

Ministry of Transport (MOT) and Emcon engineers and managers met with a group of Gabriolans in Nanaimo on Monday, May 26, to discuss the “Tex-Goop” problem (too much corrosive cement-forming clay on the island’s unpaved roads). Palpable progress in solving this problem has been made, and further action is planned.

The topics discussed included “end-user” concerns and the results of sieve, petrographic, and chemical tests. The meeting was cordial; and the sharing of information beneficial. The aggregate has been used successfully elsewhere, notably on the northern Gulf Islands. It has advantages, environmentally, by eliminating the need for dust control chemicals, and from the road construction point of view, by packing down well. At the same time, it was unreservedly acknowledged that it had created problems on Gabriola. That some roads on Gabriola are carrying more traffic than in the past might be contributing to these.

Emcon considers the main problem to be drainage. Grading has been too flat, banks of sod have built up along roadsides, and the roads’ existing substructures are, in places, substandard. Emcon will be taking steps to rectify this this summer, and a grader will be moved to the island.

There is too much clay in the aggregate and MOT will be looking at their specifications to see if these need revision. The presence of magnesium, which causes corrosion, is a concern. The principle component seems not to be limestone, as everyone thought, but an unusual mix of calcium and magnesium carbonates.

It was agreed that the results of testing indicate that there is no toxicity problem, although arsenic is present in small amounts. It was noted however that the geology of Texada Island is extraordinarily varied and MOT were encouraged to require regular testing of road materials for fluorine, boron, and arsenic. The pH of the pothole water is high, but no adverse effects of this could be identified.

Emcon acknowledged that their quality control procedures had not worked well and this will be corrected. Pressed by the Gabriola residents, it was agreed that written communication would be improved, and that MOT/Emcon representatives would be available to attend meetings on Gabriola.

Everyone was happy that, at last, we seemed to have moved on to the “finding solutions” phase of fixing the roads. [A more detailed report will be available later.](#)

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