

**Introductory remarks to the Green Issues Elections Forum
Donna Shugar
November, 2011**

Good evening everyone. Thank you for being here and being so engaged in our democratic process!

First I would like to acknowledge and thank the Squamish Nation for sharing their traditional territory and enabling this gathering.

I would also like to thank the SC Conservation Association for all the great work you do to promote biodiversity protection and community awareness and for hosting this important event tonight.

I think that most of you in this room tonight will agree that we are in a global environmental crisis. There is only one planet earth and we are faced with the unenviable responsibility of doing something to stop the train wreck or at least to mitigate the collateral damage.

I have been studying and advocating about environmental issues for a very long time. I have worked against pesticide use by the Ministry of Forests on Mt Elphinstone. I have worked for ecological forest practices and protection of our foreshore ecology. I have opposed LNG tanks and propone tanks, farmed salmon and farmed geoducks. I have worked to protect agricultural land and drinking water. In all of these actions my commitment and my conviction have been the same: We live on a planet with finite resources and we cannot continue to consume more than can be replenished. Everything is interconnected and there is no trump card in this game. We must ensure a balance between all the economic, social, cultural and environmental variables that make up our lives together.

I believe that all of our separate actions to address environmental problems have a cumulative positive impact. We all have a critically important role to play. Perhaps your environmental action is through your individual transportation choices, how you heat your home, or acquire your food. Perhaps you are an educator. Some of us write letters and knock on the doors of various levels of government. Some of us march in the streets, lie down in front of bulldozers, or blockade logging roads. And some of us accept the challenge of elected public office. I have done most of those things.

Activists on the front lines and activists at the negotiating table are both important but our skills sets are different. What I have learned in my years as an environmental activist is the power of building partnerships. Making enemies does not make progress. When the fists come down on the table or rise in the air, ears and minds close. Working through conflict to achieve consensus makes for the healthiest outcomes with the greatest chance of long term success. I have learned that I can achieve results at the negotiating table without compromising my

principles.

I have also gained a very clear understanding of what we at the Regional District have the power to achieve through direct local action and what we can only influence through lobbying other governments and agencies to make the changes that need to occur outside of our jurisdiction. I also have an understanding of the impact of ongoing First Nations negotiations on what can occur on Crown land.

I have worked hard for the last 6 years on the SCRD Board to encourage an atmosphere of consensus and collaboration. These are just a few of the many things that I have helped to achieve:

- Collaboration with our municipal partners on the Regional Sustainability Plan, We Envision.
- Adoption of the Zero Waste Management Plan
- Community and Corporate Energy and Emissions Plans and action to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions throughout the community.
- Energy audits on all SCRD recreation facilities to find out what will make them more energy efficient.
- Installation of solar panels on the SCRD office building.
- A Climate Smart training program for local businesses to help them improve their energy footprint.
- Embedding provisions for GHG reductions and energy savings into all Official Community Plans.
- Developing a communications protocol with BC Timber Sales to encourage a more ecological approach to forestry on Mt Elphinstone.
- A smoke control bylaw in Roberts Creek
- Mechanisms to reduce damaging construction on the foreshore in Roberts Creek.
- Construction of bike lanes.
- Creation of an Agriculture Advisory Committee to foster and encourage local food production.
- Lobbying BC Transit to improve and enhance transit services.

- Keeping protection of the Chapman/Gray watersheds as a high priority

I am committed to continuing to build on these actions and taking the next steps to ensure a sustainable future.

Imagine that you are the parent or grandparent of that 7 billionth baby that was born this week on Halloween. What would you do to ensure that that child's experience on this planet is as good as ours has been? That premise has been and will continue to be what guides my work. I believe that my approach gets results.

Make sure you Vote Nov 19!