

DIRECTOR'S NEWS JUNE/JULY 07

AN UPDATE FROM SCRD DIRECTOR, DONNA SHUGAR

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Check out: www.creekdirector.ca

LOGGING IN THE WATERSHED

Along with all the Directors on the SCRD Board and many members of the community, I am very concerned about present and proposed logging activity in the Wilson Creek and Chapman watersheds.

Western Forest Products has a license to cut timber on Crown land in the Chapman Watershed until April 2008 and the Ministry of Forests and Range recently gave the company permission to continue road building in the area. Since the early 70s the SCRD has been absolutely clear that we do not accept industrial activity in the drinking watershed that supplies water to the majority of our citizens. We are exploring every avenue to address this serious issue including alerting the Medical Health Officer of the risk to our drinking water in the hope that this activity can be stopped.

CNI, is a development company and owner of about 2200 acres in upper Roberts Creek. CNI has clearcut about 300 acres in the Wilson Creek watershed, very close to the Chapman watershed boundary. Hundreds of truckloads of very young wood have been taken to the mill for pulp. The SCRD has asked the Executive Director of the Private Managed Forest Land Council to investigate CNI's status as Private Managed Forest Land. CNI does not appear to be practising forestry, but is preparing for development. Ida Chong, Minister of Community Services, recently wrote, "It would not meet the criteria for a new mountain resort municipality...The developer should be working with the SCRD on his development plans." At this time, SCRD zoning does not permit residential development on these lands. No rezoning application has yet been received by the SCRD. Any rezoning requires a public process.

BC Timber Sales' 5 year plan is available for viewing at the SCRD office on Field Rd. There are about 6 cutblocks on Mt Elphinstone listed for cutting, several of which were the subject of Forest Practices Board complaints in 2005! Comments can be made until July 3, 2007. Please take the time to have a look at the maps and plans and send in your comments.

Thank you to all of you who have written to me and other SCRD Directors on this issue. Hearing the concerns that are felt up and down the Coast about the health of our drinking water is helpful to us as we try to address this serious issue. For a full rundown on all the

motions passed recently by the SCRD Board on the watershed issues, please check out my website: www.creekdirector.ca.

BIG BOX STORES

On May 17, 2007 the SCRD Board gave final adoption to 3 amendments to zoning bylaw 310 that restrict the size of retail and wholesale buildings to 2350 sq m in Elphinstone and West Howe Sound and to 500 sq m in Roberts Creek.

BACK YARD BURNING

I have had numerous complaints this fall and spring about back yard burning both because of health concerns and for environmental reasons. Both the Town of Gibsons and the District of Sechelt ban backyard burning year round. Fire Protection Bylaw 354 allows back yard burning in the fire protection areas of Halfmoon Bay, Roberts Creek and West Howe Sound between October 15 and April 15 only. This Bylaw can be accessed through the Roberts Creek Fire Dept website: www.robertscreekfire.ca. Small cooking campfires are permitted unless otherwise directed by the fire chief.

The SCRD has tested a brush pick up system but it was expensive and unwieldy and was not well used. Instead, there is now free brush drop off near the IGA mall in Gibsons and at the SCRD landfill site. The material is chipped and made available to gardeners for mulch or diverted to Howe Sound Pulp and Paper for their co-generator. The Board has discussed a number of alternatives including a mobile chipper that could circulate around the community, but we have not yet had a staff report on its viability or cost.

"Open burning" refers to land clearing burns. Under provincial regulations, the electoral areas in the SCRD are a "Category B". Roberts Creek and Halfmoon Bay have asked to be changed to a "Category A" which is slightly more restrictive, requiring a shorter burn period and a waiting period between burns on the same lot. All the Fire Departments support the idea of conversion of electoral areas to Category A.

In response to the increasing number of complaints from people with health concerns and to information about the negative effects of smoke pollution, the previous Board created Bylaw 1055 governing "smoke or other airborne emissions and nuisances" in Area D, but the accompanying regulations which are required before the bylaw can take effect have not yet been developed.

The Board has asked staff to develop these regulations over the next several months and bring their recommendations back to the Board in the fall. Details are not yet available. The regulations, should they be adopted, will not be implemented until 2008. An educational program is also under development.

THE PIER

The major rock work at the end of the Pier is now complete. It is very different from what was there before, but people seem to really like it. Thanks to John Clayton, Al Hemstreet and Jason Silverthorne for donations of rock!

What do you think about railings? Some say leave it open and others want something to lean on. Send me an email with your ideas.

BENCHES

We are considering designs for some benches at the Pier and welcome proposals from the community. Please send drawings or photos along with costs to: Randy.Udahl@scrd.bc.ca or SCRD, 1975 Field Rd., Sechelt, V0N 1V3.

PARKING

At a public meeting at the Hall in May, the issue of solutions to the parking problems at the Pier and in the downtown area were discussed. The most popular suggestion was to post "No Parking" signs in areas other than designated lots and to enforce this with towing. I encourage you to make use of the parking areas beside and behind Roberts Creek Elementary School on non-instructional days and keep the Pier area and bike lanes clear for the safe flow of emergency vehicles and pedestrians. The SCRD has also commissioned a survey of the roads in the downtown and beach areas so that we can know exactly how we can make better use of parking options.