

**DIRECTOR'S NEWS MARCH 2009**  
**AN UPDATE FROM SCRD DIRECTOR, DONNA  
SHUGAR**



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**CONTACT**

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[donna\\_shugar@hotmail.com](mailto:donna_shugar@hotmail.com)

604-885-6800 ext 6505 [www.creekdirector.ca](http://www.creekdirector.ca)

PLEASE NOTE: "Gumboot Office" only on March 28 this month. Please send me an email or call for an appointment instead.

Email me if you wish to get this newsletter electronically.

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**SCRD BUDGET**

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The budget process is lengthy and complicated as every aspect of our operations is scrutinized. SCRD finance staff have received the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting each year for the last 5 in recognition of the high quality of their financial reporting and auditors have consistently recognized the accuracy and attention to detail of the financial records of the SCRD.

I have been involved in 4 SCRD annual budget processes and this has been the most challenging. Economic conditions have had an impact on the SCRD's operations with declining revenues in landfill tipping fees for construction waste, recreation, building permit fees and development cost charges. Keeping in mind our commitment to maintaining high level but affordable service, we searched every department for reductions and efficiencies as we moved through the first 2 rounds of the process. Starting Round 1 in January, Roberts Creek's taxation was sitting at 24.2% higher than 2008 levels. By the end of Round 2, we had whittled that down to 10.6%. There is one more round to go. Note that SCRD taxation is a fraction of your total tax bill and is calculated separately from hospital, school, policing and rural taxation.

There has been some downsizing: we will delay filling personnel vacancies and reduce part time and on call staffing. We are also making changes to service at the Gibsons Pool and to handyDart service. While school programs, swimming lessons, aquafit and other registered programs will be unaffected, there will be a reduction of public swim hours to more accurately reflect actual usage. The handyDart service will be reorganized to become more of a scheduled service and less of a taxi-like service while still accommodating the needs of the special population who rely on it.

To learn more about the budget, attend a presentation at the Field Rd office on March 4 at either 3 or 7pm. The presentation will be taped and aired on Cable 11 on March 5 at 7pm when members of the Board will be live on air to take your calls. Round 3 takes place March 9 & 10 at 9:30am at the Field Rd office and these meetings are open to the public as observers.

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**TRAFFIC LIGHT**

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With increasing traffic on Highway 101 and an escalating number of serious accidents, the public cry for a traffic light at the intersection of RC Rd and Hwy 101 is getting more urgent. This is something the SCRD has been requesting consistently for at least the last 3 years. We have suggested possible alternatives to a standard traffic light including a pedestrian activated light or a light that could be activated by the RC Fire Dept. to enable volunteer fire fighters to access the fire hall when there is a call. A traffic light would be the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. We have received a letter from Minister Falcon stating that the traffic in the area does not warrant a light. If you want to see a light at this intersection, please let the Ministry of Transportation know.

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**SNOW REMOVAL**

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The SCRD held a special public meeting of our Transportation Committee on Feb 23 to discuss the Dec/Jan snow issues. Members of the public from every electoral area attended and offered their stories and suggestions for improvements. SCRD Transit and Emergency Services staff attended and representatives from MOTI gave presentations on the contract they have with Capilano Highways and on how our rural roads are rated for snow removal and maintenance.

We have strategies to improve to communication, work plans and future planning processes. We passed a resolution having SCRD Emergency Services staff work with MOTI to develop a coordinated approach to emergency planning in such situations.

Please take note of the number to call about road maintenance issues: **1-800-665-3135**. **Capilano Highways** is required to track and report on all complaints they receive.

Also note the SCRD **24 hour Transit Hotline: 604-885-6899**. That number should get you the most up to date information on any changes to or issues with our transit service. This number will be posted on all bus stop signs and on the SCRD website.

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**BACK YARD BURNING**

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The Roberts Creek Smoke Control Bylaw is now in effect and backyard burning is not permitted until April 1 and then only on lots one hectare or larger. This burning window ends Apr 15. Small campfires for warmth, cooking or ceremony are permitted. Please check the SCRD website or my website for full details. [www.scrd.ca](http://www.scrd.ca)

There have been recent complaints about garden refuse and branches being dumped on the beach. This is not permitted! Nor is it permitted to burn on the beach other than small campfires. Please respect this sensitive environment so we can all enjoy recreating on our beaches.

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#### VOLUNTEERS

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This month I would like to salute the many community members who volunteer with our emergency response programs. They play a major role in our Emergency Services system: Emergency Social Services, Emergency Radio Communications, Search & Rescue, and Coast Guard Auxiliaries. In 2008 these groups contributed approximately 8000 volunteer hours in training and responding to emergencies. It is comforting to know that these highly trained unpaid professionals will look for you if you are lost on land or sea, shelter, clothe and feed you in a disaster, and establish communications when other methods fail.

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#### DAKOTA RIDGE

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Have you discovered the joy of Dakota Ridge yet? More and more people are getting their exercise in the snow. There is now a small fee which is being collected on the honour system. Please respect that and drop your money in the cash box by the warming hut. The facility was created with grants but ongoing maintenance costs money: grooming and maintaining the trails, clearing and maintaining the road, keeping the warming hut stocked with firewood and so on. And don't forget you do need to be properly equipped with good tires and chains.

A great way to get to know the Ridge is to attend **Snowfest, March 15, 10am–2:30pm**. This is a free fun event for the whole family including cross country ski races, a kids' luge, and equipment demos. There will be a parking area part way up the hill and then a shuttle will bring you to the top for a \$2 charge.

Another fun way to experience the Ridge is **Wednesday night skiing**. This is an initiative of the Dakota Ridge Nordic Group. Meet at the IGA mall to organize car pooling; bring a head lamp.

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#### PUBLIC HEARING

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**On March 24, 7:30pm at the Gibsons and Area Community Centre** there will be a public hearing about a proposed rezoning and OCP amendment in Roberts Creek. The property is located on Highway 101 opposite the cemetery on the old Rod & Gun Club site. The proposal is to build a small performing space and camp facilities particularly for a music camp. If this project interests you or if you feel you have a property interest in the area, please attend the public hearing. More information is available from Greg Gebka, planner at the SCRCD 604-885-6800 ext. 6417 Gregory.Gebka@scrd.ca.

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#### OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

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**Seedy Saturday March 7th, 10am-3pm** RC Hall  
Featuring: Music by Sweet Cascadia, delicious food by Trish Thompson, and workshops. Seedy Saturday is a nation-wide community seed sharing event held each spring. It is a FREE seed exchange, and also features booths with plants, mushrooms, seeds and other gardening goodies for sale from local farms and producers. <http://www.onestraw.ca/node/36>

The Sunshine Coast Museum & Archives is hosting the '**Roberts Creek History Project**'. If you missed the open house at the Roberts Creek Hall last November, or just want to see it again, the Museum will have the exhibit up until it can be moved to its permanent location in the Roberts Creek library. Everyone is invited to the unveiling: **Sat., March 7, 2-4pm** 716 Winn Road 604-886-8232 [www.sunshinecoastmuseum.com](http://www.sunshinecoastmuseum.com)

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#### OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN COMMITTEE

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Congratulations to Mark Lebbell and Carolann Glover who were elected to the OCPC in January. Contact Chair Elaine Futterman about the work of this committee or with issues you wish to bring forward: 604-885-2395.

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#### BATHROOM FIXTURE PROGRAM

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In February the SCRCD received a report on the bathroom fixture program. Under this program water guzzling fixtures are replaced with low flush toilets, water efficient showerheads and faucet aerators. It was started for residential properties in 2006 and expanded to include commercial properties in 2008. The program is consistent with the SCRCD's Sustainable Community Policy not only because it conserves water but also because it puts less strain on septic fields and sewage treatment systems, conserves energy and raises public awareness about drinking water resources. The old toilets are taken apart and recycled. It is estimated that the residential program will result in the conservation of approximately 248,000 cubic meters of water annually, equivalent to 99 Olympic swimming pools or the water supply to all SCRCD customers for 22 days!

To register for the 2009 program email [lowflow@scrd.ca](mailto:lowflow@scrd.ca) or call 604-885-6806.

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#### BC HOUSING RENTAL ASSISTANCE

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The BC Rental Assistance Program provides cash assistance for eligible families renting in the private market. For families with a total household income of \$35,000 or less, this can make a significant difference in their ability to afford necessities like rent, food and medicine. To apply call 1-800-257-7756.