

Electoral Area C Community Update

September 2020
Issue 3

WELCOME

Welcome. We are glad to share this third issue of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Electoral Area C Community Update. While business has been operating in a different way than usual, there has still been a lot of work underway since our last update in February 2020.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the content, and share this update with others who may be interested.



Area C Director
Edwin Grieve

Weighing in on Rural Roadside Garbage and Recycling Collection

The CVRD is considering the introduction of roadside garbage and recycling collection in neighbourhoods of Electoral Areas A, B and C – but before further planning is considered, homeowners and residents in those areas are being asked if it's a service they would like.

An online survey is available at connectcvrld.ca/ruralroadsidecollection until September 11 – asking for residents' input on how they currently manage their garbage and recycling, and how they would like to manage it in the future. Residents of Area A, B, and C can pick the survey that applies to their specific neighbourhood. A program would be pursued only in areas where there is community support and if technical and operational requirements can be met. Please note that Mount Washington, Royston, Denman and Hornby islands are not included in this review.

In 2013 a referendum on rural roadside waste collection services failed. However, residents continue to express interest for this type of service and options for recycling have changed. Given the changed circumstances, we feel it is a question worth asking again.

The survey results will inform staff on the interest in moving forward with a service in the different Electoral area communities. They will be summarized and presented to the electoral area directors in October, for a future decision about whether to move forward with additional steps.



Mosquito management in Saratoga area

To address issues with mosquito infestation in the Saratoga area, a consultant has been working to prepare a treatment options plan for consideration by the neighborhood later this fall. All sampling required for this plan has now been completed with the predominant (+90%) nuisance species, both as larvae and adults, determined to be the salt marsh mosquito (*Aedes dorsalis*). Thanks to all the area residents who helped with this work – many of whom contributed useful larval and adult mosquito samples. Updates will be provided to the community in the coming few months.



Caring for your septic system

Over 9,000 homes in the CVRD rely on on-site septic systems to treat their domestic wastewater. These systems offer an effective, long-term treatment option for homes not connected to a sewer system – but they must be maintained properly to ensure they remain effective, and don't harm the environment.

In May 2020, electoral area directors agreed to further assess options for mandatory maintenance programs by requesting data from Island Health. This information will help the CVRD understand areas of challenge with septic care and determine whether a maintenance program would help enforce standards, and if so, how.

Information about septic maintenance is available on the CVRD's website at comoxvalleyrd.ca/septic. Watch for more information this fall about an online information session, hosted by CVRD staff, in lieu of in-person sessions for 2020.





Planning together for COVID-19 renewal

In March 2020, the government of British Columbia declared a state of emergency for our province – and the Comox Valley, along with communities around the world, responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While immediate steps were required to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the CVRD has also been focused on how to adapt plans for 2020 and future budget years, to meet changing community expectations and priorities, fiscal conditions and prepare to support renewal.

In May, Directors agreed to key principles that will guide the CVRD's actions moving forward. The Board's Renewal Plan will seek to:

- Keep services affordable
- Streamline processes
- Protect quality of life and;
- Care for the community

In September, the board will ratify a renewal plan, which outlines adaptations for the CVRD's 97 services for 2020 and into future years. The review considers the relevance and priority of projects, requirement for public engagement, financial impacts and cost saving, and new ways of service delivery.

Rethink Comox Valley is a thoughtful review of services to support community recovery. For more information about the CVRD's COVID-19 Renewal Plan, visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/renewal.

Community support from grants in aid

In May, grants in aid for community organizations were awarded by electoral area directors. Along with support for LUSH Valley, provided through a grant awarded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following organizations received funding this year from Electoral Area C: Black Creek Old Age Pensioners, Comox Valley Cycling Coalition, Comox Valley Folk Society, CV Multicultural and Immigrant Support Society, Comox Valley Pipe Band Society, Comox Valley Project Watershed Society, Dove Creek Community Association, Indigenous Women's Sharing Society, Little River Enhancement Society, Merville Community Association, Millard Piercy Watershed stewards, Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society, Oyster River Enhancement Society, Strathcona Wilderness Institute, The Alberni Project Society, Tsolum River Restoration Society, You Are Not Alone (YANA), Youth and Ecological Restoration Program.

Questions?

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

New firehalls take next steps

Merville Auxiliary Fire Hall: Residents in the Merville Fire Service Area will be asked this fall whether they support funding required to build an auxiliary fire hall on the site of Mountaineer Avian Rescue Society (MARS). Dates for the alternate approval process are still to be confirmed – and those in the service area will receive a letter in coming months with details about how to weigh in. More at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/mervillefire

Mount Washington Fire Hall: A conceptual plan for a new firehall on Mount Washington has now been completed. Engineers are updating the cost estimate to address geotechnical challenges identified last year. The revised cost will likely need residents' approval -the CVRD tentatively expects that assent process to happen in the new year, with the goal of construction in summer 2021.

Next steps for Watutco Water Service

The CVRD is working with owners of the Watutco Water Service – a privately-owned water service providing water to roughly 130 residences in the Black Creek area – to look at options for transferring the service to the CVRD. If terms for an agreement can be reached, then the CVRD will undertake a public assent process (petition) to seek community approval. Final cost estimates for the service's conversion will be provided then, for the community's consideration.



CELEBRATING SEAL BAY

In May, improvements to Seal Bay Nature Park were celebrated at a joint ceremony with the K'ómoks First Nation and CVRD. New and improved signage now emphasizes Ayajuthem, a Coast Salish language. This new signage will make it easier for park users to navigate the area while also honouring the cultural heritage and values within the park. For more information on the park and improvements, visit www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/sealbay.