

## April Boot Tales Director's News

**Mark Lebell**, SCRD Director for Roberts Creek

### Contact

In Person, Gumboot Café,

Saturday Mornings, 10-12 (**except April 11<sup>th</sup>**)

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Happy April! Salmonberry blossoms should be brightening up our backyards, trails and forests by the time you read this. A reminder that you can always check the News Blog on my website ***robertscreekmark.com*** to see if there are more recent postings on an issue.

### Volunteer Corner – Earth Day

This year, the 45<sup>th</sup> annual International Earth Day falls on Wednesday, April 22 and is estimated to engage over a billion people. **The 26<sup>th</sup> annual Roberts Creek Earth Day Celebration takes place on Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup>** at the Pier and is always a source of pride and community spirit in celebration of our Planet.

This event has long benefitted from our volunteer ethic and this year is no exception as bicycle couriers, zero-waste dishwashers, parking patrollers, and other odd-jobbers are all in demand. If your day is partly booked already, perhaps you could help out with either set-up or take down? Or perhaps bake some treats for the volunteer snack table?

New volunteer Earth Day coordinator Graham Starsage can be reached at [robertscreekearthday@gmail.com](mailto:robertscreekearthday@gmail.com) and would love your help.

### Budget 2015

As expected, this year's SCRD Budget was a challenging one. The average residential tax increase over last year will be 8.13% on the Sunshine Coast. In Roberts Creek it will finalize at close to a 7% increase. Different electoral areas pay different amounts based on the services that they subscribe to, and differing property assessments relative to other areas. This increase only applies to the SCRD portion of your property tax, not the provincial school tax.

So what accounts for the increase? Largely ageing infrastructure. Docks, emergency towers, landfill closure and green waste costs, transit bus maintenance, capital maintenance items at Gibsons Pool and Sechelt Arena, and information storage hardware and software upgrades. What else can we expect this year? Some consultation around improvements at the Pier Park, better bike lane maintenance and sweeping, more signage at beach accesses, park improvements on Gambier and at Katherine and Ruby Lakes

There is clearly concern at the Board around taxation levels. The Board has recently received the first iteration of the District's Asset Management Plan. This project will take

shape through 2015 and will be a tool for sustainably funding the maintenance of SCRD Assets through their lifecycle.

Provincial and Federal “Downloading” is a theme that emerged during budget discussions as well. This issue is explored further in a News Blog post on my website. It links to an excellent report from the Columbia Institute on the subject of how changes to funding, legislation and policy at higher government levels impact local governments and their budgets.

### **Public Transit Setback**

The SCRD was disappointed to learn recently that proposed Sunshine Coast Transit upgrades have been put on hold due to a provincial freeze on public transit improvement funding.

The increases would have led to more frequent service between Sechelt and Langdale, and correspondingly would have minimized the impact of ferry delays on schedules. Although the province recently announced a 2.5 billion dollar “On the Move” transportation infrastructure funding program, only about 8% of those funds were directed towards public transit, largely for new busses.

The Board has written a letter to the Minister of Transportation, and will work with other impacted local partners and neighbouring communities to advocate for this important service. This valuable funding collaboration between the Province and the SCRD clearly results in strong economic, social and environmental benefits for our community.

### **Goldmoss Gallery**

The proposed zoning bylaw amendment of the Goldmoss Gallery property on Lower Rd. is moving through an extensive public process. In March, both the Roberts Creek Official Community Plan Committee and the Roberts Creek Advisory Planning Committee considered the proponents new application. They will have provided comments for the Board’s Planning and Development Committee to consider at its April or May meeting. Should the application continue to move ahead, a full formal Public Hearing will be held and will be well-advertised.

In the meantime, an informative SCRD staff report, including the updated proposed Residential Art Gallery Zoning Bylaw can be found via the Agendas link on the SCRD website, but is perhaps more easily accessed through my website’s News Blog page.

Comments can be emailed to SCRD Planner Andrew Allen at [Andrew.Allen@scrd.ca](mailto:Andrew.Allen@scrd.ca) . Please cc me as well. A reminder that I am nearly always available (not April 11 this month) at the Gumboot Café on Saturday mornings from 10-12 to discuss this or other matters.

### **Woodsmoke Control**

More and more evidence is coming to light about the dangers of excessive woodsmoke inhalation. Those of us with woodstoves should ensure that they are burning as efficiently as possible.

Our Roberts Creek Smoke Control Bylaw allows for backyard burning in the spring only between April 1-15. In order that such burning has minimal impact on neighbours, it can only take place on lots that are 1ha or larger, and must coincide with a Ventilation Index

of “good”. This information can be found on the [www.robertscreekfire.ca](http://www.robertscreekfire.ca) website, where you can also find other burning hazard information as we head towards summertime.

A reminder that there is free residential drop-off for yard, garden and food waste at Salish Soils in Sechelt, and yard and garden waste at the Town of Gibsons site on Henry Rd., if you are unable to compost those materials.

### **SCRD Recreation News:**

Here are some great upcoming Recreation programs. More information, and more program opportunities can be found at <http://www.scrd.ca/SCRD-Recreation>

**New drop in schedules** at both Gibsons and Sechelt offer High Intensity Interval Training, Basic Yoga, and more. All included in your MYPass or by paying regular drop in admission.

**Steady Feet**, Sechelt Aquatic Center, Starts April 13 on Mondays and Fridays 15 sessions, \$135, more information at [www.steadyfeet.vch.ca](http://www.steadyfeet.vch.ca)

**Emergency Childcare First Aid & CPR**, Gibsons and Area Community Centre, Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2015, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, \$100.00

**Adult and Teen Stroke Improvement**, Gibsons and District Aquatic Facility, April 12 –May 31st

**Eat Well and Exercise:** A 6-week new program combining a Fitness Circuit and Holistic Nutrition workshops. Start Date TBA, mid April.