

## FINAL REPORT FROM SCRD DIRECTOR

DONNA SHUGAR

DECEMBER 2014



### CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Mark Lebbell who will be your SCRD Director for the next 4 years! Thank you to all the candidates who had the courage and dedication to our community to stand for election: Hans Penner, Barbara Hague and David Kelln. Thank you also to all of you who exercised your democratic right (or should I say responsibility?) to vote. Please do not end it there. There are so many ways to participate in public process between elections: there are advisory committees which help SCRD directors make wise decisions on planning, agriculture, resource issues, parks and recreation; public hearings on specific planning issues; specific projects where public input is an important part of the process. Individually you can call or write to Mark when you have a particular concern. I expect he will utilize many opportunities to communicate with and hear from you and I hope that the next 4 years will be rich with public engagement on the issues of concern to our community.

### MEET YOUR NEW BOARD

On December 4, 11:00am at the SCRD offices on Field Rd the new SCRD Board will be inaugurated and the 2015 Chair will be elected. Following the inaugural meeting, there will be an open house to meet your new Board and learn more about the SCRD. Everyone is invited to attend.

### 9 YEARS IN REVIEW

I offer a huge thank you to people who have helped and supported my work for the last 9 years: my 3 alternates: Elaine Futterman, Peg Neilon and Dave Ryan. Frank Henning has been my web manager making sure that up to date information is available on my website. And many of you have volunteered on the numerous advisory committees that assist directors with decision making. I could not have done good work without you! I have received many calls and emails from Creekers wishing me well in my retirement. Thank you all! My 9 years as your Director have been some of the most fulfilling times in my life. The opportunity to represent our very special community and to be an advocate for the interests and values of Roberts Creek has been a great gift. There have been challenges. After all, we do not always agree. But there have been a great many reasons to celebrate our successes. Just a few of those follow. **We Envision:** Over the last 9 years there has been a lot of concern about and emphasis on sustainability issues including climate action, energy and emissions reductions, smart planning, etc. We Envision is the SCRD's comprehensive sustainability document and includes our core values, a vision, and a set of targets and

actions that map the way forward. Since its adoption in 2011, We Envision is referenced in all SCRD decision making from work plans to budgets. A Region-wide Sustainability Round Table has been established to keep the momentum for necessary follow up actions going. **Official Community Plan:** Perhaps the biggest project to be completed in Roberts Creek during the last several years was the update of the 1994 Official Community Plan. The 4 year public process was extensive culminating with the adoption of the new plan in 2012. The OCP is the guiding document for planning decisions affecting our community. Following the adoption of the plan an implementation program has been developed so you will see some changes to other bylaws such as Zoning Bylaw 310 coming forward. Thank you to the 14 community volunteers who spent 4 years working on the OCP. **Agriculture:** During the last 9 years Food Security has risen in public awareness and the SCRD has responded with greater attention to promoting local agriculture and food security. A new Regional Agriculture Advisory Committee was created to advise local governments. An Agriculture Area Plan was recently adopted and extensive work has been done to modernize our zoning bylaws to reflect new trends in such areas as the keeping of poultry, ALR protection, community gardens, cooperative farming, etc. **Affordable Housing:** I have been the SCRD's rep on the Regional Housing Committee which was created 2 years ago to bring some regional coordination to this important issue, to harmonize policies and to facilitate the creation of more affordable housing units on the Coast. **Parks, Trails and Bike Paths:** One of the first challenges I experienced as a new director back in 2006 was the discovery that the wooden structure and the supports underneath it at the end of the Pier had corroded and become unsafe. We spent the better part of 2006 with the end of the Pier cordoned off and unsightly while we figured out what the community wanted as a solution. The message was clear: keep it simple! The result is just as functional and beautiful as it was before and the Pier continues to be a favourite community gathering place which is accessible to everyone regardless of mobility level. The bonus is that the new design is very low maintenance. A few years later we were successful in acquiring the paved area where the Mandala Art Project is painted as part of the park. We also replaced the wooden gate which did require ongoing maintenance with a beautiful metal rendering of the original design. In 2015 some upgrades of the park amenities are planned. At **Cliff Gilker**, there have been improvements like some lovely wooden walkways over boggy areas, a beautiful picnic shelter and a fun new slide which is very popular with small children. The Cliff Gilker Environmental Management Plan is now written into

the Roberts Creek OCP to ensure protection of the park. We have signed an agreement with SD 46 to cost share Saturday openings at the Community School to ensure affordable rental rates for community use. We have also agreed with the municipalities to fund youth outreach workers to assist vulnerable youth. We have developed a number of off road **walking paths** to connect various parts of the community: Robinson Trail, Hunter Rd./Doris Rd., Blackburn Trail, Richmond Rd view area, etc. Funds have also been allocated for improvements to the Henderson beach access. When the federal gas tax grant program was introduced in 2007, SCRD directors decided that we would each utilize these funds in our own areas for projects to benefit our individual communities. In Roberts Creek we have created **cycling improvements** on Lower Rd. Downtown walking paths and gardens were created. And work is about to start to create safer walking on Beach Ave. **Transportation:** In 2011, the SCRD, with the municipalities, First Nations and MOTI adopted an *Integrated Transportation Plan*, the culmination of a lengthy public process. This plan focuses on regional transportation including Hwy 101 safety, transit and active transportation alternatives, ferries and ways to integrate all modes of transportation. The plan is the blueprint for transportation improvements for local governments and MOTI. This process was followed by the *Transit Future Plan* in 2013/14. This plan sets out transit improvements for the next several years as we build towards half hourly service. There have been steady increases in service with Route 90 (along Hwy 101) now having many more runs. **Backyard Burning:** Early in my first term the SCRD introduced Smoke Control Regulations for Roberts Creek to improve air quality. At the time this was very controversial. However, we worked through that process as a community, made compromises and ended up with a program most people are comfortable with and we have very few infractions of the bylaw. Now Halfmoon Bay has a similar bylaw. Increased options for disposing of green waste provide alternatives to burning. **Recreation:** In 2007 the Sechelt Pool was opened followed by the Gibsons Arena in 2008. Along with the construction and management of these new facilities, the SCRD took over management of the existing arena in Sechelt and pool in Gibsons creating a seamless suite of recreation facilities. Now recreation, leisure and cultural services, including libraries, make up a substantial portion of the SCRD budget. In 2014 a *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* was adopted outlining how the SCRD will continue to provide services that meet community needs. **Solid Waste & Recycling:** The Board has adopted a zero waste policy for solid waste management. This means taking progressive steps towards minimizing the use of landfills by diverting materials that can be recycled or repurposed. **Watershed Protection:** In 2007 a group of watchful citizens made the SCRD aware of a potential threat to our major drinking watershed, the Chapman, due to logging. Of particular concern was logging on very steep slopes where there had already been many landslides caused by

tree removal. We could have received the information, asked for a brief staff report, and done nothing more. Instead we convened as a Local Board of Health and held extensive hearings over several weeks resulting in an SCRD order to Western Forest Products to stay away from the steep slopes and to observe stringent set backs in the other areas. This received national attention. Ultimately we did lose that battle in court but it did highlight the need for greater watershed protection province wide. Since then, the Community Forest has commissioned a study of the watershed that actually vindicates our order. I believe that if we had had that study in our hands, we would have won our court case. In response, the province has initiated a review of drinking water legislation. Sadly, because of the far reaching impact of the SCRD's actions, the province changed the legislation so that local governments may no longer convene as local boards of health! In 2012 the SCRD adopted a Source Assessment Response Plan which identifies risks to the watershed and strategies to mitigate or eliminate those risks.

**First Nations Relationships:** Relationships with both the shishalh and the Squamish First Nations have never been stronger. SCRD and the Sechelt Nation have worked together on numerous initiatives. The 2005 Joint Watershed Management Agreement declaring our joint stewardship of the Chapman/Gray watersheds was re-ratified in 2010. The Heritage Protocol and Strategic Engagement Agreements set out how we work together in a consultative way. On Nov 13, 2014 the Sechelt Nation announced that it was protecting that portion of the 1500 hectares of **Mt Elphinstone** that is in their territory! This was done to protect the drinking water supply for those residents dependent on the watersheds of Mt Elphinstone. We have been working hard to develop similar protocol agreements with the Squamish Nation as well.

**Advocacy:** There are many important issues that are not within the control of local government. Many of these issues relate to environmental impacts of human activity. The SCRD recognizes our important advocacy role in relation to provincially or federally controlled projects such as barging coal through Georgia Strait, LNG tankers in Howe Sound, provincial changes to the ALR, run of the river hydro projects, BC Ferries and so on. We have engaged actively through the Union of BC Municipalities, the Howe Sound Forum, as well as personal meetings with ministers including the premier. **Public Engagement:** You may have noticed the thread of public process throughout my comments on these topics. During this last 9 years the SCRD Board has engaged in strategic planning processes for the first time. We have adopted "collaborative leadership" as the over arching principle governing work at the Regional District. This means that we consult with our municipal partners, with our First Nations partners, and most importantly with you, the citizens of our community as bylaws, regulations and policies are created.

