

December Boot Tales Director's Update

Mark Lebell, SCR D Director for Roberts Creek

Contact

In Person, Gumboot Café,
Saturday Mornings, 10-12 (except Dec 19, 26 and Jan 2)
Phone: (604) 885-6800 ext. 6505
By Email: robertscreekmark@gmail.com
Facebook: robertscreekmark
Website: robertscreekmark.com

We're well on our way to the shortest day of the year...Winter Solstice is on Dec 21, at 8:49 PM, if you're counting. Seasonal best wishes to all! I hope you have lots of opportunity to appreciate the peace and beauty of our home. I'll be at the Gumboot on Saturdays as per usual with the exceptions noted above.

Volunteer Corner:

Thank you to the Little Legion for hosting what is always a thoughtful and moving community Remembrance Day gathering on November 11th. In a related initiative, students from Elphinstone High School Grades 10,11,12 Leadership Class spent time in early November maintaining the graves of veterans in our Seaview Cemetery. Veteran Larry Boyd and Teacher Sara Mani have initiated and coordinated the cleanup for the last 3 years, in conjunction with SCR D staff. Thanks to all involved for providing this valuable service learning opportunity for our young people.

Knotweed and other Invasives

The issue of invasive species is a growing concern on the Sunshine Coast. The more one learns about the impact of something like Knotweed on habitat and infrastructure, along with emerging studies on the probable carcinogenic impacts of some herbicides, the more challenging the solution becomes. Of particular note is that the Ministry of Transportation won't issue any permits for things like bike lanes, walking paths or beach accesses if there is knotweed nearby. The Ministry's only approved method of treatment involves stem injection or spray of glyphosate, which is contrary to our OCP, but within their legislative scope.

The local government Technical Working Group on Invasives is working with Coastal Invasive Species Council in developing land manager and property owner "best local practices" around invasive species on the Sunshine Coast, and will report to the Board in the new year. I'll be sure to communicate the group's findings.

There are a number of volunteer stewardship initiatives on the Coast in this area. Well-used and loved Henderson Beach is a case in point. The OCP Committee will be spearheading an alternative (to herbicides) eradication pilot project that will involve isolation (fencing), treatment (manual), and education (signage) components. **If you have a boat stored at Henderson Beach**, particularly in the newly labeled knotweed patch down there, you can support the project by (in order of preference) taking your boat home for the winter, or unlocking it and tying it up instead so others may carefully move it if needed. Generally, the less the knotweed plants are disturbed, the better.

If you are interested in helping with, learning more about, or receiving updates about this project send an email to the coordinator at hendersonbeachproject@gmail.com.

Corporate Energy Use

The SCR D was recently recognized by BC Hydro as a top conservation credit earner in the municipal sector. Out of 40 local government partners in Hydro's Power Smart Partners program, the SCR D ranked #2 in organizational energy use and greenhouse gas reduction projects. Corporate financial savings due to energy efficiency initiatives are used differently in different Regional Functions but often they offset inflationary, Consumer Price Index, or other "cost of living" type budgetary increases.

Skwxwú7mesh Nation Council Meeting

Recently, the Board met with the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation Council in North Vancouver. This Council of 16 diverse members represents Skwxwú7mesh Nation interests in their traditional territory, which as many of us are aware runs to the banks of Roberts Creek itself. Since the inception of the SCRDC, the attention of the Nation has largely been focused elsewhere, but that is changing, and the goal of the Regional District Board is to sign a broad protocol with the Nation to help shape consultation down the road.

Of specific interest to Roberts Creekers will be discussions with regards to the **1500 hectares on Mt. Elphinstone originally proposed as a Provincial Park which sits astride both Skwxwú7mesh and shishálh Nation territory**. Indeed, there are compelling biological and other reasons for an even larger protected area than what is delineated in our OCP. While an expanded *Provincial Park* would seem to be a good answer, that specific language can be of concern to First Nations, as it can be interpreted by some as a diminution of aboriginal title.

One of the avenues being discussed is a tri-partite staff working group to explore shared values and options around the area in question. Having said that, any changes would require Provincial approval, and form part of a broader First Nations relationship with the Province. There is an awareness by all concerned that year by year the ecological integrity of the area in question is further compromised by industrial logging.

Reconciling our shared history and future in this beautiful place, was broken down for me recently as beginning with **recognition, respect, and relationship**.

In term of relationship, the meeting presented the opportunity to share a few excerpts from our Roberts Creek's Official Community Plan with the Council. Within its Introduction, Vision, and Resource sections, our OCP is quick to acknowledge the original inhabitants of the land. It is safe to say that the Council, who deal with 7 different local governments within their territory, were impressed with the wording. Kudos to the community and 2009-2012 OCP Review Committee for producing a document that is a leader in acknowledging aboriginal interests in our home place. Council were also moved by a photograph of Dean Schutz' beautiful new "sense of place" mural in the Roberts Creek Elementary School Gym. If you haven't seen it yet, you're in for a treat. The efforts of the school and school district as a whole to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are an important part of the relationship piece.

Woodsmoke

Wood stoves get a lot of use in our community at this time of year. Wet wood, an inefficient stove, a poor ventilation index, or other factors can make for particulate in the air that is problematic for many. The Sunshine Coast Clean Air Society has a website with many resources around this issue, including a woodstove Exchange Program for non-EPA compliant stoves which wraps up in May, 2015. They can be found at www.cleanaironthecoast.com.