

Cortes Island (Area I) Director's Report

The magnolia tree is nearly finished blooming. The wind has strewn its petals about the garden. The tulips are in full bloom. Peonies are budding. The lilies and columbine are up guaranteeing the profusion of color will continue. This time of year there is one particular plant in flower that offers a special delight. It is my hoyo. It is in full bloom and fills the house with the most heavenly fragrance every night. It is a good reminder of the importance of the simple things in life.

The Burning Issue

The property near the corner of Bartholomew Road has been burning logging slash for a number of weeks. On April 23, an inversion occurred which engulfed various parts of southern Cortes in dense smoke. As the weather was warm some residents had their houses fill with smoke, others experienced breathing problems. After receiving a series of complaints/concerns I checked into the situation.

I spoke with Mr. Hubert Bunce with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and forwarded him all the emails I had received regarding this issue. It was determined that the operator is aware of the requirement of the MoE Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation. Unfortunately the province wide regulations are not specific enough to prevent impacts from every burning situation. The ministry is looking at amending the regulations and is considering including additional conditions to further reduce the potential for impact. On East Vancouver Island the ministry has entered into a Pilot Burn Plan with several of the major forest companies. They are currently assessing different burning techniques including seasoning fuel and considering wind direction to reduce potential impacts. Mr. Bunce stated he would contact the landowner and operator to advise them of these additional considerations for future burns.

One week later, on another glorious sunny day, I received a call from a resident concerned about a group of parents and children being engulfed by a different sort of smoke—this time it was from burning plastics. Burning is a provincial jurisdiction and there is an established list of prohibited materials. Plastics are on the list because they release dangerous toxins when burnt. A few of the health effects associated with the burning of plastics are: altered immune function, reduced cognitive functions, depression, central nervous system disorder and cancer. Obviously, these are not risks we want our children exposed to. Such waste should be taken to the Recycling Centre.

The Recycling Centre

There was a minor disruption at the recycling centre recently. The situation arose very quickly and unexpectedly. Happily resolution was just as quick with virtually no disruption in the Recycling Centre schedule and no impact at all on household garbage and recyclable materials collection. In order to address insurance issues the following items will no longer be accepted at the centre: hazardous waste (pesticides, paints, solvents, etc.), batteries and oil. The Regional District is working to develop alternate disposal sites for these items. Please be patient while the alternatives are worked out and please don't throw these materials into the bins at the transfer station.

Thanks to those that gathered at Manson's Hall to resolve the difficulty: Graeme Faris; General Manager of Operational Services, James Bast; Manager of Protective

Services, John Sprungman, Dova Wiltshire, and Ruth Zwickel. Special thanks to the Cortes Ecoforestry Society for providing their office on extremely short notice and to Mary Lavelle for her patience, understanding and cooperation.

Summer will be upon us soon and we can once turn our attention to increasingly being outdoors. I hope everyone has the time to bask in the warmth and beauty of this place we call home.

Feel free to contact me at 935-6488 Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 4 pm. If you get the answering machine try my cell phone -- 202-6488. You can also email me at brijen@oberon.ark.com anytime.