

Cortes Island (Area I) Director's Report

Ah! Sweet blessed rain! All the dust from a long, dry summer is being washed away and the gardens and forests are heaving a collective sigh of relief. The rain heralds the beginning of autumn, my favorite time of year. I love the softness of the air, the temperatures, the light, and the colour this season brings. The gardens are speaking of autumn as well. The veggie garden has been tilled and sown with a fall rye cover crop. The garlic bed awaits preparation for planting and the banana tree insulation before hard frosts arrive. My flower garden has had a continuous display of colour—a true testament to perennials! Basically it has waited patiently all year, thankful for any attention I can dedicate to its care. Here are a few updates on island projects that draw my attention to things other than gardens.

Beach Access Trails

Beth Rees, Manager of Parks Planning, has finished all the details as requested by the Ministry of Transportation for the necessary approvals needed for the Hayes Road (Smelt Bay), Gnat Road (Squirrel Cove), and Seascape and Moon Roads (between Hollyhock and Hank's Beach) trails to be built. Cove Road (in Whaletown) needs further assessment because of possible on-site contamination from abandoned, rusty fuel drums. Therefore, this access site will require more assessment before entering into the approval process. The goal for the fall is to complete the Hayes and Seascape beach access trails and trail improvement/building will start shortly after provincial approval is received.

At the onset of the project a number of folks indicated they would be willing to donate their time, energy, machines or materials toward trail building. John Sprungman has contacted individuals that have expressed interest over the past months. If you are just learning of this exciting initiative and are interested in participating please contact John. He is generating a list of volunteers and will notify everyone when the various projects can commence. It is proposed that trail construction will be carried out in a partnership between the Regional District and the Friend's of Cortes Island. Thanks for the continued patience of those waiting to build and utilize the proposed beach accesses.

Blind Creek Boat Ramp Improvements

People living in Cortes Bay will have noticed the current work being done on the Blind Creek Boat Ramp. This work should be completed in a few weeks and may be done by the time this article runs. Gravel is being hauled to the site so a safer parking area is available for vehicles and trailers. This will be a welcome improvement to anyone launching a boat from this ramp.

Going Camping!

While most people love to holiday during the summer Brian and I prefer to travel when parks, campgrounds, roads, and ferries are not so busy. We will be leaving for a three-week camping trip September 20. We have yet to decide in which direction to travel but ideally, our path will take us to a location of glorious autumn colour. John Sprungman, my alternate director, will attend Board and Committee of the Whole meetings in Courtenay the end of the month. I will return in time to attend Community

Service Committee meetings mid-October, followed by the UBCM Convention one week later. My laptop and cell phone will remain at home and I won't be able to respond to your queries until I return home. If you could hold off with your communication until mid-October you won't be faced with the frustration of beeping answering machines and filled email and cell-phone services. Should you require any RD information while I am away, please call 1-800-331-6007 where you will receive help from Regional District Staff. Until then 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.

Respectfully submitted by Jenny Hiebert—Regional Director Area 'I' (Cortes)