

Cortes Island (Area I) Regional Director's Report

Brian, Autumn and my arrival the day before my mom's birthday was a complete surprise. A surprise birthday party followed several days later. The occasion was also a family reunion and I got to visit with cousins I had not seen since high school graduation. It was also my mom's first birthday party ever which made the occasion more special. My sister baked the cake complete with 80 pink roses and the requisite 80 candles. Being immersed in my extended family for a week allowed me to totally disconnect from the Regional Director role. It enabled me to return rested and relaxed and ready to carry on with my busy schedule.

AVICC Convention

After one day at home I was off to a meeting in Courtenay, followed by the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities convention in Qualicum Beach. This annual gathering gives elected representatives from coastal areas an opportunity to discuss common issues. A record number of resolutions were passed many of which have significance to life on the smaller islands. Here are two issues that were debated and will be brought to the attention of the Ministry of Transportation. Three resolutions regarding BC Ferries and the Coastal Ferry Act were brought forward—specifically the impact past and impending ferry fare increases have had on coastal communities. The AVICC Executive will be taking the concerns expressed to the Minister of Transportation. Likewise the Ferry Advisory Committee Chairs will be meeting with Minister Falcon to discuss the preliminary fare increases as released by Martin Crilly, Ferry commissioner. Another transportation issue of concern to some islanders is the lack of location markers every kilometer along the Inland highway north of Nanaimo. The lack of markers has left travelers have no easy means of describing their location thus impending access to emergency assistance. MOT will be requested to reconsider its policy with a view to spacing highway location markers closer together.

Beach Accesses

It gives me great pleasure to announce the Cortes Island beach access agreements for Hayes, Seascapes, Gnat, and Moon Roads have been signed! It's taken longer than originally hoped and anticipated to complete the agreements but correct wording was crucial. One of the greater outcomes of this process is that the "Cortes Template" can be utilized for other Comox Strathcona Regional District projects and the Ministry of Transportation.

Formal implementation of trail building will start in the near future. Park staff will be coming over to reassess the sites and discuss the necessary steps to develop the trails. Cortes is leading the way in this type of trail development. I look forward to the successful completion of some of the trails this year so folks can access to some of the lovely beaches surrounding our island. Many thanks for all the community support and patience on this project.

OCP Revision

The "kick-off" meeting for revision of the Official Community Plan will take place Tuesday, May 1 at Manson's Hall starting at 7pm. I suggest interested individuals

read the existing document, which was adopted in 1995. The general objectives of the existing OCP may be of interest. The section that discusses the Planning History of Cortes as found in part C of Appendix A is also good background information. Hardcopies can be purchased from the Regional District Office or a digital version can be easily accessed by clicking on the Cortes Island OCP found in the Community Planning section of the RD website: www.comoxstrathcona.bc.ca. I look forward to extensive resident participation and hope to see you May 1.

Feel free to contact me about these or any other concerns at 935-6488 Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 4 pm. (No early morning, late night or weekend calls, please.) 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