

Cortes Island (Area I) Regional Director's Report

The past few days have brought the sunny, warmth of spring to the island. Returning birds fill the crisp morning air with their calls, a frog chorus fills the night and early spring flowers add a splash of colour to the garden. Except for the occasional collisions of the prevailing seasonal winds, which can bring a dusting of late snow, winter is past. The winds will soon mellow to light breezes and the earth, warmed by the sun will burst forth with life.

Increased Population

Statistics Canada has issued its first report derived from the 2006 census. The population of Canada increased by 5.4%, the Province by 5.3%, the Comox Strathcona Regional District by 5.6%, and Cortes Island by 11.1%. The Island now has 1042 full-time residents, an increase of 104 since 2001.

Increased Change - OCP Revision

“While we may recognize we can not stem the flow of people wanting to live on an island paradise, we must acknowledge that each and every one of us, by our presence here, changes the island. This may be because increased density impacts land use and carrying capacity, our need to earn a living, or our desire to have more of what civilization has to offer. I have seen a lot of change and development in my 31 years here and realize there is more to come. I believe we need to take a proactive approach. One that tries to anticipate change and plan for it...” (Quoted from my opening address at the November 2005 All Candidates Forum.)

The vision, direction, and policies for future development of the island are expressed in the Official Community Plan (OCP). As indicated by the latest census figures the Cortes community has changed significantly since the OCP was adopted in 1995. I am pleased to announce the revision of this document will be starting soon. This will be an open community process with ample opportunity for all interested residents to voice their thoughts, ideas, and concerns. I highly suggest that as many individuals as possible read/study the existing document prior to the public meetings. Hardcopies can be purchased from the Regional District Office or a digital version is available online at www.comoxstrathcona.bc.ca. (On the homepage click on Community Planning, click on Bylaws, then on Cortes Island OCP Bylaws-#1740.) Please watch for announcements of the first meeting in the local flyers.

Grants-In-Aid

Thus far only one community organization has applied for Grant-In-Aid funding. This fund is available to any non-profit registered society, where the grant will benefit the general community. Any community organization applying for a 2007 grant will need to fill out the grant application which can be found on the Regional District website. (Go to www.comoxstrathcona.bc.ca, type “grant in aid” into the search window, click on the appropriate document.) Forward the completed application to the Regional District office. Payments of a grant-in-aid are usually issued after August 1, when the Regional District receives taxation funds from the Provincial Government. Please forward

applications by April 15 so I can consider them all at one time. This is the fairest way to evenly distribute the limited funds.

Birthday Celebration

Brian, Autumn, and I will soon be departing on a surprise visit to celebrate my mother's 80th birthday. I will be away April 1-11, returning in time to attend the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities Convention in Qualicum. My laptop and cell phone will remain home so I won't be able to respond to your queries until I return home. If you could hold off with your communication while I'm away 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 Regional District staff will be pleased to assist you. Until then feel free to contact me 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