Moorecroft Regional Park Update
We will be celebrating the official opening of Moorecroft Regional Park with a family picnic-themed celebration from noon until 3pm on Saturday, June 18. More information on this will follow in the coming weeks. I hope to see you at this community celebration and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the residents who worked so hard to preserve this historic property. The RDN Board is proud to be able to preserve this property as an ecologically protected public space.

The Nature Trust of British Columbia was a key part of our success in securing Moorecroft as a Regional Park. As part of the purchase agreement with the RDN, this organization has committed to raise up to $500,000 toward the purchase price of $4.8 million. This fundraising effort supports the purchase and will also assist in the restoration work needed to preserve important facilities at Moorecroft including Kennedy Hall, Stringer Hall, Miss Moore’s cabin and the nature trail infrastructure.

Donations to Moorecroft Regional Park can be made online at www.naturetrustbc.ca, by cash or by credit card. For more information, contact The Nature Trust of BC at 1-866-288-7878.

NanOOSE Bay Fire Hall
In the March 26 NanOOSE Bay Fire Hall referendum, voters supported borrowing up to $3.2 million to demolish our current fire hall and construct a new fire hall for NanOOSE Bay. We are now able to build a seismically sound facility to protect NanOOSE Bay firefighters and the medical and firefighting supplies that our community will depend on in an emergency situation. The new building will also provide improved training space for firefighters.

The structure of the building incorporates wood as a locally-sourced, earthquake-resistant structural element with low-maintenance exterior finishes. The new fire hall includes a separated gear storage area and decontamination washroom in the vehicle bay area to reduce the spread of contaminants from the vehicle bays, new workshop and first aid supplies storage and improved training and administrative spaces. A reduction in the use of fossil fuels to heat and cool the firehall has been accomplished by the use of water based heat exchangers. Additionally, the vehicle bays will have in floor radiant heating which assists in providing a more even source of heat for drying wet vehicles and equipment. Rainwater will be captured from the roof of the building and will be stored as an alternate source of water. Landscaping around the building will consist of low maintenance native plants.

Construction is expected to begin later this year.

Draft Regional Growth Strategy
The Regional District of Nanaimo wants to hear what residents think about the new policies on food security, water conservation, transportation, economic development, affordable housing and climate change included in its Draft Regional Growth Strategy.

To view the Draft RGS and learn more about how it will encourage sustainability in the region, visit www.ShapingOurFuture.ca. Hard copies can be viewed at the RDN Administration Building, all regional libraries, and municipal offices in the RDN. A survey is also available on the site, and those who complete it by May 27 will be entered to win $400 towards food from a grocery store of their choice. Other prizes include transit and recreation passes.

In addition to the survey, residents can provide feedback by sending an e-mail or writing a letter.

The RGS was adopted in 1997 and was last reviewed in 2003. It represents the RDN Board’s commitment to shaping a more sustainable pattern of population growth and development in the region’s rural Electoral Areas and four municipalities over a 25-year period.

For more information, email...
The Lakes District and Schooner Cove Neighbourhood Plans

On March 22 the RDN Board of Directors approved OCP Amendment Bylaws No. 1400.03, 2011 (The Lakes District) and 1400.04, 2011 (Schooner Cove) for first and second reading. Public hearings were held on Tuesday, May 3 (Schooner Cove) and Monday, May 9 (The Lakes District). Both OCP Amendment Bylaws will be before the Board for consideration of the summaries of the public hearings and third reading in the coming weeks.

The intent and purpose of these OCP Amendment Bylaws is to adopt detailed neighbourhood plans for these two areas. Each plan provides policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management and servicing requirements for all lands lying within the boundaries of each neighbourhood plan area. I would like to thank the members of the community who contributed to this important planning process by providing their comments and suggestions.

Drinking Water/Watershed Protection Update

The RDN’s Drinking Water Watershed Protection Program is learning more about water in the Region through collaboration with local environmental groups, government agencies and residents. The work done through this important program is assisting the RDN Board in making well-informed land use decisions that protect our environment. Recent projects include the ongoing Observation Well Program and the Watershed Snapshot Report.

Observation Well Program

The Drinking Water Watershed Protection Program identified the need for an expansion of the groundwater observation well network, so the RDN and the Ministry of Environment developed a plan to expand the network of 14 wells to include at least 10 more wells. We are converting six existing wells to observation wells and four new wells have already been added—one in Area H, two in Area E and one in Area A. A second phase of the expansion will begin later in 2011 and will see even more observation wells added to the network. The DWWP Advisory Committee’s technical working group will be identifying sites for these wells and working in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and, where possible, the Geological Survey of Canada. The Ministry of Environment will be responsible for the long-term monitoring of the observation wells.

The Towns for Tomorrow program provided $150,000 in support funding for the Observation Well Program.

Watershed Snapshot Report

The DWWP will present the Watershed Snapshot Report to the RDN Board in May. This report was carried out to determine the state of water resources in the RDN, and involved extensive consultation with the public, hydrogeologists, biologists, well drillers, planners, and local and provincial government representatives. A web-accessible WaterMap and report database is available now at www.rdn.bc.ca and includes reports from a variety of sources associated with water resources, and all of the information gathered as part of the Watershed Snapshot Report process. This is the most comprehensive source of water resource information available in the Region.

Summer Fire Safety

As fire season approaches, take some time to assess your family’s level of risk and, where necessary, to make changes around your home and property to reduce that risk. It is a good idea to prepare an emergency fire and evacuation plan and review it with your family. Another important consideration is to have your address or lot number displayed prominently so that emergency vehicles can find your property as quickly as possible.

The Emergency Planning section of the RDN website (www.rdn.bc.ca) provides links to the RDN’s community wildfire protection plans, which identify areas of concern and rank the level of interface fire risk in each area. Residents can access fire hazard ratings for specific areas by using the RDNMap, an interactive property map located on the RDN website.

To learn how to find your Fire Hazard Rating, go to www.rdn.bc.ca and click on Emergency Planning to access the instructions.

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