



..... Annual Report 2011

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Full Moon over Baynes Sound

Photographer: Hans Peter Meyer

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Front Cover: Comox Bay Farm

Photographer: Hans Peter Meyer

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... Message from the chair ...



On behalf of my colleagues on the Comox Valley Regional District board of directors, I am pleased to introduce the annual report for the year ending December 31, 2011.

The theme of this annual report is “new horizons”, and I think that is very fitting, as we have just been through a local government election and are now embarking on the next three year term, with so much to accomplish and strive for in front of us. Although the annual report is a snapshot of where we have been and what we’ve been doing over the past 12 months, a great deal of that activity

was undertaken with an eye on the future . . . on our “new horizon”.

The board of directors adopted the regional growth strategy and the rural parks and greenways plan, both significant achievements that will help shape electoral areas and inform decisions in terms of managing growth and greenspace planning for years to come.

In 2011, the CVRD also completed work on upgrading Goose Spit park and the Comox Valley sports centre, both of which serve thousands of residents and visitors each year, and will now be able to do so with improved facilities.

The CVRD board also participates as members of the Comox Strathcona Regional Hospital District and the regional solid waste management boards. Both of those entities oversaw significant tasks in 2011: the advancement of the North Island hospitals project and the advancement of the review and update of the regional solid waste management plan.

I am pleased to have been chair of the Comox Valley Regional District board of directors for the past year, and I am very much looking forward to 2012, and to working with my colleagues on the board, with CVRD staff and with our residents over the next 12 months – and beyond!

Edwin Grieve,
Chair

... Message from the CAO ...



It's my pleasure to write this message as the fourth year of the Comox Valley Regional District's operation comes to a close, and as we look forward to the future and to our "new horizons".

"New horizons" is the theme of the 2011 annual report, and it was chosen as the theme because almost everything we do at the CVRD is undertaken with the future – of our services, of our residents, and of our visitors – in mind.

Last year, we put into place some major 'building blocks' to assist in our future planning – the regional growth strategy and the rural parks and greenways plan. And we also undertook a myriad of activities that might be perceived as small in comparison, but when you think about the everyday impact these activities will have on the people of the Comox Valley in the near – and distant -- future, you'll realize that they are not small at all.

Here are just a few of those things: opening of the Bear Creek nature park, beginning the exhibition grounds revitalization, securing a 30 year licence for Seal Bay park, installing a new water line to allow for water sampling at the proposed location of the deep water intake in Comox Lake, first-time offering – with incredible public uptake! -- of Green Cone food digesters to further divert organic waste from the landfill, and undertaking erosion protection at Goose Spit park.

Often it's not until one stops, looks back and takes stock that one is aware of what's been accomplished, and how those accomplishments are going to positively affect the future. That's how I feel when I read this annual report, and I hope that you will feel the same.

I want to take this moment to thank the board of directors, our staff and the Comox Valley residents for the support and the vision over the past year, and I'm looking forward to continuing to help carry out that vision as we head for our 'new horizon'.

Debra Oakman, CMA
Chief Administrative Officer

... 2011 CURD board of directors ...

Left to right – front row: Paul Ives, vice-chair, Town of Comox; Patti Fletcher, Town of Comox; Leslie Baird, Village of Cumberland; Greg Phelps, City of Courtenay

Left to right – back row: Jim Gillis, Lazo North (Area 'B'), Bruce Jolliffe, Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands (Area 'A'), Edwin Grieve, chair, Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C')

Missing: Murray Presley and Larry Jangula – both City of Courtenay





... 2011 CURD executive management team ...

Left to right – front row: Leigh Carter, general manager – public affairs and information systems; Geoff Garbutt, executive manager – strategic and long-range planning; Teresa Warnes, executive assistant; Will Hwang, executive manager – human resources

Left to right – back row: Beth Dunlop, corporate financial officer; Kevin Lorette, general manager – property services; Debra Oakman, chief administrative officer; James Warren, corporate legislative officer; Ian Smith, general manager – community services



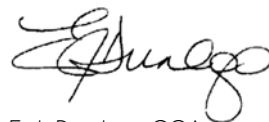
Management's responsibility for financial reporting

These summarized financial statements have been prepared by management from the complete financial statements for inclusion in this annual report. They provide a brief financial overview of the regional district's financial position at December 31, 2011 and the result of its operations for the year ended December 31, 2011.

Management maintains a system of internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded and that transactions are authorized, recorded and reported properly. Management also maintains a program of proper business compliance.

The board of directors is responsible for reviewing and approving the financial statements and for ensuring that management fulfils its responsibilities for financial reporting and internal control.

BDO Canada LLP, Chartered Accountants, the regional district's independent auditors, have conducted an examination of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards and have expressed their opinion in their report which accompanies the complete audited financial statements available at the regional district office or online at **www.comoxvalleyrd.ca**.



E.J. Dunlop, CGA
Officer responsible for Financial Administration,
pursuant to Section 199 of the Local Government Act



Independent Auditor's report



To the Board of Directors, Comox Valley Regional District

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprise the Summarized Statement of Financial Position as at December 31, 2011 and the Summarized Statements of Operations and Cash Flows for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial statements of the Comox Valley Regional District for the year ended December 31, 2011. We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on those financial statements in our report dated March 27, 2012. Those financial statements, and the summarized financial statements, do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on those financial statements.

The summarized financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian public sector accounting standards. Reading the summarized financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial statements of the Comox Valley Regional District.

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary of the audited financial statements.

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summarized financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Canadian Auditing Standard (CAS) 810, "Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements."

OPINION

In our opinion, the summarized financial statements derived from the audited financial statements of the Comox Valley Regional District for the year ended December 31, 2011 are a fair summary of those financial statements.

OTHER MATTER

The financial statements of the Comox Valley Regional District for the year ended December 31, 2010 were audited by another auditor who expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements on March 29, 2011.

BDO Canada LLP

Chartered Accountants
Vancouver, British Columbia
March 27, 2012

Summarized statement of financial position as at December 31, 2011 (audited)

	2011	2010
Financial Assets		
Cash and temporary investments	\$ 61,614,705	\$ 57,461,066
Receivables and inventory for resale	3,321,943	3,317,082
Debt recoverable from member municipalities	22,051,692	20,933,861
Total Financial Assets	86,988,340	81,712,009
Liabilities		
Payables and other liabilities	3,919,560	4,009,590
Short-term debt	1,564,800	300,000
Long-term debt	53,544,139	54,786,815
Deferred revenue	12,550,502	10,702,485
Provision for landfill closure and post closure	15,831,783	4,401,077
Total Liabilities	87,410,784	74,199,967
Net Financial Assets (Net Debt)	(422,444)	7,512,042
Non-Financial Assets		
Prepaid expenses	119,954	58,580
Inventory of supplies	69,110	76,517
Tangible capital assets	95,024,066	92,980,163
Total Non-Financial Assets	95,213,130	93,115,260
Accumulated Surplus	\$ 94,790,686	\$ 100,627,302



Summarized statement of operations

year ended December 31, 2011 (audited)

	2011 Actual	2011 Budget	2010 Actual
Revenue			
Frontage and parcel taxes	\$ 419,180	\$ 419,180	\$ 417,280
Grants in lieu of taxes	446,925	194,524	424,736
Tax requisitions	19,294,665	19,294,665	18,367,222
Transfers from other governments	1,127,125	1,543,346	1,459,470
Sales of services and other revenue sources	14,379,499	13,745,815	15,348,673
Capital contributions from others	397,892	-	408,361
Investment income	945,408	70,000	593,094
Total Revenue	37,010,694	35,267,530	37,018,836
Expenses			
General government services	3,959,999	4,797,882	3,572,886
Protective services	2,837,957	2,860,001	2,582,351
Transportation services	2,036,458	2,538,394	1,961,797
Environmental health services	23,750,840	13,158,454	15,070,725
Public health and welfare services	49,967	180,572	131,944
Environmental development services	2,396,153	2,917,226	2,508,740
Recreation and cultural services	7,782,526	8,351,686	7,532,891
Total Expenses	42,813,900	34,804,215	33,361,334
Annual Surplus (Deficit)	(5,803,206)	463,315	3,657,502
Acquisition of equity (deficit) from improvement district	(33,410)	-	2,436,459
Accumulated Surplus, beginning of year, restated	100,627,302	100,627,302	94,533,341
Accumulated Surplus, end of year	\$ 94,790,686	\$ 101,090,617	\$ 100,627,302



Summarized statement of cash flows

Year ended December 31, 2011 (audited)

	2011	2010
Operating Activities		
Annual Surplus (Deficit)	\$ (5,803,206)	\$ 3,657,502
Changes in non-cash operating balances		
Prepaid expenses and inventory of supplies	(53,967)	17,573
Receivables	10,274	2,728,844
Inventory for resale	(15,135)	-
Accounts payable and other liabilities	(224,341)	719,772
Deferred revenue	1,982,328	2,344,899
Items not utilizing cash		
Amortization of tangible capital assets	3,108,889	2,957,997
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	10,029	57,276
Landfill closure and post closure allowance	11,430,706	1,023,842
Actuarial adjustments and other items	(823,966)	(494,281)
Cash Provided by Operating Activities	9,621,611	13,013,424
Capital Activities		
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(5,174,610)	(6,253,475)
Proceeds from disposal of tangible capital assets	11,789	13,950
Cash Applied to Capital Activities	(5,162,821)	(6,239,525)
Financing Activities		
Long and short-term debt issued	1,519,800	2,300,000
Long and short-term debt repayments	(1,824,951)	(3,475,870)
Cash Applied to Financing Activities	(305,151)	(1,175,870)
Change in Cash and Temporary Investments	4,153,639	5,598,029
Cash and Temporary Investments, beginning of year	57,461,066	51,863,037
Cash and Temporary Investments, end of year	\$ 61,614,705	\$ 57,461,066



... Are we sustainable yet? ... WELL, WE'RE CERTAINLY ON THE RIGHT TRACK!

In March, the board adopted the CVRD corporate energy plan and energy inventory. With this plan in place, CVRD completed corporate milestones one to three (inventory, reduction target, action plan) of the five-milestone "Partners for Climate Protection" program run by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Photo: In March, the BC Water & Waste Association awards committee and board of directors selected the Comox Valley regional team as the recipient of the Leadership in Water Sustainability Award for 2011. This award honours those who are leading the way and demonstrating overall commitment to water sustainability in their governance, administration, operations, education, culture, and outreach.

L to R: Kevin Lorette, CVRD's general manager of property services, Larry Jangula, chair of Comox Valley water committee, Glenn Westendorp, Town of Comox's public works superintendent, Tillie Manthey, City of Courtenay's director of financial services.

Photographer: Carol Morfitt

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The woodstove exchange rebate program, which ran to June 30, provided 61 rebates to people throughout the CVRD for replacing their old, inefficient wood stoves with new stoves that meet emissions certification. Also on the subject of cleaner air, the CVRD hosted various "Burn-It-Smart" public education sessions and partnered with the Ministry of the Environment on the air quality monitoring station in the Comox Valley.

The Comox Valley sustainability strategy was the focus of our September public education session for electoral area residents on green buildings. Over 30 residents came out to see the presentations on building technology and principles, grants, EnerGuide ratings, and the personal experience of a green homeowner.

Photo: Green building information session

Photographer: Michael Zbarsky



... Breaking new ground ...

The \$1.9 million Comox Valley exhibition grounds revitalization project officially broke ground on Wednesday, September 21, 2011. The revitalization project included installation of new water and electrical lines that run throughout the exhibition grounds including the Rotary Bowl, Kin Hut Field, and the upper and lower fields, as well as the installation of fire hydrants, dark sky-friendly lighting and removal of overhead hydro lines.

- Photo:** Sod-turning event marks the start of the exhibition grounds revitalization project
- Left to right:** Edwin Grieve, CVRD chair, Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C'), Jim Gillis, CVRD director, Lazo North (Area 'B'), Patty Fletcher, CVRD director, Town of Comox, Bruce Jolliffe, CVRD director, Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands (Area 'A'), Paul Ives, CVRD director, Town of Comox
- Photographer:** Sheila Van Nus

... CVRD parks . . . always something going on ...

PARKS AND GREENWAYS STRATEGIC PLAN

In March, the CVRD board adopted the rural Comox Valley parks and greenways strategic plan, 2011-2030. The plan identifies parkland acquisition priorities for the electoral areas for the next 20 years and also includes a number of action items to support the parks and greenways system such as developing a 'leave a legacy' parks gift program, establishing a parkland acquisition fund and exploring creation of a park zone. The plan is available at www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/parksplan.

One of the key priorities identified in the parks and greenways strategic plan was to obtain more secure tenure for the portion of Seal Bay park that is Crown land. That priority came to fruition in October, when the CVRD entered into a new 30 year licence of occupation with the province for Seal Bay forest, ensuring that area of Seal Bay park will continue to be accessible for public enjoyment and recreation.

BEACH ACCESS

The CVRD completed an inventory of all beach accesses in the electoral areas of the regional district. The inventory and a beach access management strategy were adopted by the regional district board at the end of March. The electoral areas services committee adopted a preliminary work plan for improving select beach accesses in August.

SIGN, SIGN, EVERYWHERE A SIGN

In 2011, nine CVRD parks received new entrance signs. Some of those parks needed replacement signage and others had not been identified by signage in the past.

New signs were placed at:

Goose Spit park	Little River nature park	Bear Creek nature park
Lazo Wildlife park	Seal Bay nature park	Nymph Falls nature park
Bill Mee park	Morning Beach park	Eagles Drive park

Photo: montage of parks signs





... CVRD parks ...
always something going on (cont'd) ...

BEAR CREEK NATURE PARK

In May, the CVRD, in partnership with the Government of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, the Oyster River Enhancement Society (ORES) and the Pacific Salmon Foundation, officially opened Bear Creek nature park.

The 65 hectare (161 acre) park features a flood plain wetland along the Oyster River, a salmon hatchery operated by ORES and an upland mixed forest with walking and equestrian trails. The park also includes a stretch of Bear Creek, its namesake.

Acquired late in 2010 in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada, creation of the park was made possible, in part, through a land donation by the Evans family under the Government of Canada's ecological gift program.

Photo: Bear Creek nature park opening

L to r: Les Bogdan, Ducks Unlimited, Edwin Grieve, CVRD chair, Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C'), Norm Evans, Qualicum Farms, Terry Tebb, Pacific Salmon Foundation, Jim Loring, Oyster River Enhancement Society

Photographer: Karin Albert

... CVRD parks . . . always something going on (cont'd) ...

GOOSE SPIT PARK

Goose Spit was the scene of a lot of activity in 2011, and not all of it was from the more than 200,000 visits the park receives each year. A lot of the activity was due to some major upgrade work throughout the spring, summer and fall.

2011 upgrades to the park included a stepped path to connect the park to the upland neighbourhood and a pedestrian trail along Hawkins Road. The upgrades were funded in part by Western Economic Diversification Canada through the Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RIInC) program.

In May, at the request of the CVRD, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) approved and implemented a speed limit reduction at Goose Spit park to increase safety. The speed limit is now a 30 kilometre per hour 'playground zone', in effect from dawn to dusk. Based on visitor traffic to the park, narrow roadway conditions and the number of pedestrian and vehicle interactions, the CVRD, MOTI, RCMP and a representative from the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia's (ICBC) road safety program worked together and agreed that the 30km speed limit was needed.

Photo: Ribbon cutting at Goose Spit

Letter: Bruce Jolliffe, CVRD director – Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands (Area 'A'), Edwin Grieve, CVRD chair – Puntledge-Black Creek (Area 'C'), John Duncan, MP for Vancouver Island North, Jim Gillis, CVRD director – Lazo North (Area 'B');

Photo: Stepped path connecting Goose Spit park with Nob Hill neighbourhood

Photographer: Beverly Nelson



... CVRD parks . . . always something going on (cont'd) ...

Erosion protection took place at Goose Spit in October to minimize storm damage to the complex coastal environment found there, and to prevent Hawkins Road from getting undercut by wave action. Using driftwood from the beach, along with several hundred imported poles, is a lower impact approach to shoreline protection than lining the road with rock, which would be a harsh solution for such a sensitive ecosystem.

Photo: Goose Spit shoreline protection work

Photographer: Brian Allaert

LITTLE RIVER NATURE PARK

Completion of phase two of the Little River nature park remediation plan was done in partnership with the Comox Valley Naturalist Society (CVNS). Over 1,000 native plants were planted to help restore five natural habitat types within the park. Ongoing efforts will continue with invasive plant removal in partnership with the CVNS and the Coastal Invasive Plant Committee.

Fencing was completed along Wilkinson Road with the goal of delineating the park and protecting sensitive ecosystems. A parking lot was constructed to serve regional visitors driving to the park.

DENMAN ISLAND PARKS AND GREENWAYS MASTER PLAN

In August, CVRD staff completed the Denman Island parks and greenways master plan and the regional board adopted the plan as policy to guide the CVRD in its future acquisitions, development and management of parks and greenways on Denman Island. The number one priority in the plan is to develop a multi-use trail between the two ferry terminals.

Photo: Denman Island committees, Landworks Consultants and CVRD staff identify protected areas.

(Clockwise from top: Kelly Gesner, Landworks Consulting, Jay Thornton, Denman Conservancy Association, Ralph MacCuaig, DIRA parks committee and trails committee, Karin Albert, CVRD parks planner, Margie Gang, Denman community hall association, Janine Walton, Hornby - Denman Equestrians, Hamish Kimmins, DIRA parks committee, Andrew Scruton, DIRA director (passed away fall 2011)

Photographer: Peter Karsten



... CVRD parks . . . always something going on (cont'd) ...

MORNING BEACH PARK

On Denman Island, Morning Beach park was the site of some significant improvements, completed in November. Improvements to the park included the addition of a wooden staircase that provides access to the beach below Komas bluffs so hikers no longer have to scramble down the slope using pieces of rope to steady themselves. It is the only public access point to the eastern shoreline for about eight kilometres north of Fillongley Park. Other improvements were the provision of picnic tables, an interpretive sign and a hand-carved park sign.

The Denman Island parks committee provided input and volunteer labour to improve the footpath through the park and to design and install signage. The land was donated by the Denman Point Project joint venture.

Photos: Morning Beach park beach access . . . before and after

Photographer: Karin Albert

LEGACY PROGRAM

Local citizens have donated 35 park benches under the CVRD's memorial bench program since it began in 2003. The CVRD has had to turn away some donors wanting ocean side bench sites, as the maximum number of benches desired at waterfront parks like Royston greenway and Goose Spit park has been reached.

In 2011 seven families donated benches. This number matches the highest number of donations set in 2005 and exceeds the annual average of four benches a year.

The donors who granted permission to publish their names include:

Seal Bay Park

- Dick Bonney in memory of his wife Pauline Bonney
- Robert Henn and family in memory of Mary Knox
- Carmel Horochuk in memory of her husband Bruce Horochuk
- Gail Nasadyk and family for George Nasadyk's 70th birthday
- Peter Wilson and family in memory of Gladys Wilson

Royston Greenway

- Terry Levesque in memory of his wife Cheryl Lynne Levesque



... Master development agreement – Saratoga Beach Estates ...

The Comox Valley Regional District made significant progress on phase one of the Saratoga Beach Estates (SBE) development, which is identified as a regional growth settlement node. This proposed development will include the creation of 143 bare land strata residential lots, park and trail areas. As well, it will see the installation of roads and other infrastructure. At its November 15, 2011 meeting, the CVRD regional board approved the master development agreement (MDA) and passed resolutions to have the MDA executed and registered on title.

With board approval of the MDA, the bylaws were sent to the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for provincial approval. These approvals are required before the bylaws can proceed for final adoption.



... New Comox Lake Water Sample Station ...

In 2008, the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) introduced new water treatment standards for surface water supplies. In addition to other conditions, the new standards require finished water turbidity to be maintained at one NTU (nephelometric turbidity unit) or less. The Comox Valley water system (CVWS) has historically exceeded this one NTU requirement. As such, in order to meet this requirement and to reduce turbidity, a water filtration plant and/or new deep water intake may be required. To determine which option will meet the new water treatment standards most effectively, VIHA requires continuous water quality monitoring at the proposed deep water intake location on Comox Lake.

In the fall of 2011, the Comox Valley Regional District completed construction of a new water quality sample station at Comox Lake. In addition to other water quality parameters, the station will continuously monitor turbidity, temperature and pH levels at the proposed deep water intake location. This sampling work will ultimately inform the future installation of water system infrastructure for the CVWS.

Photo: New Comox Lake water sample station

Photographer: Kerry Mayo



... Protecting the future of the Courtenay River estuary ...

Back in 2010, the Comox Valley Regional District board made it a priority to protect the long-term environmental, social, economic, and cultural benefits of the Courtenay River estuary. CVRD planning staff began work on updating the Courtenay River estuary management plan (CREMP) and setting up a steering committee with representatives from the K'ómoks First Nation (KFN), federal and provincial governments and interest groups.

Throughout 2011, the revised CREMP was updated to reflect new provincial statutes, policies, plans and regulatory documents that have come into effect since drafting of the original plan. New scientific information was reviewed on issues such as the health of fish habitat, water quality, archaeological history and climate change concerns.

With adoption of the regional growth strategy (RGS), all local governments within the Comox Valley have developed a culture of coordination and collaboration associated with all new development activities. CREMP will form one of the key plans to assist in the final implementation of the RGS. Therefore, in order to move this initiative forward, CREMP was circulated to KFN, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations on November 25, 2011. The CVRD expects comments to be received from these agencies in the spring of 2012.



... Regional planning: looking ahead ...

It seems that when one door closes on a chapter in regional planning, many others open. In March, the Comox Valley regional growth strategy (RGS) was given final adoption. The RGS will help to create a balance between the various land uses and activities in the Comox Valley, to protect the natural beauty and function of the region, and to ensure it is a healthy place for people to live, work and play for years to come.

Photo: Comox Valley local governments celebrate adoption of RGS strategy

Left to right: Greg Phelps, mayor of Courtenay, Barbara Mitchell, K'ómoks First Nation councillor, Fred Bates, mayor of Cumberland, Edwin Grieve, chair of the CVRD, Paul Ives, mayor of Comox

Photographer: Carol Morfitt



Recognizing the innovation and sustainability focus, the Planning Institute of BC gave the RGS its award for rural and small town planning in 2011.

Photo: Edwin Grieve, CVRD chair, and Geoff Garbutt, CVRD's executive manager of strategic and long range planning, with award of excellence from Planning Institute of BC in the area of rural and small town planning. The award ceremony took place in May, and the presentation at the CVRD board meeting was in June.

Photographer: Beverly Nelson



Then, a little later in the year, the work began on the Mount Washington integrated resort community plan (IRCP) to be included in the rural Comox Valley official community plan (OCP) bylaw and to be consistent with RGS. As well, work was undertaken to expand aquaculture and agriculture policies in the rural Comox Valley OCP to correlate with the RGS policies.

Graphic: Mt. Washington IRCP logo

... Special permits to help protect our shoreline ...

It seems strange, but sometimes when we try to protect something, we can actually do damage. Some shoreline protection is such an example. “Hard” protection devices, such as granite or limestone rip rap, used to help shorelines withstand erosion and scour, can threaten the ecological and physical integrity of the shoreline along the Strait of Georgia.

The Comox Valley Regional District recognizes that these areas have high ecological and aesthetic values and may contain unstable slopes subject to erosion and land slip. Due to their physical and biological characteristics and situation, these areas need to be carefully managed in order to avoid potential negative impacts to the shoreline and neighbouring properties. As a result, the CVRD adopted a new development permit specifically for shoreline protection devices. This new development permit will promote sound shoreline protection device design to protect the natural environmental values and prevent erosion and destabilization of the shoreline. This development permit will ensure that shoreline stabilization should be limited to just what is necessary to prevent damage to existing, newly-constructed or established uses on adjacent upland properties. Through the application of sound engineering assessment, property owners along the Strait of Georgia now have well-defined guidelines to stabilize the shoreline and ensure that their properties are effectively protected from storm effects and wave action along the strait.



... Staying in shape got even easier ...

With September came the finale of the upgrades to the CVRD's Comox Valley sports centre. The work included renovations to 'arena one' dressing rooms and seating area, improved wheelchair access to the pool area and change rooms, upgrades to the mechanical infrastructure and the addition of a 20-person hot tub and sauna. The renovations were funded in part by the Government of Canada through the Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RIInC) program.

Photo: Community celebration marked the reopening of the CVRD sports centre.
L to r: Jim Gillis, CVRD director, Lazo North (Area 'B'), Greg Phelps – CVRD director, City of Courtenay, Paul Ives – CVRD vice chair, Town of Comox, Edwin Grieve, CVRD chair, Puntledge – Black Creek (Area 'C')
Photographer: Sheila Van Nus



... Steep slopes development permit area ...

Hillsides provide opportunities for spectacular development, but developments on or above hillsides present unique design challenges that are significantly different from those on flatter areas. The steep slopes development permit area guidelines ensure that the development would be protected from hazardous conditions, that the unique topography would be respected and that the environmental impacts would be minimized.

The steep slopes development permit area guides construction activities in a manner that is safe for properties, sensitive to the natural environment and protective of significant landscape features. It is important to have such guidelines, as the hillsides within the region not only contribute to the character and beauty of the Comox Valley, but they also contain geotechnical challenges and sensitive environmental habitats. All of these factors mean that steep slope development must be carefully designed for its particular setting. Areas of steep slopes may be faced with a variety of hazardous conditions such as wildfire, landslide, rock fall and debris torrents. Steep slopes are less forgiving for development errors than shallower slopes, and when steep slopes fail, the failures could be disastrous.

The steep slopes development permit area will help property owners, as they will be advised by professional engineers on sound development design and construction in order to ensure that their development, and ultimately, their investment, is protected from the challenging topography. By preventing erosions, slumps, landslides and slope failures, the steep slopes development permit area will contribute to the protection of public safety.



... Talking trash ...

The Comox Strathcona waste management (CSWM) service celebrated the official grand opening of the new Cortes Island recycling building on Sunday, on July 17, 2011.

The new building replaced an aged infrastructure and was locally designed by Bill Fridel of Orca Design, with support from staff at the recycling centre. The grand opening was an opportunity for locals to tour the facility, to ask questions and to celebrate the success of the project.

Photo: New Cortes Island recycling centre

Photographer: Koreen Gurak

.....

In September, CSWM completed the installation of a new weigh scale at the Comox Valley waste management centre.

The previous weigh scale was approximately 20 years old and past its serviceable life in terms of maintenance and operation. The new weigh scale project involved a development plan and redesign, which included identifying placement of the scale to improve facility access. The new scale is located closer to the front entrance allowing for enhanced on-site traffic flow in and throughout the public tipping areas.

Photo: New Comox Valley waste management centre

Photographer: Koreen Gurak





... They got on the bus! ...

The Comox Valley transit ridership increased 17 per cent in 2010/11 and is on track for a further 10 per cent increase in 2011/12. In addition to the regular service, Comox Valley transit service provided free buses to Empire Days, Canada Day and Nautical Days celebrations.

Photo: Transit “free bus” on Canada Day

Photographer: Michael Zbarsky

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In October, we hosted “Rider Appreciation Day” in Courtenay, Buckley Bay, Cumberland, Comox and Oyster River, and throughout the year we developed four videos for YouTube and attended numerous public events to promote the transit system and also help take the guesswork – and some fears – out of using the service.

During rider appreciation day, a survey was distributed to people waiting for buses and to those who had just got off the bus. Overall, the responses showed that those who utilize the transit service were traveling to work, school, shopping and appointments and that their experience was very positive. Comments highlighted that the transit system was a convenient and efficient option to get around the community and that the drivers were very friendly. Staff also received good feedback on planned improvements to scheduling and routing.

Photo: Oyster River transit riders

Photographer: Zac Whyte



... Time to come clean ...

The Comox Strathcona waste management service piloted three rural household hazardous waste events in the fall of 2011. These events were held on Cortes and Quadra Islands and in Sayward. Residents were able to drop off unidentified hazardous waste and items such as solvents, pesticides, gasoline, cleaners and batteries to these one-day events. Among many other hazardous waste items collected, avoiding potential environmentally unsound dumping, were 1,086 kilograms of lead acid batteries, 107 kilograms of alkaline batteries, 51 propane cylinders, 84 oil drums, and 332 feet of fluorescent tubes.

Photo: Hazardous household waste clean-up event – Sayward – October

Photographer: Jillian Webb



... Water efficiency rebate program moves forward ...

In the summer of 2011, the Comox Valley Regional District introduced a pilot program that brought toilet and rain barrel/cistern rebates to residents in the Black Creek – Oyster Bay water local service area. The toilet rebate program had proven to be such a success in its first year 'out of the gate', with Comox Valley residents applying for and receiving 607 rebates, that the residents of the BCOB water local service area wanted to get in on the program, too.

Our educator took the community trailer to six community events as well as to numerous other festivals to give away free showerheads to those connected to the Comox Valley and Black Creek-Oyster Bay local water service areas. This was an opportunity to provide education on ways to use water more efficiently, to discuss details of the rebate programs and to explain local water restrictions or water metering questions.



... What kind of cone says it's spring? A Green Cone! ...

In the spring of 2011, the Comox Strathcona waste management service offered residents in the region the opportunity to purchase a food digester commonly known as the “Green Cone”, and – although they are a little bit heavy – they almost flew off the shelves!

Comox Valley residents bought 400 Green Cones, offered as an alternative to the Earth Machine backyard composter, both aimed at reducing the amount of organic waste entering the landfill.

The Green Cone food digester accepts all types of kitchen scraps including cooked and uncooked meats, fish and bones, and dairy products along with other food wastes such as bread and pasta. It turns these scraps into water and carbon dioxide and then the nutrients are absorbed back into the soil.

Photo: CSWM educators Kathy Roberts and Patty Rose prepare for the arrival of the “Green Cone” customers

Photographer: Bill Rose



... Where's the fire? ...

In March, the Oyster River volunteer fire rescue hosted a wildfire and evacuation exercise in the Black Creek area. Comox Valley fire departments, police, search and rescue, and emergency organizations all participated in the exercise which was part of a two-day course on responding to a wildland/urban interface incident. The exercise helps to enhance skills, to understand roles and responsibilities and to strengthen interagency relationships. The CVRD provides operating grants for the Oyster River volunteer fire department, and also manages the department's capital purchases.

Photo: Fire departments and search and rescue vehicles mustering for evacuation exercise

Photographer: Kirk Vadheim, Oyster River volunteer fire department



... You had the last word ...

- About beach access – “Many thanks to you for your great support on the beach access project! The CVRD action was beyond our expectations and, quite frankly, we thought that it might not happen. The parks administration chose an excellent approach . . . and we very much appreciate that it’s posted on the CVRD website for all to view. It should inspire others to do similar things in their neighbourhoods.”
- About the compost education centre – “I visited the Campbell River compost education centre this weekend. I expected an office with pamphlets, but instead found the demonstration gardens with a knowledgeable and enthusiastic on-site helper. I decided to buy an Earth Machine to facilitate composting of our yard waste, and Elaine at your centre will be a great resource when my sister and I start our garden and start composting.”
- Power of R classroom education – “Today I again had the pleasure of having Gayle in the classroom working with my students. The students I work with are extremely hard to engage and motivate, and I am always amazed at how . . . Gayle connects with them, gets them involved in the presentation. She really revs them up in a positive way. I’m excited to see what the students have in mind after today’s presentation.”
- About CVRD social media sites – “I like that I can have this conversation with my local government about the social media user experience. I don’t always get what I want, but I do get an interested response. Thanks!”
- About Comox Valley transit – “Very pleased... with the responsiveness and openness of the CVRD on the issue and look forward to incremental improvements to the system!”
- Regarding dog licensing ads – “Thank you for reminding me! It is on my list for Monday.”
- Regarding the toilet rebate program – “I was truly impressed with how quickly we received our rebate! Thanks for the incentive!”
- Regarding Seal Bay 30 year licence of occupation – “More green spaces and walking trails = more of us getting out and getting exercise= less of us getting sick= less strain on healthcare....smart move!”
- Regarding Movies Under the Stars – “Thanks C.V.R.D. I had a blast last night. Watching E.T. brought back some old memories when I was a kid... can’t wait until the next one !”



At Goose Spit looking west to south Courtenay and Beaufort Range

Photographer: Hans Peter Meyer.

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