WWW INDEPENDENT
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CANADA AVENUE, IS THIS ABOUT FLOODGATES?



Every resident in the area is well aware of the delays surrounding construction on Canada Avenue. While most would agree it's handled well, delays are minimal, and the road is usable despite the varied trenches and ruts. It has opened a line of questioning regarding the work completed here.

The project page, located on northcowichan.ca, outlines at least eight upgrades which are part of the project. Aside from the flood measures, two have caught the eye of residents. One is active transportation regarding bicycle lanes as well as a mixed-use lane. The second is traffic calming through narrowed lanes.

Missing from the project page, are the full details presented to the council on March 15th.

Note, this project's roads, sidewalk, and multi-use trail components are consistent with the future Canada Avenue Complete Streets Project, where similar roadway improvements will be constructed over the remainder of Canada Avenue from Beverly Street to Sherman Road.

What are the active transportation and traffic calming plans for Canada Avenue, Beverly Street, and Sherman Road? If North Cowichan has its way, the plans include removing 40% of vehicles from the road, 35% of travel is completed by walking or using a bicycle and shared transit increases to 25%. These targets are part of the Official Community Plans' (OCP) vision for 2050. Local government only asks that you, the taxpayer, fund this project and live with the changes for the next 27 years while the supporting pieces are put into place.

Traffic calming is designed to frustrate drivers into avoiding certain roads and streets by making them inconvenient to travel on. These are usually found as concrete barriers, dividers, bumps or humps, and of course, narrowing to ensure vehicles travel slowly and with increased attention to the road. While this is done to improve safety for pedestrians, it also incentivizes travel to alternative routes.

As outlined in the Master Transportation Plan, presented to the council in 2022, a traffic calming petition program was suggested as a measure for residents to request calming on their streets. The process involves a study of the area, public consultation, funding, and ultimately traffic calming and speed measure provisions. Residents in the Canada Ave and Sherman Road area, who were happy to provide their feedback, reported they were unaware of any such petition, changes, or consultations regarding this project. It would appear as though the changes planned for these areas are being done without public input, despite the wording in the Master Transportation Plan suggesting residents would have the option to weigh in on the changes.

This suggests North Cowichan doesn't consider Beverly Street, Canada Avenue, or Sherman Road as viable routes for your morning commute. By introducing traffic calming measures, as well as widened bicycle lanes, it's clear the plans for the area include taking your bicycle with you to work, the grocery store, or perhaps your child's sporting event.

Alternatively, you could travel further North toward Drinkwater Road, however, both options include school zones and even narrower lanes to travel in. If the purpose is to frustrate drivers into switching to a bicycle for the commute, the plans appear to be well underway.

According to the 2016 Statistics Canada census, only 1% of North Cowichan residents commuted to work by bicycle compared to 83% as a driver. Data from the 2021 North Cowichan Household Travel Survey also confirm the District's limited cycling activity with only 1% of the trips by bike.

The upgrades on Canada Avenue serve as the first piece of the puzzle for North Cowichan residents who will need to reassess their lifestyles. North Cowichan's Climate Action Planning section suggests you source your ride from friends and family, share with a neighbour, or get on your bicycle. Of course, none of the supporting systems are in place yet, but if you'll just front the bill for the 27-year plan, it'll all make sense. down the road.

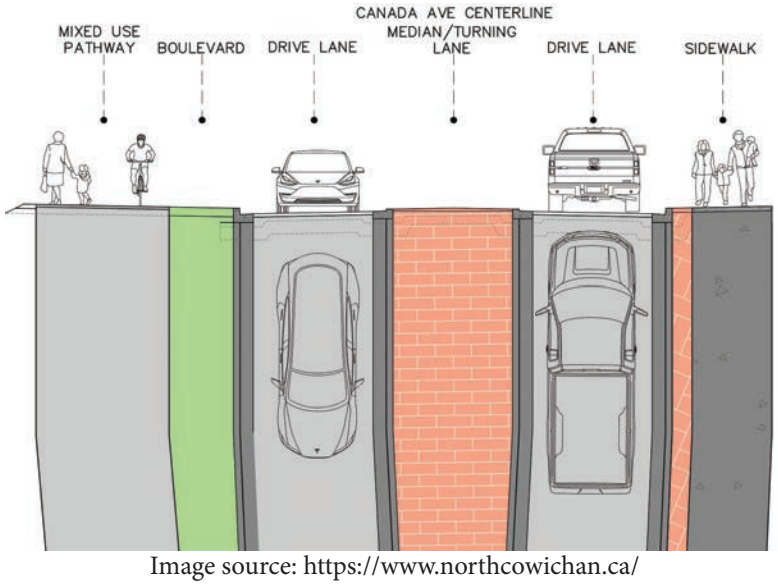


Image source: https://www.northcowichan.ca/

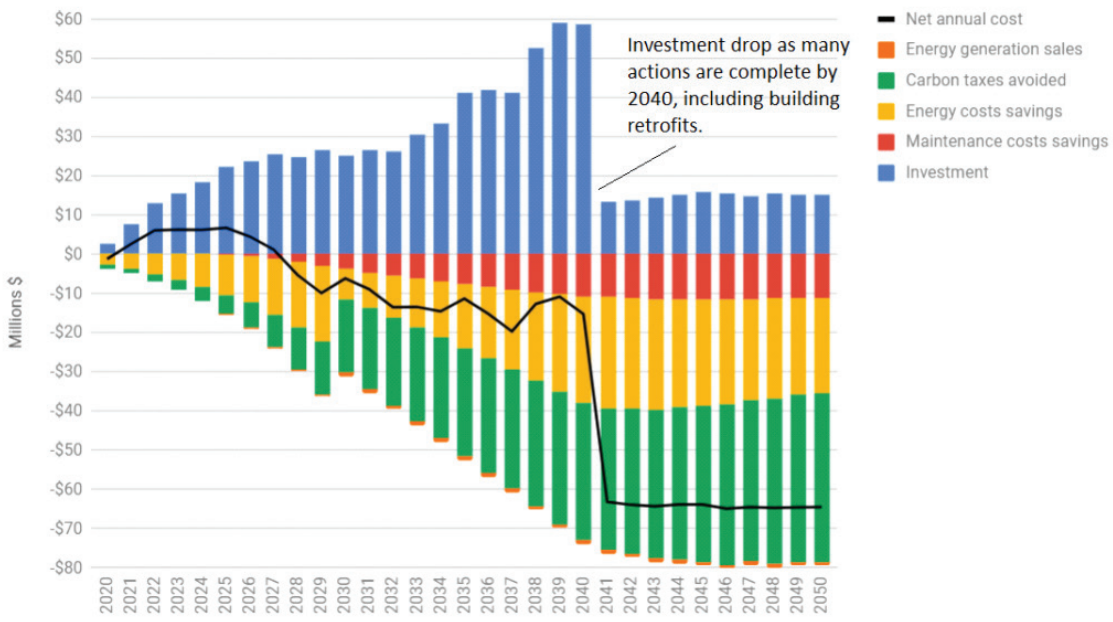


Figure 16: Low-Carbon Scenario Investments and Returns

Modelled investments and returns are compared to business as usual investments and returns. Figure 16 illustrates what investments and returns would be incurred beyond the BAU scenario. Total investments to implement LCS actions are above the horizontal axis. It's important to note that these investments are not borne solely via publicly funded taxes or the Municipality alone. Investment figures include those made by the Municipality, residents, businesses, etc.

"Revenues" shown above are from renewable energy generation sales. "Carbon" is the carbon taxes avoided due to fuel switching and energy efficiency actions. Energy is the energy costs that are avoided by implementation of Low carbon scenario actions. "Maintenance" is the operation and maintenance costs avoided due to buildings systems and electric vehicles that require less maintenance.

Image source: https://www.northcowichan.ca/

Will this switching to 100% electricity change climate, or impoverish citizens along the way?

All local governments have "plans" to significantly decrease private citizen's usage of all heat sources besides electric heat pumps, and reduce/eliminate gas-fueled cars in the coming years.

These projections have every house being retrofitted for "carbon" reasons. People ask "How can they make me?" There are multiple ways.

One method will be to deem houses not fit to sell, nor habitable if NOT retrofitted to meet the BC 'Step Code'.

"What if I can not afford that?" Your local Municipality will "loan" your property the money to retrofit your home. This loan will stay with the property when you sell it, or be an additional yearly cost, above your property taxes, until the loan is paid out.

Above we see a massive investment that seems to drastically increase until 2040, while the "Net annual costs" are shown to reduce by 2027, based on the municipality's costs being offset by their carbon credit/score. The carbon credit scheme is not even an established fiscal construct yet, however, it is the basis for all local budget and economic plans up to 2050.

Do you feel you will become more prosperous without wood, gas, natural gas, or propane in your life? Or how will the above "non-energy" emissions, aka agriculture/crops/animals, drop so drastically while keeping our food security and local farmers' prosperity?

To meet these local plans, "We will have to fundamentally change the way we live and do business", according to a quote from a former councillor of North Cowichan. Or " We will have to make sacrifices similar to WW2 or during Covid", according to a Kamloops city planner. From forced retrofitting of homes (including heat sources) to a planned vast loss of gas vehicle ownership, we are being asked a huge "ask" that will place many more citizens below the poverty line, and cause many to lose their homes.

There are so many questions, as well as so many examples from around the world where this extensive reliance on one type of electricity has failed, caused blackouts, or had the government try incentives such as charging less if power usage is vastly reduced on a Monday, or electric companies controlling peoples' thermostats in their homes. Many countries in Europe have their backup power, mostly in the form of coal fire plants, on standby, especially since their much-used gas source was cut short by the Ukrainian/Russian war/ We have been asked to prepare for rolling blackouts.

In BC we have backups that are used in homes now, such as Natural Gas, Wood, Propane, and Oil. With these phased out of our homes, what will we be reliant on? An overburdened electrical grid? According to a couple of politicians, we will need to double our electric grid, which is an impossible task by 2030.

Conveniently the BC NDP changed its tune regarding the Site C dam from originally being vocal regarding its waste of money (8 billion to taxpayers), its environmental damage, as well as its breaching the treaty with Treaty 8 territory. Now, the current mantra is that ALL other sources of energy are "bad", whilst Hydro is some super green energy! All this ignores that the Site C project resulted in the largest exclusion of land from BC's Agricultural Land Reserve in ALR's 40-year history, or that flooding agricultural land in the Peace River valley is a bad idea because it was the only large tract of land for future horticultural expansion in the province. Or that the assessment that this process did not accord with the commitments of both the provincial and federal governments to reconciliation with and legal obligations to First Nations.

Now with so many environmental goals, incentives, and regulations, one must ask, can we balance prosperity and quality of life, while making solid environmental choices? I personally can think of many environment-supporting initiatives I can do locally to help support farmers, keep the rivers clean, grow my own food and the like, instead of impoverishing myself through abiding by government overreach to reach some invisible 'climate' goal. I have asked everyone from government agents to local citizens what exactly IS "Net-Zero?", to which no one has a satisfactory answer.

If we had zero carbon, all life on earth would cease to exist, so my assumption is that it is a mathematical equation based on a person's carbon usage having to be offset through mostly monetary means like some sort of poverty-balancing game. This 'game' will only affect the regular citizens, not the wealthy, as offsetting their usage of, let's say, flying their private jets, would be pocket change to them, while I struggle to afford driving my car based on all the 'carbon credits' aka taxes, I currently pay. Let's not even think about 6 months in the future after even more taxes are added.

Let us not mix up the 'climate business model' which is set to be over 50 trillion in business, with true land and environmental stewardship along the way. The earth needs us to steward properly, and it is well known that the more prosperous a society, the more action/money/time is dedicated to preserving mother nature by that same society, while the poorer the society is, the fewer initiatives towards protecting nature there are as survival takes top priority. Let us not only 'survive', but prosper while honouring this beautiful planet that gives us life, and that we are directly a part of symbiotically.

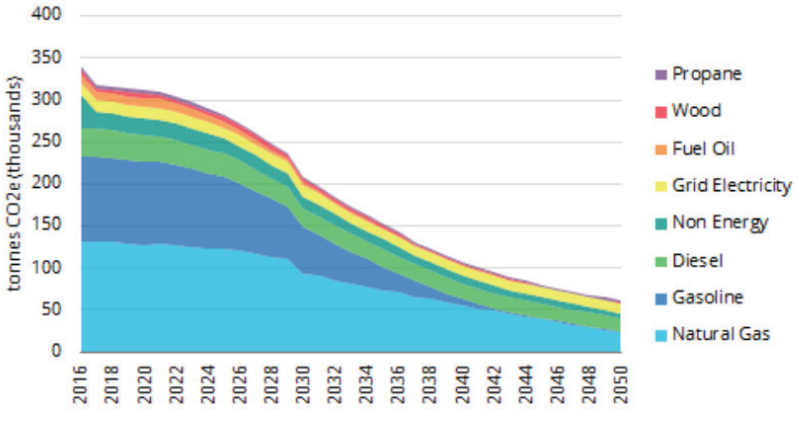


Figure 7: Total Emissions by Fuel Type

A portion of natural gas use remains in 2050 in the industrial sector and some diesel remains in 2050 as heavy-duty vehicles are the last to electrify. A small amount of emissions from the electricity grid remain in 2050 as some of the electricity imported into the province is generated from fossil fuel sources. "Non energy" emissions are those associated with agriculture (ex. crops, animals etc.).

Image source: https://www.northcowichan.ca/





NORTH COWICHAN COUNCILLOR RECEIVES PUBLIC BACKLASH OVER RECENT DEBATE

Residents near Quamichan Middle School are ready to give one councillor an ear full following a debate on bylaws proposed for the area. The issues expand across two council meetings directed toward parking, homelessness and drug use on the street.

The backlash is directed toward one councillor in particular, Chris Istace. Chris was elected to the council last fall and is becoming known for constantly referencing his former experience serving on the council in Estevan, Saskatchewan. During a debate on June 7th, Chris was fully in support of towing RVs and trailers which have been parked in Chemainus, where he resides and rides his bicycle. Chris commented on June 7th, "What I was happy to see was actually the ability to tow because we have some campers that have just been left derelict with no one even in them for months on end now." We had the opportunity to speak with a resident living in one of these trailers who confirmed they are not empty. They house people who have nowhere else to go. Even after being fined over and over the people in these trailers only kept asking bylaw "Where can we go, even the campground will not open for year-round parking?". During the discussion, Chris was quick to engage the Chemainus business association as well as the Chamber of Commerce for their feedback on times and restrictions for parking. At no point throughout the discussion did Chris mention the safety or welfare of the inhabitants of the dwellings.

Just 2-weeks later, on June 21st, councillor Tek Manhas introduced a motion to direct staff to conduct research into bylaws in other municipalities specifically related to children's safety and restricting open drug use, especially in front of school-aged children. Chris's comment that sparked the outrage was "We have a duty to protect those citizens that this bylaw intends to control." Chris voiced his support for continued drug use on the street, stating these residents don't have an alternate location to consume stating "We're trying to put laws and restrictions in place on people who have absolutely nothing."



"That's NIMBY, right there." one local resident commented. NIMBY refers to "Not In My Back Yard", a popular term referring to an initiative that would alter or change a property or a situation in a way the locals wouldn't be supportive of. In these situations, it becomes NIMBY, as it might be a great idea as long as it's somewhere else for someone else to deal with.

The resident continued "When RVs park on his street, he's getting them towed and has engaged with the chamber and the business association to support it. But when families don't want their children walking by crack, meth and fentanyl he basically said it's too bad we need to protect those citizens too. It's ridiculous is what it is"

Additional comments were more heated, calling out the hypocrisy of the situation. "Towing someone trying to provide a roof over their head. He didn't even ask about the impact on those inhabitants. But then again, that's in the town where he lives. I guess if we want his support we'll have to move in next to him."

Council is hoping to address the issues before school starts in the fall. Further discussion is slated for a future meeting.

Tues.Wed.Thurs. 12- 3:00



LIFE ON WHEELS

Life On Wheels is volunteer run and led Initiative in the Cowichan Valley .

Donation Drive May - Dec 2023. Help us continue our work and grow our detox iniative.
Donations graciously accepted

Making connections with people to move them forward in hope, faith and love.
We provide necessities for living on the street, first aid, education on healthy living, etc., options for detox and rehab.

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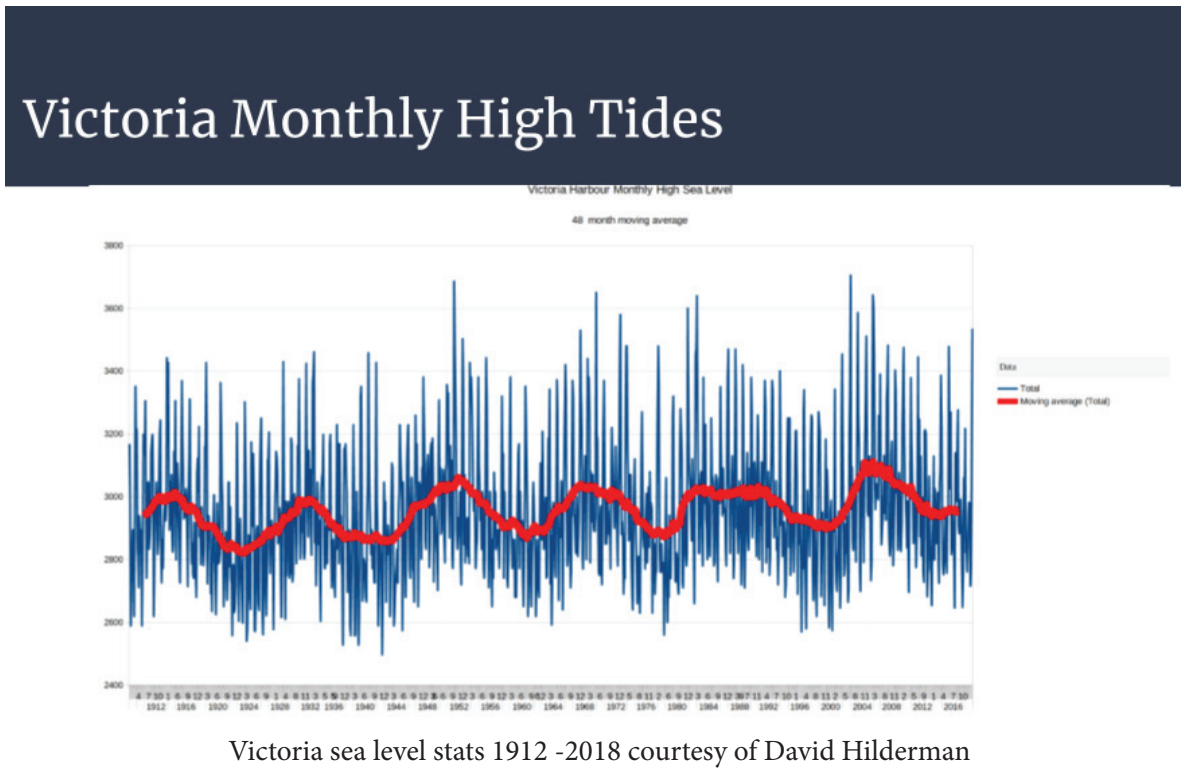
"a little help goes a long way"



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WHAT IS ACTUALLY GOING ON WITH THE COWICHAN BAY ESTUARY?



Victoria sea level stats 1912 -2018 courtesy of David Hilderman

Press release: " June 6, 2023, Cowichan BC, Canada – Today, The Nature Trust of British Columbia (NTBC), in partnership with Cowichan Tribes, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Ministry of Forests, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Environment and Climate Change Canada, and Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation announced plans to restore and revitalize 70 hectares of estuarine marshlands along the Cowichan River Estuary on Vancouver Island."

Without the current area director's input or public consultation, these NGOs and Government entities have decided on changing the face of the current bay, as well as drastically alter flood areas that would possibly take out 70-100 hectares of farmland that is crucial to migrating birds as is the dyke area.

Speaking with locals, we have learned that the flooding that causes the regular shutdown of Cowichan Bay Road happens due to the river overflowing from spring runoff or heavy rainfall, not from ocean tides, yet the plan cites "rising sea levels" as one of the reasons for this drastic two-year construction plan. Locals have let us know that the river used to be dredged which mitigated most of the flooding during those years.

Sea Level data compiled from The plan also states that a larger estuary is a better carbon sink than the earth, which somehow justifies flooding land that can grow food.

Many locals, bird watchers, and tourists alike enjoy the walk on the dyke, and when we asked around to many farmers we were told that migratory birds were much more likely to come feed on their corn fields and farmland than they were to feed in a marsh. Not to mention the incredible disturbance to wildlife with constant construction for two years.

But the most baffling of this whole scheme is that local area director Hillary Abbott was not consulted nor given the chance to speak with his constituents about the plans.

We ask what are they restoring it to? There are some vague promises on the website, but the overarching theme is one of creating a larger carbon sink than land and statements about "sea level rise". Either carbon is bad for the ocean or it is not, it can not go both ways. The fact is crustaceans, as all life forms do, thrive in a carbon-rich environment, and are shown to grow larger the more they are introduced to higher levels of carbon. If we are claiming on one hand that carbon is bad, are we not then saying that we will be harming this wetland/inlet by making it absorb more carbon, "for the greater good"?

Why would a US NGO such as Ducks Unlimited be partnering with our Provincial and Federal governments on a plan that will directly affect so many locals? What specifically is the lease agreement between the province and Nature's Trust since 1990?

There are too many questions still left unanswered, and the locals are left in a whirlwind of information and shock, as the announcement was only just put forth in June, and construction is to start this summer.
The first dyke to be removed in August. One whistleblower in the government stated that they were not privy to the plans at all until the end of May 28th 2023, at which time they were told to not say anything until the press release by the Citizen, and the Cowichan Bay Estuary Restoration Plan email was sent out,



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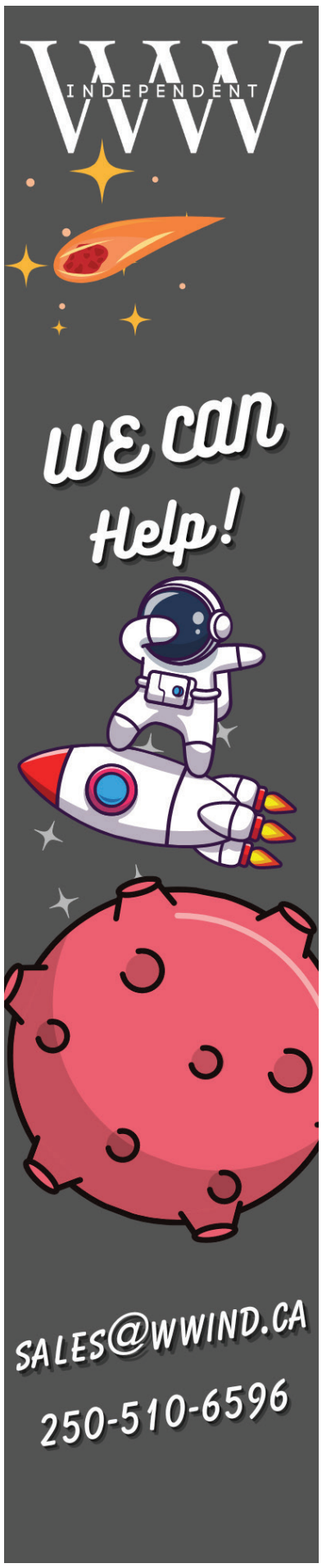
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in early June.

If you go back to 1975 and read the studies regarding the health of the estuary, one will find a common theme stating that one of the most important actions that must be implemented, is dealing with the sewer output, which is still not dealt with to this day.

The locals with land across or near to the Estuary are very worried, and feel under a time crunch to have their voices heard.



SAINT JOHN'S WORT: HERB OF THE LIGHT



This is St. John (or Joan's) wort, Hypericum Perforatum. Notice its upright stalk and tiny yellow flowers. When held up to the light you can see the that the flower's petals are perforated with tiny little holes.

This marvelous plant with beautiful little yellow flowers never ceases to amaze me with it's healing powers. Hypericum is in the Hyperaceae family and flowers near the end of June on or around St. John's Day near the summer solstice (hence its common name). Some have confused this plant with it's relative, creeping St. John's wort, botanical name Hypericum calycinum but the two are not interchangeable. There are several plants of the Hypericum genus that can be used for herbal medicine purposes though they possess different properties. This article will focus on the Hypericum Perforatum variety only.

This plant has been used since ancient times as a wound medicine and is specific for wounds to areas rich in nerve endings. It can be used for burns in all degrees, cuts and scrapes, and historically was even used to prevent tetanus. It is especially useful when wounds cause sharp, shooting pains or inflammation along the course of a nerve or where there is a pinched nerve.

I have personally found the oil incredibly effective for relieving neck and shoulder tension when massaged into that area. A few years ago, I had a low grade tension headache with a ultra tight neck and shoulders for four days. I had tried a handful of other remedies internally without much success. It seemed the other remedies were keeping a migraine at bay, but not addressing the underlying issue.



This is Hypericum Calycinum (creeping St. John's wort) which is a common ground cover in gardens in North America. It has antibacterial properties but cannot be used interchangeably with Hypericum Perforatum.

It dawned on me to try St. John's wort oil , I could actually feel the tension melting away from my neck and shoulders until there was complete relief within a couple of hours. The tension did not come back.

This year, due to poor posture with breast-feeding, baby hip-holding, and other self-inflicted injuries that result from being a mother to a baby, combined with a serious lack of exercise on my part, my lower back kept going out and causing me severe shooting pains. I would pick up my little guy and hold him for a while and when I would go to put him down, my back would jar and remain like that for days. I put on several topical pain remedies that offered some relief, but didn't fix it and then again I remembered I had St. John's wort tincture macerating. I strained out the flowers and took 10 drops. It took about an hour and then the entire area let go and relaxed, the tension was gone, and I regained full mobility and a sense of joy.

St. John's wort has a special affinity to the solar plexus/nervous system of the body. It can be used to support people with anxiety, fear or depression. It is said to bring emotions and thoughts into synchronicity. Its flower essence is good for overloading information to help with processing.

There are recommendations to exercise caution in taking St. John's wort internally if you are on antidepressants. Herbalist Susun Weed says a tincture is perfectly safe and people only run into problems when consuming capsules. I like to let people know about possible contraindications so that they can do their own research about their medications. This herb is so effective for the winter blues and depression that it has helped numerous people come off of medications altogether.

Many practitioners consider St. John's wort oil to be like a homeopathic chiropractic adjustment. For me, my personal experiences definitely confirm this opinion. It's also an incredible antiviral! The little yellow flowers of this beautiful plant make a vividly red tincture and oil. It will always have an important place in my herbal medicine chest and my heart!

- Andrea Larsen
Read more from Andrea or sign up for her classes at www.andrealarsenrncp.com





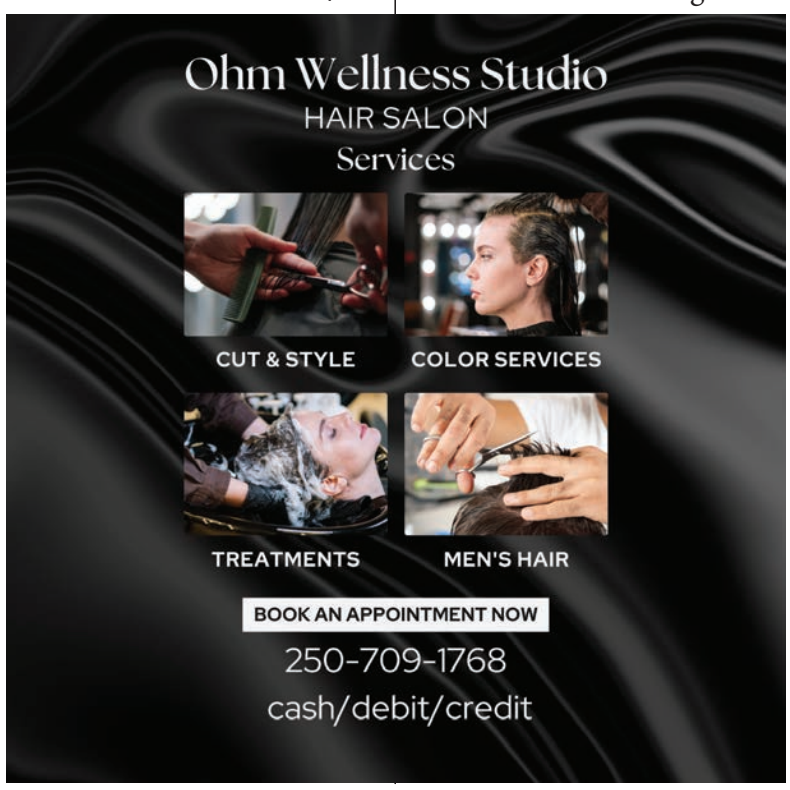
MINING FOR ELECTRIC BATTERY COMPONENTS: VIOLATING THE UNDRIP CODE OF CONDUCT AND DEVASTATING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

As North Cowichan pats itself on the back for purchasing electric fleet vehicles, as well as an electric garbage truck (one costs the same as two diesel garbage trucks), they seem to have forgotten that it put UNDRIP directly into their OCP. Council was asked if they could hold off on the purchases until the batteries and components of these vehicles could be ethically sourced, and until they had the proper recycling infrastructure in place. A motion to purchase these vehicles was passed 5-2.

The exponential growth of the electric vehicle (EV) industry has led to a surge in the demand for electric battery components, such as lithium, cobalt, and nickel. Unfortunately, the mining of these essential minerals has had dire consequences for Indigenous communities around the globe. There are devastating environmental and social impacts, which violate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) code of conduct in creating these so-called "green" vehicles.

Environmental Degradation and Water Source Contamination

The extraction of battery components involves large-scale mining operations that often cause irreversible damage to the environment. Indigenous communities, who have a deep connection to their lands and rely on them for sustenance and cultural practices, bear the brunt of this devastation. Mining activities contaminate water sources with toxic chemicals and heavy metals, endangering the health of both humans and wildlife. This contamination violates the rights of Indigenous peoples to clean water and a healthy environment, as stated in the UNDRIP.



The Exploitation of Indigenous People as Slave Labor

Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by exploitative labour practices in the mining industry. Many mining companies take advantage of the economic vulnerabilities of these communities, forcing them into hazardous working conditions for meagre wages. This form of exploitation constitutes a violation of the UNDRIP, which explicitly prohibits forced labour and ensures the right to fair and just working conditions.

Lack of Consent and Displacement

Mining operations for battery components often encroach upon Indigenous ancestral lands without their free, prior, and informed consent, disregarding their inherent rights. This results in forced displacement, cultural disruption, and the loss of sacred sites. Indigenous communities are denied their right to self-determination and the protection of their cultural heritage, as guaranteed by the UNDRIP.

Demanding Sustainable and Responsible Mining Practices

The mining industry must align its practices with the principles outlined in the UNDRIP to protect the rights and well-being of Indigenous communities. Governments, corporations, and consumers must advocate for and enforce sustainable and responsible mining practices.

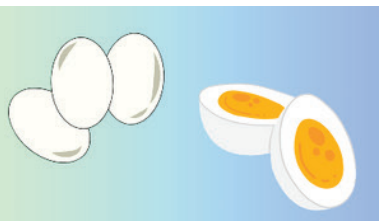
This entails implementing and enforcing regulations that require thorough environmental impact assessments before mining operations commence. Additionally, the full and meaningful participation of Indigenous leaders and organizations in decision-making processes is essential to ensure their perspectives and traditional knowledge are respected.

Investing in research and development of alternative materials, as well as improving battery component recycling methods, can significantly reduce the need for extensive mining and minimize the negative impact on Indigenous communities.

The mining of electric battery components not only devastates the environment for everyone globally but also violates the rights of Indigenous peoples.

We must do better

With B.C. set to phase out gas vehicles, and North Cowichan and other municipalities writing into their local plans an "all-electric" future, we must seriously weigh the consequences for people worldwide, and not adopt a 'Not-in-my-backyard' approach to make ourselves "feel better" in our purchases.



TAMMY'S TIPS

If you are one of those lucky enough to either have chickens in your backyard, or have access to fresh chicken eggs, you will be familiar with the egg peeling conundrum.

Who doesn't love a good deviled egg, or egg salad sandwich !? But oh my, losing a quarter of the egg during the peeling process can be frustrating to say the least.

Well, didn't I just get a hot tip from a friend last week! To think I have lived on this planet for 50 years and not one person took it upon themselves to share this revelation in the egg world with me! Maybe it is a conspiracy, and only those who pass some sort of egg handlers initiation or right of passage are privy to. The secret is out now though. You can't put a genie back in the bottle.

I'm not sure what I am risking sharing this with you, but here I go;

Take the 'bottom' of the egg. I refer to the bottom as the rounder end is more "bottomy" than the pointed end.
Get a spoon and tap right on that end until you hear a 'snap'. That snap is the membrane popping inside. Voila! Your egg should peel much easier now!

Disclaimer: If you whack that bottom too hard, that cracked egg ain't on me hunny!

Happy Peeling !





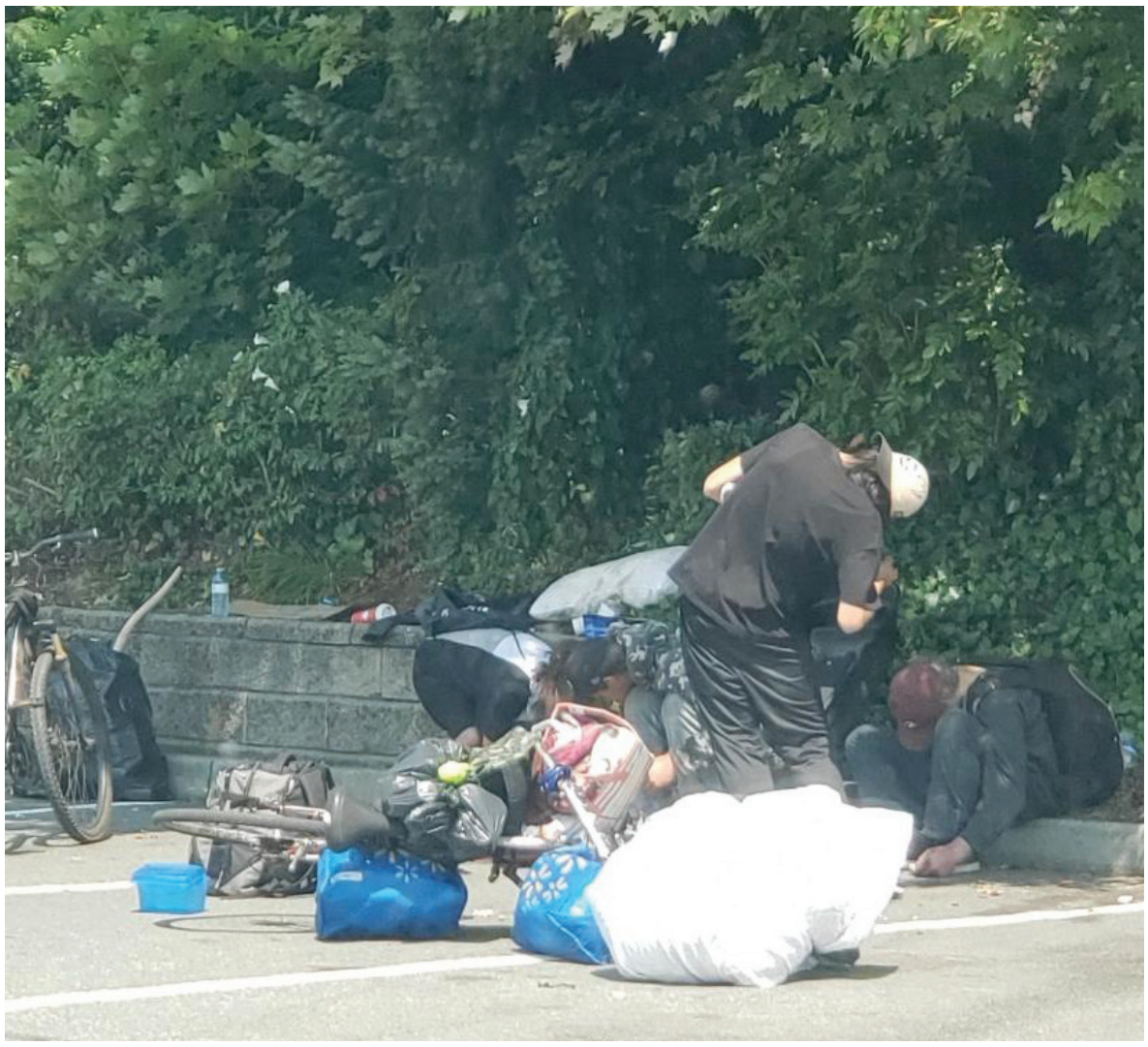
Berkey's Corner

Berkey's Corner has seemed to be ground zero lately for INTENSIVE growth, and hodgepodge installments of apartment buildings placed all over, without flow, or maintaining any type of "feel". This is because of the so-called Growth Centres, Berkey's Corner is one of the few without a Neighbourhood Society that can speak on behalf of the areas 'feel', and provide feedback to council in their Local Area Plans.
If you look to the Chemainus Local Area Plan, it is very obvious that local stakeholders in that area had a say, as their whole plan maintains that Chemainus 'feel', with lots of flowers , and tourist walks, it just shouts "Chemainus".
Berkeys Corner may not have things like Murals to draw people, but there is nothing saying Berkey's can not have a "feel", advocate for more beautification, and reject certain plans and buildings.

Why is this area the one that the RCMP station was placed in, or Island Health, or the Transition house. Or what about the massive apartment buildings behind Walmart, and the new apartment building being set to be built next to the RCMP Building? Or Let's take the new 'strip mall' like project that now hosts Country Grocer, could that not have been beautified in any way?

It is because Berkey's Corner doesn't have a Neighbouhood Society to advocate on its behalf, maybe you are the one to start one.





THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

Councillors in two municipalities filed almost identical notices of motion to deal with ever-growing drug use on local streets. "Our motion will ask the Duncan Council to protect our citizens and particularly children from the effects of open drug consumption in public places," said Councillor Garry Bruce. A local businessman told us "I have users in my washrooms, my patio and clustered around my door – every day." Councillor Mike McKinlay added, "A mother quietly told me, 'My children are starting to consider it normal to have to pick their way over comatose bodies on their way to classes.'"

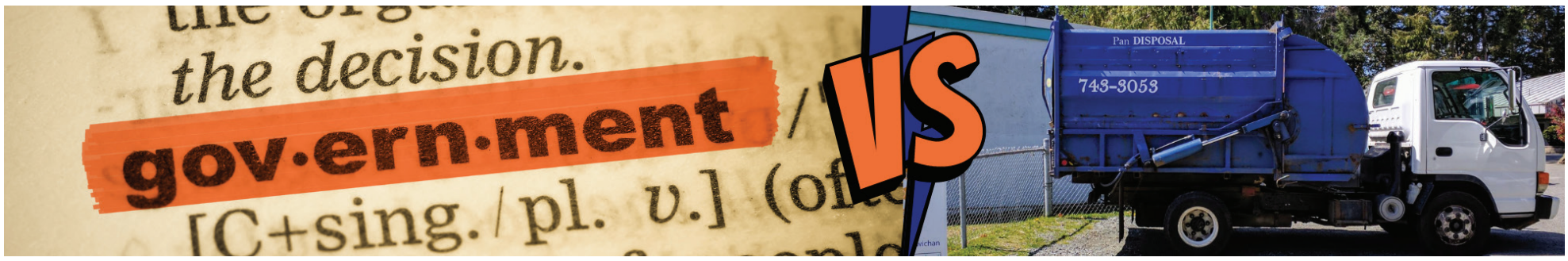
Another business owner added, "I found drugs, with a Batman label on the package, hidden in a shrub outside our building. We reported it to the RCMP, and they said there are well-organized local dealer organizations who package their products with these logos to make them more attractive to kids". The BC Coroner's Office has reported the rate of youth deaths from drug overdoses has tripled since 2019.
North Cowichan Councillors Tek Manhas and Bruce Findlay, whose recent demonstration that drinking beer in public was not allowed while public use of drugs was encouraged went viral, filed a notice with the same aim. The councillors said that the more money governments have directed to local non-profit organizations to study the problem, the worse it has become. Findlay said he was asked by a taxpayer why the initiative implemented in Portugal to give addicts mandatory medical treatment had not been tried here. "I didn't have an answer for him, but I think we should start using tax dollars for effective treatment rather than for more studies."

The councillors say they have been canvassing local residents for opinions and possible solutions. One person pointed out that people who are homeless are not all there for the same reasons. Some have economic issues. If the will were there, municipalities could set up housing cooperatives - the municipality could donate some land, and resources from the private sector could build homes.
"We're getting more than our share of burglaries and occasionally violent attacks committed by repeat offenders, "said Councillor McKinlay. "This 'catch-and-release' justice is tying up our limited police resources."

North Cowichan Councillor Mike Caljouw said "Senior levels of government have given us this problem and we're left to deal with the consequences. There's no bureaucrat involved who's left with personal responsibility for the results of their decision – there's just us to pick up the pieces. We need real outcomes – not assurances that our leaders are trying hard.

We're hoping that local residents are as angry as we are. Nothing that's happening now is working," Garry Bruce said. "We need some voluble support from people in the community. Even if our motion is passed, both councils are going to have to put resources into taking the action we need. Tek Manhas added, "This is a safety issue – our colleagues on the two councils need to act."

Sign the petition protecting our children and supporting this bylaw at coap.ca



CVRD VOTE ASSURES END OF AN ERA FOR LOCAL BUSINESS

Myself and others are feeling rather frustrated by what seems like a lack of representation in our area, in CVRD as a whole, and upwards to provincial and federal. But let's start local - in our own backyard, which is CVRD E.

Approximately 50 people made the effort to attend the June 28th CVRD board meeting and express their views against the organics pick-up and 3-stream waste disposal collection. Considering this meeting is in the middle of a work day, this is an extraordinarily high attendance. 100% of those expressed valid points why this costly move by CVRD does not make sense economically, environmentally or politically.

Most directors ignored the fact that a petition garnered 2400 signatures in 4 days (that's 600 PER DAY), against this proposal.

I think statistics show that for every person who wants to say something, there are 100 who don't bother. Hopefully, this letter may get some others involved when they realize the cost to not.

By your previous communications, 70% of the CVRD taxpayers do not want this added service or tax, but the 30% who throw their compostables in garbage are making this necessary. In AREA E, Cowichan Station/ Sahtlam/Glenora, I expect this is more like 85% of residents, who use their own organics for sustainable agriculture and environmental renewal. This large majority have zero interest in paying $300 a year for a service they will not use and do not want.

How is this decision at all fair? How is this helping sustainability, environmental protection, OR the apparent climate crisis CVRD is using to make yet more regulations for every segment of our life? How is this helping the average person, many of whom are struggling to meet increased inflation for TAXES, food, housing, construction, and wage increases for govt. employees, carbon taxes, gas taxes, and another 60+ taxes less obvious taxes.

Additionally, this particular BOARD decision is putting a private company, Pan Pacific, out of business. The government is directly destroying a private business, which has been providing a pay-as-you-need service for years. Residents who have used them in 3 CVRD areas, all stated the exceptional service they offer. Why would the government compete unfairly, plus increase the cost to all residents, whether they use or want the service or not?

It does not appear that emails, letters, delegations, petitions or attending meetings make any difference. It seems that decisions are already made. I believe this was mentioned yesterday, that these decisions were started in 2018? And CVRD has no choice? Then why do we have CVRD for supposed local community plans? Let's just pay one level of government to regulate every aspect of our lives.

Many are very much done with the representation we are getting. Is there anything that we can do to get our voices heard and our points across?

Benoit Chabot Family

Message from P.A.N. Disposal AFTER THE VOTE

Dear lovely communities, the CVRD board just voted and passed that they will be doing the collection come 2025. Thank you to Sierra, Mike and Kate who tried. Bye bye Pan Disposal, quite unbelievable.

Also, we were very humbled and with gratitude to those of you who signed the petition and your words of kindness.

nhppa.org
NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

CharterofHealthFreedom
It's a Natural Act. Help Make it Law.

BILL C-47 A Blow to Natural Health

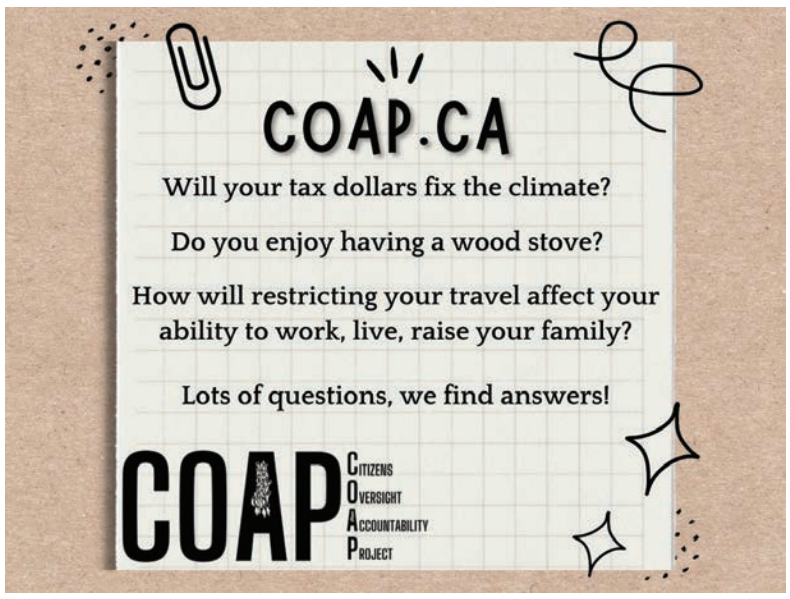
We've just started, and the country is already on the move. People are angry, and they should be. It's only been since June 10, that NHPPA's Discussion Paper was released, and followed up by two national calls with Shawn Buckley and the team. Those calls clearly sounded the alarm of the deep and real threat to the entire NHP (Natural Health Product) industry, and every Canadian who uses, and relies on natural health products, many for their lives.

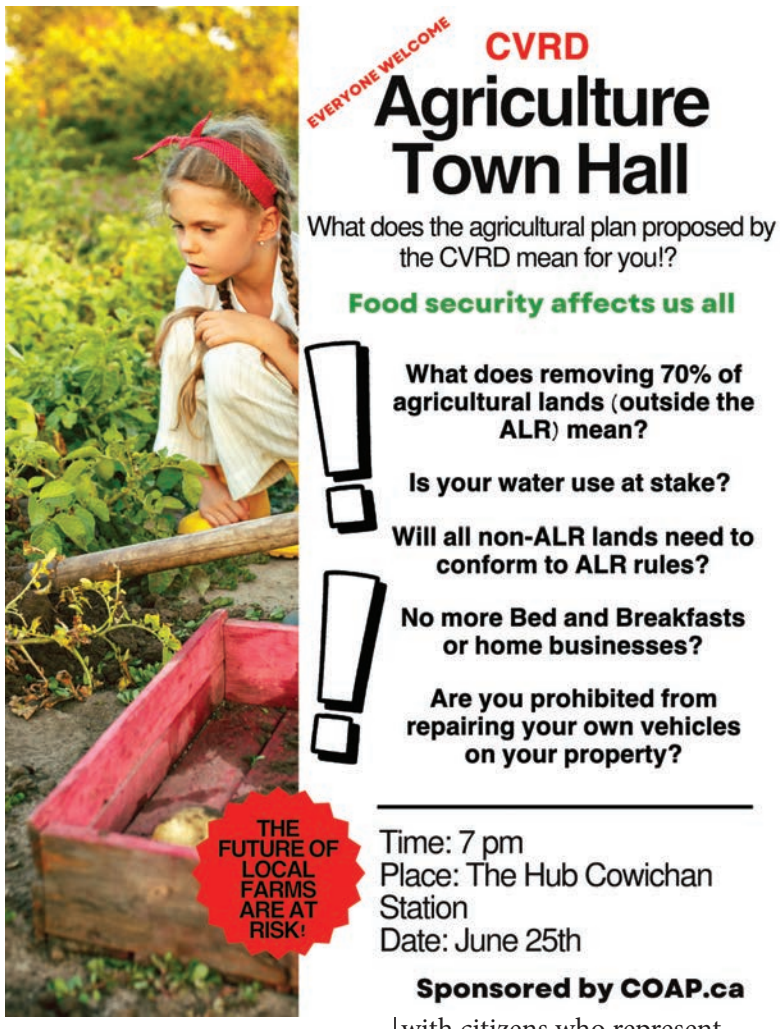
This is not going to be a short, sharp, shock campaign. We are in this until we have what we want as a vibrant natural health community. Our first iteration of letters is linked from our home page and is ready for you to TAKE ACTION! Many of you have started and are asking what you can do to stop further restriction of natural health products in light of Bill C-47 becoming law.

Our planning is not about being at the table with Health Canada to compromise. Our plan is to set the table for us to have them adjust their paradigm and perspective to conform to what we are serving. Our plan is to make the industry and community completely and fully aware of the national, and international, end game of ever-stricter regulatory changes. Now that Bill C-47 has been passed into law, it is obvious how serious Health Canada is about dismantling the natural health products community, and how unaware our elected officials are.

We are not going to stop until our right to access natural health products is protected. Step up. Don't panic. Do your part and take individual accountability. We need each other now. Together we will repeatedly contact our elected (and unelected) officials. The "we" includes YOU! We'll be talking about pacing for letter writing on our weekly calls with Shawn Buckley and the NHPPA team. We are always here to support you for as long as it takes.

RENOVATIONS * REPAIRS * LIGHTING UPGRADES * IN-FLOOR HEATING
M. Dodd
Master Electrician
250-413-7450 mdoddelectric@gmail.com





Old-fashioned Town Hall

The Hub in Cowichan Station was the scene of an old-fashioned Town Hall meeting on Sunday, June 25th.
The event was a gathering of concerned CVRD residents who attended in order to engage in dialogue about the Official Community Plan, "Strengthen Local Food and Agriculture" section 6. The hall was filled with citizens who represented all aspects of food security. Farmers, food processors, farm gate owners, large and small Agricultural property owners and managers, as well as other associated businesses.

The event was open to all. Everyone was welcome. Citizens Oversight and Accountability Project (COAP) began the evening with an informative and educational presentation.

The floor was then opened to hear stories, concerns and opinions. All in attendance had an opportunity to speak and be heard. A full report of all voiced and written concerns will be presented to the CVRD in the near future. The CVRD will be expected to review the report and enter it into the official public record.

Many stories were told of government overreach, invasion of private land by enforcers, unreasonable penalties, fees and fines. Many voiced concerns about interference in activities on private lands by government agencies and fear that these behaviours will increase with the adoption of the proposed OCP.

The Appendix of the plan clearly states multiple ways all citizens' activities will be tracked and traced. Proposed SMART Farm technology, if implemented, will monitor everything that occurs on private farmland.
Many fear increasing surveillance, unwelcome interference and trespass by Enforcers seeking violations. Many voiced concerns that spiralling costs in the Agriculture sector will result in losing their properties.

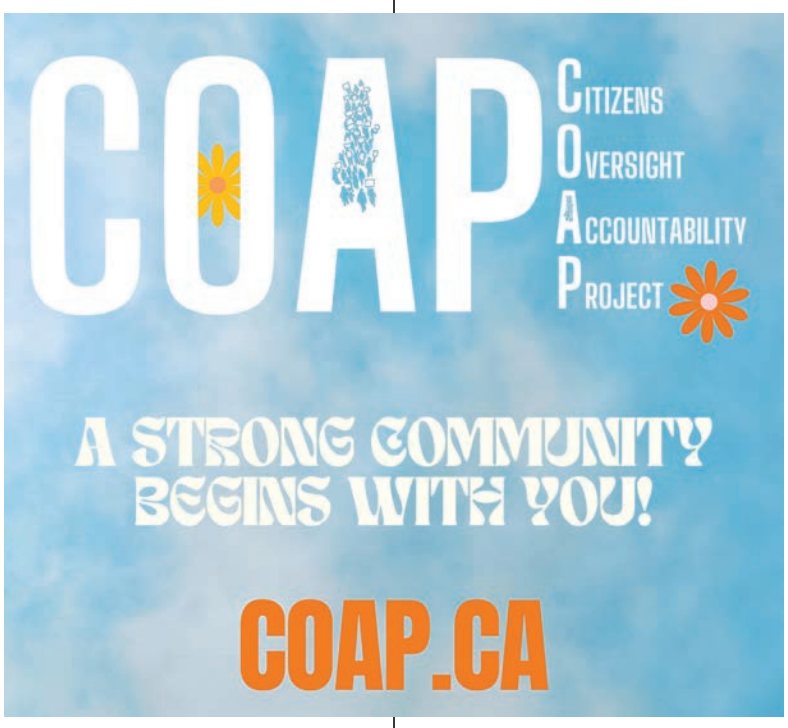
In a previous email, a CVRD Director stated there would be public consultation. A meeting was arranged by the Region and only owners and managers of ARL properties with farm tax status were permitted to attend.

I was excluded from the event, however, a local farmer told me about the events of the evening. She stated, "The meeting was mostly focused on environment and climate issues".
She stated no action plans were proposed in spite of the region's repeated message that they value and support local Agriculture.
The Region may possibly believe they have fulfilled their obligation for Public Consultation.
This remains to be seen.

All members of the Board were personally invited to the recent Town Hall. None attended. The outcomes of the Town Hall clearly showed the importance of community engagement.
COAP will compile and present a report of all concerns. Several groups are forming due to contacts being made at the meeting.

The ability of a community to solve problems is underrated. Expensive consulting processes and highly paid bureaucrats do not have the right to direct all decision-making and determine every aspect of the future of Valley Citizens.

Ruth









Question authority

What is this life all about? Who are we and where did we come from? What is our purpose here, and what are the rules that we should live by? Ever since I was young these are the questions I've asked. Now that I'm old I may not have all the answers, but I believe I've found the answer to my very first question. Perhaps asking questions IS what life is all about?

I was raised to ask questions. I have fond childhood memories of weekly visits to the library, eagerly returning home with a big stack of books. Each book was an exciting new world awaiting my discovery. I was never much into fiction and preferred to read about history, philosophy and the paranormal instead. Father would say "keep your mind open to everything you read and hear, but don't believe any of it. Ask questions, think for yourself and make up your own mind."

I was taught that asking questions is how we learn, so I questioned everything. Especially authority. And of course, I soon discovered that authority doesn't like to be questioned. But where would we be today if those great scientists and philosophers of the past had not dared to question the authorities of their time? You know, the kind of questions that make them want to burn you at the stake just for asking, but need asking nevertheless? "Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth," —Albert Einstein

Science, simply put, is the natural process of determining the truth. The scientific method is like a question that is repeated over and over again. If the answer is the same every time, it's proven to be a scientific fact. If the answers are not consistent, then it's back to the drawing board to rethink your question. "Millions saw the apple fall but Newton was the one who asked why." —Bernard Baruch

Similarly, the courtroom prosecutor repeats the same question, phrasing it differently each time, in an attempt to trick the defendant into changing their answer. "Truth stands the test of time; lies are soon exposed." —Proverbs 12:19

But sadly, it appears as though we are entering a new dark age where science has become a religion, and questioning the doctrines of its high priests has become an act of heresy. We are told to "trust the science," but what that really means is "don't ask questions." However, the truth doesn't mind being questioned, it's the lie that doesn't like to be challenged.



In Orwell's dystopian novel, Nineteen Eighty Four, the "Ministry of Truth" was an international fact-checking network charged with deciding what was "truth" and what was "fake news." Totally transfixed on "Big Brother's" narrative as portrayed by the "telescreen," the fictional society of 1984 had lost the ability to think for themselves, even believing that "two plus two is five," as the saying goes, as long as it was presented as such on the telescreen. I am reminded of Zbigniew Brezezinski's prediction in 1972 that, "Shortly, the public will be unable to reason or think for themselves. They'll only be able to parrot the information they've been given on the previous night's news."

No matter the topic these days, be it climate change, pandemics, vaccines, cell towers or gender we are told that "the science is settled," while at the same time, thousands of scientific experts worldwide are censored, silenced and ridiculed if they disagree. The fact is, there was no need for fact-checkers until the ugly truth started to get out, and if the self-proclaimed authorities have nothing to hide, then why are we no longer allowed to ask questions?

David Jay Trabajo

The 'retrofit' and 'improvement' of the gym, or a down-grade to keep kids out?

I have been going to the gym at the Cowichan Aquatic Centre for many years.
I have used the Aquatic Centre for physical as well as mental health. I did sink into quite a depressive state when North Cowichan decided to illegally ask for people's private medical information at the door, and as I did not believe in the passport, I was unable to maintain my mental and physical health during this time.

When it opened back up to all the taxpayers, I went back and found my mental health getting better per day. I am a daily visitor to the gym, and was pretty excited when I heard they were bringing in 'better' gym machines, and expanding the gym area. During the shutdown, I attended another gym in the valley with far superior equipment to N.C. Aquatic centre, but so they should have a private gym. The day the pool gym opened I was very excited to see and use the upgrades. I did not find the equipment bad before, and was initially wondering why they were upgrading, but I looked forward to these so-called up-grades.
Talk about a disappointing waste of money! Not only was the new gym equipment less superior than the previous equipment, but the so-called "expansion" only seemed to have included adding a sliding glass door next to an existing door.

Myself and others all gathered to test out the new equipment and chat about how many we would never use. The chest press does not allow for full range like the old one, and only gives a few inches of stretch from a elbow-forward position - total waste. The shoulder machine has the wrong hand positioning that will cause damage to your shoulders if used for long periods of time. The hamstring machine is faulty by design at the ankle part and seems to not even be adjustable for short people. Basically there are 4 machines of the six that most of us agreed we would never use. I also noticed a LOT of grumbling from the young men who were daily visitors like myself. I chatted with them, and they were visibly upset and disappointed. Who was hired to purchase these machines?



Obviously not anyone who uses machines regularly!
Later, looking at other gyms, I went in to another facility and chatted with the owner about the new down-grade to the pool gym, and he told me they replaced these machines, with many meant for elderly, as they did not really want the youth in there. Well, that explains the lack of challenging machines, but also showed a severe lack of care for our youth by the municipality!

These young men that came in daily were highly dedicated, and it gave them goals and focus, which so many youth lack these days. North Cowichan has very few outlets for youth in the valley, and it seems they want to dissuade them from this one as well? A facility their parents pay taxes towards? I know how my mental health declined when I was unable to go to the gym. N.C. can not pretend to care about mental health when they keep pushing the children out of facilities, and allowing them to walk amongst the 'walking dead' almost daily. I sure hope one of these kids that decide to not come back will be ok, and not decide to take on another pastime.

North Cowichan seems to make up these needs for the pool area and gym every two years when they seek their 2 million in gas tax grants (our taxes too I may add) to "upgrade" the facility. Maybe when the next application for a gas tax is available, that is meant to be used for infrastructure, North Cowichan could just spend it on a youth service, instead of having their, obviously skilled grant writer, apply for money NOT needed for lackluster so-called "improvements" to this facility. Waste of our taxpayer money!

AR Sharpe

Tell Your Story
We'd love to hear from you
EDITOR@WWIND.CA
WW INDEPENDENT

Why Are the Public being Excluded from School Board Meetings?

The Cowichan Valley school district holds their monthly public meetings on the first Tuesday of the month. For those in attendance, there has been an opportunity to ask questions provided



they relate to the current agenda of the meeting. Previously, this provided an opportunity for discussion with the trustees or to simply request clarification. This

has changed and the parents now find themselves restricted and/or barred from meetings. Are the public needs being met?

On March 7, members of the public arrived at the School Board meeting to find the door to the building locked. A man stood at the door, blocking entry and stated the public could only attend via a zoom link. At this time, it would be impossible as people needed to return home. As this meeting was not a long one, the meeting was missed by those wishing to partake. Many questions were left unanswered.

District 79 posted on their website that the April 4 meeting would also only be available to the public by Zoom. Several parents attempting to access this zoom link were dismayed to discover the audio so poor as to render the greater portion of the dialogue inaudible. Emails were sent to the District advising of the audio issues, and were met with promises to "look into the audio concerns."

When members of the public attempted to access the Zoom link for the May meeting, they found the audio quality problem had not been corrected. As well, they found the ability of the attendees to ask questions had been greatly curtailed. Though there was a dialogue bar where questions could be typed throughout the meeting, when the question period arrived, the person monitoring them stated that although several questions had been submitted, none had followed the correct protocol, which had not been posted or explained before question period. He then stated each questioner must write their name and home address before their question. Another parent stated "I had already written several questions from my phone. I had to scramble to enter in this information for them, but they still would not look at any of the questions I had already written, so I had to rewrite them".

After more emails were written regarding the subpar quality of the zoom, parents were advised they could attend meetings in person until the zoom link was fixed. However, when parents arrived to attend the June meeting, only a few were let in before the door was locked behind them. This was the second meeting when the public was physically prevented from attending a "public" meeting. A man standing at the door, barring entry stated the room was at capacity and no one else would be permitted inside. He then aggressively shut the door and was unnecessarily rude to the people requesting to be allowed into the public meeting. Left on the outside was the family of a boy who had come to receive an award.

They were still at the door when the young man came around from the back door, and called, "It's ok mom, I've already gotten the award." He told the people waiting outside that there were now 11 empty seats now that the students receiving awards had left. However, the door was still not opened to those still waiting. The few members of the public who were in attendance inside later reported "We asked them to let the people in from outside now that there was room, but we were told we too would be outside if we continued to ask."

Since the last election the School Board has become increasingly hostile to the public, the rules appear to change arbitrarily. This situation is worsening, while the School Boards face more scrutiny from taxpayers.

Why has our School Board become so restrictive towards allowing parents and concerned members of the public to attend? Why are the rules and guidelines they claim to be following not written down or explained beforehand? As we continue to hear about other School Boards across the country who are taking similar actions against parents and members of the public who wish to participate, it begs the question - are they trying to hide something?

J. O'Donnell SD 79 Grandmother

CVRD garbage disposal

In the last couple years myself and my young family purchased a larger acreage with the dream of building a home for now and for our families future generations.
Currently we are struggling with the ever expanding costs from tax hikes that were not foreseeable, nor benefit us.

In regards to this specific unwanted tax burden, we do not wish to use or participate in the



"mandatory" garbage pick up. We are a family of four, who accumulate minimal garbage as it is, because of personal choices to be less of a burden on the planet and to keep our costs low for garbage disposal.
If this proposal is passed… how will this incentivize local citizens to keep their garbage usage low? If a base cost is laid regardless of how much garbage one produces… it seems unlikely that every effort will be implemented to keep garbage accumulation low. How does this benefit the climate and all of CVRD's "green initiatives".

It is also a very well known fact that when people struggle financially to just cover the basic needs for their families, like food, shelter, heat and water… environmental responsibilities fall way down the priority list. This is why we see impoverished countries living in squalor. I think many of you may be lacking the concept of how many people in the CVRD area's are truly already struggling to make ends meet.. how can we continue to impose more and more on individual house holds?

Not everyone in this room or this valley cares about "convenience". Many, if not most, care more about choice, supporting local, independence and less regulations.
For those of us who DO prioritize convenience, great… that is what companies like pan disposal offer to the valley… WITHOUT imposing more tax strain on everyone else.

We HAVE TO STOP with the one size fits all model for everything. This is not sustainable in SO MANY WAYS and it is infuriating residents.
If this passes through, I truly believe that you do not care what your constituents are saying to you, and that us being here today is all just for show and not a true democracy. Stop pushing us into corners that we don't chose to be in. We don't want to pay for your trucks to pick up our garbage that we are happy to dispose of ourselves at a cheaper cost, 3-4 times a year.

I'd also just like to briefly point out how despicable it is that government is trying to come in and snuff out a local company and business that people currently have the choice to pay for or not, and that nobody has to pay tax dollars towards to fix and maintain vehicles. For what!? What is the benefit here? I see so much more burden than any gain, and at the same time causing a small company to have to close shop because government wants control and a piece of the pie.
Im genuinely outraged by this and wish you all would recognize the hypocrisy here between promoting local businesses



within our valley and crying about climate change, but then in the next move taking actions to ruin small local businesses and removing the incentive to create less garbage as a house hold.

Your words say one thing, and your actions say another. Im ONLY concerned with actions now. Words mean nothing to me coming from our local representatives, because far too often they/you do not follow through, words are vague and used to manipulate and deceive.
Personally I'm over it, and I wish to no longer consent to your games. I DO NOT want you garbage monopoly in my neighbourhood, or my valley.

Savannah





IS THE CVRD TESTING THE LINE WITH LOCAL FARMERS?



As we see farmers all over the world being squeezed, through demands on reducing their fertilizer usage, to outright removal of their generationally owned lands (see: Dutch Farmers), we must look to how these policies creep in locally.

The CVRD has commissioned a report from outside our community by a company called Upland Agricultural Consulting to give advice on how to 'manage' our lands outside and inside the ALR.

Below we have extracted some of the more worrisome points from their report, and have pasted them here verbatim. (* bolding of words, underlines, and brackets added).
Excerpts:

1. **Tourist accommodations,** which can include up to four bed and breakfast bedrooms within a principal dwelling and up to ten sleeping units on a farm, **can be restricted and/or prohibited by local government.** Currently, the CVRD's policies and regulations on tourist accommodation varies by electoral area. **It is recommended that a simplified and harmonized approach be adopted for clarity and consistency across communities.** Currently, some electoral areas allow a bed and breakfast to be operated in a principal residence with a maximum of four bedrooms, whereas others allow three bedrooms.

2. An agricultural land base is only as healthy as a community's urban **growth containment policies.** The ability for agricultural activities to flourish will depend on the ability of government policies to **reduce land speculation.** The most effective way to ensure that agricultural land is valued for agricultural activities is to ensure that **non-farming development, such as residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and recreational uses, is firmly directed away from farmland.** The CVRD's policies are strong but should be aligned across all electoral areas to ensure consistency. **Policies that explicitly state that the expansion of utilities (e.g., sewer, water, power, roads) should avoid intrusion the ALR should be included in the OCP.**

3. By requiring local governments to protect riparian areas from commercial, industrial and residential development, the Riparian Action Protection Act (RAPA) does not preclude them from also protecting riparian areas from agricultural development, for example by **making riparian area DP requirements applicable to agricultural uses and buildings and/or imposing watercourse setbacks on agricultural buildings.** Prior to the enactment of RAPA, the **development permit power** could be fully exercised under the Fish Protection Act in relation to agricultural activities and the RAPA legislation did not change that. b. **Consider removing the exemption provided for "normal farm practices" within the ALR.** This would provide clarity on the requirement for riparian setbacks for agricultural buildings when built on ALR land, which would better align with wording in the zoning bylaws.

4. The focus of this DPA should be on **what non-ALR properties can do to protect farming,** and discussion of activities occurring on ALR properties should be removed. (Make all Ag. land comply to the same regulations as ALR)

5. The ALC Act and Regulations have been updated in recent years to include a maximum house footprint for a principal dwelling and to allow small secondary dwellings in the ALR under certain conditions. There are also robust guidelines set forth by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food regarding the size of the overall footprint of all residential uses, and maximum lot line setbacks for residential uses in the ALR. These guidelines have been set into **ALC policy and should be reflected in the CVRD's OCP** and zoning bylaws to help guide decision-making regarding the use of the ALR for residential purposes. **It is also recommended that the sizing and siting guidelines be adopted for all land designated as Agriculture outside of the ALR in order to ensure consistency across the agricultural landscape.** It is worth noting that there are a number of properties with farm tax status that are outside of the ALR within the CVRD.

6. **Maximum setbacks of up to 60 m from all lot lines should be included for residential development** in order to encourage and maintain a contiguous land base for farming. This will ensure that residential footprints are generally maintained close to roads and lot lines, **rather than in the middle of parcels along with long driveways** and other accessory residential development.

7. Home occupation and home-based businesses a. Include a strict and consistent size limit for structures associated with home occupation (home-based businesses). **b. Consider requiring farm tax status for properties using ALR land for home occupation accessory buildings, so that it is not the primary use of farmland. Home occupation is within the purview of local government to regulate, and local government has the ability to restrict and/or prohibit it. c. Add specific restrictions around truck parking and vehicle repairs in the ALR**

8. **Ensure bed and breakfast regulations are consistent with ALC regulations and are consistent across electoral areas.** b. Create clarity around permitted Agri-Tourism uses and criteria, as per the ALC Act and Regulations and ensure that it is clear that farm tax status is required. **c. Determine how many (if any) Agri-Tourism Accommodations (e.g., camp sites, RVs, cabins)** should be allowed on a parcel with farm tax status in the ALR. **Consider creating consistency with parcels outside of the ALR with farm tax status.**

9. The proposed setbacks of **cannabis production from parks, schools and daycares is excessively limiting.**

10. Controlled Environment Structures (also known as **vertical farming**) are now a permitted use in the ALR. The CVRD should consider whether to **place restrictions on this use, such as size or siting. The CVRD also has the option to prohibit this use after August 31, 2022,** (controlled environment agriculture structures constructed or under construction before this date cannot be prohibited).

11. **Allow some limited agriculture,** horticulture or urban agriculture (definition to be determined) in all Residential zones outside of Agriculture zones.

12. Parcels and zones **a. There is an excessive number of Agriculture zones. These should be minimized.** b. Overall, there are a large proportion of small parcels within the ALR in the CVRD. **On average, more than 40% of parcels in CVRD electoral areas are under 2 ha in size, and more than 30% of parcels under 1 ha in size. This provides a strong argument for keeping minimum parcels sizes as large as possible.** (Therefore 70% of Ag land could be deemed urban, and be required to follow residential zone rules ie no pigs, roosters etc. Some municipalities have a minimum of 8 hectares to be deemed Agricultural! Also see point 11)

13. **Consider introducing building permits for agricultural structures.** This will help to measure and track development within the ALR. In our experience, many "agricultural buildings" end up being used for non-farming endeavours.

14. **The restriction of livestock buildings inside of a 30 m setback from watercourses,** lakes and the sea should be integrated into DPA1 – Riparian Protection

15. Similar policies exist in other official community plans. For example, the District of Saanich OCP refers to supporting Island Health and the enforcement of regulations regarding septic disposal systems. **Local government can have a role in bylaw enforcement in the ALR particularly because there are local bylaws that also impact land in the ALR (e.g., residential uses, home occupation and soil and fill, to name a few).** Both informal and formal partnerships between local government's bylaw enforcement and the ALC's Compliance and Enforcement department exist in communities across the province

Feeling over-governed yet? Contact your local area director today!
A full list of area Directors can be found at CVRD.ca