

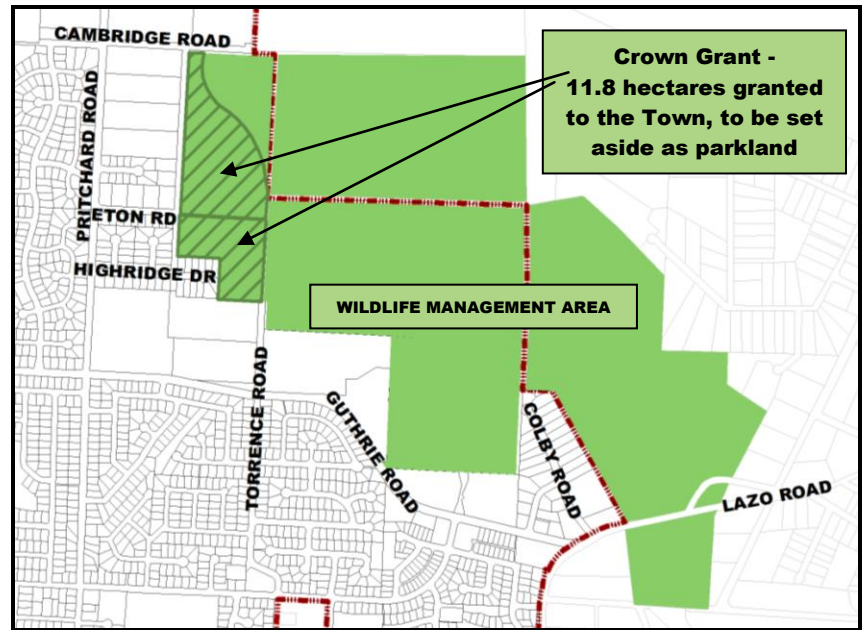


Comox News

October 2013

The Town of Comox Community Newsletter

Crown land application



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It's now official! A Crown grant has been provided by the Provincial government to the Town for 11.8 hectares of land adjacent to the Northeast Comox – Lazo Marsh Wildlife Management area (known locally as the Northeast Woods). Under a Memorandum of

Understanding, the land will be transferred to the K'omoks First Nation. They will, in turn, lease it back to the Town for 99 years, thereby ensuring the long term protection of the area as both a recreational site and wildlife buffer.

The Town looks forward to continuing its relationship with the K'omoks First Nation and local stewardship groups as we manage and operate the area on a collaborative basis for the benefit of the community.

Best fitness centre on Vancouver Island!



BC Living provided the official results of their People's Choice Awards for 2013, and the Comox Recreation Centre has been voted the best fitness centre on Vancouver Island! After tallying over 10,000 votes, we're happy to announce that we've come out on top for our category and region!

New fire prevention vehicle



Earlier this spring, Mike Marchi of Comox Valley Dodge presented Fire Chief Gord Schreiner keys to a new, donated fire prevention vehicle. This year marks the 10th year of amazing support from Comox Valley Dodge, as well as Vancouver Island Insurance Centers, who have donated the insurance for the vehicles over the years. In addition, our very

own Comox Firefighter's Association donated the emergency lighting package for the vehicle, resulting in little to no overall cost to the community.

The vehicle is used on a daily basis for its fire prevention activities and on a very regular basis for the many community-based events that it attends.

Completed capital projects

The Town has now completed its road resurfacing projects for this year, and we are pleased that we have made significant progress towards reducing the number of overdue projects in this area. This summer, a total of 3.1 km of roads were resurfaced, with some of the roads last being resurfaced in the 1950s! A total of \$3.0 million was spent on resurfacing the following:

- Guthrie Road (Shamrock to Linshart),
- Torrence Road (Ridgemount to Hillside),
- Beach Drive,
- Beaton Avenue,
- Cedar Avenue,
- Cortez Crescent,
- Denman Street,
- Fir Avenue,
- Hawthorn Place,
- Hemlock Avenue,
- Holly Place,
- Murphy Avenue, and
- Walnut Avenue.

Fry in Brooklyn Creek

As has been reported in the past several issues of this newsletter, the Town has been an active partner in the Brooklyn Creek Channel Enhancement Project, which aims to increase the productivity of wild salmon stocks in the Brooklyn Creek. Another goal is to improve pedestrian access along the Creek and within Mack Laing Park. Brooklyn Creek is an important fish producing watershed, historically supporting chum, coho and pink salmon, as well as cutthroat trout.

In May of this year, the Brooklyn Creek Watershed Society and a DFO community advisor observed thousands of coho fry in the lower 100 metres of Brooklyn Creek and the tidal estuary! In addition, there were thousands more observed in the side channel installed last year, as well as a few smolts.

It is thought that these coho fry were probably from the

Puntledge or Tsolum River systems, as there were too many to be from Brooklyn Creek, and these fish were not newly emerged. They could also be those "nomad" coho fry that go to sea right after emergence and seek out freshwater in the estuary and in freshwater creek mouths. The chum fry may also have been from creeks other than Brooklyn as no spawning chum were seen in Brooklyn Creek last year. The coho smolts are a mystery.

Regardless of where the fry and smolts came from, their appearance demonstrates the value and importance of the Brooklyn Creek estuary as very productive fish habitat, and the value of the new side channel as a great addition to this fish habitat.

We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated group of volunteers working hard to restore wild salmon stocks in the Brooklyn Creek.

Other capital projects completed this year include new bike lanes, curb and sidewalk in conjunction with the Guthrie project; repaving the Marina parking lot; improving the Ellis Street / Comox Avenue intersection; new crosswalk and bus shelter at Guthrie Road / Skeena Drive; Beaufort Avenue pedestrian activated crosswalk beacons and a sidewalk along Salish Street.

Council's priority in focusing more on infrastructure needs over the past few years has allowed us to catch up a little on addressing roads in poor condition. Next year will be another big year, with nearly 2.5 additional kilometres proposed to be resurfaced.

Military Row bike lanes



In partnership with CFB Comox, new, dedicated bike lanes have just been completed on either side of Military Row between the ice arena and Ryan Road. The Town would like to thank CFB Comox for their cooperation and generous funding contribution of \$826,250 for the project.

As part of Council's ongoing efforts to implement the policies of the recently adopted Official

Community Plan, the Town has been installing bike lanes throughout the Town as a means to promote alternative transportation modes, as well as increased recreation and accessibility. The project also supports the Department of National Defence's strategic objectives and plans to improve the quality of life of Canadian Forces members and their families.

International expert impressed with Comox Fire Rescue

On March 2 and 3, 2013, Comox Fire Rescue had the pleasure of hosting international fire service educator Dr. Richard Gasaway. Dr. Gasaway is widely considered a fire service expert in North America, and has taught in most provinces as well as the United States, China and Australia.

Over 170 firefighters from all over Vancouver Island attended Dr. Gasaway's training session in Comox on firefighter safety.

In a followup letter to fire chief Gord Schreiner, Dr. Gasaway wrote:

"To say I was impressed is a gross understatement. I was in awe. The Comox Fire Department is a very professionally run organization and the commitment of their members toward safety is highly commendable.

"The fire hall and equipment was impressive, for sure. But I was blown away with the layout and quality of the training facility. It is so well-designed and thought out and provides so many opportunities for high quality, realistic-based fire and rescue training ...".

Anderton Park tennis courts

The project to reconstruct four of the six tennis courts at Anderton Park is nearing completion, with an anticipated official opening very soon. The four courts have now been completely rebuilt, with new fencing and landscaping. This completes Phase 2 of a \$700,000 project, funded

partly through a provincial grant from the Community Recreation Program.

On October 15, 2012, phase 1 was completed with a New HealthBeat outdoor fitness circuit.



Coach houses

In the Town, a coach house is defined as a small stand-alone residential unit typically located in the backyard of a single-family dwelling parcel. Either the coach house or the main residence must be occupied by the owner of the parcel.

Similar to secondary suites, coach houses increase housing affordability for home owners as well as provide affordable rental housing. Coach houses also provide the ability for homeowners to age in place if they choose. Currently, coach houses are permitted on parcels zoned R3.3,

which are large lot, single family dwelling parcels.

In September 2013, Council adopted enabling bylaws to allow for the consideration of coach houses on a case by case basis on all other single family residential property in Town. Coach houses will be considered by Council through the rezoning process.

Simplified procedures and reduced fees to streamline the rezoning process were introduced to address the limited resources of applicants, which are usually individual homeowners.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
comox.ca

What we have learned from metred residential water data

In 2010, as part of its strategic objective to increase environmental responsibility, Council approved a voluntary water meter project, whereby residents could request to receive a water meter. Council also approved installing water meters on all stratas and single family "meter ready" homes. Since then, over 1,650 water meters have been installed, covering 35% of Comox single family homes. Another component of that project was that residents could voluntarily sign up to pay for their water based on use (by the cubic meter), rather than by the flat rate that the Town has always charged. In 2012, residents were given that option, of which 117 have applied to switch to date.

We have now been collecting water use statistics from metered customers for over two years. From this data, we have learned much from metered water customers.

- We have learned that in 2012, average water use for all metered customers, whether they pay a flat rate or metered rate, was 311 cubic metres. However, some customers use significantly more than this average. In fact, each month, 10% of customers use over 25% of the total water consumed.

- We have learned that water use in the summer months nearly quadruples that of winter months, most likely due to

yard and garden use. One likely cause of this is an automatic sprinkling system, which can use a substantial amount of water. If you use such a system, please ensure you are using it as efficiently as possible. You may also wish to consider installing a smart irrigation controller – for more information on this, and a great rebate offer, see the Comox Valley Regional District's website at

<http://www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/EN/main/departments/water-services/smart-control-irrigation-rebate.html>.

- We have also learned that there are quite a few water leaks in the system. With a water meter, new leaks are easy to detect as use spikes up unusually and stays high. Old leaks are harder to detect, but we do follow up with all high users if we think that a leak is responsible. While we routinely repair leaks in Town infrastructure, those on private property are the responsibility of the homeowner. If you do receive notice of a possible leak from the Town, it is in your best interest to follow up as excessive water use rates (those for water use over 600 cubic metres per year) are quite high.

We also continue to install water meters on request. If you would like to have one, please contact us.

Notices

Locating underground services

Every time you dig in the ground, wherever it may be, you run the risk of loss of life or damage to property if you hit any of the many buried cables, conduits, gas or oil pipelines and/or other underground facilities that serve our cities, towns, and rural areas.

BEFORE you dig please call the [CALL BEFORE YOU DIG service \(1 \(800\) 474-6886\)](tel:18004746886) to request location information.

This is a free service.

Fall cleanup

With the arrival of this year's storm season, once again the Town of Comox is requesting the assistance of the public in clearing leaves and debris from catch basin grates.

The public is also reminded to not deposit or blow leaves on to the roadway as our limited staff and equipment resources do not allow for prompt removal from our road, sidewalk and catch basin surfaces.

Comox Fireworks Regulation Bylaw

The public is reminded that fireworks permits in the Town of Comox will only be issued for community events open to the general public, and film and television events requiring the use of pyrotechnics and special effects.

In addition, no person in the Town may buy, sell, trade, possess or store fireworks.

Individuals not abiding by the provisions of the Bylaw may be issued a \$500 ticket for each offence.