



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

# Sproat Lake Newsletter

## Sproat Lake Community Newsletter - Winter 2025

*Published by Penny Cote - Director for Sproat Lake - Electoral Area D*



*Martin Mars Water Bombers on Sproat Lake - Taylor Arm, 2014 (Courtesy of Penny Cote)*

### Final farewell to the Philippine Martin Mars

On March 28, Coulson Aviation and BC's Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture, and Sport announced the donation of the Hawaii Mars to the BC Aviation Museum in Sidney. A further announcement came of the departure of the "Philippine Mars" to the Pima Air and Space Museum in Arizona.

After two attempts to fly out, the Philippine Mars landed in Sidney and returned to Sproat Lake for needed repairs. Two motors were switched out with the Hawaii Mars, and the Philippine was ready to take flight to its final designation.

There are many wonderful stories and photos shared in the community of these historic planes.

### *Farewell to the Hawaii and Philippine Mars*

Darren Hansen reports on the last day of the Philippine Mars, "It has been quite the year, culminating with the final departure of the



*Philippine Mars on its final day on Sproat Lake. (Courtesy of Darren Hansen)*

Philippine Mars on February 9. It has been a love affair with Sproat Lake that has lasted over 65 years. It is fitting that the Philippine Mars was the first of the Glenn L. Martin aircraft to arrive at Sproat Lake in the late spring of 1960, and now the last to leave in the winter of 2025. We are all sad to see them both leave the lake. As they say, 'Better to have loved and lost than to have never loved at all.' Huge thank you to all the maintenance and flight crews who have worked tirelessly this past year to prepare and fly them to their final destinations.

"If you have the chance please make time to visit the Hawaii Mars at the British Columbia Aviation Museum or the Philippine Mars at the Pima Air and Space Museum. Make sure you let everyone know when you are visiting that you are from Sproat Lake and how proud and much you love these aircraft.

"So long C-FLYL and C-FLYK, last of the World's four engine Flying Boats and Glenn L. Martin aircraft flying. You have had me in awe my whole life."

### ACRD & ACRHD 2025 – 2029 Annual budget & service review

The Community Affairs meeting is scheduled for **Monday, February 24, 2025, in-person starting at 7 pm** at the Sproat Lake Community Hall (9346 Bomber Base Road). Your ACRD Sproat Lake Electoral Area Director, Penny Cote, invites you to come and meet with your neighbours for these informative ACRD staff and SL area service presentations and discussion on the ACRD draft 2025- 2029 financial budget and OCP planning and development. Reports will be presented for the recent Sort'n'go and Transportation studies, the SL Parks Commission, SL Volunteer Fire Department, AV Community Forest and Mosaic Forest activities updates.

The ACRD and ACRHD 2025-2029 draft Financial Plans is available on the ACRD website at [www.acrd.bc.ca](http://www.acrd.bc.ca). Alternatively, you can call the ACRD at 250-720-2700 for further information or email [budget@acrd.bc.ca](mailto:budget@acrd.bc.ca).

**ACRD Financial Plan Public Consultation** is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 1:30 pm via Zoom or in the ACRD Board meeting.

The Sproat Lake Official Community Plan work plan and engagement strategy has been approved and information is available on the back page of this newsletter on the process and how to get involved.

### Sproat Lake Community Association

**General Meeting is scheduled for Monday**, Sproat Lake Community Association (SLCA) Annual AGM Monday March 31, 2025 at 7 pm at the SL Community Hall 9346 Bomber Base Rd. Come and meet your community neighbours for a review of the successful 2024 year and start planning for 2025 community gatherings of interest to the community.

This year will see the completion of renovations on the Sproat Lake Community Hall with new siding and the addition of the new basement bathroom and meeting room in progress. This is designed for access to restrooms without interruption of any rental of the main facilities. An additional AED will be located in the new area for outdoor sport players. The small meeting room will also provide additional rental revenue for the community association.

The hall will be arranging for the ACRD to complete a FireSmart Inspection. Community support information brochures for this program and more are available at the hall, or you can follow links to the [www.sproatlakecommunityassociation.com](http://www.sproatlakecommunityassociation.com).

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**SL Community Hall is rental ready** for your next event! Completed renovations of the kitchen, bathrooms, bar, and new outdoor deck are available! Information on how to book Sproat Lake's iconic rental, visit our SLCA website.

Pickle ball booking on the website.

The SLCA in partnership with the SLVFD are offering **free AED training**. Call Penny at 250-724-5040 or message to the SLCA website to sign up. The date will be announced soon.

## Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department

The SL Fire Department responded to 174 calls this year resulting from 78 medical calls, 40 automatic mutual aid calls outside of our area to help the other three fire departments, 24 Duty Officer calls, 14 motor vehicle incident calls, 10 Hydro calls, one structure fire, one chimney fire and three vehicle fires, five alarm call, and one public assist call. Thank you to those fire department members in our community for stepping up to the call. Residents all over Sproat Lake area are benefiting from the SL Fire and First Responders training and volunteer hours giving us the supports we need when we need them and the lowest insurance rates provided by our "Superior Shuttle Accreditation" designation. Reminder that the Faber Fire Hall #2 is an active first responder and training centre.

The Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department is looking for new members to join our fire department. If you like working alongside fellow members of your community and would like to see what it is like to do medical calls or train for fighting fires, please drop by one of the fire halls on a Tuesday night, or contact Chief Cann at 250-731-0936.



### Free FireSmart Home Assessments

Is your home FireSmart?

- ✓ Assessment from a FireSmart professional
- ✓ Opportunity to receive a \$1,000 rebate
- ✓ Identification of hazards & risks on your property
- ✓ Confidential report, advice & recommendations

**Book your assessment:**  
FireSmart@acrd.bc.ca  
250.720.2700



## FireSmart still offering tips and support

The ACRD FireSmart program assists residents with proper planning to possibly reduce the interface fire risk by following some simple FireSmart principles. Free advice is provided from the ACRD by contacting the FireSmart coordinator at [firesmart@acrd.bc.ca](mailto:firesmart@acrd.bc.ca) or call 250-720-2700.



### FREE RESIDENTIAL CURBSIDE PICKUP

FireSmart your property by removing excess vegetation debris and prunings

Serving Tseshaht First Nation, Hupacasath First Nation, Beaver Creek, Cherry Creek, Sproat Lake, Beaufort & City of Port Alberni.

**To request your curbside pick-up, contact:**  
**Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District**  
**250.720.2700 or firesmart@acrd.bc.ca**

**What is accepted?**

- ✓ Small trees, branches (max 4 inches in diameter)
- ✓ Two piles per property
- ✓ Max pile size (8ft x 8ft x 5ft high)
- ✓ Piles neatly stacked at curbside with butt ends facing the same direction

**What is not accepted?**

- ✗ Construction debris, garbage or organics
- ✗ Piles of gravel, dirt or roots covered with dirt
- ✗ Invasive species (including blackberry vines), grass clippings, leaves or soft material

**To learn more:**  
[www.firesmartbc.ca](http://www.firesmartbc.ca)

## Mosaic Forest Management Winter update 2025

Mosaic's net forestry in the Sarenga Road/Littleton Road area was completed in late 2023, and they were pleased to provide the Sproat Lake community with firewood opportunities in this area (special thanks to Director Cote for managing the permits to residents). The access road to this area has now been fully de-activated and planting was completed in 2024.

Mosaic's next forestry activities in this general area are west of Ash Main (see attached) and are scheduled to occur in the first quarter of 2025. To date, engagement has occurred with the Sproat Lake Woodlands Society (consistent with the MOU and ongoing meetings) and included field review throughout 2024. A field review also occurred with Director Cote and Joe Lamoureux (Sproat Lake Parks Commission) during 2024 and a community walk occurred in January 2025.

The proposed harvest (see map) is 100% second growth and includes various buffers, leave trees and internal/external retention.



Firewood permits may be available post operation for those from the community that are interested. Road construction is currently scheduled for March and harvest activities will follow (to avoid the busy summer months). If you have any questions, please contact Colin Koszman, Land Use Forester at [Colin.Koszman@MosaicForests.com](mailto:Colin.Koszman@MosaicForests.com).

Mosaic's Sponsorship and Donations program had another successful year where we supported many community groups throughout the coast, including many in the Alberni Valley. If any community groups wish to submit requests to this program do so at our website <https://www.mosaicforests.com/sponsorships-donations>.

## Preserving forest areas

Sproat Lake Woodlands Society continues to work to preserve forest areas of special nature and recreational value in the Sproat Lake area.

One of the society's goals is to encourage safe and responsible enjoyment of the forests. In the past year, society members have added additional trail signage and repaired or replaced several badly deteriorated bridges. A number of short informal hikes were arranged and were well attended. These were planned specifically to help those less familiar with the trail system to learn more about our local woodlands. In recent years Mosaic has provided the society with details well in advance and allowed the society's board to make input to these.

The winter's plan had been under discussion for over a year and has been modified to address some of the society's concerns. The changes have improved protection for seasonal watercourses, saved an especially beautiful area of large cedars, and reduced impact on a popular walking trail.

"The society works with other groups in the area who share an interest in the protection, conservation and enjoyment of local woodlands, and advocates with local and provincial government when concerns or opportunities arise."

For more information about the Sproat Lake Woodlands Society, contact [gary.mccaig@shaw.ca](mailto:gary.mccaig@shaw.ca).



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## Community forest feedback wanted

The Alberni Valley Community Forest Corporation (AVCFC) invites the public to review and comment on an online Forest Operations Map (FOM). The Alberni Valley Community Forest is located to the west of the City of Port Alberni in the vicinity of Sproat Lake and is comprised of two separate operating areas/forest development units, the Sproat (FDU) and the Taylor (FDU). There are five cutblocks and related roads in the Sproat FDU. A FOM is valid for the application of a cutting permit or road permit for three years starting of the date that the FOM review and commenting period commences. The FOM can be viewed by appointment at the AVCFC office, 7500 Airport Road, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 8Y9 between Feb 3 and March 5, 2025. Please call 250-731-7377. The FOM can also be viewed online at <https://fom.nrs.gov.bc.ca/public/projects>. Written comments must be received no later than March 5 and can be sent to Mike Davis RPF, [mike@econ.ca](mailto:mike@econ.ca) or mailed to the AVCFC at the above address. For more info contact: Chris Law AVCFC manager [manager@communityforest.ca](mailto:manager@communityforest.ca), 250-731-7377.

## Is it time for water conservation at Sproat Lake?

Sproat Lake Flood/drought management is an issue for many lake residents who watch the level of Sproat Lake hit record level highs and lows in recent years. The Somass Fish Flow committee is discussing with all levels of government - First Nations, fisheries, private land-owners, and Paper Excellence - the management of infrastructure that controls the level of Sproat Lake and Great Central Lake. The Sproat River weir plates were removed this fall. What will happen in the next 25 years to the environment for potable water and fish habitat? The SLCA Environmental Committee is newly formed. It will identify the environmental issues to ensure the health and protection of the Sproat Lake watershed to inform and educate landowners, visitors, and the government about the environmentally sustainable use of the watershed and riparian zone that are important to the community living around a lake. For more information check out the [www.sproatlakecommunityassociation.com](http://www.sproatlakecommunityassociation.com) website.

## Enjoy Sproat Lake's parks

SL Parks for 2025 invites the community to come play on the trails and in the parks. Cougar Smith Park had upgraded bathrooms, the tennis courts had cracks filled and painted, and there is new signage by the gazebo. The 2025 work plan includes lighting on outside of the bathroom building and the gazebo will get a new coat of paint. This park offers playground equipment for all ages and abilities, tennis/pickleball courts, basketball/hockey court, bike skills park, a great grassy area for field sports, and a covered gazebo with picnic tables.

Dickson Park (Faber Park) Neighbourhood Park has a new signage with very limited parking. Security is in place for the summer months. Park hours are between 9 am and 9 pm.

Lakeshore and Faber Trails continue to be very well used by the community and visitors. The Active Transportation Study identifies trail expansion and signage as top priorities. Plans to extend the Faber Trail to the Cougar Smith Park is in the works for this year. For SL Parks info or to volunteer, call the ACRD office at 250-720-2700 or see the ACRD website at [www.acrd.bc.ca](http://www.acrd.bc.ca).

## Spring means Broombusting

The Sproat Lake Broombusters held their Third Annual Broombusting Day on May 18, 2024. The target area for the year was the logging road and above Sproat Lake Park and the petroglyphs. They managed

to keep Broom out of the park, but the broom on the logging road threatened to spread. Although the day conflicted with several other Valley events, we still had 21 volunteers working. In total, 15 packed truck-loads of Broom were taken to the landfill! We were pleased that Mosaic opened the gates for this event and allowed the truck access. The volunteers enjoyed the volunteer luncheon again sponsored by ACRD Director Penny Cote – thanks very much! Thanks also to the Sproat Lake Community Association for use of the community hall and to Angela for all the food arrangements.

We are hoping to have several smaller broom busting events this coming spring – causal, drop-in work parties, as well as the annual event. Please contact Julia McCaig to help: [Juliana.mccaig@gmail.com](mailto:Juliana.mccaig@gmail.com).

## SLCA group water test for E. Coli and Total Coliforms

Tests are offered at a discounted group rate of \$80 per test is scheduled for Monday, March 24, 2025 (This is at a minimum \$85.50 value plus free transportation to Courtenay lab and report.) Water sample bottles and requisition forms are continually available for individual testing at the **ACRD Office** at 3008 5th Ave. Monday to Friday 8 am to 4:30 pm or at the **Tseshah Market and Sproat Lake Landing (Della's Café)**, during business hours from **March 17 to 24, 2025**. Water samples are to be taken Monday morning, **March 24, 2025**, and delivered with completed requisition form and payment of \$80 (to SLCA) to the **Sproat Lake Community Hall between 9 and 11 am on March 24, 2025** for transport to Bureau Veritas Laboratory in Courtenay. This is a great opportunity to test water filtration systems and lake sources, wells, etc. It is always advisable to treat or boil raw water. Free septic dye tests are also available upon request at the ACRD Office.

## Solid Waste Management Plan update

Phase 2 of Public Engagement also took place in October through November with 19 meetings held in 10 communities during the engagement period. It focused on sharing information regarding the progress to date, the solid waste system overview, and consulting the public on the proposed strategies for feedback and support. A summary report to highlight the key results of the public engagement sessions will be brought to the ACRD Board of Directors later in March.

## Track progress on ACRD's website

The ACRD Development Application Status Trackers are now posted and available on the ACRD website for rezoning, development variances, and temporary development applications by Electoral Area, civic address, date received, status, progress, and date of most recent activity.

Applications will be updated each month, while Temporary Use Permit tracker will be updated as TUPs are issued by the ACRD Board. See the ACRD website at [www.acrd.bc.ca](http://www.acrd.bc.ca) for these updates.

## Garbage and abandoned wharves are all of our concern

If you are replacing an old wharf please act responsibly! It is illegal to dispose of old wharves on Crown Land and the Province may charge removal to the owner.

Please have old wharves disposed of in an environmentally safe and sensitive manner. Report illegal poachers and polluters by calling 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP), cellular #7277, or report violation online at the Ministry of Environment Conservation Officer Service Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) [website](http://www.rapp.ca). Thank you for your consideration of our water protection.

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## SPROAT LAKE OCP UPDATE

*What's the future for Sproat Lake?*

### Sproat Lake & Area Official Community Plan Update

#### Introduction

The ACRD is starting to update the Sproat Lake (Area "D") Official Community Plan (OCP). An OCP establishes a community vision over a short- (five year) and long-term (10 to 20 year) period, while addressing topics such as land use, housing, growth, and the environment. An OCP helps determine where people will live, work, and play, and how they move around.

The purpose of this OCP update is to establish a plan that better reflects the community's needs and interests, while also aligning with the updated provincial legislation and other ACRD plans and initiatives.

#### The OCP Area

The OCP area encompasses approximately 36% of the entire Sproat Lake Electoral Area (EA) "D" and includes most of Great Central Lake, which is part of the Somass watershed.

The area is home to many provincial and regional parks, as well as campsites. A long history of industrial uses is associated with the OCP area. The existence of petroglyphs at the eastern end of Sproat Lake and culturally modified trees throughout the area are evidence of an even longer history of First Nations occupation and use of the land.

EA "D" is located entirely within the traditional territories of the čišaaʔath (Tseshaht First Nation) and Hupačasath First Nation. It is also adjacent to the First Nation reserves of Tsahaheh (Tseshaht First Nation) and Klehkoot (Hupačasath First Nation).

#### Why update the plan now?

The current OCP was adopted in 2014 and has influenced local land use for more than 10 years.

#### What does this mean to you?

It's important that the community vision in an OCP is created with and supported by the community. An OCP influences the neighbourhoods you live in, for topics like where parks are located, the types of homes that are built, and how the environment is protected.

The OCP will also influence regional land use, so it's important that community and First Nation members are involved throughout the process.

#### Project Phases

The estimated project phase timeline is as follows:

Phase 1: Project Initiation | WINTER 2025

Phase 2: Background Research | SPRING 2025

Phase 3: Vision and Goals | SPRING - SUMMER 2025

Phase 3: Create the Plan | SUMMER - FALL 2025

Phase 4: Plan Completion | WINTER 2026

#### Handbook

To plan the future of Sproat Lake together, we need to discuss numerous topics, involve the community and consider many different viewpoints. The Sproat Lake OCPizza Party Discussion Guide & Handbook (Handbook) has been created to collect feedback. The Handbook will be available from February 3 to March 31, 2025. To fill out the Handbook visit: [letsconnectacrd.ca/sproat-lake-ocp](https://letsconnectacrd.ca/sproat-lake-ocp) and scroll to "Document Library."

Get together with your family, friends, neighbours, or community groups. You may also complete this handbook on your own.

#### How Can I Get Involved?

Each phase of the project will include community involvement and input. Community members are encouraged to get involved by following the project page: [letsconnectacrd.ca/sproat-lake-ocp](https://letsconnectacrd.ca/sproat-lake-ocp)

**Don't forget to subscribe to receive project updates!**

The Sproat Lake and Area Official Community Plan (OCP) is being updated.

The updated OCP will provide a short and long term vision for where people live, work, play, and how they move around.

**We want to hear from you!**

