



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District

Sproat Lake Newsletter

Sproat Lake Community Newsletter - Summer 2024

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)

Farewell to the Martin Mars Water Bombers

Join the Sproat Lake Community Association, along with Coulson Aviation and the BC Aviation Museum, to bid farewell to the Martin Mars Bombers on Saturday, July 27, 2024 between 11 am and 3 pm at the Sproat Lake Community Hall. Come and share memories and honour the beloved flying tankers, the companies and people who worked in this industry.

On March 28, Coulson's Aviation and the provincial tourism ministry 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 Space Museum in Arizona.

This event promises to be a memorable day filled with activities and community spirit! Food and memorabilia sales available on site.

Organizers will need many volunteers, so please volunteer, so please drop them an email to getinvolved@sproatlakecommunityassociation.com if you can help. Looking forward to seeing you all there. Parking will be at a premium so it is recommended to ride a bike or walk to this event.

Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department (SLVFD)

Join us to Explore Fire Safety at our Annual Open House, Saturday June 22, 10 am to 2 pm. Meet our local firefighters at the Harold Bishop Fire Hall, explore our station and equipment, and learn about fire safety and prevention. Enjoy interactive demonstrations and refreshments. This is a community event, so bring family and friends to learn more about your local fire department, and how we serve you.

The Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department took possession of our newest truck a couple of weeks ago. This truck will be replacing one of our tenders. It is bigger and holds 25% more water. It will serve in our fleet for the next 20-plus years.

Faber Road Fire Hall #2 is an active first responder and

training center. Always looking for new recruits. Check out the Sproat Lake Fire Department website for information on how to volunteer.

On March 21, we learned of the passing of Peggy Bishop, the widow of our former Fire Chief, Harold Bishop, who served our department for over 30 years. Peggy was a stalwart supporter of our department, standing by her husband through the challenges and triumphs of his tenure as the longest-serving Fire Chief in BC. Peggy was well known in our community for her kindness, generosity, and unwavering support for the Sproat Lake Volunteer Fire Department.

The SLVFD is proud to have one of our members, and cancer survivor, participate in this year's Tour De Rock bike ride that covers the length of Vancouver Island, with a stop in the Alberni Valley. You can donate to his ride by going to our website at sproatlakefire.ca and click on the link there.

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 or call 250-720-2700.

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Lightening on the Lake returns

Lightning on the Lake takes over Sproat Lake July 6 and 7, 2024 for two days of drag boat races, featuring Formula One boats and more.

The original Sproat Lake Regatta was held in 1928 featuring boats up to 20 horsepower and races up to five miles long. Spectators welcome at the Sproat Lake Provincial Park with admission by donation. This year the races will be Remembering and Honouring, Ray Nass who was one of the founding members, who first raced at Sproat Lake back in the 1960s.

If you would like to volunteer contact avrapresident@gmail.com. Looking forward to seeing all the boat enthusiasts there.

Is it time for water conservation on Sproat Lake?

Sproat Lake flood/drought management is an issue for many lake residents that watch the level of Sproat Lake hit record level highs and lows. The Somass Fish Flow committee is discussing with all levels of government, first nations, fisheries, private land-owners and the management of infrastructure that controls the level of Sproat Lake and Great Central Lake. What will happen in the next 25 years to the environment for potable water and fish habitat?

Sproat Lake Official Community Plan (OCP) Update

The South Long Beach and Sproat Lake OCPs will be reviewed and updated by a consultant and staff-led team, beginning in June 2024 with the South Long Beach OCP and with the Sproat Lake OCP update starting in September 2024.

The updates will include community engagement throughout the project. The community will be notified how to participate and share your voice in the visioning of the OCP. For more information contact Planning staff at planning@acrd.bc.ca.

Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) - Secondary Suites

ACRD Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment P1500 is being considered for approval so that the ACRD will meet provincial mandated compliance with housing regulations in the Local Government Act.

This bylaw will permit one secondary suite within the principal dwelling (not detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or suites within an accessory building) on all lots with no minimum lot size that are zoned for only single-family residential use. This will enable SSMUH legislation to allow secondary suites in all single-family zones, prior to the statutory deadline of June 30th, 2024.

The zoning will continue to permit ADUs as detached units or within accessory buildings on lots that are larger than 0.4 hectare (one acre), with an overall maximum of two dwellings on a residential or rural lot.

The bylaw also includes updates to the setbacks and lot coverage in the Acreage Residential (RA3) District to be less restrictive on housing development.

For more information contact Planning staff at planning@acrd.bc.ca or go to: www.acrd.bc.ca/events/26-6-2024/.

Get the facts on short-term vacation rentals

Short-term vacation rentals (STR) are not permitted in the ACRD without a Temporary Use Permit (TUP), and must adhere to the ACRD regulations and requirements. You do not have to live in the STR to rent your property. For more information on STRs go to www.acrd.bc.ca/str. The Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw and Notice Dispute Adjudication System for ticketing unauthorized STRs is authorized by the ACRD Board for Zoning Bylaw infractions. Please call the ACRD for more information or go to www.acrd.bc.ca/bylawenforcement.

ACRD Agriculture water grant approved

The Request for Proposal has been posted for specialist consultant services to facilitate the Agricultural Water Plan project. This is a fully grant-funded project to explore opportunities and requirements for agricultural water in the Alberni Valley, both now and projected into the future. If all goes well, the contract will be awarded to the successful proponent at the July ACRD Board meeting.

ACRD Development Application Status Trackers

These are now posted and available on the ACRD website here www.acrd.bc.ca/planning for rezoning, development variances, and temporary use permit (TUP) applications by Electoral Area, civic address, date received, status, progress, and date of most recent activity. Applications will be updated each month, while TUP tracker will be updated as TUPs are issued by the ACRD Board.

Sproat Lake Active Transportation Study

SL Active Transportation study hosted an Open House on May 15, 2024 at the Sproat Lake Community Hall for community input on a study to identify issues around the area regarding the access for active transportation in the community. Road repair, trail expansion and signage were top priorities. The ACRD is bringing the completed study back to the SL Parks for further consultation before it goes to the ACRD Board for final adoption or revisioning.

Parks and trails updates

SL Parks for 2024 invites the community to come play on the trails and in the parks.

Cougar Smith Park has a new welcoming sign and renovated bathrooms for park visitors. This park offers playground equipment for all ages and abilities, tennis/pickleball courts, basketball/hockey court, bike skills park and 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.

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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 see the ACRD website at www.acrd.bc.ca.

SL Community Pickleball

Sessions are ongoing, and you are invited to join in the fun! Ladies Open Play is on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Men's Open Play is on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings and starting June 16, Sunday mornings will be Mixed Open Challenge Play.

Much appreciation goes out to the volunteers that helped with the installation of the new fencing and clearing around the outdoor pickleball courts. The SLCA reminds everyone that for liability purposes the pickleball courts are restricted to registered participants only, and everyone must sign a waiver, including house guests, before accessing the courts. Kindly visit the website at www.sproatlakecommunityassociation.com for more details and to register. We look forward to seeing you there!

Are you concerned about invasive carp in Sproat Lake?

SLCA is hosting guest speaker Brendan Anderson, Senior Fisheries Biologists from the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship. He will be speaking to our community about the invasion of carp/koi in our lake on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 at the SL Community Hall. He will give a detailed presentation on understanding the threat invasive carp pose to Sproat Lake and how it is being addressed, followed by a Q & A session. Information on this session will be posted on the Sproat Lake Community Association website with a summary.

Sproat Lake Community Association update

The Sproat Lake Community Association invites residents to participate in our **community survey** on their website to share your thoughts on various topics. Completing the survey takes about five minutes and will allow you to enter a draw to win a \$50 Visa gift card. The survey will remain open until August 16

SL Community **Hall rental is ready** for your next event! Renovations of the kitchen, bathrooms, bar, and new outdoor deck are now complete and ready to be used! Information on how to book Sproat Lake's iconic rental, visit our SLCA website or contact a board member.



Marine Patrol hits the water for 2024

Sproat Lake Marine Patrol (SLMP) is back for the summer months at the Sproat Lake Provincial Park Boat Launch. The ACRD hired four students to run a program assisting in boating safety, offering boat checks, assisting in launches, along with their other duties as ambassadors to the community.

Out on their patrols, they are cleaning beaches, helping boaters with dead batteries, and so much more. They provide information on water and boating safety, and etiquette, invasive species, maps and there is also a free lifejacket loaner program available at the boat launch.

Before the end of the school year, the SLMP team visits local schools with education to students on water safety and the message that "kids don't float". The SLMP has developed social media platforms through Tiktok and Facebook to promote safe, fun, and environmentally responsible marine culture. Wishing everyone a safe and happy summer.

Be sure to keep an eye out for the SLMP on the water and give them a wave. To contact the Sproat Lake Marine Patrol Instagram - [@Sproatlakemarinepatrol](https://www.instagram.com/Sproatlakemarinepatrol) Tiktok - [@Sproatlakemarinepatrol](https://www.tiktok.com/@Sproatlakemarinepatrol) - Facebook - [Sproat Lake Marine Patrol](https://www.facebook.com/SproatLakeMarinePatrol) - Email - slmp@acrd.bc.ca ACRD office - 250-720-2700.

25 years of Dragon Boating at Sproat Lake

On Sunday, June 9, the West Coast Dragon Boat Association held their annual Dragon Boating Regatta at Sproat Lake Provincial Park with 18 paddling teams from Vancouver Island and Powell River participating. They also celebrated 25 years of dragon boating in the Alberni Valley. They hosted their first mixed regatta in 2002 and added a ladies event in 2007, and they have been hosting them ever since.

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A combined Sproat Lake team - made up of members of the Diehard Dragons and Sproatness Dragons - competed in this year's mixed event. It was a great chance to give new paddlers an opportunity to try out racing.



The local teams also compete in out-of-town races. The Sproatness Dragons are pictured above with their Women's B Finals silver medals at the Fairway Gorge Paddling Centre Super Sprints in May.

Teams practise on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and new members are always welcome. For more information, check out the West Coast Dragon Boat Society's Facebook page.

Busting Broom

The Sproat Lake Broombusters had a very successful cutting season this year. On its third Annual Community Broombusting Day, May 18, 16 volunteers came out in the pouring rain and cut down 11 truckloads and two utility trailers of broom! They cut broom along the road just above Sproat Lake Provincial Park - removing broom there will curtail the spread of broom into the Park.

Thanks to Penny Cote, our ACRD rep, who once again provided a luncheon for the volunteers and to the Sproat Lake Community Association that gave access to the Community Hall. Thanks also to our volunteer who arranged all the food and made the luncheon such a treat. Since that day, several broom busters have continued to cut broom above the park and along industrial road leading to the park. There are another 10 truckloads that will be taken to the landfill! Thanks to Mosaic who gave us access to those roads. And a special thanks to the many individuals who cut broom in their neighbourhoods and along woodland trails. Way to go! Isn't it a great pleasure to turn off the highway and see only green? For more info, go to www.broombusters.org/alberni-valley/

Community Forest update

Alberni Valley Community Forest Corporation (AVCFC) announced a dividend cheque to the City of Port Alberni for \$300,000 for the operating year of 2023.

This came from profits of harvesting trees in the Sproat Lake Community Watershed. Harvesting took place on the north side of Sproat Lake and none of it was visible from residential areas of the valley. There will be no harvesting operations summer 2024. AVCFC is working to harvest in a sustainable manner and is harvesting less than the prescribed allowable cut set by the BC government.

AVCFC planted 40,000 trees in the spring of 2024 and are currently caught up planting all harvested areas. AVCFC will be doing planning work summer 2024 to find the next areas for harvesting. Any future harvest plans will be advertised and made available to the public before harvesting commences.

For further information contact Chris Law, AVCFC manager, at manager@communityforest.ca.

New committee takes on environmental issues

SLCA Environmental Committee is a newly formed group to identify the environmental issues and ensure the health and protection of the Sproat Lake watershed. They will 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 sproatlakecommunityassociation.com.

Water tests available

SLCA Group Water Tests for E. Coli and Total Coliforms at a discounted group rate of \$75 per test is scheduled for Monday, July 8, 2024. (This is a \$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 Fifth Avenue, Monday to Friday 8 am to 4:30 pm or for this test at the Tseshaht Market, Sproat Lake Landing (Della's Café) during business hours from June 28, until July 8, 2024. Water samples are to be taken Monday morning, July 8, 2024, and delivered with completed requisition form and payment of \$75 (to SLCA) to the Sproat Lake Community Hall on Monday, July 8, 2024 between 9 to 11 am 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.

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. Thank you for your consideration of our water protection.