



Shawnigan-Showe'luqun Focus

Volume Seventeen- Issue Nine

September 2026 Tum'qwe'unhw
"The time when the leaves turn colour"

A Non-Profit Community Publication

So You Want to Be Area Director...

Each of the three announced candidates for Area B-Shawnigan Lake were given the same 4 items to respond to. Below in alphabetical order are their answers...

Kim Barnard
Why people should vote for me...
I'm a community builder and proven leader with a history of participating, communicating and advocating for our area. I've lived in Shawnigan Lake for over 30 years, raising my family and running a home-based business that got its start at Discovery Elementary's community craft fair. My ongoing volunteering and presence at meetings and events celebrates the spirit of Shawnigan Lake in a "Here for You, Shawnigan!" "Together We Care" capacity. Count on my responsive leadership, scrutiny of spending and operational policies for affordability, advocacy for seniors and youth, emergency preparedness amongst neighbours, and encouraging the best of lakeside life in Shawnigan's vulnerable mixed use watershed. I've participated on CVRD Recreation, "Think Shawnigan" and Waste Management committees, and been regularly attending CVRD meetings to closely follow the decision-making deliberations and provide much-needed public input. My 100% self-funded and 99% sign-free Kim-for-Shawnigan.com campaign centers on the pillars of community participation, transparent communication, and relentless advocacy. I aim to serve as a responsive conduit for Shawnigan residents in local government and beyond. Paying attention to the issues we face and working collaboratively, I dedicate my energy toward stewardship of Shawnigan Lake's economic, social and environmental well-being for present and future generations.

What is the essence of Shawnigan Lake to me - In your opinion what are the three major goals that Shawnigan should focus on during the next 4 years?
To me, Shawnigan is HOME, a shared place of belonging that brings me joy. I'm running to improve on CONNECTION - amongst neighbours, in emergency preparedness, and ensuring reliable infrastructure and communication to support and bring us together. Locals and visitors value OPPORTUNITIES for all ages to enjoy learning and sharing skills
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(C and talents through markets, murals and

Netta Bos
Why people should vote for me...
Shawnigan doesn't need a politician who simply sits at the regional table. We need an independent voice who listens, asks tough questions, brings people together and gets things done. For 38 years, Shawnigan has been part of my DNA. I know its people, its character and the things that make this community special. I also understand that protecting what we value requires someone willing to listen, do the homework, challenge assumptions and follow through. Throughout my career, I've worked with communities, businesses and organizations to solve problems, bring people together and turn ideas into action, and that the best solutions come from listening to different perspectives, asking the right questions and finding common ground. That is the kind of representative and community builder I intend to be. My heart is with Shawnigan. The next four years will shape our community for years to come. I am running to be a strong, effective voice at the regional table to protect what we value, address the challenges ahead and help build a resilient, connected and thriving community. I'm asking for your vote, your trust and the opportunity to serve. Together, let's build the Shawnigan we want for the future.

What is the essence of Shawnigan Lake to me - In your opinion what are the three major goals that Shawnigan should focus on during the next 4 years?
Shawnigan Lake is more than a place to live. It is a community proud to call Shawnigan home. A place where neighbours care for one another, rural living matters, and the outdoors is part of everyday life. From homesteaders and young families to seniors and recreational users, we share a strong connection to this place. Shawnigan is in our DNA. We have also proven that we will fiercely protect our lake, our environment and our way of life. I believe Shawnigan needs a voice at the
(continued on p3)

Kyle Cheveldayoff
Why people should vote for me...
I grew up in Edmonton, dreaming of being an Architect, and started my training at NAIT. I shifted into the health sciences, completed degrees in Kinesiology and Physical Therapy, then spent ten years with the Calgary Fire Department as a Firefighter while operating a small renovation business on my days off. During those years I trained as a Fire Investigator and Inspector, and was licensed provincially as a Fire Safety Codes Officer. I retrained as a Psychologist and have practiced for over a decade, specializing in stress management. My background informs me of how policies impact people, whether it is land-use restricting an expanding family, lack of affordable housing, or stress in the home and in the community. I've heard from youth who feel lost, young voters with little hope, new families who cannot afford land, parents whose adult kids can't move out, people hiding in tiny homes because of outdated bylaws, and grandparents who want to age in place near their grandchildren. I've spent my life solving problems for people and businesses, and I want to bring those skills to Shawnigan Lake residents and the greater CVRD so we can have better control of the system that manages us.

What is the essence of Shawnigan Lake to me - In your opinion what are the three major goals that Shawnigan should focus on during the next 4 years?
People move to Shawnigan for the lake, the forests, the homesteads, the Valley lifestyle, and the independence of living outside a city. First major goal is fiscal accountability and transparency, with a zero-net tax increase focus. Before new taxes are suggested, future Services or Bylaws proposed, or external consultants hired, the CVRD should annually audit existing Services for idle surplus and reallocate. Function 325 (Community Planning) holds over \$1.5 million in operating surplus and we need to find ways to amend other Services to access any idle surplus of tax dollars. If possible, the costs outlined in the upcoming referendum
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Ever wonder why nothing ever gets done around here? Areas A B C get 3 votes out of 16 votes. Vote YES for more autonomy!
Sierra Acton
Area B CVRD Director
Referendum Question to Create a new Line Item (This is how a Regional District has to function)
Shawnigan Lake, Mill Bay and Cobble Hill struggle in a Regional District System, our three electoral area directors can easily be outvoted at the

Regional District board table of 16 (sometimes 9).
There are 16 votes on regional matters, and only 3 represent South Cowichan. And 9 votes when the municipalities are excluded, which only happens on land use matters.
That means South Cowichan's priorities are being overshadowed, even though our communities are growing and our needs are increasing. Getting regional funds to address local issues is unlikely to be supported by other areas.
A YES vote will not change the governance structure or give South Cowichan more votes. It gives the three

South Cowichan directors a dedicated tool and funding to work together; focus on local priorities, and develop projects to fix local issues that can attract provincial and federal funding.
If we want to solve local issues, we need local studies... Upper levels of government will only help us if we have the data and the plan. They will help fund the studies but we need the line item that says we want to collaboratively solve some of our issues. Please take a look at the findings.
Read the South Cowichan Community Issues Assessment: [https://www.planyourcowichan.ca/south-](https://www.planyourcowichan.ca/south-cowichan-community-issues-assessment)

[cowichan-community-issues-assessment](#)
Vote YES to strengthen South Cowichan's ability to get things done.
Did You Know?
•Area B (Shawnigan Lake) represents approximately 26% of the Electoral Area population, yet has only 1 vote out of 9 on Electoral Area Committee matters and 1 vote out of 16 on the full Regional District Board.
•Areas A, B, and C (Mill Bay, Shawnigan Lake, and Cobble Hill) together account for approximately 50% of the Electoral Area population, but collectively hold only 3 of the 9 Electoral Area votes.

As always I'm available Shawnigan Lake, do connect, but make it quick, Sierra Acton.
Ideas
Your area directors want to fix the problems... we all run for office because we want to help out community and move the ball forward.
We hear you and we know some issues have "obvious" solutions, however convincing 13 other directors to help figure out and fund that "obvious" the solution typically falls on deaf ears.
For example, the people in Saltair don't want to pay to fix our storm water or snow removal problems.

South Cowichan Library Shawnigan Focus Weather — August 2026

Monica Finn
South Cowichan Library
250-743-5436
southcowichan@virl.bc.ca

https://www.facebook.com/
VIRLSouthCowichan

- The Inspired by Reading Book Club, hosted by the Cowichan South Arts Guild, starting meeting again in October so now is the time to start reading! The group meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 5:15-6:45pm. The October 8 meeting will be a discussion on How to Survive a Bear Attack: A Memoir by Claire Cameron.
- Check the South Cowichan Seed Library for winter vegetables! Seeds are generously donated by West Coast Seeds and our community. As grocery prices rise, consider planting extra to store or share.
- Tech Help: Drop in Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays or make an appointment for one-on-one help with a mobile device or laptop.
- LEGO® Club happens every Tuesday, 2-5pm. We provide the LEGO (and Duplo) and you supply the imagination. Come ready to build! This is a free, drop-in event.
- Intermediate Conversational

- Spanish meets 5:30 to 6:30pm on Thursdays. Drop in to practice Spanish in a casual setting.
- Conversational Scottish Gaelic is a fun way to learn and practice Scottish Gaelic. Join in at 4:30pm on Tuesdays, restarting on Sep 8 after a summer hiatus.
 - Intermediate Chess meets Wednesdays at 1pm. For experienced players looking for matches.

If you know someone local who is unable to come into the library due to illness or injury, please let them know about our volunteer **Home Delivery service**. The library stocks **period products** in the washroom using donations of items or money to support this. Thank you.

Find out more at virl.bc.ca and on Facebook at VI Regional Library South Cowichan.

The South Cowichan Library in the Mill Bay Centre is open:

- 10am - 6pm, Monday and Tuesday
- 10am - 7pm, Wednesday to Saturday
- 10am - 6pm Friday & Saturday,

Find out more at virl.bc.ca and at <https://www.facebook.com/VIRLSouthCowichan>

Stats courtesy of [UVic Weather Network](#) and [Weather Underground](#)
Reported by Grant Treloar

	August Normal	Cigarmaker's Bay		Butler Road		Discovery School		Museum		Shawnigan Average	
		2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
Average High	23.6	27.0	27.5	26.3	27.2	26.0	26.9	26.0	27.0	26.3	27.2
Average Low	12.0	13.3	14.0	10.5	11.6	13.0	13.8	13.7	14.7	12.6	13.5
Extreme High	36.1	34.1	36.0	31.0	35.0	30.7	35.0	32.3	36.2	32.0	35.6
Extreme Low	3.3	9.6	10.0	6.6	7.1	9.0	9.6	9.5	10.7	8.7	9.4
Precipitation	27.9	10.6	52.1	6.7	43.7	11.8	31.6	11.7	32.0	10.2	39.9
Days w precip	6	2	3	2	3	2	4	1	3	2	3
Year Precip	682.8	716.9	681.8	562.5	557.3	540.0	507.8	471.1	466.0	572.6	553.2

2026 Rank since 1914: 12th warmest, 32nd driest

Lake Readings	Aug 2	Aug 9	Aug 16	Aug 23	Aug 30
Temperature	23°	24°	24°	24°	22°
Temperature 2025	24°	24°	22°	23°	23°
Surface Elevation	116.05m	116.01m	115.99m	115.98m	115.95m
Elevation 2025	115.98m	115.95m	115.95m	115.94m	115.93m

Opinion

Stop Bubble-Wrapping the neighbours' kids

Brian Terris
Shawnigan Lake

I've lived in the Shawnigan community for more than twenty years and have witnessed many changes. After reading the recent opinion piece regarding young people riding off-road motorcycles on local roads, I found myself wondering about the direction our community is heading.

One of the things I have always appreciated about Shawnigan Lake is that it remains a rural community where people generally respect the

choices of others, provided those choices do not directly interfere with their own ability to enjoy life. Rural living has traditionally offered a degree of freedom and independence that many people specifically seek when they choose to leave the city behind.

Like the author, I have noticed an increase in young riders travelling on paved roads. Some of these riders are undoubtedly unlicensed, and some occasionally show off with a wheelie or two. Yes, these activities may be illegal. However, our roads are filled every day with people speeding, rolling through stop signs, using mobile phones while driving, or committing countless other infractions. The

existence of risk or the occasional violation of the law is not, by itself, evidence of a crisis.

The opinion piece focused heavily on the possibility of injury or death. While any serious accident is a tragedy, life itself involves risk. We manage risk every day rather than attempting to eliminate it entirely. Children ride bicycles, climb trees, swim in lakes, and play sports. Each activity carries the possibility of injury. The goal is not to remove all risk from life, but to teach people how to assess it and manage it responsibly.

As someone who has spent time riding motorcycles on-road and off-road, I would argue that trail riding

can often be more hazardous than travelling on a quiet paved road. Riders navigate rough terrain, steep slopes, hidden obstacles, and narrow trails lined with trees. Crashes happen, and unlike cars, trees rarely move out of the way.

What concerns me most is a growing tendency to view every activity through the lens of potential danger. If our standard becomes that no one should engage in an activity unless it is completely safe, we risk raising a generation that is protected from every hazard but deprived of opportunities to develop confidence, resilience, and judgement.

People move to rural communities for many reasons. They come to be closer to nature, to enjoy a quieter lifestyle, and to have freedoms that are increasingly restricted in urban environments. That freedom comes with responsibilities, and parents should ensure their children understand the risks associated with their activities. But it should not come with an expectation that every aspect of rural life must conform to urban sensibilities.

Safety is important. Personal responsibility is important. But so too are freedom, independence, and the understanding that some degree of risk is simply part of living a full life.

It's true, with us, mechanical problems melt away.

Maintenance Offer Book an appointment now

Back to School Time!

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'A safe car is a safe drive!'

2-Stroke Bar & Chain Oil Available Now!

100 years as purveyors of the finest petroleum products to the Shawnigan Lake community!

Kim Barnard

(continued from p1)

and talents through markets, murals and music venues, also a priority! I'm committed to our WELL-BEING - the online and in-person pulse and vibe of our community that includes nature, wildlife and a variety of people and their stories. In Shawnigan we have young families, commuters, home-based businesses, folks on disability, caregivers, retirees and young adults needing flexible housing and services. Let's maintain the roads, transit, pathways and gathering spaces to collectively grow our sense of well-being that extends beyond our own doors. Defining all of life here is our lake, a key source of drinking water for Shawnigan Village and Shawnigan North, and our forest habitats which are under increasing threat of wildfire and over-development, and the shared uses of recreation and habitation. As we encourage residents and visitors to practice taking care, I believe we set an example by our everyday actions and attitude. This too is Shawnigan!

What is your position on whether Shawnigan Lake would be better served if it was incorporated as a municipality together with Cobble Hill and Mill Bay?

No, with respect. Any discussion of potential incorporation must first acknowledge the history, administration and ongoing investments of the Shawnigan Lake Improvement District. We are already distinct within the CVRD to retain Shawnigan jurisdiction regarding this vital service. This Board of Trustees oversees our volunteer fire department and first responders, and related responsibilities including street lighting, maintaining equipment and comprehensive training. I respect this continued service, and am not in favour of its dissolution. Provincial authorities set the criteria for readiness for incorporation. Examine why numerous prior attempts to move towards incorporation have failed. The number one community goal is to demonstrate unity, and equally important is a robust tax base in order to afford the costs of administration and government staffing and service level functions. Meanwhile, the Capital Regional District grows ever northward. Consider the boundaries of the Provincial Electoral District "Juan de Fuca - Malahat". All 3 CVRD Areas now sit alongside Sooke and Metchosin, possibly pointing to the future the province envisions for us. Lastly, Shawnigan Lake currently has a distinct set of zoning and bylaws that I am in favour of improving to reflect how we actually live here, to maximize our available resources within the CVRD.

What is your position on growth in Shawnigan, and what policies would you propose to manage it?

Growth in Shawnigan is currently constrained by available water licensing and sewer infrastructure. There's been attempts to define Growth Containment Boundaries so as to cluster infill development along existing services. I live in the Shawnigan Beach Estates which as one of Shawnigan's first suburbs was controversial amongst cabin culture, but was designed with extensive greenbelt areas that also serve as thriving wildlife corridors. Those of us with outdoor roaming pets and backyard chickens continue to learn to co-exist with hungry birds, deer, bears, raccoons and cougars! Nevertheless, this style of development could guide other projects that could also offer smaller affordable units for accommodation. I would also like to see tiny homes and detached rental suites increasingly permitted to help homeowners and others afford independence. Shawnigan could definitely use more off-grid technology such as alternative power sources, rainwater harvesting and storage, and safe, innovative solutions for managing waste rather than relying on aging septic and sewer systems. There's been much hype surrounding the CVRD's soon-to-launch Land Use Management software, promoted as a tool for staff and developers to streamline applications. The years of delays are being felt, and the new Board will need this available to help manage growth effectively.

Netta Bos

(continued from p1)

CVRD focused on three priorities:
1. PROTECT OUR LAKE. Advocate for protecting our water, responsible growth and policies that protect Shawnigan's rural character and environment.
2. GET OUR FAIR SHARE. Shawnigan residents contribute to regional taxes and deserve infrastructure, services and investment that reflect our community's needs. I will work to ensure priorities are clearly established, commitments are followed through and available funding opportunities are pursued.
3. STRENGTHEN SHAWNIGAN'S VOICE. As Area Director, I will listen to residents, bring their priorities to the regional table, participate in developing policy and vote on the decisions that affect our community. I may not control every outcome, but I can ensure Shawnigan is heard, represented and advocated for.

Would Shawnigan be better served if it was incorporated as a municipality with Cobble Hill and Mill Bay?

I would not start with the answer already decided. Shawnigan Lake, Cobble Hill and Mill Bay are growing communities, and there may be real advantages to greater local control and accountability. At the same time, it could bring additional responsibilities, costs, and implications for taxes and services. We should also recognize the benefits of the current electoral area model, where services and administrative costs are shared through the regional district. Our communities are distinct, even though we share many interests. Any governance discussion must reflect those differences and consider what is best for all. Housing is another important consideration. We need diverse housing options for younger families, workers and seniors to keep our community vibrant and affordable. Additional water and sanitary infrastructure may be necessary to support growth. If incorporation provides greater access to borrowing for this infrastructure, the consequences of remaining at our current scale may ultimately be more significant than the costs of incorporation. An independent governance study examining incorporation, municipal boundaries and alternatives within the regional district model would ensure we get the facts to make an informed decision. It's been discussed for decades; many have met to explore the possibility. Ultimately this decision belongs to the community.

What is your position on growth in Shawnigan, and what policies would you propose to manage it?

Growth is going to happen, with or without us. The question is not whether we are for or against growth, but what kind of growth makes sense, where it belongs and what our communities can reasonably support. I support thoughtful, managed growth that respects our character while protecting our watershed, environment, neighbourhoods and quality of life. That means supporting appropriate development where infrastructure and services can reasonably accommodate it, and ensuring roads, water, wastewater and other community needs are considered as part of the planning process. We also need reasonable housing choices for our youth, families and seniors, recognizing one solution will not fit all. Where appropriate, I support balanced approaches to infill housing and short-term rentals that respect both community concerns and responsible property ownership. Most importantly, residents deserve a meaningful voice in decisions that shape their community. Public engagement should happen early, when input can influence policy and decisions not after the important choices have been made. ThinkShawnigan has demonstrated that our community can come together to envision a future that respects both growth and character. I will advocate for decisions that provide a lasting net benefit to Shawnigan.

Kyle Cheveldayoff

(continued from p1)

would not come from taxes. Second, affordable housing and land-use solutions. Shawnigan needs more land available for expanding families and those wanting to age in place. That means smarter subdivision policy, not blanket growth or blanket refusal. We are in an affordable housing crisis and new solutions are needed to make more land available in ways that will complement the needs of families and nature. Third is water issues. Stormwater runoff, lake health, drinking water, and other water concerns are of great importance for our future. Coordinated efforts between various departments and agencies will be needed to strategize for future success.

Would Shawnigan be better served if it was incorporated as a municipality with Cobble Hill and Mill Bay?

Incorporation means Shawnigan, Cobble Hill, and Mill Bay would form their own municipality with a local council, instead of CVRD governance. It is a complex decision with trade-offs, and residents want to know more. The October 17th referendum is not a vote on incorporation. It asks whether to fund studies on how the three areas can work better together, share services, and coordinate infrastructure. That information would help residents understand what incorporation might look like, but the two are separate questions. Incorporation would move the three areas from the Local Government Act, which governs regional districts, to the Community Charter, which governs municipalities. That changes how services are delivered, budgeted, and funded, such as new policing costs for communities over 5,000 people. As Area Director, my job is to bring the community's voice forward. Over the past six months I have clearly heard that people want this explored openly, with plain-language information on the pros and cons, so residents can make an informed choice. We cannot repeat what happened with the spring 2026 Bylaws, when people felt surprised and unheard. This is a chance to put accountability and transparency into action and regain the trust that's been lost.

What is your position on growth in Shawnigan, and what policies would you propose to manage it?

Shawnigan is almost 10,000 strong and growing. I have seen how young adults cannot afford their own piece of land, parents cannot put a tiny home on their property, and grandparents cannot subdivide to age in place near their grandchildren. CVRD rules should help people more, and this requires easing subdivision rules that complement the land, and allowing RVs, park models, and tiny homes with proper regulation. Many people are already living this way across the Valley. We need rural solutions, not urban containment rules applied across Shawnigan.

There is much unfinished business, with Growth Containment Boundaries and related Bylaws. The 2025 OCP united three South Cowichan villages in one boundary, but that plan is now in repeal. Shawnigan's village core still has community sewer issues, and Local Area Plan work was paused. Growth without that infrastructure is just pressure on the lake.

As Director, my job will be to meet the needs of the people in Shawnigan. Future growth will depend on affordable housing, access to land, water and stormwater improvements for lake health, and freedom to live the home-stead lifestyle people moved here for. In a way that complements the land and allows for future generations to thrive.

Let's Keep Blue-Green Bacteria Out of Shawnigan Lake

Linda Gregory
Shawnigan Basin Society

August 8, I attended a workshop organized by the Vancouver Island Lake Stewards (VILS). Dr Rick Nordin gave the keynote address on blue green bacteria (cyanobacteria). Dr Nordin is a well-respected aquatic biologist/limnologist specializing in algae/bacteria.

What are commonly called blue-green algae are not algae, but bacteria.

They have chlorophyll for photosynthesis, but otherwise bacterial characteristics. The chlorophyll makes them green, but when they die, they have a blue hue. They are one of many kinds of organisms in the waters of freshwater lakes.

Others are viruses, other bacteria, small free-living organism (plankton, which include plant like (phytoplankton) and animal like (zooplankton), non-planktonic algae, invertebrates and fish.

There are several species of blue green bacteria, and some are best known for producing neurotoxins or hepatotoxins, which have killed dogs (e.g. in Quamichan Lake).

We do not want blue-green bacterial blooms in Shawnigan Lake. Knowing what they require can lead to preventative solutions. The main requirements are nutrients (nitrogen, and particularly phosphorus), appropriate water temperature, light, and calm waters, but not necessarily all at once.

For instance, blooms are not restricted to warm summer waters. They can occur in winter when the bottom waters, with low oxygen creates conditions that release phosphorus from the sediments.

Winds then mix the water making the phosphorus available at the surface. Phosphorus containing sediments are both natural due to death of organisms, and human related due to the input of eroded

materials flushed into tributaries and the lake due to land disturbance (e.g. logging).

There are other human sources of nutrients: septic fields, runoff from agricultural land and lawns (manure and fertilizers), and runoff from soil deposits along waterways.

Climate change is real, but increased lake temperatures have indirect consequences that increase nutrient input. Zooplankton consume phytoplankton and the temperature change has in some lakes put this relationship out of phase, resulting in more dead organisms that sink to the bottom.

Also, Eurasian watermilfoil is abundant particularly along the shoreline and when it dies and decays, it releases nutrients.

Given its requirements, what should we do?

First, we must continue, and increase water quality

monitoring of the lake and input streams and identify any changes. Second, we must continue to educate people about the importance of protecting the lake. But also, we must decrease the external human contributions to nutrient inputs, that is:

- ensure consistent service of septic fields;
- support measures to reduce logging and to acquire land to support continued natural tree ecosystems;
- avoid or minimize fertilizer additions to lawns adjacent to the lake;
- retain vegetation along the shore to reduce erosion and hold nutrients in the soil and vegetation
- discourage activities in the riparian habitat along the input streams, including soil deposits.

Shawnigan Lake is for



the most part a healthy low nutrient lake, but is changing due to human activities.

It is up to us to maintain the lake for drinking water, recreation, and to protect the species therein and those who consume the water.

Your property values and your enjoyment of this area depend on keeping the lake healthy. You can help.

Beyond the Muck: Why Trust Matters.



Cowichan Forward
www.cowichanforward.org

You may have seen the chicken.

Our "Get Out of the Muck and Give a Cluck" billboard was designed to make people smile and, more importantly, pay attention to what's happening at our

regional government.

Behind the humour is a serious message: our communities deserve to be heard, respected and represented.

Trust isn't built on slogans or election promises.

It's earned through honesty, experience,

listening and accountability.

Cowichan Forward believes residents deserve clear information about decisions affecting their property, taxes, services and quality of life. Elected representatives should ask tough questions, understand

the facts, explain their decisions and be accountable for the results.

We're not asking anyone to blindly follow us. We're asking you to get informed, ask questions and vote.

We won't always agree and that's okay. What matters is having strong, independent voices at the table who will listen, work together and stand firm when our communities' interests are at stake.

The chicken may have started a conversation.

Now let's have the important one.

What's the agenda?

To get people informed, engaged and voting.

That's it.

The October election affects all of us across the nine CVRD areas. We may have different

priorities, but we share the same regional government and we need to pay attention to all nine races, not just our own.

Cowichan Forward is asking you to please open the conversation with your network. Talk to your friends and neighbours in other areas.

Ask questions.

Find out who is running.

Get informed.

Get involved.

Vote.

We're in this together.

Who is elected in the other areas matters at the table, and so it matters to all of us.

Put politics aside.

Focus on the facts.

Listen to your neighbours.

And work together to protect what makes the Cowichan Valley special. **That's worth trusting.**

Shawnigan and the CVRD: How Accountability Works

Michael Battler
Shawnigan Lake

How Regional Decisions Connect to Our Community

Part 6: How Accountability Works, Oversight, Audits, and Governance Reviews

The Final Installment in a 6-Part Series Ahead of the October Regional Election

Over the course of this series, we have looked at how the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is structured, how decisions are made, who carries them out, and how those decisions are funded.

The final piece is accountability.

How do we know the system is working as intended, and who is responsible when it does not?

In practice, accountability works through a combination of Board oversight, independent financial audits, and ongoing governance and policy reviews. Ultimately, it comes back to elections as the final layer of accountability.

A System Built on Multiple Checks

Accountability in a regional district is not handled by a single office or authority. It is built into the structure itself, with several layers working together through governance, legislation, and transparency.

At the center is the Board. Directors are responsible for reviewing staff reports, questioning recommendations, approving budgets, and setting direction, as set out under the Local Government Act (British Columbia).¹ While the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and staff provide analysis and recommendations, the Board retains full responsibility for decisions. That includes ensuring decisions reflect the best interests of the community.

When something does not work as intended, responsibility ultimately rests with the Board to review, question, and adjust course where needed.

In reality, this responsibility depends on the level of engagement from Directors. It is shaped by how clearly they question assumptions, how well they understand the implications of decisions, and how consistently they represent their area. In Shawnigan Lake, as in other areas, residents have seen how the level of engagement from their elected representative can influence how issues are brought forward and discussed.

Financial Oversight, Following the Money

One of the most visible ways accountability, oversight, and financial review show up in everyday terms is in the

annual budget.

Each year, the Cowichan Valley Regional District sets out what services will be provided and how they will be paid for.² In a regional district, that picture can be harder to follow because not every area participates in every service, and different services are funded in different ways.

Each year, financial statements are independently audited to confirm that public funds are being managed as intended, as required under the Local Government Act (British Columbia).³ These audits are one of the key oversight tools. They help confirm that public funds are being managed properly, that spending aligns with what was approved, and that any issues can be identified and addressed over time.

For Shawnigan Lake, the budget is where decisions become real. It influences what services are available, what changes over time, and how costs are shared. It is also one of the clearest ways to see what is considered essential, what is growing, and where priorities are shifting.⁴

Governance Reviews and Policy Direction

Oversight also exists at the policy level.

Regional districts regularly update bylaws, review services, and respond to changes in provincial legislation. Larger initiatives, such as the proposed Zoning Bylaw No. 4710, function as broader system reviews, shaping how land use and regulation are applied across electoral areas.⁵

For Shawnigan Lake, these types of policy reviews are where many of the most noticeable changes occur. Decisions about zoning, land use, and permitted activities directly influence how properties can be used, how development happens, and how the community evolves over time.

These are also the stages where input can have the greatest impact, often before final decisions are made and before positions are fully set.

These processes influence not just what decisions are made, but how they are made. They determine the level of flexibility residents have in using their property, the scope of services the regional district provides, and the balance between regulation and local autonomy.

Because of this, policy decisions often carry long-term implications that extend well beyond a single budget cycle. Transparency is a key part of accountability within this process.

Most CVRD Board and committee meetings are open to the public, and agendas, staff reports, and minutes are published

online in accordance with provincial requirements for open meetings.⁶ Legislative Services supports this process by coordinating agendas, publishing materials, and maintaining official records so that decisions remain accessible and transparent over time.⁹ This creates a clear record of decision making and allows residents to see what is being considered, understand the reasoning behind it, and follow how Directors vote.

At the same time, transparency only works if it is used. Information may be available, but it still requires time and attention to follow how decisions move from proposal to outcome.

Public Participation, Where Residents Fit In

As a community, residents play a direct role as primary stakeholders in the accountability process.

Public participation can take several forms, including attending meetings, submitting feedback, participating in public hearings where required under legislation, and engaging in consultation processes.⁷

In practice, participation often increases when decisions have an immediate and visible impact, such as zoning changes or taxation. However, many of the most significant decisions happen earlier, during policy development and long-term planning. That is often where direction is set, well before final decisions are made.

A Practical Tool, A Priority Governance Lens

One of the challenges in understanding accountability is not a lack of information, but how to interpret it.

Budgets, bylaws, and staff reports can be detailed and technical. For many, the question becomes how to evaluate whether it makes sense and is the right fit for our community.

What if there was a relatively simple way to look at decisions through a common framework? One concept for consideration is to view decisions through a set of guardrails, referred to as a Five Lens Governance System, to support a clearer and more accessible way of understanding decisions.

This lens-based approach looks first at Service to the Community, whether a decision clearly benefits the community as a whole. Second is Existing or Future Need, whether it responds to a current issue or a reasonably anticipated one. Third is Essential, identifying services or actions that are required by law, policy, or core operational responsibility. Fourth is Non Essential, where a service may not be legally

required but is generally necessary to support the functioning and expectations of the community. Fifth is Discretionary, where a decision reflects choice or preference rather than necessity. The lenses are intended to be considered in that order of priority to support better outcomes.

It could be applied across a range of decisions, from the Board and CAO to staff reports and policies, and through to budget items and longer-term planning.

What if residents were not only reviewing decisions, but also contributing to how they are evaluated and understood?

That could mean shifting from frustration toward more constructive and informed ways of looking at decisions. Instead of reacting after the fact, it becomes about asking clearer questions like, How does this proposal serve the community? Is it essential? Has it been considered through all five lenses? And how does it fit within broader priorities?

Used consistently, this type of priority governance lens could help bring clarity and perspective to seemingly complex decisions, while supporting more transparent discussions at the Board level and providing a shared reference point for the Board, staff, and the CAO when evaluating priorities. It can also act as a governance guardrail by helping identify where assumptions, preferences, or unintended bias may be influencing decisions.

For example, if the CVRD published its proposed budget with each line item aligned to one of the five lenses, it could make it easier to see how decisions are being prioritized, without requiring specialized knowledge to interpret the information.

It does not replace formal governance processes, but offers one way to make them clearer and easier to relate to.

Elections, The Final Accountability Mechanism

At the end of the process, accountability comes back to elections.

Directors are elected to represent their communities, and over time their decisions form a record. That record includes how they approach budgets, how they vote on bylaws, and how they respond to community concerns, as enabled through the governance framework set out in provincial legislation.⁸

Elections provide an opportunity to review that record, to ask questions about decisions that have been made, and to determine whether representation aligns with community expectations.

This is where all the pieces come together.

After looking at how the system works, the question of accountability comes back into focus. The CVRD system is designed with multiple checks, including Board oversight, financial audits, policy reviews, public transparency, and elections. But none of these mechanisms operate on their own. They depend on Directors actively fulfilling their role, on staff providing clear and accurate information, and on residents engaging with the process.

Tools like the Five Lens approach can help bridge the gap between complex systems and everyday understanding, not as a replacement for governance, but as a way to make it clearer and more consistent.

For residents, that can mean asking informed questions, following how decisions are shaped before they are finalized, and taking part where it matters. For the CVRD, it can mean continuing to improve clarity, transparency, and how information is presented so it is easier to understand and evaluate.

This series has not been about advocating one position over another. It has been about making the system easier to understand, while offering one possible framework for thinking about governance and accountability.

And in an election year, it is worth taking a closer look at how decisions are made, and how that connects to how you cast your vote.

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This article was prepared using publicly available information and research, with editorial assistance for AI.

Shawnigan Lake Museum

Lori Treloar
Executive Director-
Shawnigan Lake Museum

August was a very busy month at the museum with over 800 visitors!

We had a well-attended Lake Placid Movie night and it was a hit. There was trivia, treats and the ‘campy’ movie that was partially filmed in Shawnigan Lake. We might consider screening it on an annual basis...just for fun.

Our summer student Luke, a local, was a great candidate for the summer job position at the museum. He is now off to university to become a teacher. He will be missed.

A big shout out to Mason’s Store for generously providing buns for our monthly seniors’ lunch for members.

We hosted a special gathering to celebrate the life of Researcher/ Historian Neil Dirom who left the museum his large legacy of information relating to the sawmills, and workers in the forest industry, on Vancouver Island. It is a living document that will be added to as new information is learned.



Linda Cook was present to see the honorary plaque being applied to this beautiful roll top desk that she donated to the Museum, in memory of her husband.

We will protect his work and allow researchers to find information. Neil will be sorely missed.

The ‘lion’ project continues. The restoration of the Shawnigan Lion is near completion, and it will be very exciting to see it settled in its new home next to the museum. If you are not aware, the lion was situated on the Shawnigan waterfront, for over 100 years, on what is now the Easter Seals property. It was removed, recently, in pieces and moved to the property of Craig Gibson, the great grandson of George Gibson who originally sculpted the lion. It has a great back story that is part of our history - a

story we will share when you visit. We are still raising money for this project. Let us know if you want to contribute to the project – donations over \$25 will receive a mini lion. museum@shawniganlakemuseum.com or 250-743-8675

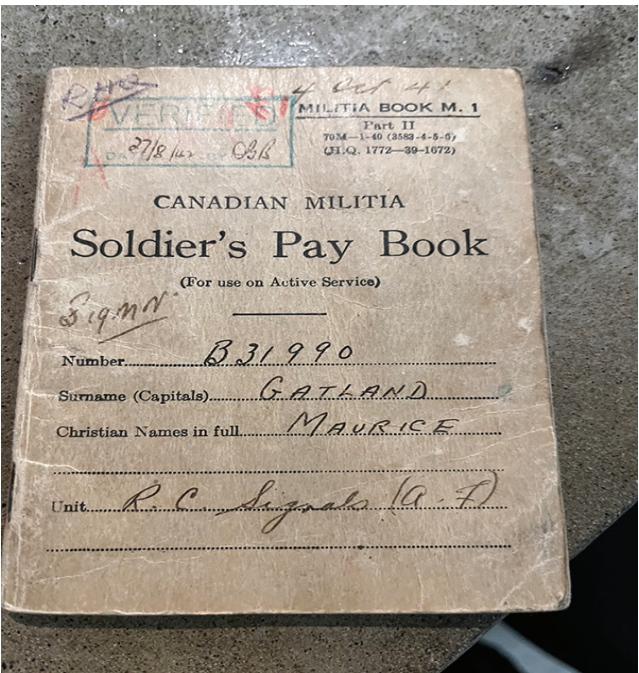
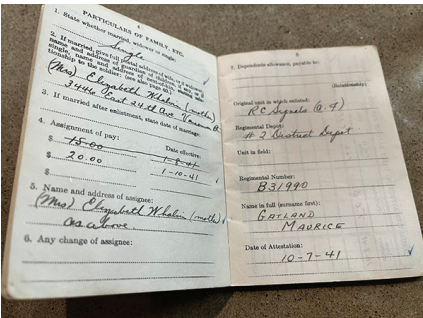
If you haven’t already, check out the museum – open Tues-Sat from 9:30-3:30. You can also become a member to support the museum and receive information about activities and events. Follow us on Facebook & Instagram as we post information on the activities and events that we will be planning at the museum.

Community helps in reuniting special book

Virgina Bauer
Malahat Legion

Ashley from Cobble Hill contacted the Malahat Legion Branch 134 a week ago and dropped in this soldier’s pay book belonging to WWII Maurice Gatland dated back to 1941 found in Cobble Hill on top of a recycle bin.

Virginia our Treasurer went ahead and posted the lost book on a My Cowichan fb. Through the help of this group, they found the owner. This past Saturday 22 Aug, Toni Gatland from Ladysmith came to the Legion to claim her book. We want to thank the Virgina to the family. We hope Toni can find what she seeks for her family history. Your Legion is glad we were able to help reunite this with the owner.



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October 17th

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Authorized by Kim Barnard, Financial Agent 250-732-0531

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Call (250) 743-0511
www.valleyhealthandfitness.ca

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Phone: (250)743-2096 Non-emergency: (250) 812-8030
shawniganfire@shaw.ca

Mission Statement: To provide fire suppression, medical aid and rescue services to the community. To protect life, property and environment through prevention, public education and emergency response.

August 2026 Report

Department Members Attended 41 Incidents in

- Saturday, Aug 1 - 1st Responder off Cameron-Taggart Rd
- Saturday, Aug 1 – Bush Fire at Govt Wharf Park
- Sunday, Aug 2 – Duty Investigation on Briarwood Cres
- Sunday, Aug 2 – Duty Investigation on Miner Rd
- Sunday, Aug 2 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Monday, Aug 3 – Alarms Activated on Pinder Pl
- Monday, Aug 3 – Duty Investigation on Renfrew & W Shawnigan Lake Rds
- Thursday, Aug 6 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Friday, Aug 7 – MVI on Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- Friday, Aug 7 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Saturday, Aug 8 - 1st Responder off Gregory Rd
- Saturday, Aug 8 – MVI on Kapoor Main
- Saturday, Aug 8 – Burning Complaint on Gregory Rd
- Sunday, Aug 9 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Sunday, Aug 9 - 1st Responder off W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Monday, Aug 10 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Monday, Aug 10 – Duty Investigation on Leonard Ave
- Monday, Aug 10 – Burning Complaint on Miner Rd
- Tuesday, Aug 11 – Alarms Activated on W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Tuesday, Aug 11 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Tuesday, Aug 11 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Tuesday, Aug 11 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Thursday, Aug 13 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Friday, Aug 14 – Alarms Activated on Wildflower Rd
- Saturday, Aug 14 – Alarms Activated on Wildflower Rd
- Saturday, Aug 14 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- Tuesday, Aug 18 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Tuesday, Aug 18 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Tuesday, Aug 18 – MVI on Renfrew & Shawnigan Lake Rds
- Wednesday, Aug 19 – Alarms Activated on Wilmot Ave
- Thursday, Aug 20 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Friday, Aug 21 – Duty Investigation on Arken Ter
- Friday, Aug 21 – Duty Investigation on Ingot Dr
- Friday, Aug 21 – Duty Investigation on Baden-Powell Rd
- Friday, Aug 21 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Saturday, Aug 22 – HazMat on Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- Sunday, Aug 23 – Burning Complaint on Easton Pl
- Monday, Aug 24 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Monday, Aug 24 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Monday, Aug 24 – Alarms Activated on Northgate Rd
- Wednesday, Aug 26 – MVI on Shawnigan Lake Rd

Changing with the Seasons at Community Safety & Engagement

Sarah Davidge-Cardinal
South Cowichan
Community Safety & Engagement Society

Good morning/afternoon/evening South Cowichan Community. As you prepare for your fall season and back to school, summer vacations are wrapping up, elections are around the corner. We want to share with you changes happening at South Cowichan Community Policing. One thing we know for sure in life is everything changes.

Let's talk first about our name, as we are not an official RCMP "E" Division Community Policing Program, and we are a Not-for-Profit Organization through our CVRD Area Directors budgets, as taxpayers you contribute to the South Cowichan Community Safety & Engagement Society our proposed new name. We are dropping the Policing from our name to remove all false concepts that we are a policing organization that we never have been since our doors opened in January 1999.

There is a bigger change as well..., this will have a more of impact on our community than just a name change. Effective August 1st, 2026, we are no longer able to provide Speed Watch Road Safety programs through our dedicated Volunteers. Yes, we are extremely thankful to all of them from the people who started Speed Watch and then passed the torch to the new volunteers who



stepped in along the way. We have had many successful years serving our community with Speed Watch and Road Safety Initiatives working alongside our ICBC Road Safety Coordinator Colleen Woodger who provided support for our programs like: Back to School Blitz, Speed Watch/Cell Watch Education and Awareness, Pedestrian Safety, Reflective swag and so much more. We are thankful to ICBC for their support over these 25+ years. The history of Speed Watch was launched by our dear departed Shirley Walker, President at the helm. Directors Bob Wallace, Jim Scott, Ron Roach, Coordinator Heather Embury are just a few who volunteered thousands of hours recruiting, training and coordinating all our dedicated Speed Watch Volunteers. I know this is a tough pill to swallow considering all the road safety/speeding concerns our communitys experience.

So, you ask what happens now... I was informed by the Manager of ICBC that all Road Safety/Speed Watch requests are to be called into your local RCMP detachment and, of

course, any requests we have already received have been forwarded to the RCMP for enforcement. When change occurs, we look at all the excellent community programs we offer and start to put our energy and volunteers into supporting these: Block Watch, Free Friendly Phones, Seniors Safety Awareness -Frauds and Scams Education, Reflective House # Signs, Positive Tickets, Youth Engagement, Drug Safety Education, Community Building all these providing volunteer opportunities.

Just like the ebb and tide of the ocean so we must adjust our sails and look to new horizons. Change continues at our Board level. Please join me in saying a huge thank you to our former Vice President Luke Mills who volunteered with us for 9 years, and welcome to our new Vice President Jane Barton-Greig.

We are your Community Safety & Engagement office and we would love to hear from you. As part of our 2027 planning, we will be sending out a Community Safety & Engagement Survey shortly. We appreciate your feedback.

From all of us South Cowichan Community Safety & Engagement Society we look forward to supporting you. Contact us at 250-929-7222 or scsp@shaw.ca Volunteers are the heart of community safety & engagement.

Chief Justice Gordon Hunter

Ross Carter

Chief Justice Gordon Hunter made sure the iconic Shawnigan Lion's rear end was facing the Parliament Buildings to represent that politicians were making an ass out of justice. But this wasn't the first time Gordon used an animal as an allegory. Some years earlier, on May 12, 1907, William Lyon MacKenzie King (WLM King), future Prime Minister of Canada, spent a day at Gordon Hunter's first Shawnigan Lake summer home. In WLM King's April 8, 1938 diary entry he wrote the following:

The Victoria Daily Times
Mon, May 13, 1907 - Page 1

W. L. Mackenzie King whose able administration of the labor department at Ottawa has won for him the esteem of working men and employers alike, is the guest of Chief Justice Hunter while in Victoria. He spent yesterday with the Chief Justice at Shawnigan and did not return to Victoria until to-day at noon.
Mr. King is well known on the coast where he has assisted at different times in settling labor troubles. His adjustment of the recent difficulties at Fernie has added to his fame in this respect.



"Now it was at Gordon Hunter's island at Shawinigan (sic) that years ago with a single cartridge (last one) I aimed & brought down a female bird (partridge) out of season from a very high tree on a Sunday. Gordon had it stuffed for me and said I had committed as many sins & crimes in one act as it was possible for a man to commit, taking advantage of his hospitality, he the Chief Justice - on a Sunday - on his property - killing a bird - a female bird at

that out of season. He subsequently sent me the bird stuffed...".

We can see that Gordon Hunter is using the stuffed bird to symbolize the law being broken that day. Just like the Lion symbolizing justice being abused by the politicians. Now that's a wicked sense of humour!

Please consider a donation to help save and preserve the [Shawnigan Lion and its underlying message.](#)

COMMUNITY GROUPS

- **CVRD Director for Shawnigan Lake Area B**
Sierra.Acton@cprd.bc.ca
- **Area B Parks Advisory and Area B Advisory Planning Commission**
<https://www.cprd.ca/list.aspx#> (sign up for meeting notifications)
- **CVRD Public Input to the whole Board**
LegislativeServices@cprd.bc.ca
- **Shawnigan Improvement District**
2nd Monday of each month 7 pm at #1 Fire Hall
- **Shawnigan Lake Museum**
Contact us for information: 250-743-8675
museum@shawniganlakemuseum.com (web): shawniganlakemuseum.com
- **Shawnigan Lake Community Association (SLCA)**
Contact: bburr@shaw.ca
- **Shawnigan Basin Society**
#102-1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road.
Contact: info@shawniganbasinsociety.org
- **Young Seniors Action Group (YSAGS)**
Contact: ysagssl@gmail.com (web): blog.ysag.ca
- **South Cowichan Community Policing (SCCP)**
Contact: 250-929-7222(web): southcowichancommunitypolicing.ca
- **Royal Canadian Legion Malahat District Branch 134**
Events: (web) malahatlegion.ca/upcoming-legion-events
Contact: (web) malahatlegion.ca/contact-us
250-643-4621
- **Cowichan South Arts Guild (CSAG)**
Contact: hello@cowichansouthartsguild.com
(web): cowichansouthartsguild.com
- **Shawnigan Quilters** - Wed. 9-2 at Lion's Hall (former Sylvania School)
- **Rotary Club of Shawnigan Lake Eco Club**
Meeting Info & Contact: ShawniganRotaryEcoClub.ca
- **Malahat Lions Club**
Contact: 250-743-0569

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