



# Shawnigan-Showe'luqun Focus

Volume Seventeen- Issue Three

March 2025 Wulhxus  
"The time when frogs start to sing."

A Non-Profit Community Publication

## The Art of Storytelling Festival 2026

Co-hosted by  
**Shawnigan Lake Museum**  
and  
**Cowichan South Arts Guild**

*After nourishment, shelter  
and companionship,  
stories are the thing we  
need most in the world.*  
Philip Pullman

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, we often find ourselves distanced from the true essence of community. The digital age has brought convenience, but it has also created barriers to authentic human connection. The simple act of gathering in person - sharing stories, experiences, and traditions, can help bridge these gaps and reawaken the sense of belonging that is fundamental to the human spirit. Building '3rd space' opportunities for people to gather outside of home and work for face-to-face creative engagement and interaction is how relationships form and stronger communities are built.

The tradition of storytelling is a thread that connects the past,



present, and future. Every culture has used storytelling to pass along important lessons and values, as well as individual and collective her/his-story. Stories teach younger generations how to live, how to understand others, and how to relate to the world around them. Stories allow us to recognize our commonalities, even across cultural divides. In these moments of exchange, we learn about each other; we build curiosity, empathy, acceptance and respect,

and become better equipped to navigate each other's differing perspectives.

Join us once again, as we gather to hear storytellers, emerging and experienced, participating in our 2026 Art of Storytelling Festival,

- Friday March 27th, 7 - 9pm Location: Shawnigan Lake Museum.

Friday's opening event focuses on bringing together listeners and oral storytellers for

an evening of shared connection for adults and interested youth.

- Saturday March 28th, 1pm Location: Shawnigan Lake Museum.

Youngsters & their families will be entertained by an original play - Teller Of Tales, performed by Rising Ensemble Youth Theatre, followed by an artsy activity. The Festival also includes possible storytelling workshops and a mini youth animation film fest, stay tuned!

Reserve your spot (max 2): [hello@cowichansouthartsguild.com](mailto:hello@cowichansouthartsguild.com) to guarantee entry!

It was SOLD OUT last year. The events are by donation, and go towards supporting the ongoing Storytelling Festival.

More information about events & activities related to The Art of Storytelling Festival 2026, (Feb 21 - Mar 29) will be found on our [website](#) or [facebook](#) & [instagram](#)

**Thank you to all of our advertisers for supporting this local publication!  
We couldn't do it without your help...**

The Focus team encourages community members to submit editorial content, including letters; articles of local interest; bouquets you would like to offer to people; things that strike you as funny; challenges you want our civic leaders to consider; and/or ideas that would better our community. Letters to the Editor must be accompanied by the author's full name, address and phone number, but the contact information, other than the name, will not be published. Letters should be limited to 300 words and we reserve the right to edit for brevity or to refuse inappropriate or abusive language. Letters should attack issues - not individuals or groups.

Email: [shawniganfocuseditor@gmail.com](mailto:shawniganfocuseditor@gmail.com)

# Shawnigan Focus

## South Cowichan Library

**Monica Finn**  
 South Cowichan Library  
 250-743-5436  
[southcowichan@virl.bc.ca](mailto:southcowichan@virl.bc.ca)

[www.facebook.com/VIRLSouthCowichan](https://www.facebook.com/VIRLSouthCowichan)

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

Mon & Tue 10-6

Wed & Thu 10-7

Fri & Sat 10-6

- During Spring Break, kids can drop in to complete a scavenger hunt and more!
- Learning how to use your Android phone? Sign up for Android Phone Workshops, 1:30-3pm, on four Thursdays: Mar 12, 19 & 26 and Apr 2.
- Family Storytime is Fridays at 10:30am with the last session on March 6.
- Parent-Child Mother Goose meets on Thursdays. 10:30-11:30am, with the last session on March 12. Mainly for children 0-2 and their adults.
- The Inspired by Reading Book Club, hosted by the Cowichan South Arts Guild, meets on March 12, 5:15-6:45pm, to discuss *The Beekeeper's Question* by Christina Baldwin.
- 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 for people interested in learning Scottish Gaelic to practice together. Join in at 4:30pm on Tuesdays!
- 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. They can get books, audiobooks, and DVDs delivered to their door monthly.

Book a Librarian: available various days and times for a 1-on-1 session on using the library catalogue, downloading books and audiobooks, and more.

Find out more at [virl.bc.ca](http://virl.bc.ca) and at <https://www.facebook.com/VIRLSouthCowichan>

## Shawnigan Focus Weather — February 2026



Stats courtesy of [UVic Weather Network](#) and [Weather Underground](#)



Reported by Grant Treloar

Weather	February Normal	Cigarmaker's Bay		Butler Road		Beach Estates		Museum		Shawnigan Average	
		2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025
High Temp	7.8	7.6	4.7	8.5	5.0	8.8	5.8	8.8	5.8	8.4	5.3
Low Temp	0.4	1.4	-0.6	0.0	-1.9	1.4	-0.9	1.8	-0.8	1.2	-1.1
Extreme High	18.3	11.1	13.4	14.5	15.6	15.5	14.7	13.8	15.0	13.7	14.7
Extreme Low	-16.7	-3.6	-9.2	-4.4	-11.7	-4.6	-9.9	-3.6	-9.8	-4.1	-10.2
Precipitation	134.7	171.5	168.4	137.1	149.5	128.0	148.1	114.3	135.3	137.7	150.3
Days w precip	16	19	17	19	17	19	17	16	17	18	17
Year Precip	350.0	325.6	244.0	337.5	210.9	325.6	206.8	291.4	192.8	320.0	213.6
Precip since Oct 1	884.7	1146.1	974.6	1032.5	895.4	919.8	791.8	871.6	757.3	992.5	854.8

2026 Rank since 1914: 27<sup>th</sup> warmest, 39<sup>th</sup> wettest

Lake Readings	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22
Temperature	5°	5°	5°	4°
Temperature 2025	3°	1°	1°	3°
Surface Elevation	116.60m	116.74m	116.56m	116.46m
Elevation 2025	116.24m	116.22m	116.16m	116.59m

### Comments

February ended up being slightly warmer than normal (8th warmest) and a bit wetter compared to the long time averages since 1914. The first snowfall of the season finally happened during the 3rd week, but snow on the ground only lasted a few days. Depending on the location, there was about 5-6 cm of wet snow that stuck on the ground.

The warmest day was on the the February 4th, with temperatures 12-13°. The daytime temperature exceeded 10° between 4-10 days depending on the location. The coldest night was on the 20th, under clear skies with temps bottoming out near -4°. There were 9 days with freezing temperatures, including 8 in a row during the cold snap mid month.

Precipitation total was very close to average. There were 2 days when over 25mm was recorded in some areas. So far, the wet season (October - April) is running about 110% of normal due to a wet fall.

The lake level is now tending lower with the heavy wet rains easing off. Levels are slightly below the 10 year average.

Daylight hours are increasing rapidly now and increasing at a rate of 3½ minutes per day for the month of March. Daylight saving begins on March 8. Sunset moves from 5:58 PM on March 1st to 7:44 PM on the 31st. First day of spring is March 20th.

# We made a BIG difference in Courtenay!

**Warren Skaalrud**  
 Founder and President,  
 Restore Island Rail Society

Boom!

Did you hear that giant pin drop? It was made up of hundreds of smaller pins as you zoomed in, but it reverberated with the sound of thunder. Our campaign asking Courtenay residents to mark the Courtenay Train station as a transit hub on the "Let's move Courtenay" web page was a huge success! Furthermore, just as I expected, that led people to add other transit-related pins elsewhere on the map too! That engagement is closed now, but I'm hearing that the message was received loud and clear!

Freedom isn't a car-centric world

Being able to move around without a car is freedom from poverty for many, or freedom to socialize again for those who

feel shut in from a lackluster transit system and the high cost of car travel. It's freedom to choose how your personal travel impacts nature, and the freedom to use your travel time wisely. It's freedom to take care of your kids or elderly family members unrestrained, and freedom to move and stretch. It's even freedom to use your electronic devices safely while travelling, whether you are texting, watching a movie, finishing that paperwork, or working on that side-hustle.

Terminology brings clarity

The word "Transit" often rings as "Buses" in the ears of politicians, so we need to make it clear what we are talking about when we talk to them. The lingo used in the public sphere is different than that used by the experts. Politicians are not experts, which is why they need to rely on experts to design transit solutions. Even within the world of railway experts, I see disputes about what name to give a service...

is it Light Rail Transit, or is it a TRAM? Is it Regional Rail or Inter-City Rail? Does a subway mean it has to be in a tunnel all the time, most of the time, or what? Fortunately, for the general public we can boil things down to two names... "Buses" and "Trains" with the two big buzz word versions of those two being "Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)" and "Light Rail Transit (LRT)." And thus far, Vancouver Island hasn't built either one. To be clear, putting in bus-on-shoulder lanes does not make a BRT system; what those are is a long-form version of jumper lanes for a faster regular bus. Mark my words; people will demand they be turned into HOV lanes, thereby defeating the purpose of having them to begin with. We want trains running on the Vancouver Island Railway again. We know it will be different than it was last time, that's kind of the point!

Taking some time away I've been at this for 4 years

as of July 2026, and it has increasingly consumed my time and a sizable chunk of my wallet. After I retired in May of 2023, my passion for this project overtook many other priorities in my life. As a result, most of the things I was thinking about doing when I retired like downsizing my house, were put on hold. With the government extending the \$18 million it allocated in 2023 into 2027, and the Reconciliation Corridor agreement in play with a 12-18-month timeframe, now is the best time for me to take a break and make the move. I also plan to replace my ageing computer equipment during this time. By the summer, I'm hoping I can make long-form videos and expand my simulation environment. My computer is maxed out in terms of memory and processing power, but it's also about 8 years old and repeatedly crashing and freezing when I work on anything complicated. It's

frustrating to say the least. It won't be tomorrow, but it's coming soon. During my time away I'll be asking people to share their favorite posts to groups they like to keep the information flowing. Together we will combat the misinformation campaign put forward by those that would see its demise.

Restore Island Rail Society Health

The Restore Island Rail Society is in a healthy place with a bank balance that should support the events we plan to attend this year and fund any social media advertising we might need should things heat up. Traffic-wise, we are sitting between 1.4 million and 1.6 million views per month on social media, and the website sees between 55 and 358 visitors a day. Not too shabby!

Thanks for standing strong for Island Rail.

# False Spring of the Pacific Northwest

**Robert Amos**  
Artist & Author

*For several generations, Bruce Hutchison was one of Canada's beloved newspapermen and "the dean of Canadian political commentators". When he found time to leave his Victoria home for some rest and relaxation, made his way to Shawnigan Lake where he transformed a wilderness shack into a family cabin full of memories. In 1988 - at the age of 87 years - Hutchison*

*published "A Life in the Country", a bittersweet look at the joys and tribulations of "the country life that urban dwellers envy and fortunately escape."*

Space surrendered by winter's victims will be quickly occupied by their successors. Extra sunlight will breed a new generation.

Already, before their evergreen competitors, alders have taken advantage of their good luck to increase their kind. Pendulous catkins,

dyed in Burgundy, will become seeds for next year's growth. Maple buds begin to swell and feel sticky. Sword ferns prepare to unwind their tight coils, and skunk cabbage to wave yellow banners of defiance with a bracing scent. Soon the hoarse love song of the frogs will rise from the swamp, the slugs will appear in shiny green uniforms, and the arrow flight of clamorous geese, bound north, will print its ancient calligraphy upon the sky.

But not yet. For true spring we must wait several more weeks.

In the meantime we performed a ritual that no city dweller could understand. At the end of a winding trail half a mile long and on the far side of a little gully crossed by a rotting footbridge stood a cabin, a poor sort of cabin, a botched job of nameless carpenters long ago, a lopsided shell of boards that lacked the solid dignity of logs and seemed likely to collapse at any moment into the gully behind it or the lake in front. Its walls were flimsy and crooked, its roof leaky, its underpinnings decayed. But, rebuilt and

expanded, this structure became, until death parted us, the centre of our joint life, then the lives of our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Year after year, the spring ritual never changed. We found the key, secreted under the bridge where the most incompetent burglar would be sure to find it, and pushed open the warped back door. An icy draft, accumulated all winter, struck us like a fist. In a kitchen with a single window and dark on a day of sunshine, we lighted a coal-oil lamp and soon had a fire burning in the rusty stove. Now we surveyed the winter's negligible indoor damage.

If any burglar had entered, he had seen nothing worth stealing. Rats had munched a cake of soap carelessly left on the table. Mice had deposited their calling cards of thanks for meals of spilled flour. A squirrel that hibernated above the ceiling had dropped some of his pine cones onto the floor. The roof had usually leaked in only a couple of places-inevitably upon the beds.

It would take us many hours, and exertions

about as strenuous as a four-minute mile or the ascent of a high mountain, to carry the mattresses outside and dry them on the clothesline, to mop the floors, fix the leaks with roof gum and prop up the sagging bridge. It was many years before we had saved enough money to rebuild the cabin and equip it with big windows, electricity, plumbing and comfortable furniture. But we were never to be so happy again as in those primitive days when we carried all supplies on our backs half a mile from the road, and water in pails from the lake and bathed in a tin washtub before the weather warmed for swimming.

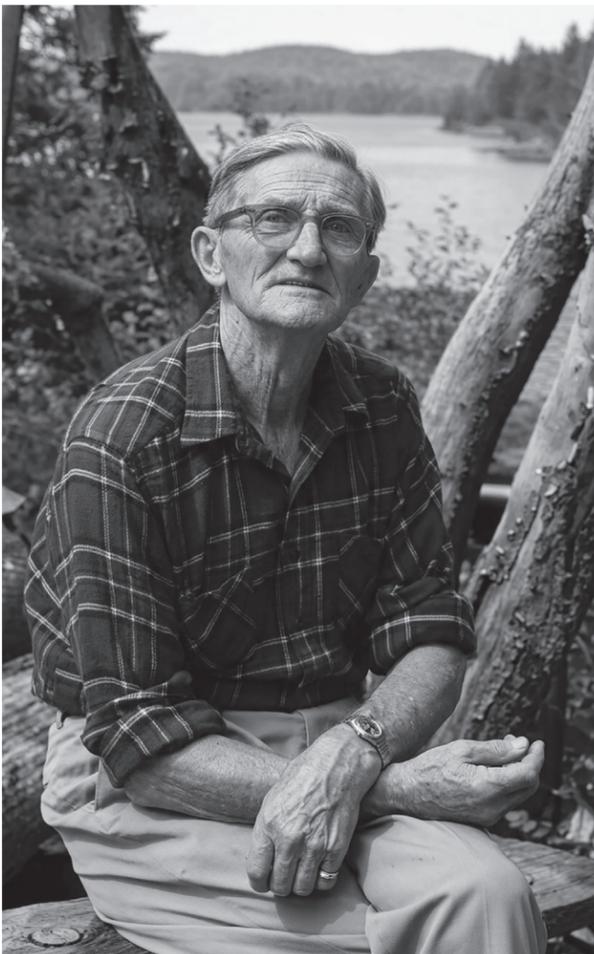


photo courtesy of the Hutchison family

*"The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot."*  
- Michael Altshuler





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



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## Ripples of Influence

**Kim Barnard**  
250-732-0531

Introducing my longtime mentor in all-things-CVRD, local treasure Mr. Cliff Evans! He is wisdom and kindness personified. I'm humbled to learn from his monthly reports for the Shawnigan Basin Society. He knows the workings of this place like no other!

Sharing knowledge, building relationships, and serving by example, Cliff takes watershed measurements and reads the conditions based on extensive memory and experience. Field work photos come alive with his narration!

Key to behold is his conduct. Delivering decorum in the boardroom with extraordinary patience, he embodies the civility we can all strive for. I echo the director who quipped that the lectern needed a brass plaque dedicated to Mr. Cliff Evans' years of thoughtful public input. How could I not step up also, with such a teacher?

My grandmothers' Ukrainian-Canadian heritage beckons as well. I am continuously in awe of Ukraine's actor-turned-statesman and convener of allies (who refused the offer of an easy ride!). May we be



Cliff Evans and Kim Barnard

similarly prepared to work together to meet ANY challenge!

Other marvelous mentors you may recognize who are active in our community...

- A master of organization with an impeccable poker face
- A skilled debater, analyst, and persuasive presenter
- A talented gardener who plants for future generations
- A keen planner corralling data in spreadsheets
- A generous friend who brings makers together
- A curator of stories and curious artifacts
- A leaf+lichen

whisperer and keeper of lore

- A paddler, cyclist, and caring companion to the elderly
- A scientist-diver who leads the charge on milfoil
- A tireless fundraiser for the food bank and veterans
- A wise, experienced event coordinator
- A trainer of those who save the lost at sea
- A mother of neurodivergents, like me!

I'm so grateful that Shawnigan has all of these, and many more, kindly reaching out to us with their ripples of influence!

## Shawnigan Lake Fire Department

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

**February 2026 Report**  
Department Members Attended  
35 Incidents in January

- Sunday, Feb 1 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Monday, Feb 2 - 1st Responder off Thain Rd
- Wednesday, Feb 4 - 1st Responder off W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Thursday, Feb 5 - MVI on Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- Monday, Feb 9 - Alarms Activated on Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- Wednesday, Feb 11 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Friday, Feb 13 - MVI on Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Friday, Feb 13 - 1st Responder off Gregory Rd
- Friday, Feb 13 - 1st Responder off Jersey Rd
- Sunday, Feb 15 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Monday, Feb 16 - Alarms Activated on Pinder Pl
- Monday, Feb 16 - MVI on Deloume Rd
- Monday, Feb 16 - Rescue on Renfrew Logging Rd
- Monday, Feb 16 - HazMat on Colman Rd
- Tuesday, Feb 17 - Hydro Lines on W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Tuesday, Feb 17 - MVI on Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Wednesday, Feb 18 - Assistance on Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- Wednesday, Feb 18 - HazMat on Shawnigan
- Thursday, Feb 19 - 1st Responder off Jersey Rd
- Thursday, Feb 19 - 1st Responder off Cameron-Taggart Rd
- Thursday, Feb 19 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Thursday, Feb 19 - 1st Responder off W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Friday, Feb 20 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Saturday, Feb 21 - 1st Responder off Wright Rd
- Saturday, Feb 21 - 1st Responder off Jersey Rd
- Saturday, Feb 21 - Alarms Activated on Park Pl
- Sunday, Feb 22 - Mutual Aid Structure Fire w/Malahat Fire
- Monday, Feb 23 - 1st Responder off W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Monday, Feb 23 - 1st Responder off Gregory Rd
- Monday, Feb 23 - Alarms Activated on Renfrew Rd
- Monday, Feb 23 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Monday, Feb 23 - 1st Responder off Wright Rd
- Wednesday, Feb 25 - 1st Responder off Gregory Rd
- Wednesday, Feb 25 - 1st Responder off Colman Rd
- Thursday, Feb 26 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd

**Jeff Lydiatt**  
Malahat Legion

### March 2026 at the Malahat Legion

#### Regular Hours

Fridays and Saturdays

- Bar 1:00-7:00 PM
- Kitchen 12:00-4:30 PM

#### Drop-in Events

Wednesdays

- Crib 1:00 - 3:30 PM

Fridays

- Euchre - 2:00-4:00 PM
- Mahjong - 1:00-3:30 PM

Saturdays

- Meat Draws - 3:00-5:00 PM

#### \*Our Special Events:

- Friday, March 13th - The Love Cats from Victoria are here! This high-energy five-piece group is a crowd favourite. Classic Fish and Chips dinner is available before the band plays. Reservations available on our website, [malahatlegion.ca](http://malahatlegion.ca).

More Legion events are available at [Upcoming Legion Events](#)



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# Shawnigan Focus

## Do You Wish To Protect Your land For the Benefit of Future Generations?

**Bernhard Juurlink**  
*Shawnigan Basin Society*

There are two major goals driving the objective of setting aside 30% of the land for nature by 2030. One is to sequester carbon to avert major climate changes due to the increased accumulation of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. The second is to maintain biodiversity.

The planet is entering a biodiversity collapse crisis. Ecologists say that land set aside for nature must be increased to 50% by 2050. Considering only 8.5% of the land in the CVRD is protected, we have a long way to go.

You as an owner of a small property may ask what one can do in protecting nature? Probably

little in the way of making any dent in carbon sequestration but you may be able to promote biodiversity.

You may have a small Garry Oak meadow on your property or a small wetland. Small wetlands are critical habitats for amphibians. An example of an amphibian that is endangered is the Red-legged frog which is listed as of Special Concern in and the rest of Canada. If you have a protected wetland you can help this species to survive. Small wetlands also form habitat to many insects that provide sustenance to other creatures, for example, bats.

If you have been wondering on how to protect such small ecosystems for future generations, then

the Cowichan Community Land Trust (CCLT) may have the answer for you.

The CCLT has introduced a new initiative called the Conservation Springboard which draws on the years of CCLT's work to preserve and safeguard land and waterways.

The objective of this new initiative is to help private land title holders, both residential and business, who wish to protect land of ecological importance through covenants and other means and to explore potential tax benefits such as the Ecological Gifts program.

The CCLT invites you to start a conversation and let's see what can be protected together.



*Rana Aurora: the red-legged frog*

All communications will be kept in strict confidence. Please contact the CCLT by email: [info@cowichanlandtrust.ca](mailto:info@cowichanlandtrust.ca). If you are unsure whether your property has enough ecological significance to

warrant attention by the CCLT, the Shawnigan Basin Society would be pleased to assist you in evaluation. You can contact the SBS at:

[admin@shawniganbasin-society.org](mailto:admin@shawniganbasin-society.org)

## Making progress for Xavier's Law

**Dana Lajeunesse**  
*MLA*  
*Juan de Fuca-Malahat*

Many of us have heard the tragic story of the death of a boy from Cobble Hill, Xavier Rasul-Jankovics, due to a reckless driving incident last year. I know many people in our area who deeply felt the tragedy of this story, and who felt it resonate in their own family.

Soon after this incident, I had the honour of meeting the Rasul-Jankovics family, who shared their story and their advocacy efforts with me, in hopes that they could help initiate a legislative change to prevent reckless driving incidents like these,

**NEW DEMOCRAT**  
BC GOVERNMENT CAUCUS



which can cause permanent damage to victims and their loved ones.

Some of you may have heard about the Private Members Bill I introduced in December to help where I could to address the issues Xavier's family have raised. This bill, M226, the Motor Vehicle Amendment Act (No. 2), which we've been informally calling Xavier's Law, works to define reckless driving specifically, address it with immediate temporary license suspensions

to get dangerous drivers off the road quickly, and send a message that these incidents will be taken seriously at first offence.

It also ensures that reckless driving incidents are reported to the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles right away, so that patterns of behavior can be monitored, and when deemed necessary, more severe penalties can be applied to ensure public safety.

Since introducing this bill, I've been heartened to hear from numerous other families across B.C. who have experienced similar incidents of reckless driving and the negative impacts on their own lives, and who

are hopeful about the changes that Xavier's Law could make. I've also heard some concerns and questions about the bill, which I've taken to heart as the bill progresses to committee stage for comprehensive review.

This review process also includes consultation with stakeholders, members of the public, Ministry staff, subject matter experts, and more. Through this process, if deemed necessary, important changes and clarifications can be proposed to make the bill more effective in achieving the goal of making our roadways safer for B.C. residents and visitors alike.

The consultation is now

open, and will remain open until March 10th. More information can be found about how to contribute to this process at [consultation-portal.leg.bc.ca](http://consultation-portal.leg.bc.ca), where you can also find out about other consultations and ways to share your voice.

I'm grateful that I have the unique opportunity now as a private member to bring forward a bill that can make positive change toward improving safety for all British Columbians. As this bill progresses through committee stage, I hope to work with members of all parties to make sure the bill achieves its intended goal, not only for my region, but for all of B.C.

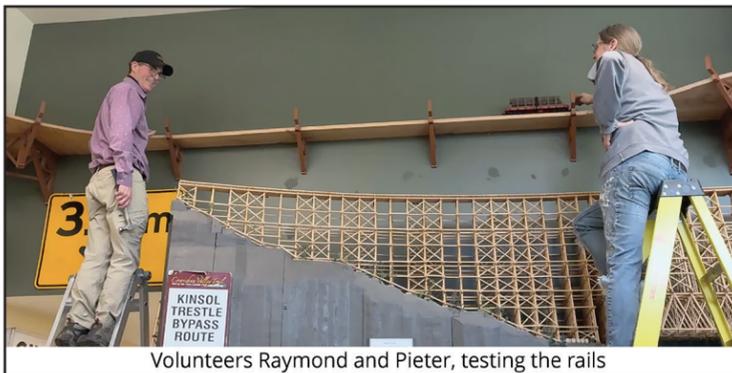


*A Shawnigan Moment*  
*Photo by Dave Hutchinson*

## Shawnigan Lake Museum

**Lori Treloar**  
Executive Director

I have watched the new movie about the life of EJ Hughes twice – once in Victoria and once in Cowichan. It is amazing! Jenn Strom, the producer, is a very talented, young woman. She has carefully crafted a wonderful film about Hughes' life, that I think even the shy EJ Hughes would be very happy about. It is a warm and rich depiction of his life and art. 'The Painted life of E.J. Hughes' will be available on Knowledge Network later in April. We had another busy month as we continue to put the museum back together and add some new bells and whistles...literally. We now have a G gauge train that moves around the entry pulling a load of logs, thanks to the donor, Bill, and railway builders Pieter, Gord, Raymond and Grant. We have also installed an amazing EJ Hughes Shawnigan Lake painting, as a backdrop



Volunteers Raymond and Pieter, testing the rails

for our forest exhibit, with permission from his family.

We held a sold-out Steak and Lobster dinner, on Valentine Day, cooked by Chef Richard Walton. It was an amazing feast. We also have lovely Soup Socials for seniors once a month. As we have limited the number to 30, members get priority.

In March, we will co-host the 3rd Annual Storytelling Festival with the Cowichan South Arts Guild (CSAG). There will be four adult storytellers on Friday March 27th, with other workshops and youth events to follow. Watch for more info in the coming weeks.

To all teachers in the area – we are now planning for the return of school programming in April, May and June. More information to follow.

Also, watch for new programs and events that we will be testing this year. Hope to see you at the museum. If you want to be on our email list, become a member and you will receive notices of upcoming events.

Please note: the museum will be closed on Saturday, March 7th for the service of a family member.

Questions?  
[museum@shawniganlake.com](mailto:museum@shawniganlake.com)  
[shawniganlakemuseum.com](http://www.shawniganlakemuseum.com)



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**26<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL**

**Saturday, March 21st 10am-2pm**

**Cobble Hill Seedy Saturday**

**Announcing: Soil 101 with Tamara Dinter**  
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Cobble Hill Hall 3550 Watson Ave  
Stu Armour Hall 1438 Fisher Road

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## Understanding the CVRD

**Michael Battler**  
Shawnigan Lake

### Understanding the CVRD

#### How Regional Decisions Connect to Our Community

#### A 6-Part Series Ahead of the October Regional Election

Regional government can feel distant until a zoning notice goes up, a tax bill arrives, or a development proposal sparks debate. As we head toward the October regional election, this six-part series takes a plain-language look at how the Cowichan Valley Regional District works, how decisions are made, and how those decisions connect directly to life in Shawnigan Lake.

Along the way, we'll explore common frustrations, structural tensions, and one question that often sits quietly in the background: what does it mean that Shawnigan is unincorporated?

#### Part 1

#### What Is the CVRD — and What Does It Actually Do?

We begin with the basics. What exactly is the CVRD? Why isn't Shawnigan its own municipality? And what services does the regional district control and not control?

Common frustration:

“Why doesn't the CVRD fix the roads?” or “Why can't they just stop this development?”

Why it matters:

Understanding which responsibilities fall to the province and which fall to the regional district clarifies both authority and limits.

Unincorporated vs. incorporated — the trade-off:

As an unincorporated area, Shawnigan shares services regionally and avoids the cost of running a full municipal government. The trade-off is less direct control over some services that incorporated municipalities manage locally.

#### Part 2

#### Shawnigan and the CVRD: Inside Regional Governance

Who represents Shawnigan at the Board table? How do municipalities and electoral areas share decision-making power? What does weighted voting really mean?

Common frustration:

“Why does it feel like municipalities have more influence?”

Why it matters:

Voting strength on financial matters is tied to population. Knowing when weighted voting applies helps residents understand how influence is exercised at the regional level.

Unincorporated vs. incorporated — the trade-off:

Municipalities elect a mayor and council with broad local authority. Electoral areas rely on one Director at a shared regional table — offering focused representation, but within a collective decision-making structure.

#### Part 3

#### Roles and Responsibilities: What Directors Do, and What Staff Do

Who sets policy? Who implements it? Where does the CAO fit in?

Common frustration:

“Who actually made this decision?”

Why it matters:

Clear accountability depends on understanding the difference between elected governance and professional administration.

Unincorporated vs. incorporated, the trade-off:

Municipal councils directly oversee their own administration. Electoral areas are governed through a regional structure, where staff serve multiple communities under one Board.

#### Part 4

#### How Decisions Get Made: From Committee Meetings to Board Votes

How does an idea become a bylaw? Why are there multiple readings

and public hearings?

Common frustration:

“Why is this taking so long?”

Why it matters:

The structured process is designed to ensure transparency, public notice, and legal stability, even when it feels procedural.

Unincorporated vs. incorporated, the trade-off:

Municipal councils can move independently on purely local matters. Electoral area issues often move through broader regional committees, adding oversight but sometimes adding time.

#### Part 5

#### Where Your Tax Dollars Go: Understanding CVRD Budgets and Services

Why does one community pay for a service that another does not?

How are requisitions calculated?

Common frustrations: “Why am I paying for that?”

Why it matters:

The CVRD uses a service-based funding model, meaning communities participate in, and fund specific services.

Unincorporated vs. incorporated, the trade-off:

Unincorporated areas benefit from shared service economies of scale, while municipalities have full control over their tax base but must fund complete municipal operations.

#### Part 6

#### How Accountability Works: Oversight, Audits, and Governance Reviews

How is the CVRD held accountable? What checks and balances exist?

Common frustration:

“How do we influence decisions between elections?”

Why it matters:

Regional districts

operate under provincial legislation, financial audits, and open meeting requirements, but civic engagement remains central to accountability.

Unincorporated vs. incorporated, the trade-off:

Municipal residents vote for multiple council members. Electoral area residents elect one Director, concentrating representation and responsibility in a single seat.

Every governance model involves trade-offs. Regional districts were designed to balance rural autonomy with shared service efficiency. Incorporation offers greater local control, but also greater administrative responsibility and cost.

This series isn't about choosing sides. It's about understanding how decisions affecting Shawnigan are made, and how residents can take part in that process.

And in an election year, that understanding matters.



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## COMMUNITY GROUPS

- **CVRD Director for Shawnigan Lake Area B**  
[Sierra.Acton@cprd.bc.ca](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:museum@shawniganlakemuseum.com) (web): [shawniganlakemuseum.com](http://shawniganlakemuseum.com)
- **Shawnigan Lake Community Association (SLCA)**  
Contact: [bburr@shaw.ca](mailto:bburr@shaw.ca)
- **Shawnigan Basin Society**  
#102-1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Road.  
Contact: [info@shawniganbasinsociety.org](mailto:info@shawniganbasinsociety.org)
- **Young Seniors Action Group (YSAGS)**  
Contact: [ysagssl@gmail.com](mailto:ysagssl@gmail.com) (web): [blog.ysag.ca](http://blog.ysag.ca)
- **South Cowichan Community Policing (SCCP)**  
Contact: 250-929-7222(web): [southcowichancommunitypolicing.ca](http://southcowichancommunitypolicing.ca)
- **Royal Canadian Legion Malahat District Branch 134**  
Events: (web) [malahatlegion.ca/upcoming-legion-events](http://malahatlegion.ca/upcoming-legion-events)  
Contact: (web) [malahatlegion.ca/contact-us](http://malahatlegion.ca/contact-us)  
(250) 743-4621
- **Cowichan South Arts Guild (CSAG)**  
Contact: [hello@cowichansouthartsguild.com](mailto:hello@cowichansouthartsguild.com)  
(web): [cowichansouthartsguild.com](http://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](http://ShawniganRotaryEcoClub.ca)
- **Malahat Lions Club**  
Contact: 250-743-0569
- **South Cowichan Healthcare Auxiliary**  
Contact: [info@southcha.ca](mailto:info@southcha.ca)

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