



Shawnigan-Showe'luqun Focus

Volume Seventeen- Issue Four

April 2025 *Líimus*
"The time when the wild geese fly in V formation."

A Non-Profit Community Publication

Shawnigan Lake Museum

Lori Treloar
Executive Director

March was another busy month at the museum, as we continue to add new features and events.

The monthly **Soup for Seniors** lunch has been very successful. In March, we chose two Irish soups to celebrate St Patrick's Day. They were both very popular. This event happens once a month, on the third Thursday, and it is a great chance to connect with people in the community. Attendance must be reserved in advance. The cost is \$5 and there is a limit of 30 people. Members get priority.

The **4th Annual Storytelling event**, co-hosted by the Cowichan South Arts Guild and the Shawnigan Lake Museum, was another big success. On the Friday night, five talented storytellers performed for a very appreciative audience. On Saturday, a great group of young people gave a performance to a full house. And, on Sunday, there was a workshop on storytelling.

In April, we will offer several screenings of the amazing new documentary, **The Painted Life of EJ Hughes**, produced by Jenn Strom. Check our website for times. Some

dates are already full. This event is by donation.

Jenn will speak at an opening reception on Friday, April 10, starting at 5:00, before the first screening (which is full). The 2nd screening on Saturday morning is also full. Other screenings are April 11, 14, 15, 17 & 18 at 1:00 PM. Reserve your spot at: museum@shawniganlakemuseum.com

Please check our website to reserve a spot for one of the screenings

In addition, on April 15th we will participate in **Canada Film Day** by showing two great Canadian films. Please note: there is a limit of 18 seats for each movie. Attendance is by donation.

At 10am, we will screen **The Grey Fox**, a true story about Bill Miner, an American stagecoach robber who became infamous in Canada for robbing the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and securing his status as a legendary figure in Canadian outlaw lore, which also included an escape from the B.C. Penitentiary in New Westminster. At 1:00, we will screen **Bye, Bye**,



Storytellers Event

Blues, a wonderful Canadian classic with great music. This is a personal favourite.

Opening, on April 24th, and closing on May 10th, we will host **Stories of Birds** by Shawnigan resident, Sylvia Swift. Sylvia paints in her home studio and has combined her love of tales and art in her new exhibit, Stories of Birds. There will be an opening reception on April 24th from 6-8pm. Sylvia will

also provide storytelling on Saturdays at 11:00, 1:00 and 3:00 during the run.

To all local teachers – it has been a while since we could accommodate school programming, but we are planning to offer dates in May and June. We will send information to the schools soon.

We have a lot more events planned. Hope to see you at the museum!

shawniganlakemuseum.com



Soup for Seniors Lunch

**Thank you to all of our advertisers for supporting this local publication!
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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

Shawnigan Focus

South Cowichan Library

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

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

April is National Poetry Month

Local Poetry Gathering:

calling all poets, published and aspiring! Celebrate poetry with an afternoon with Kamal Parmar, past Poet Laureate of Nanaimo, and other local poets. Join us for readings, tea & cookies, book sale, and a Q&A session on Saturday, April 18, 2-3:30pm.

Scavenger Hunt for adults: search the branch all April for excerpts by contemporary Canadian poets.

South Cowichan Seed Library is stocked with seeds for vegetables, herbs, and flowers. It's time to start growing!

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.

Book a Librarian: available various days and times for a 1-on-1 sessions.

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.

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 at <https://www.facebook.com>.

Shawnigan Focus Weather — March 2026



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



Reported by Grant Treloar

	March Normal	Cigarmaker's Bay		Butler Road		Beach Estates		Museum		Shawnigan Average	
		2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2025	2025
Average High	10.4	9.9	9.7	10.5	10.1	10.4	10.7	11.4	10.9	10.6	10.4
Average Low	1.7	2.2	3.1	1.0	2.2	1.8	3	2.4	3.1	1.9	2.9
Extreme High	22.2	13.6	16.2	15.3	16	15.7	16.7	15.0	17	14.9	16.5
Extreme Low	-11.7	-1.8	-0.9	-3.5	-2.5	-2.9	-1.4	-2.0	-1.0	-2.6	-1.5
Precipitation	119.2	158.9	265.4	133.6	202.4	102	179.1	75.2	167.9	117.4	203.7
Days w precip	19	22	25	24	25	24	25	22	25	23	25.0
Year Precip	469.2	582.7	509.4	471.1	412.7	427.6	383.3	366.6	357.8	462.0	415.8
Precip since Oct 1	1003.9	1306.0	1240.0	1166.0	1097.6	1134.5	970.9	944.5	925.0	1137.8	1058.4

2026 Rank since 1914: 32nd warmest, 50th wettest

Lake Readings	Mar 1	Mar 8	Mar 15	Mar 22	Mar 29
Temperature	6°	6°	6°	7°	7°
Temperature 2025	5°	5°	5°	8°	8°
Surface Elevation	116.49m	116.41m	116.45m	116.54m	116.54m
Elevation 2025	116.74m	116.57m	116.63m	117.04m	116.97m

Comments

March ended up being slightly warmer than normal (32nd warmest), sometimes drier or wetter compared to the long time averages, depending on the location.

The warmest days were on the 7th and 18th with temps around 14°. The daytime temperature never reached 10° on 11 days. The coldest night was on the 30th, under clear skies with temps bottoming out near -2° to -3°. There were 9 days with freezing temperatures, and measureable snow on the 10th and 15th.

Precipitation total was very close to average. The wettest day was on the 16th, but no days had more than 20mm. So far, the wet season (October - April) is running about 110% of normal due to a wet fall.

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

Daylight hours are increasing by 3½ minutes daily.

Sunset moves from 7:45 PM on April 1st to 8:28 PM on the 30th.

The sunset location moves 16° north to 294°N by the end of the month.

Quw'utsun Nature Rambles

Genevieve Singleton
Nature educator, Biologist

My husband Dave Polster, a plant ecologist, and I bought one Western Trillium at Dinter's Nursery about 13 years ago and planted it at our 70 year old dream home. Now there are many of these



beauties. First picture is the only one in full bloom. Look at its heavy little head loaded down with rain. The second picture is baby Trilliums just pushing up out of the soil! Their little white faces are peeking up out of their green burrito blanket roll of leaves!

There is no known Hul'q'umi'num' name. The Latin name is *Trillium ovatum*. Its plant parts are all in three leading to the name Trillium. I was startled in doing my research to find it is no longer classified as a lily due to DNA research. Apparently, some time ago (I am falling

off the job!) it was reclassified. However, there is disagreement. Some taxonomists say Trilliums are a member of the *Trilliaceae Family*. Others say the *Melanthiaceae (Bunchflowers) Family*. Apparently, it is a hot topic among taxonomists! Always something new to learn!

Trillium takes several years to grow from seed, but not necessarily seven as the story goes. The number of years varies but it is not quick growing. So please don't pick it because when you do you pick the whole plant, due to its structure that is the end of it.



As the little poem goes, *Leaves of three, Let it be.*

Trilliums produce oily black seeds which ants love. They will carry them away which is likely how we got our second patch. We have up to 25 flowers between our two patches! Cute to imagine little ants

marching these seeds along! Maybe they are singing "The ants go marching one by one" song! I sing this song and others to my husband now living in Acacia Ty Mawr, near Shawnigan Village, where he is so lovingly cared for by the amazing staff.

Spring- A Lovesome Thing God wot

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." This excerpt is from Spring- A Lovesome Thing God wot".

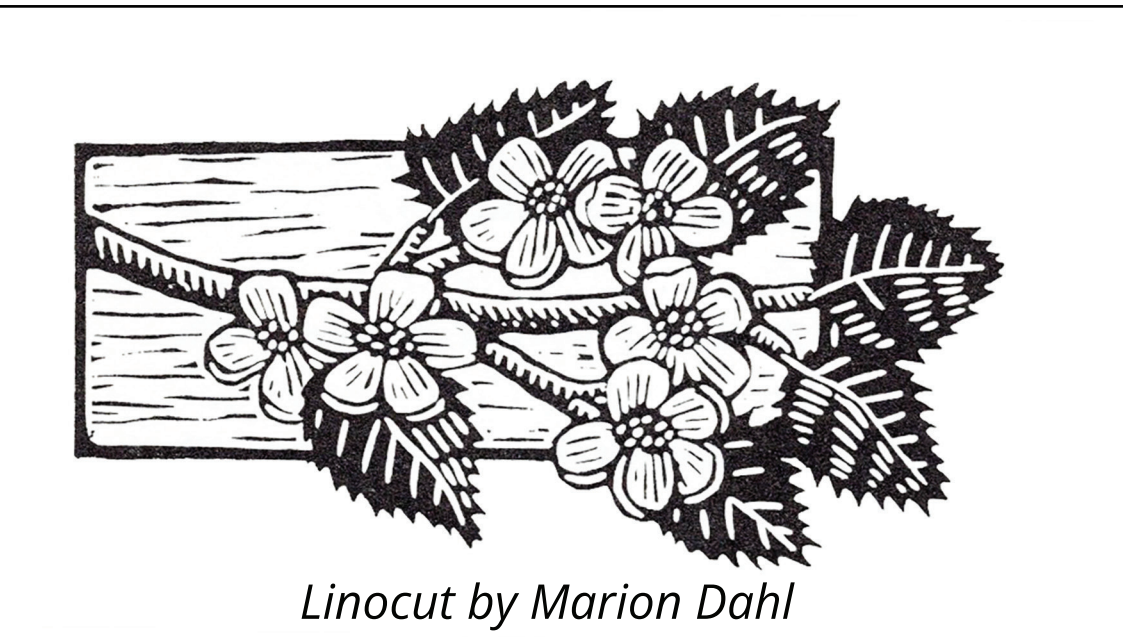
Our energies were not confined to vegetables. We encircled the house with rhododendrons, azalias, camelias, forsythias and other shrubs bought at a price we could not afford. But they grew swiftly and paid handsome future dividends.

Our primary interest, however, was in trees. We acquired far too many of them from

commercial nurseries or dug them up in the forest around our camp. As we then supposed, they would not shade us but our successors. Instead, firs, cedars, spruce and a California redwood, mere twigs when we planted them, are now almost four feet in diameter at their base. These conifers, unlike their fellows of the wild, lived in open space without competition for light. As a result, the lower branches did not die and fall off but, thriving, gave the trees a symmetrical contour as if a sculptor had moulded them.

We also moved young dogwoods from the forest and waited half a dozen years for their first elegant white blossoms, whose seeds took root in unexpected places. We even managed to transplant a few arbutus saplings with roots two feet long, but the casualty rate was high.

After a decade we were surrounded, and in cloudy weather sometimes even felt



Linocut by Marion Dahl

threatened by a minor jungle. But on a sunny April day the changing landscape exceeded our hopes.

The blossom of Japanese plums and cherries frothed against the evergreens. The blue skyline of the Sooke Hills was pierced by the hundred-foot exclamation marks of our lombardy poplars. Scents too mixed and subtle for analysis filled the air, none so bitter-sweet to old folk with youthful memories as the lilac's squandered redolence. "When lilacs last in the doorway bloomed" is perhaps the most poignant line in American lit-

erature, and for us they bloomed faithfully year after year, despite our neglect.

With amateur's luck my plantings succeeded, in some places, too well. Birds dispersed the seeds of holly, broom, wild cherry, red osier and even dogwood until I was forced to attack unwanted copses. But my axe, machete and muscles could never subdue the blackberry vines that had escaped from gardens unknown and made some thickets impenetrable.

When, for a single family, I planted an orchard of about thirty fruit trees - apples,

pears, plums, cherries and even peaches, whose blooms usually froze - my ignorance (or greed) betrayed me. I did not foresee the work of pruning, spraying and picking.

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- Michael Altshuler





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Shawnigan Focus

CVRD Moves to Simplify Land Use Rules with New Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw

Sierra Acton
Area B Director

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is taking a significant step toward streamlining land use regulations by consolidating nine existing zoning bylaws into a single, region-wide Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw (CZB). The initiative aims to simplify zoning rules for residents, improve administrative efficiency, and reduce costs across all electoral areas.

Zoning bylaws play a critical role in shaping communities. At their core, they are a set of rules that determine how land can and cannot be used. In the CVRD, these bylaws are enacted by the CVRD Board under authority granted by the *Local Government Act*. They govern a wide range of factors, including how land, buildings, and structures are used, how many homes can be built on a property, and how buildings are placed and sized.

More specifically, zoning regulations control density, building height, setbacks from property lines, and the location of uses within a property. They also determine the shape and size of parcels created through subdivision, including minimum lot sizes. Together, these rules help guide development in a way that balances growth with

livability.

For example, zoning helps prevent incompatible land uses from being located next to each other, such as housing developments beside heavy industrial operations. It also ensures that communities have a balanced mix of uses to meet the needs of residents, from housing and agriculture to businesses and services.

The move to consolidate bylaws comes in response to the CVRD's updated *Official Community Plan (OCP)* for 2025, which sets out a long-term vision and land use framework for the region's electoral areas. Zoning bylaws must align with the OCP, making them a key tool for implementing its goals.

Currently, having multiple zoning bylaws across different areas can create confusion and inefficiencies. By merging them into a single Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw, the CVRD hopes to create a more consistent and user-friendly system. It's also important to add new bylaws such as backyard chickens which are currently not permitted in Shawnigan Lake in residential areas due to outdated bylaws.

The new CZB will introduce one unified set of definitions and general regulations that apply across all electoral areas. This is expected to make it easier for residents,

developers, and staff to understand and apply zoning rules. It will also streamline the processing of applications and simplify future updates.

In addition to consolidating zoning regulations, the CZB will incorporate several existing bylaws into one document. These include the Sign Bylaw, Manufactured Home Park Bylaw, Campground Standards Bylaw, Off-Street Parking Bylaw, and Landscape Standards. Bringing these regulations together is intended to create a more cohesive and accessible framework.

Overall, the CVRD's effort reflects a broader approach toward clarity, efficiency, and long-term planning. By simplifying its zoning framework, the regional district aims to better serve its communities while supporting sustainable growth into the future.

Please go to planyourcowichan.ca

Lots of good information including instructions on how to look up your own property.

Input can be sent to zoning@cprd.bc.ca and myself sierra.acton@cprd.bc.ca

Six Openhouses scheduled for May, see website for times and locations.

Opinion

Tricia Wittich
Cobble Hill, Resident of Electoral Area B

I am writing regarding the proposed changes to chicken regulations within the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

As a rural resident zoned RR2 on approximately 2.5 acres, I am deeply concerned about the proposal to impose a strict cap of six chickens and no roosters. Applying such a limit to a property of this size does not reflect the realities of rural living. My property is surrounded by like-minded neighbours who value small-scale farming, hobby farming, and responsible animal husbandry. In this context, a six-hen limit feels both arbitrary and disconnected from how these properties are actually used.

Properties of this size are not comparable to small, dense residential lots; they are capable of supporting small-scale, responsible food production. For many of us, keeping chickens is not a hobby—it is part of a broader effort toward self-sufficiency, local food resilience, and reconnecting with where our food comes from.

Access to agricultural land is increasingly out of reach for many people, especially younger and first-generation farmers. Land within the Agricultural Land Reserve or zoned specifically for agriculture is often financially unattainable. Rural residential properties are, in many cases, the only viable entry point for those trying to get their foot in the door of food production. Imposing restrictive limits on these properties effectively shuts that door.

We are already seeing a decline in the number of young people entering agriculture, alongside an aging farming population. Programs like 4-H, which once played a major role in youth livestock and husbandry education, have been steadily declining. Small-scale poultry keeping is often the first step for young farmers and families to build skills, confidence, and a connection to agriculture. Policies that restrict this kind of accessible, small-scale farming risk further accelerating that decline at a time when we should be actively supporting the next generation.

I also urge the CVRD to reconsider how coop and housing specifications are applied. Standards that may

be appropriate for dense residential neighbourhoods should not be applied in the same way to larger, more rural lots. Setbacks, coop sizes, and related requirements should reflect property size, density, and surrounding land use. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work across such varied settings and risks placing unnecessary burdens on rural residents.

I am also concerned about the practical implications of enforcing such a cap. Many rural residents already keep more than six chickens in a responsible and humane manner. If this bylaw moves forward, what is the plan for those existing flocks? Will there be grandfathering provisions? A phase-in period? Or will residents be expected to immediately reduce their flocks?

The idea that people could be forced into culling healthy animals to meet an arbitrary limit is deeply troubling. It raises serious ethical concerns and does not reflect the values of many in this community who prioritize humane animal care and sustainable practices.

If the goal is to address nuisance concerns such as noise, odor, or improper management, those issues would be better addressed through standards of care

Shawnigan Lake Fire Department

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.

March 2026 Report
Department Members Attended
38 Incidents in March

- Sunday, Mar 1 - 1st Responder off Deloume Rd
- Sunday, Mar 1 - 1st Responder off Worthington Rd
- Sunday, Mar 1 – Alarms Activated on Pinder Pl
- Sunday, Mar 1 – Assistance on Ravenhill Rd
- Monday, Mar 2 – Alarms Activated on Park Pl
- Monday, Mar 2 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Tuesday, Mar 3 - 1st Responder off W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Thursday, Mar 5 - 1st Responder off Deloume Rd
- Thursday, Mar 5 - 1st Responder off Linden Ln
- Thursday, Mar 5 – MVI on S Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Friday, Mar 6 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan-Mill Bay Rd
- Saturday, Mar 7 – Assistance on Terrace Rd
- Saturday, Mar 7 - 1st Responder off Thain Rd
- Saturday, Mar 7 – MVI on W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Sunday, Mar 8- 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Sunday, Mar 8 – Burning Complaint on Berger Rd
- Monday, Mar 9 – Alarms Activated on Fitzgerald Rd
- Tuesday, Mar 10 - 1st Responder off Bellendean Rd
- Wednesday, Mar 11 - 1st Responder off Bob'O Link Rd
- Wednesday, Mar 11 – Hydro Lines on
- Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Wednesday, Mar 11 – Hydro Lines on W Shawnigan lake Rd
- Wednesday, Mar 11 – Assistance on Northgate Rd
- Wednesday, Mar 11 – Hydro Lines on Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Thursday, Mar 12 – Hydro Lines on Steinway Rd
- Thursday, Mar 12 – Mutual Aid Structure Fire w/Malahat Fire
- Friday, Mar 13 – Burning Complaint on Tyerman Pl
- Saturday, Mar 14 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Sunday, Mar 15 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Tuesday, Mar 17 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Friday, Mar 20- Mutual Aid MVI w/Malahat
- Saturday, Mar 21 – Alarms Activated on Sherburn Rd
- Saturday, Mar 21 - 1st Responder off Bob'O Link Rd
- Sunday, Mar 22 - 1st Responder off Sylvester Rd
- Sunday, Mar 22 - 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- Monday, Mar 23 - 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- Monday, Mar 23 – Burning Complaint on Scobal Rd
- Tuesday, Mar 24 – Hydro Lines on Burnham Rd
- Wednesday, Mar 25 – MVI on Sooke Lake Rd

and enforcement of existing nuisance bylaws—not through blanket numerical limits that penalize responsible owners.

I strongly urge the CVRD to reconsider imposing strict caps on chicken numbers in rural residential zones and instead adopt a more flexible, scale-appropriate approach that supports small-scale agriculture, youth engagement, and long-term food security in our region.

Additionally, I would appreciate clear, detailed communication on how the CVRD intends to manage existing flocks, including any grandfathering provisions, timelines for compliance, and enforcement practices.

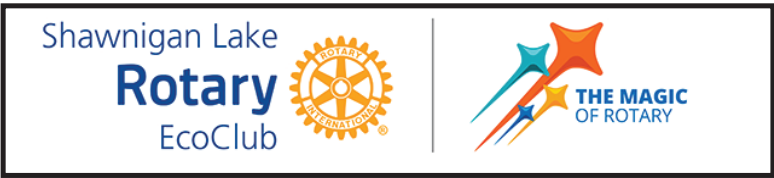
Please remember that you were elected to represent your constituents. Decisions such as the ones laid out in Bylaw 4710 should reflect the needs, lives and realities of the people you serve.

Shawnigan Focus

Shawnigan Community Clean-Up Event Saturday April 25, 2026 10 am to 2 pm

Shawnigan Rotary EcoClub

“It takes a Village To protect its Beauty” is our Event’s new motto. And it’s true. It takes each of us to make the effort, whether small or grand, to keep our Shawnigan Lake a beautiful destination and beautiful place to live and play.



How to be a part of our “Village”:
 First step: Don’t throw your garbage out the window of your car! Or dump your refuse at the end of a road in the forest. Seems like a no-brainer.....

Second step: Clean where you are. Adopt a favourite street, park, trail or shoreline and pick its litter when you can, or once a month. Let us know the area

you have adopted by emailing us at ShawniganCleanUpEvent@gmail.com.

We’re building a network and we’d like to put you on the map.

Third step: Join our annual Community Clean-Up Event on Saturday, April 26 from 10 am to 2 pm. Our Registration Area will be set up between the Dougan Parking Lot and Renfrew

Road beside the entry to Sthawnigan Community Centre. You can choose a zone to clean, pick up safety gear and litter-picking tools and enter for draw prizes donated by our local businesses.

We will be joined by Whimsy Caravan from Cowichan South Arts Guild with a youth-oriented art project, Shawnigan Basin Society, and Qu’wutsun Cultural Connections with their western red cedar restoration project – so please check us out and bring the family.

Fisher Road Recycling/D.L. Bins have again generously provided a large dumpster for our Clean-Up Event. If you clean your area ahead of time, you can bring your litter-picking to the dumpster by 3 pm. The bin will accommodate large pieces of garbage, so don’t be afraid to tackle a large dumpsite if you have a truck!

Hope you’ll join us, because it takes a village! For more info go to www.ShawniganRotaryEcoClub.ca

April Fundraisers Honour Earth Day

Marcy Fenske Shawnigan Basin Society

April is a BIG month for the SBS as we have not one, but two fundraisers! And it is no coincidence that they are timed around Earth Day on April 22, a day we stand together to defend the only home we share - our beautiful, life sustaining planet. We defend our part right here in 11,022 hectares of the Shawnigan Creek Watershed, the largest and most populated watershed in South Cowichan.

As a non-profit, volunteer society, fundraising is a necessity. We apply for grants, but these funds are allocated to projects and cannot be applied to operating costs. That includes our Research and Education Centre. It is the heart of our operation that houses mapping, studies and resources. It is where we meet together, where we connect with community, essential partners and host political delegates.

Fundraising supports our Board of professionals with qualifications in Limnology, Forestry & Eco-Forestry, Registered Professional Biology, Ecology, Education, PhD in Human Sciences and those members with decades of knowledge and practical experience on the lake and in our

watershed. We find our time is best applied to monitoring creeks and watercourses, analyzing lake sample data, managing Milfoil, assessing forest conditions, monitoring industrial activity, strengthening relationships with government and major stakeholders, supporting community, working towards the goal of protecting 30% of the watershed by 2030 and researching the science that guides our work. This is just a portion of what we do. The Board donates over \$75,000 in logged time annually towards our strategic objectives, detailed in our 5 Year Plan available on our website. This is why we so deeply appreciate your support. It allows us to put all of our focus on the purpose of our society - working to protect and secure the long-term health and safety of the Shawnigan Lake Community Watershed specifically and South Cowichan region generally, particularly the drinking water these watersheds provide.

The first fundraiser is our 50/50 Cash Raffle - draw April 26 where the winner takes half! Tickets are available now until Saturday April 25 at 11:59 p.m. The draw date is Sunday April 26

at 10:00 a.m. Tickets can be purchased online at shawniganbasinsociety.org.

The second is our Hibid.ca Online Auction running April 18-25. Hibid was created as a free platform for non-profits like us, as a way for its creator to show his support. We have some truly unique items

in the auction already and looking for more donations and word-of-mouth promotion to build excitement and appetite for bidding. Registration opens Thursday April 16, bidding opens Saturday April 18 and runs for one week closing Saturday April 25. People can bid on a variety of items as

well as Nature Based Cash Donations. Our auction can be found at: hibid.ca/events/shawnigan-basin-society-fundraiser.

For more information about other ways to support and how your generous donations are applied, please visit our website at shawniganbasinsociety.org. Community working together makes the difference!

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Shawnigan Lake






Meet My Heroes!

Kim Barnard
250-732-0531

It all began at a Monday night Director's meeting in February of 2018. I attended as the Rotary Club of South Cowichan's newest and keenest member-in-training. Listening, I learned that the litter situation here was out of control. Concerned resident Carolyn Morris had stepped forward to ask for help for a way to tackle this problem, so I pledged to follow up.

Knowing that Rotary had sponsored Kelsey students to Adopt-a-Highway in Mill Bay, I was certain that the club could sponsor a Clean Up event, with then-president Andrew's support. We continued in April 2019, before the lockdown of 2020, followed by an intrepid "Clean Where You Are" collaboration throughout the Cowichan Valley in April 2021. Other student groups jumped on board with tremendous impact.

In June of 2021, together with other like-minded volunteers, we launched Shawnigan's own Rotary EcoClub (Canada's first environmental

cause-based Rotary club, and one of a growing number worldwide) to support this work. We promote taking care of our outdoor spaces and planting for pollinators. Rotary's "4-Way Test" values guide our growing friendships in community service.

Shining throughout these efforts are two heroes I'm lucky to also call friends, Paul and Dinah! (see photo) They now lead this call to action, to help us keep Shawnigan beautiful.

We are poised to gather up litter again with our incredible team of residents and volunteers! Please plan to join in this year's Clean Up on Saturday, April 25th from 10-2, especially to meet these marvelous heroes of mine! I also acknowledge every hero who has Adopted-an-Area and is out there picking up, day after day, rain or shine.

I heartily recommend surrounding yourself with people who bring out your best self. Here's to making a positive difference amongst friends. It feels SO GOOD to keep Shawnigan beautiful, together!



Malahat Legion

Jeff Lydiatt
Malahat Legion

Like many Legions across Canada, Shawnigan Lake's Malahat Legion Branch 134 on Vancouver Island supports a wide range of community and veterans' causes through traditional fundraising activities. Weekly meat draws generate funds for charities recognized by the BC Gaming Commission, while the annual Poppy Campaign supports organizations approved by BC/Yukon Command. Over the past five years, these efforts have contributed to numerous local initiatives that serve both veterans and the broader community (see Figure 1).

Year	Meat Draw	Poppy	Creative
2025	\$28,500	\$17,500	\$13,740
2024	\$32,975	\$16,500	\$7,669
2023	\$26,025	\$21,500	\$7,305
2022	\$26,375	\$21,000	\$4,710
2021	\$7,700	\$11,000	\$4,589

FIGURE 1: OUR LEGION CHARITY DONATIONS

The "Creative" column in Figure 1 highlights funds raised for other worthwhile charities that fall outside the Legion's traditional fundraising categories. Notable examples include Cops for Cancer – Tour de Rock and the Military Police Ride for blind children, which are not eligible for gaming related donations because their cheques are processed out of province. Wounded Warriors Canada (BC) is another important charity that is not on BC Gaming Commission approved list this year. To overcome this challenge, the Malahat Legion has developed alternative fundraising methods to continue supporting these causes.

One popular initiative has been the outdoor vendor markets. Local vendors rent 4 foot tables in the Legion's

spacious backyard for \$25 or double parking lot spaces for \$30. Typically held twice a year from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., these markets draw strong community participation. The indoor Christmas Market is another highlight, offering both 4 and 6 foot tables for rent. Together, these events raised nearly \$2,500 in 2025.

The Legion has also embraced technology through online auctions. Members and local businesses donate 40-50 items—such as quilts, framed art, and household treasures—which are photographed, priced, and posted on an auction app hosted on the

Legion website. The weeklong auction concludes with automatic winner notifications, and payments are collected the following weekend. These auctions regularly bring in more than \$1,000 each time.

Through a blend of traditional activities like meat draws and creative ventures such as markets, auctions, and themed events, the Malahat Legion shows how a small community branch can think innovatively within regulatory limits. Their efforts continue to engage members, attract new supporters, and channel vital funds to a diverse range of charities and programs that enrich both veterans' lives and the wider community.



FIGURE 2: \$4,603 CHEQUE DONATED TO WOUNDED WARRIORS BC

April 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 free key game is at \$380 and increases by \$20 each week nobody wins

*Our Special Events:

- For our Centennial year, the Legion offers free membership
- April 18th – Chili Cook-off Competition
- April 18th – Military Police Ride at the Legion

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

Shawnigan Community Annual Clean-Up Event

Let's make Shawnigan shine!



Shawnigan Lake Rotary EcoClub

Saturday
April 25th, 2026
10am - 2pm

Location:
Dougan Park
Below the Shawnigan Community Centre

Clean-up on April 25th Event Day:

For tools, safety gear, and clean-up zones please visit the registration tent at Dougan Park. A large dumpster bin has been provided by Fisher Road Recycling/DL Bins for the litter you collect.

OR

Clean-up your neighbourhood:

Bring the litter you collect from your neighbourhood to the bin at Dougan Park by 3pm on April 25th.

- Draw prizes donated by local businesses.
- Art activities by the Cowichan South Arts Guild.
- Eco booths by Shawnigan Basin Society, Quw'utsun Cultural Connections Society, and FireSmart.

Find Event Details at: www.ShawniganRotaryEcoClub.ca
Any Questions? Please Email: ShawniganCleanUpEvent@gmail.com

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Understanding the CVRD

Michael Battler
Shawnigan Lake

How Regional Decisions Connect to Our Community

Part 1 of a Series Ahead of the October Regional Election

Shawnigan and the CVRD: Decisions, Decisions

Inside the Regional District System That Guides Our Local Services

If you live in Shawnigan Lake and have ever found yourself asking, “Who actually makes this decision?” you’re not alone.

Maybe it was about a zoning change near the lake. Maybe it was a development permit sign posted along Shawnigan Lake Road. Maybe it was a bylaw update, a park improvement, or the road you drive every day that still needs repair. In Shawnigan, the answer often leads to four letters: CVRD.

So what exactly is the CVRD?

The Cowichan Valley Regional District isn’t City Hall, and it’s not a municipality. Shawnigan Lake is part of Electoral Area B, which means we are not incorporated as our own town. Instead, we are governed through the regional district system, a form of local government created under provincial law so communities like ours can share services without becoming their own city.¹

This model dates back to the 1960s, when regional districts were established under British Columbia’s Local Government Act.¹ The goal was practical: to allow rural areas to remain unincorporated while still accessing services such as waste management, parks, land-use planning, and emergency coordination. Today, there are 27 regional districts in BC, and the CVRD is ours.²

Here’s how it works locally. Shawnigan Lake residents elect one Area Director to represent Area B at the regional Board

table. Municipalities such as Duncan, Ladysmith, and North Cowichan send their mayor or a councillor to that same table.² Together, they vote on regional services that affect communities across the Cowichan Valley.

On financial matters, voting strength is generally tied to population, as set out in the district’s Letters Patent, the legal document that establishes the regional district’s structure and voting rules under the Local Government Act.¹ Larger populations receive more votes on certain budget decisions.

So what does the CVRD actually do that touches daily life in Shawnigan?

At its core, the CVRD exists to deliver services to participating communities, using bylaws to establish those services and policies to guide how they are delivered.^{1, 2}

It sets zoning rules and land-use policies, including proposed updates like Zoning Bylaw No. 4710, which is currently moving through the public review and approval process. This bylaw is essentially the rulebook for how land can be used across Electoral Areas, covering permitted uses, building sizes, setbacks, and density. It works alongside long-term planning documents such as the new Official Community Plan (OCP), which guide how the community grows and changes over time.²

This can mean real and sometimes significant changes, from what can be built on a property, to how neighbouring properties are developed, to how the overall character of the community evolves. It can also include how rules are enforced, such as proposed updates to fines and penalties for bylaw violations, which, if adopted, could in some cases reach up to \$50,000

per day, depending on the type and severity of the infraction.⁶

The CVRD also reviews development permits and subdivision applications, oversees certain parks and regional solid waste services, and establishes the annual service budgets that fund those activities. If you’ve attended a public hearing or seen a notice about land-use changes, the CVRD was likely involved.²

It’s also important to understand the limits. The CVRD does not run schools, which are governed under the School Act.³ It does not operate hospitals, which fall under provincial health authorities established under the Health Authorities Act.⁴ It does not maintain most public roads. In unincorporated areas like Shawnigan Lake, roads fall under provincial jurisdiction through the Ministry of Transportation and Transit.⁵ Regional districts can only exercise powers granted by provincial legislation.¹ They cannot

create new services without a formal bylaw process or spend outside approved financial plans.

One reason this structure exists is cost. Rather than each small community running a full municipal government with its own departments, services are shared regionally and funded only where communities choose to participate.²

For Shawnigan Lake, the CVRD is the local government structure we work with. You may not agree with every decision, and that’s normal. But understanding how it fits together, who is making decisions, and how policies like zoning bylaws and the OCP affect your property and community makes it easier to ask informed questions and take part in the conversation and the decision-making process.

If you want to learn more or explore specific bylaws and projects like the zoning bylaw update, residents are encouraged to review materials directly on the CVRD website.

And in an election year, it’s worth taking a closer

look at how decisions are made — and what that means for your vote.

Next Month: Article 2 — Shawnigan and the CVRD: Inside Regional Governance

Sources:

¹ Local Government Act (BC Laws – www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca)

² Cowichan Valley Regional District – www.cvrld.ca; Zoning Bylaw Project (Bylaw No. 4710) – www.planyourcowichan.ca/zoning-bylaw-project

³ School Act (British Columbia – www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca)

⁴ Health Authorities Act (British Columbia – www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca)

⁵ BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit – Roads & Highways (www.gov.bc.ca/transportation)

⁶ Community Charter (BC) & Local Government Act – Bylaw Enforcement and Penalties (www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca)

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

Groundbreaking Marks New Chapter for Camp Shawnigan



Pictured from left to right: Jeff Kibble, Angel Kibble, Elena Lawson, and Tristan Klassen



Pictured from left to right: Mike Wilson, Hilary Abbott, Dana Lajeunesse, Tek Manhas, Elena Lawson, and Tristan Klassen

Have you seen all the exciting work happening at Easter Seals Camp Shawnigan this month? In early March supporters, community leaders, and partners gathered at camp to celebrate the groundbreaking of Phase 1 in the camp’s \$25 million redevelopment.

The project will transform our beloved camp to North America’s first year-round, purpose-built camp for children, youth, and adults with physical and intellectual disabilities.

The groundbreaking, held on March 6th, brought together donors, supporters, Lion’s members and volunteers to celebrate the future of a camp that has changed thousands of lives over the past 46 years.

“For 79 years, Easter Seals BC/Yukon has been dedicated to enhancing the quality of life, self-esteem, and independence of individuals with disabilities,” said Tristan Klassen, Acting CEO of Easter Seals BC/Yukon. “Today’s groundbreaking ensures that Camp Shawnigan’s legacy will continue for generations. This is more than a rebuild, it is an investment in dignity, belonging, and community.”

Setting a New Standard for Inclusive Design

The redevelopment will replace aging facilities with a fully accessible, modern camp built using Universal Design principles. Once complete, the new Camp Shawnigan will set a benchmark for inclusive recreation in Canada.

The redesigned camp will offer year-round recreational and educational programming, provide vital respite and support for families, create accessible gathering spaces for community use, and serve tens of thousands of individuals and families in the decades ahead.

The first phase of construction focuses on preparing the site for the camp’s future while improving safety and accessibility. Key elements of Phase 1 include a brand new dock, construction of a new parking lot near the camp entrance and the construction of the first two fully accessible cabins.



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: ysagsexec2024@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) 743-4621
- **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
- **South Cowichan Healthcare Auxiliary**
Contact: info@southcha.ca

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