

OTTER POINT & SHIRLEY RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION (OPSRRA) INFORMATION UPDATE—AUGUST 2006

The Otter Point & Shirley Residents & Ratepayers Association (OPSRRA) is a registered non-profit society with an elected Board of Directors and strives to present the points-of-view of its members to local government. OPSRRA was founded in 1992 and has a membership of about 375. Any resident or property owner in Shirley and Otter Point is eligible for membership.

Lifetime memberships are \$5.00 and are available from OPSRRA directors—see our web site (www.opsrra.ca) for further information.

The purpose of our society is to:

- Ensure that the development of the two communities of Shirley and Otter Point takes place in an orderly way and in the best interests of its residents.
- Co-operate with local government and other public bodies in the furtherance of the objectives of the society and benefits to the community.
- Concern itself with the performance of government agencies.
- Encourage citizens to stand for public office.
- Promote community spirit and sense of identity by organizing or supporting appropriate activities.

Are you an OPSRRA member? Do you want to receive the OPSRRA newsletter and notice of meetings directly to your e-mail address? OPSRRA is now e-mailing this newsletter to over 125 of our members. Contact Arnie Campbell at: d.acampbell@shaw.ca if you want to receive this membership service.

OPSRRA's EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTORS

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1. UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Contact Arnie Campbell at: d.acampbell@shaw.ca to have your community event listed in our monthly community events calendar.

Thursday
August 3

Juan de Fuca Parks Committee
5:00 p.m.
JDF Electoral Area Services Office
2-6868 West Coast Road, Sooke

Tuesday
August 15

JDF Land Use Committee Meeting
7:00 p.m.
District of Sooke Council Chambers
Council Chambers
2225 Otter Point Road

Note: This meeting tentative: check with CRD Planning Office to confirm

You can obtain the agenda at the CRD Planning Services office, 2-6868 West Coast Road or on the CRD website at:

www.crd.bc.ca/jdf/index.htm

Click on "Agenda" at the top of the page.

Thursday
August 17

Sooke & Electoral Area Recreation Commission (SEAPARC)
7:00 p.m.
Multi Purpose Room "A"
SEAPARC Leisure Complex
2168 Phillips Road, Sooke

- Thursday
August 17 **Muir Creek Protection Society**
Fund Raiser
Sanctuary: Artists in Support of Muir Creek
Monday, August 14 to Saturday, September 3
Noon to 4:00 pm
Victoria Arts Connection, 110-2750 Quadra (at Hillside)
- Grand Opening August 17**
7:00 to 9:00 pm
Presentation by Daryl Ashby, author of *John Muir—West Coast Pioneer*.
Information: 642-0393
- Sunday
August 20 **Shirley Day**
10:00 am to 4:00 p.m.
Shirley Community Hall
- Tuesday
September 5 **JDF Land Use Committee Meeting**
7:00 p.m.
District of Sooke Council Chambers
Council Chambers
2225 Otter Point Road
- You can obtain the agenda at the CRD Planning Services office,
2-6868 West Coast Road or on the CRD website at:
www.crd.bc.ca/jdf/index.htm
Click on “Agenda” at the top of the page.
- Wednesday
September 6 **OPSRRA Directors Meeting**
Members welcome!
7:00 p.m.
Board Room
SEAPARC Leisure Complex
2168 Philips Road Sooke
- Thursday
September 13 **Juan de Fuca Parks Committee**
5:00 p.m.
JDF Electoral Area Services Office
2-6868 West Coast Road, Sooke
- Wednesday
September 13 **Shirley Community Association Meeting**
7:30 p.m.
Shirley Community Hall
- Second &
Fourth
Thursday
of every month **Shirley Quilters and Crafters**
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Shirley Community Hall

2. UPDATE ON A REQUEST FOR A GOVERNANCE STUDY

A preliminary governance study meeting was held on Friday July 21 with representatives from the province and the Capital Regional District. Representatives from the Shirley, Otter Point and East Sooke fire departments, water improvement districts, ratepayers associations and community associations

were in attendance. Our MLA, Regional Director and an observer from the Malahat were also present. The purpose of the meeting was to present the provincial and CRD representatives with the reasons why we feel there is a need for a governance study for our area and to identify the options that we wanted to see included in any study. The province then presented their draft objectives for a proposed governance study. The minutes of this meeting can be viewed on the OPSRRA web site: www.opsrra.ca. Go to the Home Page and click-on Governance.

OPSRRA made the presentation on behalf of the community of Otter Point and identified six reasons supporting the need for a governance study. Here is a brief summary of what was said.

- **Integrity of our boundaries:** Under provincial legislation we have no legal right, as an unincorporated area, to prevent on-going annexations by an incorporated area such as the District of Sooke.
- **Representation:** The JDF Electoral Area is too geographically scattered, and with too many diverse and competing needs to be adequately represented by one elected representative.
- **Exclusion from decisions:** As an unincorporated area we are often left-out of important decisions that affect our community (e.g. annexation, subdivision approvals, Regional Growth Strategy boundaries, Native Land Claim negotiations and sale of large parcels of crown and private forest lands).
- **Inadequacy of CRD governance:** The CRD provides regional services to the JDF Electoral Area and serves as our “local government”. However, it is neither responsive nor effective. Issues such as a lack of leadership, advocacy and long-range planning and inadequate service delivery were identified.
- **Growth & vision:** Growth is coming to our area. Governance needs to be addressed within the larger context of growth and a future vision for our community. Taxation, social development, economic development, and cultural and environmental preservation are some of the other areas that need to be studied as part of that future vision.
- **Status quo:** This is not a governance option! Other options that should be included in a governance study are self-incorporation of the communities west of Sooke, incorporation with Metchosin or a “rural alliance” with Metchosin.

The Governance Study group will be meeting again in early August to review the province’s draft governance study objectives and to prepare a reply. The Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River Governance Study group will also be considering its future. OPSRRA originated this group in July 2005 to oppose the annexation of parts of Otter Point by the District of Sooke; from there it evolved into a larger group to lobby the province for a governance study for Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River. The Governance Study group was recently expanded to include East Sooke - and now the Malahat has asked to join. The suggestion has been made that Willis Point, the View Royal Native Lands and Port Renfrew should be invited to join us too.

The recently completed JDF Survey, available on the Regional Director’s web site, (<http://www.crd.bc.ca/jdf/index.htm>) provides some additional insight into how local residents feel about the present form of governance and their preference for other options.

3. SEPTEMBER OPSRRA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

A general meeting of the OPSRRA membership will be held later in September. The agenda will include an update on our request for a governance study, preparation for OPSRRA's presentation at the Official Community Plan public hearings and a proposal to develop a Strategic Community Vision for Otter Point & Shirley. Members are invited to submit additional agenda items for consideration.

4. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Trying to keep a membership list up-to-date is a challenge. OPSRRA is in the process of doing a major update: we have been reviewing and consolidating our membership lists; removing names of individuals that we know have left the community; and adding some names that were over-looked when previous membership lists were up-dated. This project, combined with another 15 new memberships sold in July, puts our membership numbers at about 400.

We have also created a new Associate membership classification. This was done to accommodate some of our members who have left the Otter Point and Shirley area but wish to continue receiving the monthly newsletter. Associate members would not be entitled to vote on OPSRRA motions.

5. DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC VISION FOR OTTER POINT & SHIRLEY / JORDAN RIVER

Neither Otter Point nor Shirley / Jordan River has community goals or strategies. The closest either has are the proposed Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws. OPSRRA feels that our communities need to identify the goals that reflect our priorities. Governance, taxation, public services, economic development, recreation and cultural and environmental preservation are some of the issues we feel a strategic vision could focus on. We will soon be contacting community organizations in Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River to explore their interest in joining us in this venture. A more detailed of our proposal follows.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC VISION DOCUMENT FOR OTTER POINT AND SHIRLEY/JORDAN RIVER

What Is a Strategic Community Vision?

- A strategic community vision is a document that outlines the major goals that a community sets for itself for a 5-15-year period and identifies key strategies for achieving those goals.
- The community goals normally reflect the community's priorities and can focus on diverse issues including: governance, public services, taxation, economic development, socio-cultural progress, environmental preservation, etc.
- The strategies to achieve such goals are generally broad and inclusive, link to a wide range of groups and organizations both within and outside the community, and may include timeframes for initiating certain activities.
- In some respects, the process of developing a strategic community vision can be more important than the document developed if it brings community residents, groups and elected leaders together in a process to clarify what they want for their community and how to pursue those goals.

Why Develop a Strategic Community Vision for Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River?

- Neither Otter Point nor Shirley/Jordan River has community goals or strategies. The closest document either has is a proposed Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw, which is legislatively required and focuses narrowly on ensuring an adequate supply of land for housing and setting land use zoning standards.
- Although the Capital Region District Board, which includes an elected regional director, functions as the local government for Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River, the CRD concentrates its energies on larger, region-wide planning issues. The lone regional director faces significant challenges in identifying let alone seeking to achieve diverse community goals in the six distinct Juan De Fuca electoral area districts. Local government bylaws and regulations for both Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River are largely determined by elected officials who neither live in the community nor are accountable to the local electors for their decisions.
- The economic base of Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River is changing. The traditional fishing, agriculture and logging industries are becoming less significant as employers, while home-based businesses and the tourism and retirement industries continue to grow in economic importance. Population growth is largely based on in-migration of retirees or commuting workers. Young adults often leave these communities for educational and employment opportunities elsewhere.
- Southern Vancouver Island is experiencing long-term population growth and, with it, demands for more housing, infrastructure and services. As land becomes more expensive and limited in Langford, Colwood and Sooke, increasing pressure for housing and commercial development in Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River is anticipated. A large-scale land developer recently purchased substantial forest tracts in Otter Point (with similar purchases in Shirley/Jordan River likely to follow) and is currently exploring ways to convert the land into profitable housing developments and settlement areas.
- By a wide margin, residents of Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River recently rejected amalgamation with the municipality of Sooke. In public meetings dealing with their respective draft zoning bylaws, many residents of both districts have spoken in support of maintaining a largely rural, low housing density pattern of development. The Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River Governance Committee has called on the CRD to support a study looking at local governance options. Other community organizations are actively lobbying for the creation of public parks and trails.
- Common forums to identify community goals and strategies to achieve them do not currently exist in Otter Point and Jordan River. Unfortunately, if the residents of Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River do not find a way to develop and support a common vision of future community development, future change and development may well be determined by non-residents with competing and conflicting visions and interests.

How Can a Strategic Community Vision Be Developed?

- The first step is to see if community organizations are supportive of the idea of developing a strategic community vision. The OPSRRA Board could recommend tabling such a proposal for consideration with the current Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River Governance Committee, which represents the major “local community-service” organizations in Otter Point and Shirley/Jordan River.

- If the Governance Committee were supportive, it could, in turn, establish a small sub-committee with a mandate to draft recommendations for developing a strategic community vision document over the next 1-2 years. The recommendations should include ways to ensuring wide community involvement, possibly through the use of evening/weekend workshops, public meetings, a community survey, and the assistance of a non-profit facilitator organization such as SmartGrowth BC.
- If, in turn, the recommendations brought forward by the sub-committee find widespread support, a steering committee could be established to obtain the necessary funding/support commitments and manage the visioning process.
- If there is a will to develop a strategic community vision, there is certainly a way to do it.

6. FREE SMALL BUSINESS LISTING ON OPSRRA'S WEB SITE

The Otter Point & Shirley Residents & Ratepayers Association welcomes the following local business to the OPSRRA web site:

Heron's Rest B & B - Otter Point

Blue Waters B & B - Shirley

Wood Visions – Custom Cabinets and Fine Furniture

Do you operate a small business? Are you an OPSRRA member? OPSRRA is offering a free business listing service for members, on its web site: www.opsrra.ca We will list non-members for a suitable donation!

The purpose of this service is to provide an opportunity for businesses in Jordan River, Shirley and Otter Point to advertise their goods and services to their local community. We anticipate having listings for accommodation, farm produce, art, furniture, fishing charters, eco tours, firewood, knitting, soaps, landscaping, bookkeeping, sewing and more. More information, businesses already listed and a registration form are available on OPSRRA's web site (www.opsrra.ca) under Business Listings.

The following business listings are on the OPSRRA web site:

1001 Welding & Equipment Repair	ALM Organic Farm
Beaches West B&B	Birds Edge Press
Blue Waters B&B	Body Wellness Spa
Eagle Cove Beachfront Guest Suite	Full Circle Seeds
Heron's Rest B&B	Jambo Pet Sitting Service
Kemp Lake Store	Malahat Farms B&B
Otter Point Beach House	Roads End Construction
Sandy's Drywall Ltd	Straitview Ridge Bed & Breakfast
Tugwell Creek Honey Farm	Tugwell Creek Meadery
Wood Visions	

7. DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Did you know that Robinson Road in Otter Point was named after Thomas Jefferson Robinson? He was a son-in-law of the homesteading Poirier family. His son Edward married Jean Shannon whose family farmed at Kirby Creek in Shirley. One of their two sons is Donald Robinson who owns DEREK Equipment and operates his excavator business locally.

Did you know that the large octagonal concrete pad at Point-No-Point resort, in Shirley, was originally the base to a WWII radio tower? In an even earlier time, the area near Point-No-Point was the source of ships' masts for the Royal Navy and "aero plane" spruce used in the construction of WWI war planes.

Information for this month's **Did You Know That?** is from two books of early local history, *The Sooke Story—The History And The Heartbeat* and *4,000 Years—A History of the Rainforest*, both written and published by the Sooke Region Museum.

Do you have local historical information that you would like to share or questions that you would like the answer to? If so, let us know and we'll try to help.

8. ARE YOU ADEQUATELY INSURED?

Somewhere between the feeling that your home is over-valued by the property tax assessor and under-valued by the real estate market, is probably its true replacement value. It is worth taking a look at what your insurance company considers the replacement value to be: it may be far too low. A division of the square footage of your home into the present insured replacement value will give you a rough idea of whether you could afford to replace your home in the event of major damage. Remember you are replacing it in 2006 dollars! If it comes-out to less than \$100 per square foot, you may be under-insured. Replacement costs will vary and depend on many factors such as materials used and the type of construction. However, if you have a custom-built home, use a lot of wood, especially for windows, and have a metal roof, your replacement costs could be \$125 to \$150 per square foot in today's building materials/construction market. When re-insuring, remember to check that you are getting all the discounts that you are entitled to:

- Senior's discounts usually start at age 55.
- Non-smoker?
- Mortgage paid?
- Distance from fire hall or fire hydrant?

9. UPDATE ON GRAVEL & SAND PIT APPLICATION FOR WEST COAST ROAD

As reported in our July newsletter, Dale Arden Log Hauling Ltd., in association with Trio Concrete Ltd., has applied to the provincial Ministry of Energy & Mines for a permit to remove 150,000 cubic metres of sand and gravel per year, for the next three years, from their property near Muir Creek. The property is bisected by the West Coast Road; the portion away from the ocean is further bisected by Anderson Road. The sand and gravel application is based upon an Application for Subdivision, now pending with the CRD, which would make the area below West Coast Road (next to the ocean) into Lots 1, 2 and 3. The remaining pieces above the West Coast Road would also be part of Lot 2. The Mines Application is for Lot 2.

The Mines Application states that the mine is of a type that extracts material above the water table. This has less strenuous requirements than some other types of mines. The neighbours of the existing gravel pit, which also belongs to Dale Arden Log Hauling Ltd., and is one residential lot away from this new application, have a great many concerns. Their experience, to date, is of a great deal of dust, noise and extra heavy truck traffic. They feel that their appeals to provincial and CRD regulatory and by-law enforcement authorities have not produced much mitigation of their situation, and that a new gravel pit will only worsen the situation in direct proportion to the amount of sand and gravel being extracted. Their other concerns are that the proposed access to the operation seems to be very close to the blind intersection at Anderson Road (as you come up from Muir Creek) and will be a traffic safety concern; and, that one residential property will have a gravel extraction operation on both sides—an impossible situation to live with.

The provincial Mines application is carefully considered and is a model of its kind. Regrettably, the neighbours had only 30 days to explain their concerns to the Ministry of Energy & Mines; and complaints to the Ministry must only address the potential Safety, Health or Environmental impacts of the proposed mine. A very visible gravel operation next to the proposed Muir Creek Park will not sway the Ministry.

Update as of July 30, 2006: July 21 was the last date for letters or other interventions to the Ministry of Energy & Mines. The neighbours and others have submitted about 30 letters and a petition signed by approximately 30 people, to the Ministry: so far they have received no acknowledgement. A number of letters have gone to the CRD and some of these have been acknowledged.

OPSRRA was contacted by members living in the vicinity of the proposed pit. They asked us to listen to their concerns and to suggest where they could go to find support and information. Following three meetings with the neighbours, OPSRRA decided to send the following letter to the Ministry of Energy & Mines.

OTTER POINT & SHIRLEY RESIDENTS & RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.opsrra.com/>

2950 Michelson Road
Sooke, BC V0S 1N0

17 July, 2006

Ministry of Energy, Mines,
Mining & Minerals Division,
PO Box 9320
Stn Prov Govt,
Victoria, BC V8W 9N3

Attn: Chief Inspector of Mines

Re: Dale Arden Log Hauling Ltd. Gravel Pit Application

Dear Chief Inspector:

I am writing on behalf of the Otter Point & Shirley Residents and Ratepayers Association (OPSRRA) to suggest that the Mineral and Mines Division of your Ministry require a public information forum be held in the community of Otter Point before a decision is made on this application.

Representatives of our association have met with neighbours of the proposed Arden Log Hauling Ltd. gravel and sand pit and feel that many of their concerns are issues that could impact health, safety and the environment beyond the immediate area of the proposed pit. These wider community concerns include:

- Damage to the adjacent ocean foreshore and Muir Creek, and remediation of the site (environment).
- Access to Highway 14 (safety).
- The impact on existing residences if potable water is removed for industrial use, from the already limited water table (health).

These are just some of the issues brought to our attention, which suggest the need for further information and discussion before a decision is made.

Our association is prepared to assist in organizing and promoting a public information forum in cooperation with your Ministry and the applicants.

Regards,

Arnie Campbell, President OPSRRA

Copy: Arden Log Hauling Ltd.
Trio Concrete Ltd.
CRD Planning Services

10. BACK ISSUES OF THE OPSRRA NEWSLETTER

Back issues of the OPSRRA newsletter are available on the OPSRRA web site.

This monthly newsletter is prepared by the directors of OPSRRA. It is available to members by e-mail and to others on our web site: www.opsrra.ca. To have an item you would like to have considered for placement in the newsletter, or make a comment about the newsletter, contact an OPSRRA director. OPSRRA tries to verify the correctness of the information in this newsletter; if we have got it wrong we will acknowledge that and make a correction as quickly as possible.
