



# FRASER VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

## Electoral Area E

### Spring 2010 Director's Report

#### *Services and Finance*

I am sending this newsletter to give you information on FVRD finance – how it collects, spends and accounts for public monies for services. A more complete explanation of how regional districts work may be found in the document *Introduction to Regional Districts: Communities in Partnerships* on the FVRD website at [www.fvrd.bc.ca](http://www.fvrd.bc.ca) or the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) website at [www.civicnet.bc.ca](http://www.civicnet.bc.ca).

**You will soon be receiving your Annual Property Tax Notice.** In general, there has been no FVRD tax increase this year except where new services have been added.

#### *How Electoral Area Finances Work*

- The provincial government is the assessment and collecting agent for electoral area property taxes and pays the funds to the FVRD to cover each service.
- Each service in an electoral area is accounted for separately using separate accounting records.
- Each account identifies the full cost of providing the service, including a portion for general overhead.
- Each year revenue specific to a service must be collected to pay the full cost of the service.
- No service is permitted to budget an operating deficit in any year.
- Any funds left over in one year go into funds for future years.
- Revenues and costs specific to one service cannot be shifted to or spread among other services.
- Services are provided in what are called, “service areas” which may be regional district wide, all of the electoral areas, an individual electoral area or just part of an electoral area.
- Your tax notice will list the services provided to your property along with the taxes, but a large number of services are put together because of limited space on the notice.
- The tax notice you receive collects taxes for many organizations with the FVRD being just one of them.



**Cultus Lake from Entrance Bay**

#### **FVRD Wide Services: (including municipalities)**

- Hospital capital funding projects (Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre, Chilliwack Emergency Wing, a reserve for Mission Hospital upgrade, and Hope Hospital).
- E-911 and fire dispatch
- Air Quality and Regional Solid Waste Management Planning
- Regional Parks
- Search and Rescue and Mosquito Control Program

#### **All Electoral Areas:**

- Electoral Area Planning, Building Bylaws and Permits
- Building Inspection and Enforcement
- Emergency Preparedness and Management
- Library

#### **Electoral Area E Local Service Areas: (where they exist)**

- Fire Departments (Chilliwack River Valley Volunteer FD, Columbia Valley/Lindell Beach Volunteer FD and a contract with the Cultus Lake Fire Department for East Cultus Lake/Parkview).
- Community sewer systems (Cultus Lake Sewer System)
- Community water systems (Parkview/East Cultus Lake and Bell Acres)
- Flood protection and or dyking areas (Baker Trail Flood Control, Frosst Creek Flood Mitigation, Wilson Road Dyke and Rexford Creek Drainage).
- Street Lighting (McFaul Road, Bell Acres and Parkview).



**Cultus Lake**

### ***Accountability***

**Electoral Area E** is one of seven electoral areas in the FVRD. The FVRD is the local government in the electoral areas. It operates differently than a municipality as not all the same services are provided. The majority of land in electoral areas is crown land which does not contribute a property tax for local services. Roads in electoral areas have remained the responsibility of the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. In the Cultus Lake Park the roads are the responsibility of the Cultus Lake Parks Board.

**Each Electoral Area Director** meets with staff annually to review budgets for the Electoral Area they represent. Their recommendations then go to the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC) of the FVRD where the issues are discussed and debated by the EASC in open meetings and the Electoral Area Directors vote like a Council to support, reject, or defer the recommendations.

Recommendations then go to the FVRD Board meeting for ratification. Recommendations that become bylaws, when passed and approved by the Ministry of Community and Rural Development, have the same validity as any other Canadian law.

The regular open meetings of the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC) are usually held on the second Tuesday morning of each month. The meeting agendas and minutes are available on the FVRD website at [www.fvrd.bc.ca](http://www.fvrd.bc.ca). Anyone with issues or concerns may make a request to the Administration Department to speak as a delegation at the beginning of a meeting or is welcome to ask questions about agenda items at the end of the meeting.

### ***Support for Our Volunteer Services***

Our volunteer organizations are a vital part of our communities and help supply additional services in a very cost efficient way. The labour is donated; however, equipment, training and other supplies are often provided by our taxes. Their service is greatly appreciated.

The **Fire Departments** continue to give excellent service to our communities. The volunteer fire fighters put in many hours of time beyond their basic fire fighter training to be able to give better first response assistance. Both Columbia Valley (which includes Lindell Beach) and Chilliwack River Valley Fire Departments carry the Jaws of Life, oxygen and other specialized equipment. Each department responds to over forty calls per year.

The Cultus Lake area is served by the Cultus Lake Fire Department which contracts with the FVRD for the area of East Cultus Lake/Parkview outside of the Cultus Lake Park.

Tax dollars provide the fire halls, fire trucks, equipment, training, and a stipend for volunteers to help cover out of pocket expenses for firefighters who attend regular practises and fire calls. Each department has a reserve fund for replacing vehicles and equipment when required which means that usually money will not need to be borrowed.

Cultus Country Investments Ltd. has recently donated \$30,000. to the Columbia Valley Volunteer Fire Department to help with equipment and vehicle purchases. Thank you Mr. Van Geel.



**Columbia Valley Fire Hall**

**The New Chilliwack River Valley Fire Hall Addition** has been completed below budget, thanks to good project management and the downturn in the economy. The referendum had approved borrowing of the required funds which will show up on tax notices in the local service area. The Chilliwack Fish and Game Protective Association has again generously donated a lease of the property with option to renew with similar terms in thirty years. The new building is expected to look after the fire department housing needs for at least the next thirty to forty years. An open house and official opening is being planned and you all will be invited to attend and help celebrate.



**Chilliwack River Valley Firehall**

**Fire Department Tanker Trucks** are being purchased for both Columbia Valley and Chilliwack River Valley fire departments using their reserve funds. Their reserve funds for vehicles have built up over the last few years so that no money will need to be borrowed in either area. These trucks will bring better fire protection during the dry wildfire seasons.

**Emergency Preparedness Volunteers and Management (PEP and FVRD)**

We are fortunate to have groups of volunteers in Columbia Valley, Cultus Lake and Chilliwack River Valley who have trained, usually at monthly workshops organized by the FVRD. They are trained for handling emergency situations such as registering evacuees during floods, wildfires or earthquakes.

**Citizens on Patrol** are active in Cultus Lake and Chilliwack River Valley. These groups of volunteers are trained and work as extra eyes and ears for the RCMP. If you are interested in volunteering and willing to take the necessary criminal checks and training, please let us know. New volunteers are always appreciated. FVRD grants-in-aid help these groups for equipment and transportation.

**Chilliwack/Vedder River Clean Up Coalition** continues to hold the river clean ups three times a year. Last September on Rivers Day about 250 volunteers from throughout the Lower Mainland took part. The event this April 17<sup>th</sup> was very successful. The next clean up events are set for Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup> and then on Rivers Day, September 26<sup>th</sup>. Please come out and help pick up litter and really appreciate and enjoy the great outdoors.

**Cultus Lake Aquatic Stewardship Society (CLASS)**

The drastic decline in numbers of Sockeye Salmon returning to Cultus Lake is nearing a "Species at Risk" level and has brought concern about the sustainability of the Cultus Lake environment. CLASS is a concerned multi-stakeholder group looking at strategies to balance human use with watershed health. There are many questions. Is the increase in milfoil and pike minnow connected to the decline of the sockeye? This stakeholder group includes residents, DFO, Fraser Basin Council and FVRD, meets monthly and is searching for answers.

**Fish Habitat Restoration in the Chilliwack River Watershed**

The volunteers of the Chilliwack River Action Committee made a significant contribution to the watershed sustainability during their summer work of 2009. Four main projects were accomplished: nutrient enrichment in Foley and Centre Creeks under the direction of biologists from the BC Conservation Foundation; upgrading the Slesse Park Clay Slide Berm to reduce siltation of the Chilliwack River; building of five groynes for erosion control at the Anderson Run Clay Slide to reduce downstream siltation, and the removal of silt build up in off-channel rearing ponds on Wingfield and Ryder Creeks under supervision of DFO.



**Chilliwack River from Wilson Road Dyke**

**An Adopt a Road** group is forming in the Bell Acres area for picking up litter on a regular basis along the roads.

Such groups can receive support from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. I encourage such volunteer groups as they improve the quality of our communities. If you are interested in helping your community in that way, let me know and let's see if we can get things going.



Bell Acres

### *Bylaws and Planning*

#### **Riparian Area Regulations**

As of March, 2006 the Province of British Columbia in cooperation with Fisheries and Oceans Canada introduced the Riparian Area Regulations to protect streams and wetlands that support fish and fish habitat. As a result most alteration of land within 30 meters of a stream is required to meet the Riparian Area Regulations. If you are planning a development within 30 meters of a stream or wetted area an assessment by a qualified environmental profession is required. Normal gardening, farming and yard maintenance are exempt. A Riparian Area Bylaw has now been approved for the FVRD electoral areas. You may contact the FVRD Planning Department if you wish more information.

**Do you know** that we have had in place for over 10 years a **tree cutting bylaw** for private property in Electoral Area E? The purpose of the bylaw is to help protect against slope instability, bank erosion, and to protect habitat. To cut trees over 20 cm in diameter you may need to obtain a permit. Please check with the FVRD Planning Department if you have questions about tree cutting.

**The Official Community Plan for Electoral Area E** is due for upgrading. This process includes opportunities for considerable community input. The final document will set the direction of planning for the area's development over the next ten years. You should have received a letter from FVRD staff providing information. Remember the public meetings planned for the Fish and Game Hall

on May 10 and the Columbia Valley Hall on May 11. There will be two volunteer advisory commissions formed, one for Columbia Valley/East Cultus Lake area and one for the Chilliwack River Valley. Residents are welcome to apply. Cultus Lake Park area will receive separate planning assistance at a later date.

**The No Camping or Overnight Parking** along the Chilliwack River between Vedder Crossing and the Tamihi Bridge except in designated camping areas is a Sec. 58 regulation under the Forest Practises and Range Act. This project included the placement of concrete barriers and garbage bins under the direction of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Arts. The result has been a great success in solving a problem of over 30 years which caused hazards to public safety and the environment. There has been a tremendous reduction in noisy parties, illegal dumping, confrontations with residents and habitat destruction. It took many meetings with many government agencies chaired by the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB), and included the BC Forest Service, Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe Society, City of Chilliwack, RCMP, ICBC, Conservation Officers, and the FVRD to bring it all together. The lead agency is the BC Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Arts.

On its success Kim Kettyls of the ILMB nominated this project for the Regional Premiers Award. It was chosen as one of the top five in the Service Excellence Award category.

**The Aggregate Pilot Project** has been a project intended to update the provincial mining act to include input by local governments for gravel mining applications. A committee has been working on this for over five years with the BC Ministry of Mines and a Memorandum of Understanding was presented for continuing and finalizing the process. In general, it proposed three types of areas: red where no mining applications would be considered, yellow where consideration of other values would be carefully weighed, and smaller green areas where new applications or existing mines could expect approval. However, there was some hesitation and progress has been slow. In the meantime apparently we remain under the old Mining Act regulations. An application to the ILMB for a large gravel mine at Larsen's Bench is in progress.

**A gap analysis of community water systems** owned by the FVRD in the electoral areas was undertaken with a grant from the provincial government. Community water systems upgrades have been advised to improve water quality and service delivery and safety. Upgrades are

proposed for the Bell Acres system and the Parkview system east of Cultus Lake. It is anticipated that the upgrading costs will be covered by Provincial grants and Reserve Funds (if required)..

In the Bell Acres area a water main was extended from the Bell Acres Reservoir to service the new fire hall addition. This also gave residents along the route an opportunity to agree to be added to the local service area for potable water and fire hydrants. Long term maintenance must be paid for by a property tax in the area added to the local service area. The hydrants will bring much better protection during wildfire season and lower fire insurance premiums should more than cover the cost of the tax increase.

**The Waste Management Plans** of Metro Vancouver have been a concern of the FVRD Environment Committee. We do not want air quality of the Fraser Valley to be at risk as the mountains act as a down wind funnel from Metro Vancouver. Discussions on the affects of waste to energy, landfills, and/or incineration continue.

**Congratulations to Stehiyaq**, the First Nations healing and wellness village at Centre Creek. I had the honour of being invited to their official opening ceremony. The practical refurbishing of the buildings looks very functional. First Nations vision of helping young people to overcome difficulties of addiction is indeed honourable.

#### **Animal Control**

Over the years I have received a number of complaints from residents from all over Electoral Area E about **nuisance dogs**. Two FVRD municipalities are conducting a feasibility study on animal control. I supported Area E being included in the study to find out the costs and the benefits. No decision will be made without careful consideration.

**To help prevent wildfires** the BC Forest Service Coastal Fire Centre has announced a ban on open backyard burning in our area during the period of May 15 to October 15.

**The FVRD Website** has more information on services for you. Please check it out at [www.fvrd.bc.ca](http://www.fvrd.bc.ca). You may also phone the FVRD office at 604-702-5000.

If you have other questions or concerns you may contact me at home at 604-858-3257 or email at [dlamson@fvrd.bc.ca](mailto:dlamson@fvrd.bc.ca).

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