

# Juan de Fuca Community Land Trust Society



2459 Kemp Lake Road Sooke B.C. V9Z 0R3

*May 2015 Newsletter*

Welcome to the Juan de Fuca Community Land Trust Society's May 2015 newsletter, sent to members and others who support our goals.

## **Society News at a Glance**

The society has placed its focus on preservation of the Muir Creek watershed. This builds upon work started by the Muir Creek Protection Society as well as the Capital Regional District's (CRD's) expressed 10-year strategic plan for park and trail acquisition.

Since TimberWest owns the Muir Creek watershed, several Society directors met with TimberWest representatives Frank Limshue, Molly Hudson and Ross McKeever. The meeting was the amiable beginning of what will be a much longer conversation about which areas might be preserved and by what means.

The society developed a power point presentation on Muir Creek which it previewed at our society's general meeting. Since then, directors have also presented it at the JdF Community Trails Society AGM on March 5 and the JdF Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission on April 28.

The specialty coffee fundraiser is still happening. Contact Arnie at ([d.campbell@shaw.ca](mailto:d.campbell@shaw.ca)) to order.

Victoria Foundation has disbursed \$2069.55 as grants to the society in the past six months.

Finally, four director positions will be up for renewal at our next AGM in September. We encourage you to get involved by contacting Sid ([sid2767@shaw.ca](mailto:sid2767@shaw.ca)) or Heather ([bother@telus.net](mailto:bother@telus.net)).

There is more information about each of these topics below.

## **Muir Creek on the Radar**

Muir Creek is back on the community's radar. At the society's general meeting on February 23, members were excited about reviving the Muir Creek Protection Society's goal for park acquisition. It is ten years since the Muir Creek Protection Society (MCPS) sprang into action and came so close to having the CRD acquire property in the area.

The release of some Western Forest Products private land from tree farm license back to private land in 2007 was a major setback for the MCPS. In 2010, when the Western Forest Products parcels at Jordan River, Sandcut Beach, and the Sooke Potholes came

onto the market, the CRD purchased a number of parcels to keep these areas open for public recreation. With the CRD acquisition fund tapped out, the Muir Creek acquisition plans lost out.

However, the CRD regional parks strategic plan for 2012-2021 shows there is still interest in developing parks and trails around Muir Creek. See page 81, <https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/parks-pdf/regional-parks-strategic-plan-2012-21.pdf?sfvrsn=0>. The goal of the Juan de Fuca Community Land Trust will be to help the CRD realize such parks and trails to the fullest extent possible.

Directors and members present at the society's general meeting know this may be a long term project or may depend on the community being prepared to act quickly on an unexpected opportunity. Most society members were absent. We would like to hear from more of our members about your ideas and questions concerning acquiring the Muir Creek watershed as parkland.

## **Meeting with TimberWest**

Couverdon is the real estate arm of TimberWest. Frank Limshue is the Director of Planning and Zoning and Ross McKeever is a Director for Real Estate Sales & Marketing. Molly Hudson is a Resource Specialist with TimberWest. On April 13, they came to Sooke to meet with directors of the JdF Community Land Trust: Anne Bell, Arnie Campbell, Heather Phillips and Sid Jorna. Thanks to David Evans for letting us use the Stick in the Mud meeting room. We are also very appreciative of the timely response from Couverdon to our request to meet.

The JdF CLT main objective was to let Couverdon/TimberWest know we aim to revive the Muir Creek Protection Society (MCPS) parkland acquisition plan. Frank Limshue's quick response to a meeting seemed to indicate that Couverdon has an interest in the plan. However, important details such as which parcels or areas in the Muir Creek watershed and by what means they would become park land were not discussed.

There were other issues not fully explored. We did not establish exactly how Couverdon-TimberWest had viewed the MCPS plan. It seems the directors for Couverdon envisioned the first few kilometres of old growth beside Muir Creek as having park potential. The JdF CLT vision that all of the Muir Creek watershed will one day be public parkland is not currently shared by Couverdon-TimberWest. Overall, the Muir Creek watershed is productive timberland and the company is mainly about timber harvest. Our desire to have the forest regrow and remain standing does not really match their's to have forests regrow to the point where they are harvested.

Creating isolated pockets of parkland in an area of private land is also problematic. An important difference between Private Managed Forest and a Tree Farm License is that the private owners have better control of access to forestall such acts of vandalism and carelessness as garbage dumping and human caused fires on their property. The public

has access to Crown land when there is no active timber harvest underway. Not to say there is no potential for vandalism and carelessness on Crown land, but the public bears any related costs.

Molly Hudson stated that TimberWest policies protect the environmental values of watersheds and identify sensitive ecological areas for appropriate management. The Couverdon-TimberWest team also pointed out the potential for agreements between organizations such as the JdF CLT for responsible access for recreation.

Arnie Campbell pointed out the parcels in the Muir Creek watershed have changed ownership several times over the years and it is not impossible that they will change ownership again. The JdF CLT wants to keep the public interested and ready if any opportunities come up.

## **Presentations to JdF Community Trails Society and JdF Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission**

Sid Jorna and James Gaston, with help of other society directors, prepared the power point presentation on the Muir Creek watershed presented to members at our February general meeting. They also shared the presentation at the Juan de Fuca Community Trails Society AGM on March 5 where Michael Walton, CRD Senior Manager for Regional Parks was also present. An earlier version was presented by Sid to the Sooke Region Tourism Association AGM in February.

The presentation points out that acquiring public access and management of the Muir Creek watershed will help meet goals for green space, recreation, economic diversification, conservation, watershed management, local food supply and carbon sequestration set out in both the regional parks strategic plan and the regional growth strategy. The project is larger than Otter Point, Shirley or Sooke: regrowth and conservation of the forest in the Muir Creek watershed would provide regional and provincial benefits.

The JdF Community Trails Society and CRD Regional Parks will be important partners in the move for parks acquisition at Muir Creek. It was no surprise that the Community Trails Society members were interested in the Muir Creek project. There is historically a lot of overlap in membership between the Muir Creek Protection Society, the JdF Community Trails Society and our more recently incorporated JdF Community Land Trust. The trails society has recently supported the land trust with a gift of \$300 towards operating expenses.

It was a happy revelation that the Senior Manager for Regional Parks has great respect for community groups such as ours and is very interested in parks acquisition in the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area.

Arnie Campbell and James Gaston did the power point presentation for the JdF Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission on April 28. Again, there is a lot of interest and support at this local level. June Klassen, our JdF Local Area Planning Manager, was also present at the parks commission meeting. Mrs. Klassen confirmed that rezoning and subdivision applications for properties in the Muir Creek area would result in parkland or cash-in-lieu coming to the CRD. She also cautioned that use of any parks or trails near the actual creek would have to meet streamside protection and enhancement area requirements.

## **Coffee sales and funding.**

The sale of specialty coffee blended for the society by David Evans at the Stick raised \$980. Our special blend is still available as the "Juan de Fuca Blend". The coffee is available in either ground or bean and in ½ pound (\$9.00) or 1 pound (\$18.00) sizes. Get in touch with Arnie Campbell at [d.accampbell@shaw.ca](mailto:d.accampbell@shaw.ca) to get on the list.

In December 2013, the Victoria Foundation established funds for land acquisition in the Juan de Fuca. We received a grant of \$1648.55 from the foundation in December 2014. A further \$421.55, which is from the interest on an endowment fund, was disbursed to us in May.

As a registered charity, the JdF Community Land Trust is able to receive grants from the Victoria Foundation. You will find us listed as a Public Foundation because our main purpose is not to hold land but to assist local, provincial or federal government in acquiring public greenspace.

## **Membership notes from the February General Meeting.**

When Sid Jorna gave the membership report at the February GM, directors realized we needed to sort out membership policies. Membership is kind of important because, short of donations towards operating expenses, memberships have been our main source of cash for operating. We have a separate savings account for "land acquisition".

Here's the deal. The bylaws say \$20 gets a two year membership. When a person's membership has lapsed, he or she won't get to vote at meetings but it will be another year before his or her name is crossed off the membership list.

The policy is that the "year" is a calendar year, from 1 January to 31 December. If someone joins or renews between 1 October and 31 December, the membership is counted from that time but the "two years" begins 1 January of the following year.

We have only been in operation as a society since May 2013 with our first general meeting in January 2014. As of May 2015, five of the founding directors are the only members whose membership will expire 31 December, 2015. So, you're all in the game as the game goes forward. By the way, we have 69 members including the seven directors.

You can put more money on the table to help with operating costs at any time. It's really easy. Have a look at the JdF Community Land Trust website and, while you're there, consider clicking on the donate button or sending a cheque.

## Minutes for February 23 General Meeting

The draft minutes for our February general meeting should be attached to this newsletter. Contact Heather at [bother@telus.net](mailto:bother@telus.net) if you can't open the attachment or with any questions, thoughts or nominations. See below.

### **Nominations now open: AGM in September 2015**

Nominating Committee members are Sid Jorna and Heather Phillips. Positions to be filled are President, Vice President, Treasurer and one Director at Large.

According to our current bylaws, each of these positions will be for a two year term ending at the AGM in 2017. Contact

Sid at 250 642 2767 [sid2767@shaw.ca](mailto:sid2767@shaw.ca)

Heather at 250 642 3297 [bother@telus.net](mailto:bother@telus.net)

## How You Can Help

You can help in several ways:

- Volunteer
- Suggest someone to the nominating committee or stand yourself as a director
- Friend us on Facebook and link to our website, [www.jdflandtrust.ca](http://www.jdflandtrust.ca).
- Become a member at \$20 for two years. Join via PayPal at [www.jdflandtrust.ca/join](http://www.jdflandtrust.ca/join).
- Make a tax receipted charitable donation via PayPal at [www.jdflandtrust.ca/donate](http://www.jdflandtrust.ca/donate)

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