

Results

Cowichan Station Area Association Conversation About the Environment

November 2008

Summary of Responses by Question

1. PROTECTING - What do you think are the 2-3 most important things we should address in the Cowichan Station area to ensure we protect the environment from harm.

Themes

Number 1

- Protect our watershed –whole watershed planning/management, assess pollution and water levels, protect banks, buffer zone and tree planting, ensure appropriate infrastructure for flooding.

Number 2

- Protect forests, green space and habitats – keep rural areas rural! Protect the agricultural and forestry land base and protect habitat and native wildlife e.g., use permit system to require buffer zones, wildlife corridors, habitat/water protection measures, protect Bright Angel Park and other places of refuge, no additional power lines, monitor forestry practices, no herbicides on railway right of way.
- Environmental Dialogue/Education/Regulation – continue the community environmental dialogue, ensure ground water protection, prohibit garden pesticides, and related signage.
- Reduce green house gas emissions– support carbon neutral by encouraging car pooling, better public transit, commuter train, trails and walking paths.

Others

- Waste management - Legislate dumping of contaminated soil, reduce garbage; encourage dialogue about personal consumption and waste management
- Protect air quality – restrict burning

2. RESTORATION - What do you think are the 2-3 most important things we should address in the Cowichan Station area to restore, rehabilitate and enhance the natural environment?

Themes

Number 1

- Look after the Watershed – promote whole watershed planning/management, monitor and address where appropriate riverbank erosion, restore degraded riparian areas, promote water conservation, monitor Koksilah water quality, quantity and timing of flow, remove garbage from river banks, , replant shrubs and trees, restrict water pumping from river in late summer, assess local agricultural practices for impact on water use and encourage organic farming methods, consider aquaculture for restoring fish stocks, assess local forestry practices for impacts on water.

Number 2

- Raise awareness – e.g., support stream keepers course in area, develop interpretive signs for environmental features, encourage community involvement in restoration projects, develop an environmental restoration program with youth.
- Protect forests, green space and farmland - work with Cowichan Tribes re development of reserve lands, stop removal of land from ALR, monitor logging/forestry practices ensure reforestation, curb development, keep trees along roadsides, no herbicide along rail line.
- Improve parks and trails –acquire new parks and trails, connect trails and walking paths.

Other

- Enhance sense of community e.g., restore train station
- Enhance habitat for migratory birds
- Encourage clean burning stoves.

3. STEWARDSHIP - *What do you think are the 2-3 most important things we should address in the Cowichan Station area to encourage economic and social development compatible with environmental stewardship?*

Themes

- Support community-based agriculture – e.g., local farmers market and gate sales, support the maintenance of the ALR and reasonable tax assessments for small farms, community allotment gardens
- Support development of a community-based hub – keep development focused on village core with rules on height, green space etc.; encourage cottage industry and environmentally friendly/nature and culture-based/community-based businesses; limit commercialization; support community gathering places to voice/share ideas e.g., village shops, church, use of public school site for kids space, library, workshops, interpretive centre, garden allotment, allow multi-purpose zoning in congested areas, support affordable housing through suites in homes and on farms.
- Protect environment/Green spaces – more green spaces and better habitat protection and restoration e.g., protect water from herbicides and pesticides, ensure sustainable community-scale forestry practices, adopt zero waste policy

4. LEADERSHIP - *What do you think are the 2-3 most important things the CVRD can do to help champion sustainability for the Cowichan Station area?*

Themes

Number 1

- Protect our watershed – whole watershed management plan; monitor and protect the river and riparian areas and ensure sustainable water use.
- Support and encourage community-based agriculture – i.e., no subdivisions on land suitable for agriculture, tax incentives for small farms, raise awareness of local producers, ten mile diet, organic growing
- Improve land use planning – we need: more community engagement in planning, a growth management strategy, and community plans that reflect environmental priorities in the zoning, e.g., zoning nodes of self sufficiency.

Number 2

- Improve transportation – improve efficiency of system and provide more service/better scheduling.
- Environmental building – more flexibility required in codes and inspections so that emerging environmental technologies and “out-of-box” environmental design are easier to do.

Others

- Improve waste management program
- Support parks and facilities
- Encourage alternative energy systems , e.g. mini-hydro systems
- Monitor development, tree cutting, yahoo gun use etc.