

Welcome to everyone!

I am Hilary Else and I am the president here at the Cowichan Station Area Association. I grew up here roaming the forest and swimming in the Koksilah river and loving this area. It was only a few years ago that I became aware that in the past there was a First Nations village site right here near the river and train station.

With that in mind, I'd like to begin this meeting by acknowledging we are gathered here today on the traditional and unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, specifically the traditional territory of the Quw'utsun (Cowichan) Tribes.

I would like to highlight, it has always been our goal here at the CSAA to build and foster strong relationships between all community members, and a big part of this is creating inclusive community spaces at the Hub. We have programming and activities for all ages, such as Yoga, Frisbee Golf, Clay Hub and the Community Workshop. The Hub also hosts a diversity of groups such as the Japanese Club, dance classes and the Men's Club. Recently, we pasted Progress Pride Flags on our doors and our new washroom block will include gender neutral washrooms. Building connections and fostering reconciliation with our local First Nations families and neighbours is really important to us.

At our last AGM in September 2020 we had a request from community members to hold archival space for the St. Andrew's Cemetery. Our dialogue with the Anglican Diocese began early in 2019 and while we have seen little movement in this area we continue to hold community interest at heart and push for accountability in this area.

Our Cafe has been up and running every Friday since mid-January 2021 with our dedicated team of volunteers and our new staff, Red Seal Chef, Joel Peck! This Friday Cafe would not be possible without these volunteers coming out to help take orders, make coffee and do the dishes! Thank you so much to these selfless community members! We also have a new exciting partnership with the Cowichan Co-operative, aka Cow-op, as a food distribution site every Thursday since January 2021. The Cow-op has many of the same goals as we do here at the CSAA, supporting local food growers, producers and much more!

Thanks to our amazing ED, Lynne Rozenboom, we now have outdoor space rentals and policies. The BC Community Gaming Grant enabled us to purchase tents and heaters for outdoor space rentals. Having these outdoor rentals has helped us keep our doors open for the public and staff employed during the restrictions of the pandemic.

After countless years of potable water shut downs here at the Hub we are so pleased to announce the support we are receiving from the Rotary Club of Duncan! The Rotary Team has been busy building a new shed to house our water treatment system, we are excited to have this new water purification system working this year!

We also have updated alarm systems for our buildings thanks to Wendy and Al Mikalishen!

Security is a big issue here at the Hub, we need properly functioning alarms and security due to the countless community members coming and going every single day!

It is with reluctance we are saying goodbye to Ronn Stevenson. He has left his Facilities and Community Coordinator position for a very part-time Facility Maintenance Coordinator position while he transitions out to new endeavours. Ronn has spent three years working hard to make a difference here. Right from the start he acted like a dedicated community member. He has a big heart and consistently put the Hub first! Ronn was a natural at establishing great relationships with so many volunteers here. Ronn was instrumental in the Island Coastal Economic Trust - Hub resiliency through technology project. This project has brought us up to date with the newest technology for virtual meetings and classes. Ronn put so much extra time in for us, putting on amazing events such as Pub in the Hub nights as well as The Homesteading Fair and two Christmas Fairs. He also leaves us set up for amazing events such as the Cowichan Fleece and Fibre Fair happening this October 2021. Ronn really thought big for us and has achieved so much while maintaining facilities and day to day operations. We are sad to see you go Ronn, and wish you all the best!

One of these amazing volunteers that Ronn became good friends with is Gord Warrenchuk. Gord has spent countless hours building and training us to use a new database to make our operations so much smoother! Our scheduling for renters and tenants will be easier and our records for volunteers, members, donors and human resources can be accessed and updated quickly. Thank you so much to Gord, you are the epitome of a dedicated community member!

We have had such a decline in rentals that we are reporting a loss this year but with the help of wage subsidies to pay our staff and the Canadian emergency small business loan for \$60,000 it seems we will be able to keep operations as usual. \$40,000 of this loan needs to be paid back by December 2022 but this collateral will help us with matching funds for infrastructure grants we hope to apply for to meet our needs in the areas of septic and washrooms.

Our board of directors is working hard to coordinate a Community Conversation for future outdoor space usage here on the grounds. Take a walk through the gym and share your ideas and needs with us!

The virtual HUB Film Club which has been happening for the last couple months has launched a whole bunch of great new films onto the virtual cinema page which can be found through a link from our website. We look forward to bringing back The Hub Film Club program again in the near future! The Film Club was an amazing monthly fundraiser for the CSAA and we are sorely missing it not only for the financial reasons but also for the community connections it created.

A big thank you to The Canadian Mental Health Associations Open Door Program! They have been helping in the cafe and doing forest clean-up, as well as raising funds for us by holding a bottle drive. Another partnership we have had the lovely support from is the Cowichan Estuary Nature Center! They have also helped in the cafe and started working on a big project cleaning out invasive plants in our forest and investing in a restoration project for native plants.

And lastly, we would like to welcome Carla Nigro as our new Rental and Administration Coordinator! Carla has already proved her worth in the few weeks she has come on board this multi-faceted association of ours. We look forward to growing and working with Carla and all the amazing volunteers who keep this place functioning, expanding and totally awesome!

Huy ch q'u