

SCCA 2018/19

CHAIR'S REPORT

June 18, 2019

Three strategic planning sessions were held in 2018 to allow the experienced and new Directors both an orientation to recent tasks and plan for the coming years. As a result we hope to pursue increased funding that will allow employment of an Executive Director in addition to our current Program Manager position. We will continue our efforts to:

- protect biodiversity in both marine and terrestrial ecosystems
- protect and improve local domestic water systems and a more resilient approach to the expansion of water sources
- expand educational opportunities through events such as Ocean's Day, information displays at local events, an enhanced web and social media presence
- support new initiatives for citizens science information gathering
- expand current conservation land trust holdings

In the past year we held a local government election all-candidates meeting in Sechelt and another in Gibsons. Both were well attended by the public and candidates for municipal and Regional District offices. Community concerns about water supply problems and responses to climate change issues were top of mind. We congratulate the successful candidates and are glad to see that they who seemed to share the same community concerns. We hope to again have a solid working relationship with all those elected, most of whom are new to their elected office themselves.

Early this year we had our Celebration of Conservation featuring the Big Easy Funk Ensemble, who were a big hit – a great mardis gras style dance! We used the opportunity to honour our very own Linda Williams with the John Hind-Smith Environmental Award. We are all blessed to have Linda's mind and heart working for the conservation cause.

We have a sort of good news/not so good news report on efforts to established marbled murrelet protected areas. SCCA Director Dan Bouman was involved in extensive negotiations to achieve this protection:

The SCCA has been working for nesting habitat protection for the Marbled Murrelet for many years. This species is federally recognized as *Threatened* under the Species At Risk Act. As part of the Habitat Area Nomination Project (HANP), the SCCA nominated ~5000

hectares for Wildlife Habitat Area (WHA) status in 2013. This year, the Province granted WHA status to 3,400 hectares of our nominations. We are pleased with this decision. However, there is still need for ~20,000 hectares more in order to meet the requirements of the of the federal recovery plan. The SCCA will continue working for more Murrelet nesting habitat protection until the recovery plan objectives have been achieved.

Our summer student in 2018, Paul Yeung worked on community engagement through outreach booths at many community events, assisting with our own events (like Oceans Day), the Summer Art and Conservation series that we do with the Arts Council each year, and assisted with our Chapman watershed protection campaign and supported our committees in their work. Our two summer interns for 2019, Devon and Erika, have already been quite busy with our 3rd annual Oceans Day in Sechelt (this past June 8th) and our first outreach booth the Community Services' Childrens Festival, and will be working on a number of projects with us this summer including: the development of a strategy for the Reed Road Educational Demonstration Forest, promotion of rainwater harvesting, the development of the Sechelt Inlet mapping project, and assisting us with our salmon and stream stewardship goals. They've already benefited from the 2-day Streamkeepers Training that we just offered in partnership with the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

Our land trust group continued work on Gambier, Keats with our partner, The Land Conservancy (TLC).

We have a new potential conservancy in Block 7 of Gospel Rock in Gibsons where a total of 47% of the property will be protected by a combination of Gibsons park and a land trust conservancy to be held jointly between ourselves, TLC and the Town. The entire waterfront below the road and the previously identified special forest on the side hill will have protection. This rare ecosystem is endangered largely due to its inconvenient location in areas where people prefer to build houses.

We are currently working with our Marine Committee to support renewed Streamkeepers stewardship programs on local streams in the rural area and with other community groups to secure protection for the Reed Road Forest in Area E. We've participated in new Federal consultations regarding the Oceans Protection Plan initiated to improve marine protection as new tanker traffic increases shipping of diluted bitumen in the Salish Sea and LNG in Howe Sound.

We are particularly pleased (and relieved) that the Provincial Park regulations have been enforced thus preventing the removal of Chapman Lake from Tetrahedron Park, an initiative of

the previous SCRD Board. The SCCA worked hard (as did all of you!) to support the Park protection in the face of a campaign to remove the protection we spent years bringing into place. This is a success that we can all celebrate – it was the community speaking up that made the difference!

The newly elected Directors are vigorously pursuing efforts to find other water sources and water storage options that are less damaging to the natural environment. They are aware that climate change is posing serious challenges to local water supplies that will require all of us to adapt to reduced water supplies in longer drought periods and prepare to cope with more severe winter storms with attendant shore line erosion and landslide damage on previously clear-cut mountain slopes. We hope to renew our previous collegial relationships at the SCRD and with all three local Municipal governments.

We're looking ahead to a fall Federal election and the shifts in priorities that could accompany the results. We will likely be joining efforts with the Alliance 4 Democracy to host our environmental issues All Candidates Forums.

We are grateful to all of you who help us continue our work in this community. Your support, both in your work, your time and in money keeps us keeping on. Thank you!

Lee Ann Johnson, Chair

Sunshine coast Conservation Association