

## Mayor's Message



The District of Highlands is comprised of almost 40% provincial, regional and municipal parkland and is home to numerous picturesque outdoor recreation opportunities. The ongoing pandemic has caused an increase in the usage of parks within our district.

Over the past several months, some Highlands residents have raised concerns about the growing demand for parking. We must balance the needs of the broad regional community with the concerns of Highlands residents.

Staff are working collaboratively with the Fire Department, RCMP, and bylaw enforcement to ensure the continued safety of the areas that visitors may be using as overflow parking. Compliance with officially designated no parking areas is still required and staff will continue to monitor the situation.

Having opportunities to enjoy beautiful places within our region is important for maintaining physical and mental health.

"I do believe, and I've said this repeatedly, how important it is for us to have access to outdoor areas, particularly in urban areas where people being cooped up inside can lead to a lot of other anxiety and challenges and problems, including mental health problems," said Dr. Henry. Welcoming visitors to the parks in Highlands is one way that we can do our part to ensure the wellbeing of our local and regional neighbours during these challenging times.

## The 2021 Census

The next census will take place in May 2021. Highlands residents are encouraged to complete their questionnaire online at [www.census.gc.ca](http://www.census.gc.ca).

## The District of Highlands to Appeal B.C. Supreme Court's Decision

After carefully reviewing the Reasons for Judgment in *O.K. Industries v. District of Highlands*, 2021 BCSC 81, the District of Highlands has elected to pursue an appeal of the decision including the declarations issued respecting the application of the District's bylaws to O.K. Industries Ltd.'s proposed quarry site. Visit [www.highlands.ca](http://www.highlands.ca) for more information.

## Highlands Evacuation Route Planning

The District of Highlands received a \$25,000 grant from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities' Community Emergency Preparedness Fund to develop advanced evacuation route planning should a local emergency event occur. The purpose of the project was to validate planning assumptions and develop key constraints and vulnerabilities faced by the municipality during a significant emergency situation.

The Plan identifies all of the high risk areas of the District and breaks them down into smaller groups to ensure that residents in the affected areas can be safely evacuated in the event of a significant emergency.

In December 2020, the Emergency Planning Committee reviewed the District's draft Evacuation Route Plan and forwarded it to Council for consideration. Council provided approval to incorporate it into Highlands' Emergency Response Plan at their meeting held February 1, 2021.

## Are you Bear Aware?

- Remove or secure attractants.
- Do not store garbage or other organic waste outdoors.
- If you have curbside collection, only put the containers out on the morning of collection day - never the night before. Make sure recyclables have been cleaned.
- Pick fruit early and do not let windfall accumulate.
- Avoid feeding birds when bears are most active (April to November) and ensure birdfeeders are always inaccessible to non-target species such as squirrels and raccoons. Do not let seed accumulate that may attract rats and other rodents.
- Feed pets indoors and keep pets inside at night.
- Keep your barbecue clean by burning off uncooked food and emptying grease container.
- Ensure your compost is well-managed and refer to Growing in Wildlife Country. You can find this and other info at: Wildsafe B.C. <https://wildsafebc.com/>



Recent Sighting on Ross Durrance / Millstream Lake Road

# Community and Council News

## 2021 Home Owner Grants

The Home Owner Grant is a property tax assistance program offered by the Province. Late last year the Province introduced legislation to enable centralization of the Home Owner Grant Program in 2021. This means that all Home Owner Grant applications must now be submitted directly to the B.C. Government online or over the phone. **Applications can no longer be accepted at the District Office.**

Effective February 16, 2021 eligible property owners can apply for their grants at [gov.bc.ca/homeownergrant](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/tax-changes/whats-new/property-taxes) or by calling toll-free to 1-888-355-2700 to speak with an agent. 2020 retroactive grants will be processed once submitted. Applications for the 2021 grants will be processed when property tax notices are issued at the end of May. If you apply early, your application will be held until taxes are levied. Residents are encouraged to wait for their tax notices to arrive before applying for the 2021 grant. This change in process does not change the eligibility criteria for the program.



Home owners can subscribe to receive updates from:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/taxes/tax-changes/whats-new/property-taxes>

Office

## Climate Plan Approved

In December 2020, Council approved the Climate Plan in support of the District declaring a climate emergency. The Climate Plan is intended to help the District to move towards the goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 and identifies six priority areas and associated actions. Two significant areas of work to be commenced by staff in 2021 include the implementation of the BC Energy Step Code and a subsequent review of the District's Building Bylaw, and the development of options for secondary suites and appropriate bylaw enforcement.

Staff have also created an information page on the District's website to help keep residents informed of incentive and rebate programs available from external agencies for switching to low emissions transportation options and climate-friendly home renovations such as switching your home heating system to an electric heat pump. For more information on these programs, please visit [www.highlands.ca](http://www.highlands.ca) and click the orange climate-friendly incentives and rebates image.

The Climate Plan is available online at

<https://www.highlands.ca/195/Sustainable-Highlands>.

## South Highlands Local Area Plan

The South Highlands Local Area Plan Task Force continues to prepare "preliminary directions" to be used for the next survey, expected to be out in the Spring. It's really important that people respond to this survey once it's available.

Stay tuned to [www.LetsTalkSHLAP.ca](http://www.LetsTalkSHLAP.ca) and

<https://www.highlands.ca/504/South-Highlands-Local-Area-Plan>

## Strategic Plan Annual Review

On February 3, 2021 Council conducted the annual review of the Strategic Plan. Council decided to retain the initiatives included in the Strategic Plan.

Staff proposed a modified timeline for completing these initiatives as both core work and Council's priorities have been impacted by the addition of items at last year's review (bow hunting and Climate Plan), the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, significant land use applications, and other workload increases.

Highlights of the proposed changes:

- Extend the Local Area Plan process to the end of 2021.
- Delay starting the Tree Bylaw review to the third quarter of 2021.
- Extend timelines for the Building Bylaw Review and Step Code Implementation.
- Extend timelines for Secondary Suites policy consideration.

The revised timeline for Council's strategic priorities is available online at:

<https://www.highlands.ca/DocumentCenter/View/7661/Timeli ne-Update-Jan-2021>

Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan is also available online at:

<https://www.highlands.ca/160/Strategic-Plan>



Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 14th for daylight savings time. It is also recommended that you test your smoke alarms and replace the batteries to ensure that they are functioning properly

# Community and Council News

## “The Shelter” at Mark & Marlene’s *by Councillor Ann Baird*

The Shelter, centrally located at 4240 Munn Road, is where Highlanders can share seeds, veggie starts, and even extra garden produce. With more people growing food these days, it just makes sense to have a place to share our garden surplus and help our neighbours get growing too.

This is an informal set up where Highlanders can pop by to share what we have and take what we need. Last year was our first year of sharing seeds and veggie starts, and this year promises to be even better.

The Shelter is getting a deer fence around it and a rain water harvesting system to water the vegetable starts.

COVID safety protocols will be in place with no gathering permitted and hand sanitizer is available on the table. During COVID, please do not come up the driveway to the house.



Check out the simple website we created for The Shelter to learn more: <https://gordannofecosense.wixsite.com/highlandsplants>

Highlanders can also post on the Highlands BC Community Facebook site to update others with what’s currently available at “The Shelter” or email [ann@eco-sense.ca](mailto:ann@eco-sense.ca). Happy Gardening and Sharing Everyone!

## HIGHLANDS 2020 COVID GARDEN *by Marlene Tyshynski*

The Community Garden gardeners got through the 2020 COVID growing season with commitment and success. Gardeners complied with the Health and Safety requirements of the Provincial Health Officer and managed to grow fabulous vegetables and fruit, kept the garden weeded and installed a composting system and electric fencing (to keep out the bears).

COVID is still with us and thus the Health and Safety requirements continue. We will not be able to host educational seminars and workshops in person but hope to do so on Zoom (watch for announcements on the notice boards for free Zoom gardening seminars). However, the gardeners will continue to garden!!!!

If you are interested in renting a garden box or joining as a communal gardener please contact Monika, the Membership Co-ordinator at [mccoyote1@gmail.com](mailto:mccoyote1@gmail.com)  
See: HighlandsCommunityGarden on Facebook.



## Highlands Broom Bash 2021 MAY IS BLOOM TIME

**CUT** anytime at your leisure.

**CUT** only blooming broom – no old woody dead ones.

**DON'T PULL** – that spreads seeds

We encourage all landowners to cut the broom at their roadside. Involve your neighbours. Make it fun.

**The HDCA is proposing a new program for Broom Collection. Stay tuned for more information on the District’s website.**

Contact Paul: 250-478-7885

## Highlands Information at your fingertips!

You simply sign up for items such as: agendas, minutes, news alerts and events posted to the community calendar and an alert will be directed to either your cell phone or email account informing you of the new item. Sign up by visiting [highlands.ca](http://highlands.ca).



**Notify Me®**  
Sign up to receive  
notifications

## A Message from Zhinoos

Hi everyone,

Since we want to continue to provide music & arts nights to bring people together and to cheer hearts and keep spirits up, we will hold our music nights via Zoom on the 2nd Saturday of every month. We "open the door" (on Zoom) at 7 pm, to provide an opportunity to chat, and the music starts at 7:30. There will be another opportunity to chat at the end of the program.

Please contact Zhinoos at [zhinoos19@gmail.com](mailto:zhinoos19@gmail.com) to receive a Zoom link, or if you have any questions.

## HIGHLANDS MUSIC COFFEE HOUSE PRESENTS

# THE WILDS

Holly Arntzen & Kevin Wright  
with Karel Roessingh - piano

FOLK POP TO ROCK YOUR WORLD!



ADMISSION BY  
DONATION

7:30 PM, SATURDAY, MARCH 13TH, 2021

PLEASE EMAIL ZHINOOS BY MARCH 10TH AT  
[ZHINOOS219@GMAIL.COM](mailto:ZHINOOS219@GMAIL.COM) TO RECEIVE A ZOOM LINK

## Mary Lake Addition

The Land Conservancy of BC has acquired a 27-acre swath of coastal Douglas fir and wetlands adjoining the Mary Lake Sanctuary. This key piece of property will help protect the ecosystem and wildlife of the Millstream Creek Watershed.

On Feb 24, 2021, the Peninsula Streams Society and Goldstream Salmon Hatchery released Coho salmon fry into the lake at the Mary Lake Nature Sanctuary. The sanctuary land is protected by a collaboration between the Greater Victoria Greenbelt Society, Tsartlip First Nation and The Land Conservancy of BC.

## District Update

The District Office continues to be accessible by appointment only. Please call 250-474-1773 or email [info@highlands.ca](mailto:info@highlands.ca) to connect with staff or make an appointment.

Council meetings are happening electronically as per the 2021 meeting schedule. Meetings are held using the Zoom application. If you are interested in attending an upcoming electronic Council or Committee of the Whole meeting, you can now access the meeting link directly from the agenda without having to contact District staff to receive this information. Meeting agendas can be viewed at <https://www.highlands.ca/agendacenter>.

## 2021 Budget Schedule

The Draft 2021 Budget and 2021-2025 Financial Plan will be reviewed between March and May. Meetings will be held electronically at 7:00 pm and members of the public are welcome to join Council for these discussions.

- March 8, Committee of the Whole, Financial Plan presentation and discussion.
- April 12, Committee of the Whole, Financial Plan discussion.
- May 3, Council Meeting, Financial Plan and Tax Rates Bylaw Readings.
- May 10, Special Council Meeting, Financial Plan Tax Rates Bylaw Adoption.



A shout out to our roads crew who did a great job salting and plowing before and after the snowfall.



## Contact Info:

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Councillor Karel Roessingh  
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250-727-9808

Councillor Rose Stanton  
[rose26@telus.net](mailto:rose26@telus.net)  
250-474-3403

Fire Chief Ford  
[firechief@highlands.ca](mailto:firechief@highlands.ca)  
250-920-6970

Municipal Office  
[info@highlands.ca](mailto:info@highlands.ca)  
250-474-1773

CRD Animal Control  
250-478-0624

CRD Bylaw Enforcement  
250-474-3351

CRD Parks  
250-478-3344

Wildlife Information  
1-800-663-9453

## Community Calendar

March 1, 7pm – **Council Meeting**  
March 8, 7pm – **Committee of the Whole**  
March 13, 7:30pm – **Virtual Coffee House**  
March 15, 7pm – **Council Meeting**

April 6, 7pm – **Council Meeting**  
April 10, 7:30pm – **Virtual Coffee House**  
April 12, 7pm – **Committee of the Whole**  
April 19, 7pm – **Council Meeting**

May 3, 7pm – **Council Meeting**  
May 8, 7pm – **Virtual Coffee House**  
May 10, 7pm – **Special Council Meeting**  
May 17, 7pm – **Council Meeting**