

# Shawnigan FOCUS

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A Non-Profit Community Publication

## SIA “GROWING PAINS” – a history of blatant non-compliance!

**Dave Hutchinson**  
*Shawnigan Focus*

Let's put aside, for a moment, the impending threat posed by the Contaminated Waste Permit issued by the Ministry of Environment (MoE). Consider instead, South Island Aggregates' less than stellar history as the operator of a quarry governed by Permits issued by the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM).

The Environmental Appeal Board decision states that previous incidents of non-compliance with MEM did not lead to the conclusion that SIA is an unreliable operator. There are excuses about growing pains and inexperience. There is an implicit assumption that things are better now.

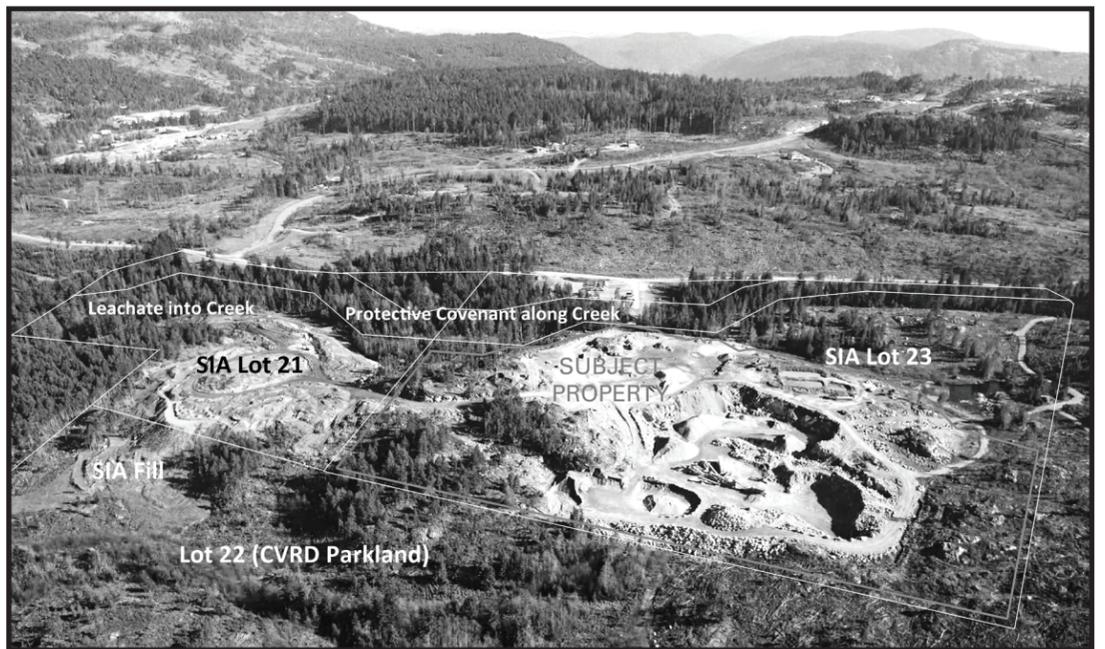
A simple hike around the site perimeter shows otherwise. There is no fence and no signage as required by the Mine Permit. Starting at the south-west corner, and walking north along the western boundary, you first encounter encroachment onto CVRD parkland about midway along Lot 23 (see photo). Among multiple infringements in this area, one that really stands out is the 20 metres of drainage channel that SIA blasted into CVRD land. This is where effluent will be discharged into an 'ephemeral stream'. No easement, notice or permission was obtained.

Further along, as you pass the divide between Lots 23

and 21, you come across fill that has been pushed onto CVRD land. The amount increases as you proceed until, midway along Lot 21, the intrusion onto CVRD parkland is truly astonishing – a veritable peninsula, many metres deep and dozens of metres wide. Far from being clean material, it is substantially riddled with concrete, metal, plastic, asphalt, tires and wood-waste, all in contravention of the Mine Permit. This is all observable in the fill pushed onto the CVRD parkland. Who knows what exists 50 metres beneath the surface of the SIA property.

Google Earth imagery shows this fill appeared between 2006 and 2010. It was received and stockpiled allegedly as reclamation fill for the quarry operation on Lot 23. SIA record keeping is poor and no one really knows what the volume is. There appears to be far more material than could fit onto Lot 23, never mind what is allowed by the Mine Permit. Instructions from MEM and other agencies to address this monumental problem have clearly been ignored by SIA and not enforced by the Province.

One flank of the Lot 23 stockpile parallels Shawnigan Creek and tapers down to within a few metres of this vital source of Shawnigan Lake water. Oozing from this is a repugnant red leachate which gathers in puddles covered with an oily sheen, and then flows into the creek.



*The SIA site, looking east*

This has been happening for years! Recent analysis by Dr. Andrew Weaver, Green Party MLA, has confirmed earlier findings that there are serious contaminants. MoE, still steadfastly defending their Waste Permit decision, have agreed to perform follow-up testing of the water and the site itself. It is crucial that these tests are comprehensive and verifiable.

There has been an unexplained reluctance (perhaps even incompetence or negligence) on the part of MEM to enforce conditions of the Mine Permit. Even with the MoE Waste Discharge Permit, SIA cannot legally receive or process contaminated material without an amendment to their Mines Permit for Lot 23. If granted, it begs the question of what will be done with all the fill on Lot

21, which would presumably be in contravention of the Mine Permit for that property (each Lot has its own Mine Permit). Those responsible at MEM have a lot of explaining to do and it would be quite wrong to grant the amendment without addressing these many concerns.

*Related Quotes: (more on pg.4)*

**Scott Cunningham,**  
CTV Reporter, CTV  
News, Apr 22, 2015:

*“A woman who worked for South Island Aggregates in 2006 has come forward to CTV news, she says the company began accepting industrial fill as a way to make money, and she says they were willing to take almost anything, no matter its environmental impact.”*

**Ian Webster, Former  
MEM Inspector of**

**Mines, Email, Apr 17,  
2007:**

*I requested to see records of material being brought to the mine site and was provided with only two vague “Material/Soil Acceptance” forms and they did not show volume or description of material. There were no records for the wood waste brought to the site (600 tonnes). Mr. Block seemed to be completely unaware that there is a permit condition requiring a registered professional certify all fill as “clean”.*

**Ed Taje, MEM Regional  
Manager, Email,  
Mar 1, 2007:**

*Further to our discussions regarding the wood waste, tires, asphalt and soil being imported to the quarry site on Stebbings Road ... The import of waste material to a mine site is not permitted ... all imported waste material, wood, asphalt, and tires must be removed from the mine site.*



*Red ooze from Lot 21 leaching into Shawnigan Creek*



*SIA waste on CVRD parkland*



## WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEND US LETTERS... EDITOR@SHAWNIGANFOCUS.CA

The Focus will publish your thoughts on Shawnigan issues: bouquets you would like to offer to special people; things that strike you as funny; challenges you want our civic leaders to consider; and/or ideas that would better our community. Letters to the Editor must be accompanied by the author's full name, address and phone number, but the contact information, other than the name, will not be published. Letters should be limited to 300 words and we reserve the right to edit for brevity or to refuse inappropriate or abusive language. Letters should attack issues - not individuals or groups.

### Thank You to Andrew Weaver

Thank you so much Dr. Weaver for your very thorough and visual support for this issue.

None of my letters to the ministries, or investigative media have received anything other than automated responses.

I was incensed to see the picture of the cement, rebar and especially the tire that have been so ignorantly dumped in our watershed, spilling over onto our beautiful parkland. There are ways to recycle all of those waste materials and a very competently run recycle depot on Fisher road in Cobble Hill does just that. The fact that this garbage was allowed to be dumped there speaks volumes as to the carelessness of the monitoring done by SIA and CHH.

How the EAB believes these companies can contain, treat and monitor the amount of contaminated soil the permit allows for makes me wonder about the intelligence of those who have the authority to make these decisions that affect us. Obviously neither the decision maker, Hubert Bunce, nor the EAB panel members have visited the site as you did.

For almost 40 years now, a volunteer project run by the Mill Bay and District Conservation Society, with support and assistance of the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans, have used the creeks and Shawnigan Lake in the success of restoring Pacific Coho in our region to greater return numbers than ever. If the Ministry of Environment doesn't care about the future safety of the drinking water of thousands of their electorate, perhaps the negative impact to BC's salmon will encourage them to rethink this permits approval.

Not only does the permit need to be revoked, but SIA and CHH must be charged with the responsibility for cleaning up the mess they're already shamefully responsible for. I wonder if their mining permit shouldn't be revoked as well, since they have already shown delinquency in that endeavor. Then fill will become unnecessary.

~Sylvia Gray

### Imposition is not Responsible Governance

Make no mistake, the SIA contaminated soil facility is be-

ing imposed on the Shawnigan Community by the Provincial Cabinet. Minister Polak suggests that the provincial government is obligated to respond to applications by any private land owner and is then bound by the scientific analysis provided by bureaucrats to whom decisions are delegated. What she fails to mention is that the legislation that sets up this default decision-making regime was created by her government in the first place. Political responsibility is conveniently masked by delegation. Not surprisingly, the Environmental Management Act has the effect of favouring a private owner over any other interest. Not surprisingly, the interests of an entire community for its water security, its property values and its sense of environmental integrity is now playing second fiddle to the dulcet strings of a private sector corporation and business lobbies in Victoria.

It is clear that the Minister and her colleagues have decided that it is legitimate to impose the facility's risks on the Shawnigan Community, despite the numerous gaps in the technical record as fully demonstrated by the testimony of independent professionals during the recent EAB hearings. The repetitive reference to "the science" supporting the permit is actually a reversal from the recorded testimony. What the statutory decision making bureaucrat and the EAB clearly relied upon for their conclusions was the self-interested account of the quarry site geology and engineering design put forward by the company's hired engineers - in spite of the significant contrary testimony of other well qualified professionals. When the basic science is in such significant question and the risks are of such great importance, the right response is to invoke the precautionary principle, not to retreat behind a hugely complex set of permit requirements that hold no guarantees of effectiveness.

The very existence of an elaborate set of permit requirements illustrates the degree of risk that the Stebbings Road SIA Quarry actually represents. The promise of intense monitoring illustrates the potential harm that can be anticipated when things go wrong. What we know about self-monitoring by companies and the ability of the Ministry of Environment from its track record in the CVRD is that it only responds too little and

too late, well after the damage has been done. Mt. Polley is only one of the more recent and spectacular examples, but in Shawnigan we have had numerous cases of illegal contaminated soil dumping for over a decade with nothing more vigorous than the sending of letters to polluters by the Ministry with no discernible effect.

When it was demonstrated at the EAB hearings that the site geology was not in itself a buffer against contamination risks, the company fell back on insisting that the engineering design and permit conditions would more than compensate for the unsuitability of the site given its proximity to Shawnigan Creek and the underlying aquifer. Engineering safeguards, essentially unenforceable permit conditions and delegated self-monitoring are a very poor substitute for fundamental environmental suitability. The public outcry in the Shawnigan Community is gaining momentum because the public quite rightly dismisses the weak explanations for a bad decision. People held off from active protest while awaiting the EAB decision. Shock at upholding the permit is now galvanizing the community. This is not the time for circling of the Cabinet wagons around a single business; it is time for restoring confidence in government within an entire community.

~Bruce Fraser

### The NIMBY syndrome!

Dear Editor:

We're all familiar with the so-called "NIMBY" syndrome, for Not In My Back Yard.

I'm sure there are a few people out there (i.e., the management and staff of South Island Aggregates, its subcontractors and others who have little or no conscience - and value private wealth much more than public health, etc.) who would suggest that the opposition to their toxic dump site at Shawnigan Lake is nothing more than NIMBYism.

Well, I've got news for you, SIA et al: This has nothing whatsoever to do with NIMBYism! Instead, this is exclusively about NIAFWA!

I'll let you figure out what the F and the second A stand for, but the rest of the acronym is for, "NOT IN A WATERSHED!"

Here's an idea! Dump 274 tons of toxic waste, per day,

into an already- and long-established (albeit severely dysfunctional) toxic waste site: The Liberal-dominated B.C. Legislature.

~Errol E. Povah

**Editor's Note:** All land is in a watershed. Shawnigan is a "Designated Community Watershed" providing drinking water for thousands of people. Perhaps the acronym should more politely be NIADWS.

### Karma dumping

I am a part time resident at Shawnigan Lake and have been coming here since the 1970's. I have always been so awed by the beauty here.

Last year I noticed the Karma Shack. This is an absolute eyesore on Shawnigan Lake road. Today, for example, the roadside in front of the 'shack', was littered with old couches as well as mattresses.

What do you expect? You start putting out the 'stuff' you don't want, everyone else is going to do the same. What's to stop the mindset of some people to drop off their 30 year old couch or bed so someone else can deal with it? The fact that it is unsupervised opens the door for a junk drop off.

Who has the right to set up this kind of used junk area on District property? Where is the Bylaws Officer, or for that matter, the RCMP?

To ask for donations is a joke. Take the shack away and you wouldn't have to go the landfill in the first place!

~Sincerely, S Johnson

### School Bus - Safe to pass?

Dear Editor

The other week, while waiting to see my daughter come home from the school bus stop, I heard the very loud honking of the school bus. Turned out, a truck blew through the safety zone despite the flashing red lights and extended stop sign.

Today I requested, and received, from the Supervisor of Transportation at SD79, clear rules about what to watch for when approach-

ing a school bus: when flashing amber lights are on, it is legal to pass the bus. It is similar to a traffic control light where a driver should proceed slowly with extreme caution.

If the flashing reds are on all drivers must stop. I hope this simple explanation serves as a reminder to drivers.

~Gaileen Flaman

### Clean air and clean water are human rights.

Dear Editor

If only Dr. Richard Stanwick, Vancouver Island's chief medical health officer and the chief protagonist behind the recent smoking bylaw, would just take one step back from his lofty position, he would realize how hypocritical his one-sided crusade is. The good Doctor is all air, what about our water?

Clean air and clean water are human rights. I guess clean water is not even on Dr. Stanwick's radar. Never mind keeping smokers seven metres from a door or air intake, Dr. Stanwick should be fighting with all the authority granted him as Vancouver Island's Chief Medical Officer to stop contaminated water from getting onto the dinner table of islanders and down our throats and those of our children.

Contaminants are contaminants in air or in water. Come on Dr. Stanwick let's hear your voice loud and clear on this issue. I hesitate to suggest that Dr. Stanwick has bigger fish to fry than some smoker who lights up a smoke in a park. He should be at the forefront of the crusade to stop the contamination of 8,000 people's drinking water in the Shawnigan Lake watershed.

Or maybe not, could it be that the political fallout from such a fight with the Provincial Government is much greater than writing a \$2,000 ticket to some poor bloke who lit a smoke in the wrong place. Like I said - hypocritical.

~Sean Igan



Mary's Mistake

# Open letters to Premier Clark, AKA “Trying to fathom the incomprehensible”

**Steve Houser**  
*Resident of Shawnigan Lake and former BC Liberal candidate for Cowichan Valley*

As a former BC Liberal candidate for Cowichan Valley and still a strong BC Liberal supporter, it pains me to point out the terrible mistake the BC Liberal government is making in permitting a toxic waste dump in the Shawnigan Lake watershed – the source 12,000 citizens depend on for safe drinking water.

Common sense should tell anyone that dumping nasty contaminants on top of an aquifer, beside a creek leading to a community's drinking water makes no sense.

The government says the permit was issued by a 'statutory decision maker' and claims this somehow miraculously insulates the process from politics, leaving the decision based solely on 'science'. Sorry – but when you threaten to potentially poison drinking water – that's political, however much Cabinet might wish to duck responsibility and let ministry staff carry the can.

As to the 'science', the dump owners, South Island Aggregates (SIA), claimed their dump is on top of impermeable

bedrock 75-metres thick, with no chance of toxic leachate seeping into the water supply. The government accepted this myth, not because they did their own studies but because SIA's engineers said it was so.

In a world of tight budgets the Environment Ministry uses the Qualified Professional model wherein it relies on the opinion of the proponent's engineers. Without casting aspersions on SIA's engineers, it may not be too much of a leap to suggest their findings just might be biased.

When the SIA engineers presented their 'science', SIA owed them \$500-thousand dollars, with payment contingent on a permit being issued. Forgive me if this could give the appearance of the engineers "singing for their supper".

During the Shawnigan Residents Association challenge of the permit before the Environmental Appeal Board, the claim of 75-metres of solid bedrock crumbled in the face of strong indications the dump sits on fractured limestone likely to leak like a sieve.

Not to worry, the engineered solution is polyethylene liner, a big baggy if you will, that is supposed to prevent any leaks.

Never mind that there is limited and unhappy experience with these liners which have a history of failing. In the case of SIA, this is almost guaranteed as the polyethylene will be used inside a still active quarry with ongoing blasting; not to mention the heavy equipment that will dump tons of contaminated crud onto the thin liner.

Relying on the unproven liner technology, the Environmental Appeal Board upheld SIA's permit. It would be wrong to suggest the EAB tribunal was in any way improperly influenced in its surprising and disappointing ruling, but the fact that the tribunal is appointed and paid for by government, may lead some to query a conflict.

Not only is the liner technology unproven, so is the competence of SIA. Going by their sorry track record of flagrant disregard for the permit conditions under which SIA already operates – including trespass, encroachment and illegal dumping on a neighbouring park, plus a raft of 20 law suits against them, it can be suggested the only thing proven is SIA's lack of competence. One can only wonder why on earth the government would hitch its reputation to such a questionable cowboy outfit. Does this

pass the smell test?

In recent days I have seen some Liberal Party messaging from the Premier that she is concerned about the environment and wants to make it a priority along with economic growth. On first blush this is comforting and credible that the head of this beautiful province wants to proclaim a solid commitment to the environment. My consternation comes from how glaringly the permit for a toxic waste dump in a designated public watershed undercuts and makes a mockery of any claim of care for the environment.

If this can happen to Shawnigan Lake, what other community drinking water is not at risk?

We've already had the Mount Polley disaster to warn us about the dangers of 'engineered solutions' in completely unsuitable locations. Let's not have your government siding with another disaster in the making.

Please Premier, show some real environmental leadership and separate your government from this appalling permit and the unworthy holders of it.

Dear Christy Clark,

My name is Peter and I'm 9. I've already written to you twice on climate change, but this time it's a different subject: The Shawnigan Watershed.

The first meeting on this was in July 2012. Now, after almost three years of fighting and after spending over 1,000,000 dollars, the "Environment" Minister Mary Polak lets SIA dump 5 million tonnes of soil in my cousins' and friends' drinking watershed. After 9 (maybe more) scientists said it was a TERRIBLE place to dump contaminated soil.

The CVRD has offered to find a better place and help pay for it, but you refused.

My mom sat through the hearings and everyone acknowledged that SIA was wrong about the 'impermeable' bedrock, that it is actually fractured limestone.

Now based on that info, who would uphold that permit?

Set a good example for BC and rip up the permit.

Yours truly,

Peter

[www.shawniganfocus.ca](http://www.shawniganfocus.ca)

## Quotes continued from page one...

**John Alexander, Lawyer for SIA, CTV News, Apr 23, 2015:**

*Well, South Island absolutely denies that they were ever in the business of bringing in undocumented loads or any material that wasn't permitted. Yes, one can point at one figure from one lab result at one location and say, oh my goodness, we have a problem here. It's all tactics to stir unnecessary fear in the public.*

**Sean Hern, SRA Lawyer, Letter to MEM, Apr 15, 2014:**

*It appears to us that SIA has been, and remains, out of compliance with its quarry permits in a number of respects and we do not understand why the Ministry of Energy and Mines seems to have turned a blind eye to this and has apparently committed itself to issuing an amended quarry permit to allow the contaminated soil facility to be located in the quarry.*

*If the MoE Permit is upheld, contaminated soil will be used for reclamation and none of the fill presently on either lot will be used for reclamation except for a final covering layer of clean fill for the top of the landfill. According to the mining per-*

*mits, SIA should have to remove the additional fill that is no longer going to be used for reclamation.*

**Ed Taje, MEM Regional Manager, Email, Apr 19, 2013:**

*The existing permit allows for the stockpiling of residential classification soil for final reclamation.*

*The stockpile as it sits now is not a suitable final end land use.*

**Ed Taje, MEM Regional Manager, Email, April 1, 2014:**

*The sloughing or material that encroached on to the CVRD property can be removed ... the property impacted by the encroachment must be cleaned up and returned to its pre-encroachment state, to the satisfaction of the property owner.*

**Brian Carruthers, CVRD CAO, Letter to MEM, Apr 27, 2015**

*As an adjacent property owner that has been blatantly impacted by the mining activities of SIA/CHH, the CVRD remains disappointed by the lack of action on the part of SIA/CHH or the Ministry in addressing these outstanding issues.*



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## Directors Report, Area B

**Sonia Fursteneau**  
Area B Director

With respect to lot 21, it is private property. Now, that means for the Ministry of Environment that we have full authority to be able to enter that property, conduct testing, investigate if there are concerns with respect to pollution. We intend to do so. We have done so, and I will talk a little bit more about that in a moment.

There is, however, though, no authority — the minister possesses no authority — to be able to allow another party, even through a contractual arrangement, to engage in that kind of investigation on private land. Here's what we can do, though. Staff, after meeting with representatives from CVRD have developed a sampling plan for the site. I understand they will be discussing that with CVRD today.

We cannot order the private property owner to allow CVRD members to attend and observe. However, we will be discussing that with them, and we're hopeful that on a voluntarily basis the landowner will allow us to bring along CVRD representatives to observe the testing

In the absence of that we will certainly make sure that all test results, all test processes are discussed and shared with the CVRD.

**~Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Environment, April 20, 2015**

This has happened because our community decided to work together, to stand up for what is right, and to be unrelentless in our efforts to convey our intentions to protect our drinking water, and to protect our future.

We have not yet won, but we have made extraordinary progress in the last six weeks.

Since March 20th, thousands of signatures have been collected for the SRA's petition. Hundreds of letters have been sent to the Minister of Environment, the Premier, and MLAs around the province, and dozens of letters have been published in newspapers in the Cowichan Valley, Victoria, the Gulf Islands, and Vancouver. There have been numerous TV sto-

ries, several radio interviews, an investigative piece in the Victoria Focus magazine, and an absolutely phenomenal presence on social media.

Our story is getting out, it is getting coverage, and it is getting results. And it is all because we have chosen, as a community, to come together and support each other in every way possible.

We have come a long way since our community meeting on March 23rd, when we felt such shock and grief. Today we are a community with direction and force, with hope and optimism, and with a clear understanding that when we choose to work together, we are unstoppable. I cannot begin to express my gratitude to everyone who has committed to this fight for our future. It is only because of all of you that we have been able to achieve what we have achieved in the last six weeks.

Today – April 30th – two Ministers stood up in the Legislature and addressed

the very real concerns of Shawnigan residents in a direct, straightforward manner. Minister Polak committed to working together with the CVRD on developing a sampling plan for the SIA property, and to sharing all test results with the CVRD.

Minister Polak's remarks were a step in the right direction. Probably even more powerful was the statement in the Legislature from Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett:

To [Andrew Weaver's] question, he is correct that there was a commitment made by the Ministry of Energy and Mines that we would ensure that the company that had encroached on regional district land would, in fact, remediate that land. An engineering plan has gone to the regional district, about eight weeks ago.

I don't know why we haven't heard back from the regional district, but I will commit to work with the

member, work with our ministry, work with the regional district and make sure that they know they have that plan. They can take some time to look at that plan, and that RD land will be remediated.

This issue of the encroachment onto CVRD parkland by SIA has been a long-standing and frustrating one, with the company demonstrating an entrenched intransigence to fix the damage they have done to CVRD property over several years. Today's announcement from Minister Bennett, and the commitment made to the CVRD, is a huge step in a positive direction. We intend to ensure that that commitment is honoured.

Stand firm, Shawnigan. Continue to stand together and to stand up for what is right. We will win more small battles, and we will win the big battle. It is just a matter of time.

For more details, go to: [soniafursteneau.ca](http://soniafursteneau.ca)

## Shawnigan Residents Association

**Victoria Robson**  
Shawnigan Residents Association

### Time is running out.....

Over the past 4 weeks, Shawnigan citizens have worked tirelessly attending events, standing at grocery stores and other venues, and talking to their families and co-workers gathering signatures to petition our provincial government to rescind the Environmental Appeal Board decision allowing contaminated waste to be dumped into Shawnigan's watershed. At the time of writing this article, 5,000 signatures are collected and locked up safely – waiting for Rally Day!

A Celebration Rally will take place at noon on May 13th, on the grounds of the Legislature Buildings, to honour those who have signed the petition and to present the petition in the House. Your participation at the Rally will show our community's unity and resolve. Elected members, community leaders, and students will speak in support of protecting the watershed that provides drinking water to 12,000 people. You can check the SRA Facebook page or our website for event details.

With only 2 weeks until the Rally we want to collect more signatures, but time is running out. We ask that each community member take the "25 Signature Challenge". Go to [www.thesra.ca](http://www.thesra.ca), print off a petition, get 25 signatures and send them to the SRA. Just think of how the numbers of signed petitions can multiply if we ask a few friends!

Challenges are extremely rewarding. Here are some Challenge highlights we are excited to share.

- ★ A gentleman came from Victoria to pick-up a petition kit. He and his family collected over 200 signatures one Saturday at an event there.
- ★ A woman and her daughter, after working all day, walked the Thrifty Food parking lot on a Tuesday night and in 3 hours collected over 200 signatures.
- ★ A Shawnigan resident mailed his petition in all the way from Portugal.

Join the Challenge! For more information visit [www.thesra.ca](http://www.thesra.ca)

### Shawnigan Weather April 2015

Stats courtesy of CVic Weather Network ~ compiled by Grant T'reloar

April Stats	Cigarmaker's Bay		Discovery School		Museum		Elford Road		
	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	
Normal High	13.2	14.5	14.2	13.9	14.1	14.6	14.7	14.2	14.2
Normal Low	3.5	3.7	4.2	2.8	3.7	4.1	4.6	3.5	4.2
Highest Temp	30.0	24.2	25.7	21.5	25.2	23.2	27.5	21.0	24.0
Lowest Temp	-5.6	0.9	0.6	-0.7	-0.7	1.2	0.8	1.0	0.0
Precipitation	65.2	47.9	69.1	36.1	53.9	24.8	51.1	34.8	54.8
Days w precip	15	14	17	14	16	13	16	15	16
Precip since Jan 1 (mm)	556.0	514.9	642.8	496.5	619.2	437.4	547.9	481.4	603.4
<b>Since 1914: 30<sup>th</sup> warmest 20<sup>th</sup> driest</b>									
<b>Lake Temperature:</b>	Apr 5 <sup>th</sup> : 11°	Apr 12 <sup>th</sup> : 10°	Apr 19 <sup>th</sup> : 12°	Apr 26 <sup>th</sup> : 12°					
<b>Lake Level Change:</b>	Apr 5 <sup>th</sup> : -1cm	Apr 12 <sup>th</sup> : -8cm	Apr 19 <sup>th</sup> : -8cm	Apr 26 <sup>th</sup> : -1cm					



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**SUNDAY MAY 24, 2015**  
**9TH ANNUAL SUBARU SHAWNIGAN LAKE TRIATHLON**  
**7:00AM - 11:30AM**  
**Triathletes and Volunteers Wanted!**

Join us at West Shawnigan Lake Park or VOLUNTEER for a weekend of fun and festivities! On Saturday, enjoy a variety of fun activities during the Shawnigan Lake Triathlon Festival, including a FREE Subaru IRONKIDS Fun Run and Duathlon in the Village, the Camp Pringle Pre-Race Dinner Party (open to everyone) and the Sport & Lifestyle Expo at West Shawnigan Lake Park. On Sunday, watch as hundreds of athletes from all across North America swim, bike and run in and around spectacular Shawnigan Lake.

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## Area B Parks Commission

**Margaret Symon**  
Area B Parks Commission  
Chair

I was up at Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park (SHAP) again the other day. My daughter and I rode the Trail-a-bike through the switch-backy path connecting the park with Meadowview Rd in the Beach Estates. The plan: I read my book - she plays in the tot lot. Since I was in the middle of planning the Mothers Day Picnic in the Park, I reveled in what a little gem we have in our neighbourhood with this park. Initiated by a group of volunteers, now developed and maintained by the CVRD, SHAP had its Grand Opening almost 3 years ago. Piggy-backing upon this, the Mother's Day Picnic in the

Park has become an annual event hosted by the Area B Parks Commission, to inspire residents to celebrate mom with a family outing. We hope to see you there on Sunday, May 10 from 11am -1pm and do keep in mind this is a dog on-leash park if you choose to bring your pet.

That seems to be something we have come across many times when visiting this special place - dogs off-leash. Despite the clear signage, some folks neglect to respect this rule. Hearing, "She's friendly" when a dog is bounding towards one's child or even curiously sniffing around their snack-in-hand, is not comforting to those with allergies or fears of dogs. There is also the potential of dogs going off

trail as they pick up a scent, and harming wildlife or doing environmental damage before their owner realizes. Plus, it's awkward to be put in the position of having to ask those owners to please leash-up their dogs. Having dogs "on-leash" in parks is the standard expectation in all CVRD parks however, there are parks designated "off-leash" such as Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area and Quarry Nature Park. To find out more, go to [www.cvrld.bc.ca](http://www.cvrld.bc.ca)

*Gaileen Flaman*

Thanks to Gaileen Flaman for spearheading the Mothers' Day Picnic in the Park event. Now in its third year, this family-fun event is truly

a community-friendly way to celebrate with family and friends. We hope you will join us on Sunday May 10 at Shawnigan Hills Athletic Park - Renfrew Road to Gregory to Meadowview to Hurley - turn right into the park - or just follow the signs on May 10!

If you missed the recent Open House at the Mobile Water Treatment Lab at Mason's Beach, don't despair; another Open House is in the works. The project, funded by RES'EAU WaterNET, with additional support from various partners, is funded by the federal government through NSERC, and operates at zero cost to Shawnigan Lake residents. The goal of the project is to determine the most fea-

sible and sustainable drinking water treatment alternatives for a community water system on Shawnigan Lake - and at other areas across Canada.

Over eighty people turned out for the Area B (Shawnigan Lake) Parks and Trails Commission AGM on April 16 at the Shawnigan Lake Community Centre. Catherine Whittome, Gaileen Flaman, Al Brunet, and Margaret Symon were re-elected to the commission. Newly elected members are Sarah Malerby, Matthuw Ronald-Jones, Bruce Stevens, and Mark Neufield. I would like to thank outgoing members Tom Buss and Bill Savage for their passionate dedication to the commission over the last decade.

### Looking for Work?

- ★ May 22-August 29, 2015
- ★ 30 hrs/week - Thursday through Sunday
- ★ \$10.75 per hour
- ★ Mandatory Requirements:
- ★ Post-Secondary student, returning to school full time in September
- ★ Maximum age 30
- ★ Available for the full 14-week commitment

### Museum Assistant - Summer Position

#### Skills needed:

- ★ Preference will be given to students in Museum Studies, Education, or Art and Design Studies.
- ★ A strong and enthusiastic interest in demonstrating the importance of museums and the celebration of history
- ★ Strong computer skills. Experience with PowerPoint, iMovie, social media and/or graphic design are an asset.

- ★ Ability to work independently in an environment with distractions, and as part of a team.
- ★ Problem solving, creative thinking and flexibility.

#### Contact:

Lori Treloar, Curator  
[shawniganlakemuseum@shaw.ca](mailto:shawniganlakemuseum@shaw.ca)  
Tel: 250-743-8675





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## Community by design:

### Bringing Our Community Together - And Designing with Next Intention!

- ★ MAY 9th - Mark Lakeman and City Repair Project
- ★ May 10th - Mark Lakeman/Co-Design Team "Stakeholders Working Circle". Mothers Day Brunch/afternoon session.
- ★ May 16th - Consulting Design Team Presentations = Open House Day

May marks an amazing time of coming together for Shawnigan Lake and the ongoing design of many of the last years...starts to come together on yet another level! Much creative assistance has come to our community as we have worked together to vision, think outside the box of how to transform some community challenges, work together, bring unity amongst the many stakeholders - and now to have some of the design facilitators come face to face this month.

In 2005, the CVRD paid to

bring Mark Lakeman, Visionary of the City Repair Project, Oregon, to the Cowichan to share the community animation projects that he has founded internationally. Almost every year he has come back to visit and now he is providing a full day of activities on May 9th (at OUR ECOVILLAGE) and then on the afternoon of May 10th a "Free - Stakeholders Working Circle" to support any project on the South Islands. And the same day we will work with the "Co-Design Team" who we recently met at The Shawnigan Gathering 2015' - Susan and Philip Chung. They will bring forward their work with the Village Design in Shawnigan, and work with Mark and all of us to move into some next steps in the design planning..

If you are worried about missing out on Mothers Day - simply phone the week before and ensure you are put on the brunch list! 250-743-3067.

Lastly, as Shawnigan will be the location for the largest Permaculture Design Cer-

tification to date in Canada - with 55 participants coming from all over the world (and at least 20 locals are in the course) on May 1-17th, 2015.

These students (architects to finance folks, teachers to farmers, medical staff to local youth, etc) will be taking on approx 8 local projects and providing a FREE community designs and action projects. One of these will be a design proposal for "Healthy Watersheds Community Animation Response" and one will be "Re-becoming Villagers: Regenerating Shawnigan's Downtown Core". The teams will work with all Shawnigan residents, the 'Village Design Committee', and all stakeholders - there is always room to have more of us at the table and looking at how to move some of our beautiful design forward into action. Come one - come all...it is our community to care about!

More info <http://ourecoovillage.org/events/2015-intro-to-placemaking-urban-permaculture-and-design/> or call 250-743-3



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## A Special School - A place of similar values

Principal Andrea Spinner of Dwight School Canada attended the Victoria Film Festival's screening of "Backward Class" to learn about a school in India called Shanti Bhavan. The mission of Shanti Bhavan ('Haven of Peace') is to "work with some of the poorest, and most marginalized of Indian society – known as the untouchables or Dalits." Dalits are relegated to the lowest rung of society, not allowed to associate with others, are exploited economically and offered little if any protection when injustice or crimes are committed against them. Spinner and spouse, Dan, visited Shanti Bhavan during spring break to explore ways to support the school – from fundraising to sending volunteers – showing Dwight's commitment to making a better world.

Her interest in India comes honestly. When her mother was a younger girl, the family owned a tea plantation in India. Principal Spinner, her mother, Fleurette along with Dan managed to find the tea plantation in full operations, in the Nilgiris Hills near Banagalore.

Shanti Bhavan, located near Bangalore, provides a caring, student centered learning



and living environment for children deemed as uneducable. **Founder, Dr. Abraham George** has been committed to India's Dalits for twenty years. His school is home to over 260 students and, remarkably, actually breaks a cycle of poverty hundreds of years old!

Since their first graduating class in 2011, Shanti Bhavan's students earn top marks in

India's state board exams, earning placement in top Indian colleges and universities, continuing onto high paying jobs in India. With four years of graduates, Shanti Bhavan has proven that Dalit children are capable of excelling academically and socially when provided a supportive and caring learning environment. All the working graduates donate

back to their families, village and the school itself at least 20-50% of their earnings.

Principal Spinner met the Grade 12 students, impressed by their eloquence, self-confidence and high level of emotional and overall intelligence. They were quite aware of their lot in life, appreciating the generosity and care provided by Shanti Bhavan. "What a delightful, engaging

group of young people!"

Before the Spinners left for India, Dwight students raised \$2500 for Shanti Bhavan. Over the school year, several fundraising efforts by Dwight School Canada's students were held by the Service Club and the Rotary Club's junior members at Dwight, the Interact Club, held a Silent Auction at the Annual International Dinner. Dwight School students raised \$2,500 for the Shanti Bhavan school. When contacted about these efforts, Dr. George could not believe the generosity demonstrated by the Dwight School students and community.

In the future, Principal Spinner hopes to provide a couple of scholarships for students from Shanti Bhavan to attend Dwight School Canada. Students may have the opportunity to study the internationally recognized International Baccalaureate diploma program that Dwight School offers, especially as Dwight shares the same values of Shanti Bhavan – of helping children to become successful and productive members of society by building strong socially responsible character along with their academic learning.

## Earth Day at Discovery

In celebration of Earth Day, Discovery Elementary participated in the CTV Community Clean-up. This initiative was part of a province-wide campaign designed to bring awareness to schools and their community about the impact of littering.

Each classroom committed to cleaning up a designated area around the school and the community. Astonishingly, they collected 25 bags of garbage and recyclables! Many students were surprised to discover that people in their community would intentionally litter and dump garbage along the roadside and ditches. "It made me feel really sad that my friends and I found so much garbage", stated Olivia, a Grade 2 student.

Principal Ian Zibin said "it is a great opportunity to have a collaborative effort by children, and a way for them to contribute and take care of our beautiful community. Discovery Elementary staff and students pride themselves on understanding and valuing the importance of our environment and

natural resources".

This year, the school has partnered with the Sierra Club, whose volunteers visit classes to teach students about animals from BC Coastal Rainforests. The school was recently awarded grant money from 'Go Grant'.

These funds will go towards environmental field trips to the Beach Seine at Bamberton Provincial Park, and programs at Eve's Park in North Cowichan - all of which are very important environmental initiatives, applicable to the school curriculum.



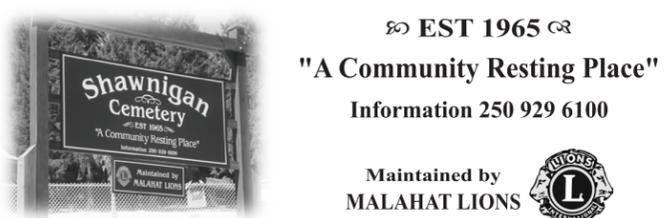
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## On your mark...get set...go, triathlon, go!!

**Sarah Malerby,**  
*Race Director*

The Shawnigan Lake Triathlon weekend is coming up fast, and there are lots of great opportunities for the community to get involved on May 23 & 24:

### Participate

- ★ It's not too late to sign up! Registration is open until May 22. Grab two friends and put together a relay team!

### Volunteer

- ★ Volunteers still needed! Lots of jobs to do and help needed – please visit the online volunteer sign up if

you can help.

### IronKids Fun Run & Duathlon

- ★ On Saturday, May 23 at 1:30 pm, Kids between 3 and 12 can participate for FREE in this fun event! Race bibs and medals for all participants. Draw for a kids wetsuit and a week at Camp Pringle. Kids can choose to get pledged and/or fundraise for KidSport and Top 3 Fundraisers are eligible to win a fabulous Triathlon Prize Pack sponsored by Cowichan Cycles, Aquasphere and Ironman. Pre-registration recommended via CVRD South Cowichan

Recreation, Online Registration system.

### Camp Pringle Fund-raiser Dinner

- ★ Everyone is welcome to Chef Pat's delicious buffet dinner at the lakeside main hall at Camp Pringle. Advance tickets available – get yours soon, this will sell out! [www.camppringle.com](http://www.camppringle.com)

### Saturday

- ★ 12 to 4 pm - Shawnigan Village Triathlon Festival
- ★ 1:30 pm – IronKids Fun Run and Duathlon (SL Community Centre)
- ★ 12:30 to 5:30 pm –

Athletes in Village and at the Park – getting packages, dropping bikes

- ★ 5 – 7 pm – Camp Pringle Pre-Race Dinner Party

### Sunday

- ★ 7 am to 11:30 am – Triathlon Race Events at West Shawnigan Provincial Park
- ★ 5:30 am to 7:10 am then 9:40 to 12:30 pm – Free Shuttle Bus running from SLCCC to Park along Renfrew Road – pick ups at public bus stops on Renfrew Road. No busses during bike race.
- ★ 7 am to 12 pm - Rotary Breakfast /Brunch at the

Park / Great Spectating & Excitement

- ★ 7 am to 10:15 am – Bikes on the Roads. Please show your support by avoiding driving on the inside lane around the lake to help us keep the athletes safe. If you plan to come to the Park, please arrive before 7 am. Thank you!

More information on all of the above available on-line at [www.ironman.ca](http://www.ironman.ca) – Shawnigan Lake.

This is a great event! Let's embrace it, Shawnigan Lakers!

I hope to see you all out there on Race Weekend!

## WildSide: Something's fishy

**Keilih Gates**

Beneath the surface of Shawnigan Lake swims one of its most voracious predators: the Smallmouth Bass. An introduced fish with an insatiable appetite, they can outcompete (and eat) both land dwelling and aquatic native species on Vancouver Island.

If you're out on the water in the spring you might spot these fish nesting in the shallows- a telling sign that spawning season has begun. The male Smallmouth Bass makes a remarkable father figure and

will defend its young, patrolling for danger and fending off potential predators. Before spawning the male finds a safe place, preferably close to a log, structure or rock, to provide protection and cover. He then digs a nest using his tail to sweep out gravel and his mouth to move rocks. Wooing a female, the male nudges her towards the nest and waits for her to lay her eggs. She may lay her eggs in multiple nests but once her job is complete, the female takes off to feed leaving the male to guard his nest. Singularly focused

during spawning season, the male opts not to eat. He remains close to his nest keeping the eggs safe until the fry are old enough to strike out on their own.

They then consume crustaceans, insects and eventually invertebrates and fish. Once the young have left the nest, the male will go on a feeding frenzy, aggressively preying on small baitfish, crustaceans, reptiles, amphibians and even small mammals. Although they are mainly piscivorous, Smallmouth Bass will eat whatever they

can get their tiny-toothed mouths on including trout, perch, sculpins, crayfish, turtles, frogs, and snakes.

Their tendency to devour everything in their path can impact ecosystems and in many parts of BC it has earned them the stigma of invasive species. Although they are not native to the cool clear waters of Shawnigan Lake they have thrived here since the early 1990s and are an amazing sport fishery.

Smallmouth Bass are closed to fishing from April 15-June

15 but if you happen to spot these fierce freshwater feeders at any other time of the year you can grab your rod, throw in a line and see first-hand what all the fuss is about.

Smallmouth Bass -  
Brian Gratwicke





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## Take a Hike!

**Robin Massey**  
*Shawnigan Focus*

So...a couple of months ago the Iron Butts went out to play by the dump.

No, seriously we did! There is a really spectacular trail right next to Bing's Creek Recycling Centre.

It is kind of an obscure trail, but once inside you will find an amazing view of lush forestry, rushing creek waters and waterfalls along butt blasting inclines and gorgeous vantage points.

During the seemingly forever upward hike there are a variety of environments that will please your senses indeed. The start is a sample of the temperate rainforest that we find in a lot of our beloved island trails. Then, all of the sudden, you reach a dry, dark, dead wooded area which resembles a 'wicked forest'

that we hear about in fairy tales. Then, once you make it through that – if you dare! – you will head up to the high range views, over the creek-side, from the safe comfort of lush green ferns and moss.

Throughout the hike there are many opportunities to visit the creek, and maybe dip your feet in. In drier months you can cross over to the trails that live on the other side of the creek. And, as rumour says, you may even be able to reach the Mt. Prevost summit and memorial. However, due to our timeline on this particular day we forged ahead on the main trail for approximately 45 minutes and did a traceback on the way back to the start.

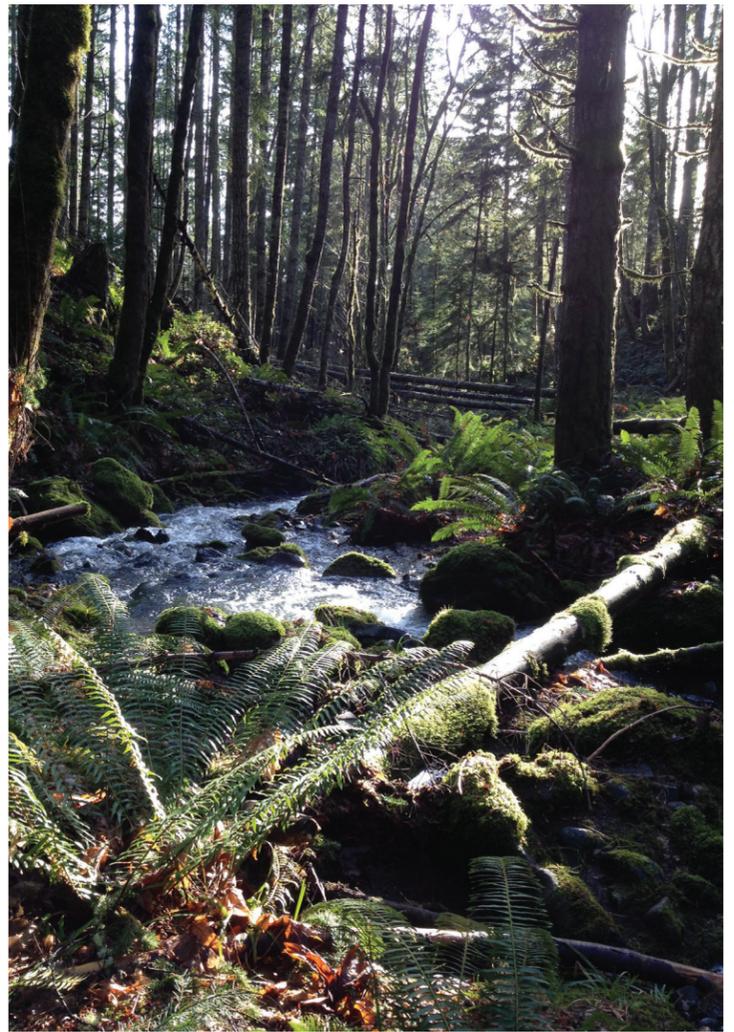
Finding the trailhead is fairly simple if you know where the recycling centre is located. If not, I recommend googling or mapquesting it, as it's immedi-

ately across Drinkwater Road from the centre's entrance. There is a noticeable little parking area and opening where you can hop onto the trail where these adventures (and possibly more) await your explorations.

There is a lot of up, and up, on this trail, making this hike intermediate or advanced in nature. But, a good steady pace will get you up there in no time! Away from the sounds of the city and immersed in nature is such a joy – and no worries, there are no lingering fragrances from the proximal 'dump'.

*Enjoy this one - we sure did!*

\*Thinking of getting out there in the woods but not sure where to start or who to contact? Hiking doesn't have to be a solo sport! Find us on Facebook at The OM Tree Studio Inc.



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## Lyme disease. Where do I start?

**Doreen Carscadden**

I have an intimate relationship with this spiral-shaped bacteria that has corkscrewed its way into my physical and emotional being.

In December of 2013, I noticed a round discoloured mark on my shin with a tiny black speck in the centre. I didn't know where it had come from and it didn't hurt so I gave it no thought. How I wish I had some basic knowledge of Lyme disease back then, but like so many others I did not.

I woke up on a Monday morning early in January of 2014 with a headache like

no headache I had ever had before. It lasted for days. My blood pressure became very high, then the dizziness started. It was not profound dizziness but it was troublesome. I began to have trouble concentrating and soon found I could no longer multitask. Then the flu started and, as with the headache, I had never had a flu like that. I literally could not get out of bed for days. The only word I can use to describe the fatigue is relentless. I started to experience visual disturbances in my left eye and transient tingling soon became a constant sensation in my hands and feet. Slowly, pain and stiffness settled into

most of my joints. It became difficult to walk in the mornings or if I sat for too long.

I have had many medical tests but it was my neurologist who first mentioned Lyme disease. Sadly, the testing available falls short and although I tested positive for Babesia, a co-infection often found with Lyme disease, it was not enough to 'meet the criteria for a diagnosis'.

Frustrated and alarmed at the rate at which my body was changing, I made the decision to have my blood analyzed at IGeneX lab in California. It was an objective test that confirmed Lyme disease as

well as co-infections.

Five months into treatment, I am now seeing small, but measurable, improvements. Every day has its own challenges. I'm trying to learn as much as I can about the disease and keep moving forward with my life, with hope for the future - to return to my job, and to once again do all the physical activities that have always been such a big part of my life.

Loving, supportive family members and friends have helped me keep a sense of humour, which has made it easier to not only keep this debilitating disease in

perspective but to stay the course and do whatever it takes to become well again.

I'm so grateful for my amazing Naturopathic Doctor, Dr. Biswas, who has been instrumental in my diagnosis and treatment. Also for the Victoria Lyme Disease Awareness and Support group, The Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation (canlyme.com) and The Murakami Centre for Lyme Research. These people work tirelessly for all of us affected by this illness.

I am happy to answer questions and can be reached at doreencarscadden@gmail.com



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## News from South Cowichan Community Policing

**Gail Ramsey**  
Coordinator

### May 3 – 9 is Emergency Preparedness Week

Do you know how much food, water and other supplies are necessary for you and your family to survive for at least 72 hours before help arrives? Do you have an emergency plan for your family? What are some supplies you should have in an emergency kit? Find the answers at [www.getprepared.gc.ca](http://www.getprepared.gc.ca).

### May 24 - Shawnigan Lake Triathlon

Once again our Speed Watch Volunteers are happy to help at the Shawnigan Lake Triathlon.

The volunteers will be busy helping with parking at Shawnigan Lake Provincial Park on the 23rd, Shawnigan Lake Community Centre and at the main race site on the 24th as well as assisting the race organizers in other areas.

### House Number Signs

Our local Fire Departments and Ambulance Service have told us how important it is to have visible, reflective house number signs. Have you got

yours? South Cowichan Community Policing will be taking orders for these signs at our office - \$40 for the sign and \$30 for a metal post.

For more information or to place an order, call 250 929-7222 or visit us at the Mill Bay Shopping Centre.

### Positive Tickets

The Positive Ticket Program started on April 10th in South Cowichan. The RCMP, Block Watch Captains, SCCP volunteers and Malahat Nations will be handing out tickets to young people who are “caught in the act” of performing

good deeds and exhibiting positive behaviour.

When a positive ticket is handed out, the recipient brings the ticket to our office and he/she will be rewarded with a small prize. Our volunteers are excited and looking forward to greeting positive ticket recipients.

We are always looking for volunteers to join our team. Currently we have a particular need for Office volunteers and Speed Watch volunteers. Come into the office, give us a call or go to our website to find out more.



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Email: shawniganfire@shaw.ca

Department Members Attended 12 Calls in April



- ★ Tuesday, April 2 – MVI on W Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Saturday, April 11 – 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Saturday, April 11 – MVI on Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Tuesday, April 14 – 1st Responder off Shawnigan Lake Rd
- ★ Tuesday, April 14 – Structure Fire on Cudlip Rd
- ★ Tuesday, April 21 – 1st Responder off Hawkins Rd
- ★ Friday, April 24 – Alarms Activated on Renfrew Rd
- ★ Saturday, April 25 – 1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- ★ Sunday, April 26 – Extinguished Fire on Flicker Rd
- ★ Tuesday, April 28 -1st Responder off Renfrew Rd
- ★ Wednesday, April 29 – 1st Responder in Burnum Park
- ★ Wednesday, April 29 – Alarms Activated on McKean Rd



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## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- ★ **Area B Director's meetings with Sonia Furstenu**  
1st Monday of each month at 7pm at the Community Centre
- ★ **Shawnigan Advisory Planning Commission (APC)**  
1st Thursday Watershed office - Unit 4 - 1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Rd
- ★ **Shawnigan Parks and Recreation Commission**  
3rd Thursday of each month 7:00 pm at SLCC
- ★ **Shawnigan Lake Community Centre Commission**  
June 22nd 7pm at the Community Centre
- ★ **Shawnigan Improvement District**  
2nd Monday of each month 7 pm at #1 Fire Hall
- ★ **Shawnigan Residents Association (SRA) Board meeting**  
3rd Tuesday each month 7pm [www.thesra.ca](http://www.thesra.ca)
- ★ **Shawnigan Lake Business Association (SLBA)**  
2 meetings per month. Contact [info@slba](mailto:info@slba) for dates and times
- ★ **Shawnigan Lake Community Association**  
4th Monday of each month 7pm. Contact [lburr@shaw.ca](mailto:lburr@shaw.ca)
- ★ **Shawnigan Basin Society**  
1st Tuesday of each month 7pm. at Unit 4 - 1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Rd
- ★ **Young Seniors Action Group (YSAGS)**  
Info at: [www.ysag.ca](http://www.ysag.ca) email: [ysagssl@gmail.com](mailto:ysagssl@gmail.com)
- ★ **Shawnigan Lake Museum**  
Open Friday, Saturday, Sunday 11:30-4. [www.shawniganlakemuseum.com](http://www.shawniganlakemuseum.com)
- ★ **Village Development Committee**  
May 30th 10-11:30. Unit 4 - 1760 Shawnigan Mill Bay Rd
- ★ **Mill Bay Tennis Club**  
Beginner tennis lessons starting May 9th. For more information please contact Penny Kemshaw @ 743-5645 or [pennykemshaw@gmail.com](mailto:pennykemshaw@gmail.com)
- ★ **Firewood Sale**  
Saturday, May 9th, 9 am - 5 pm, across from the entrance to Shawnigan Lake Community Centre. Prices: Small truck \$80, regular truck \$100, Truck with sides \$180. All loads are not stacked.
- ★ **Cobble Stone Pub Night - Sunday, June 7th** 5:00 pm at Cobble Stone Pub  
Burger (beef burger with your choice of a side) and Beer Night, \$20.00 per ticket, Silent Auction and 50/50 Draw. Contact Kim Gamble at [kgamble@shaw.ca](mailto:kgamble@shaw.ca) or 250-661-4254 for tickets. This is our last big fundraiser. Don't miss out.

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## What Is It? Where Is It? Why Is IT?



One lucky respondent with the correct answer will be randomly selected to win two Specialty Coffees at Shawnigan House.  
Reply to: [editor@shawniganfocus.ca](mailto:editor@shawniganfocus.ca)

## CONGRATULATIONS

The winner for April was Woodruff Music who correctly identified the filtration system and settling ponds that SIA intends to use as part of its contaminated waste treatment. The water from these ponds will be discharged onto CVRD parkland and flow into a small stream that connects to Shawnigan Creek and then the lake.



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# Shawnigan Focus



## Sierra Acton Blue Dot Organizer for Shawnigan Lake

Shawnigan Lake “Connects the Blue Dots” calling for every citizen’s right to live in a healthy environment

On April 19th, the Community of Shawnigan Lake participated in a national day of action, called “Connect the Blue Dots”. The event took place at the Kinsol Trestle at 10am. The event coincides with more than 60 communities across the country as part of the David Suzuki Foundation’s Blue Dot Movement. More than 70,000 Canadians have joined the movement, calling on all levels of government to recognize the right to live in healthy environment for every Canadian, no matter who they are, or where they live.

The primary goal of the “Connect the Blue Dots” event is to bring change at all levels of government; to call upon our politicians to protect small communities

like ours. Local organizer, Sierra Acton said “The current fight to save our drinking water is a fight we shouldn’t have to take on. It is taking away a lot of energy from our community that could be used to help this community thrive and grow instead of fighting an expensive, frustrating legal battle. As Canadians, we should have the right to clean air, clean water and a safe environment. We want our local and provincial government to take stronger action and stand up for our rights. This is what the Blue Dot Movement is all about.”

Currently the Residents of Shawnigan Lake have been fighting a Ministry of the Environment permit that allows dumping of contaminants in a quarry that is situated in the designated community watershed. 12,000 people in the area depend on this watershed to provide clean and safe drinking water. The toxins are of the worst kind, ranging from Mercury to PCB’s, all of

which have been linked to causing Cancer, Alzheimer’s and even death. Despite other sites being offered, our requests are not being respected, and the greed of one small corporation is taking the profit at the cost of our health and environment. Any gravel pit in BC could become a potential fill site for contaminated soil.

This permit is a precedent that affects all communities, not just Shawnigan Lake.

The Event was held at the historical Kinsol Trestle, starting in the parking lot with a brief Greeting, followed by a walk and run.

As more and more cities pass these declarations, Acton said the aim is to turn to provincial leaders to take action, amending the Charter of Rights. 110 Nations have taken the steps to protect their citizens’ right to clean air and water. It’s time that Canada stepped up as well.

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