



Director's Report

Aimee Watson – Area D

Report Date: November 2022

Happy fall, wait, winter?? That was a fast transition! Here is a snapshot of the work I have been doing in Area D. Items covered:

1. Neighborly issues
 - a. Unsightly bylaw
 - b. encroachment
2. Emergency services
 - a. Fry Creek debrief
 - b. Wildfire mitigation work in Woodbury
 - c. BC Hydro emergency plan
 - d. Johnson Landing hazard review
3. Roads
 - a. Johnson Landing
 - b. Hwy 31 upgrades
 - c. Subdivision
4. Forestry
 - a. BC Community Forest AGM
 - b. Cooper Creek Cedar Forest Stewardship Plan referral

Neighborly issues

Neighborly disputes are on the rise. Area D does not have the usual bylaws that regulate community constraints such as noise, dog, unsightly and zoning. We have begun the community planning conversation a year ago to explore land use regulations, we will continue those conversations, but it does take several years to get it right, especially with 24 communities to coordinate and engage with.

Issues I am being requested for support range from encroachment, car accumulation on private properties that results in access and environmental concerns, public access being blocked by vehicles and business activities in residential areas.

Public Access

Public access is the toughest one for local government to manage as the land is owned and managed by the Ministry of Transportation (MOTi), authority for enforcement is with the RCMP. However, MOTi does not manage public access points and would like to see the RDCK take these over. To do so, requires a new service (referendum=\$8000), management plan (\$20,000+) and

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enforcement bylaw (\$14,000 annually), this would all be paid for via local taxation. Quite expensive and not efficient.

Encroachment

Encroachment without zoning will fall to civil court to enforce private property lines. With zoning, it is still limiting depending on what the encroachment issues are.

Noise

Noise issues have been mostly related to industrial activity that is regulated provincially which are not subject to local government bylaw, we cannot supersede provincial operating permits.

Unsightly

This leaves unsightly as the most applicable bylaw, I am exploring the option to enact this bylaw to address properties that accumulate material raising fire risk and other environmental concerns. If you have strong opinion on this, please do reach out. I have asked for feedback on this bylaw for quite some time with zero input received.

This is not an easy task given the solutions are generally to enable bylaws which are only enforceable with a bylaw officer; all of which is paid for via taxation. As an elected official, I have struggled with the approach of having everyone pay for management and mediation between neighbors, I have always aimed for solutions that do not require a bylaw which results in an increase to taxation. This has proven to be idealistic, and I will be seeking community feedback on enacting the unsightly bylaw.

Community Planning

As mentioned previously, I will continue the community planning conversations in 2023 to review which of Area D's 24 communities would like land use regulations but given they are all unique with different needs, it's a long process to get it right in each of the communities. For further information on what has occurred with community planning in 2021 -2022, reach out and I will share our summaries. Also previously posted online.

Emergency Services

Wildfires

Fry Creek debrief can be viewed here: [Fry Creek Wildfire Information Session - YouTube](#)

BC Wildfire Service, RDCK Emergency Operations, MLA and I met with the community regarding the fire, which was still burning. Hot questions were if the fire was left to burn due to it being in a park? With Glacier Cr receiving active action throughout the same time despite no community being within the vicinity (there is one property and high recreation values) Response from BCWS was that they were unable to action safety due to terrain and access, despite the fire being in a park, they communicate as needed with parks and can suppress fires when threatening infrastructure.

Wildfire mitigation was a big focus for the RDCK over the passed decade. We created and updated Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) for all electoral areas in 2016. The purpose of the

CWPP's was to highlight high risk areas for wildfire within the Wildland Urban Interface. (WUI) Shortly after the completion of the Area D CWPP, the RDCK applied and was successful to write wildfire fuel prescriptions for several communities including Woodbury, whom was also one of the first Fire Smart communities.

The province has shifted how wildfire mitigation is acted upon within the WUI and for the past few years, these prescriptions have remained unactioned. The Ministry of Forest did take initiative for Woodbury prescription and via their own actions, was able to complete most of the fuel prescription this past summer. However, there remains unactioned portions the community would like to see completed. This is no easy task as there are multiple jurisdictions and the work can be costly. I have been working with our staff, the community, and various funders to look at how we can action these prescriptions and see them completed. For further information, there will be a report on our RDCK board agenda in November that looks at a long-range view.

I note that wildfire mitigation work within a community is one of the most effective ways to not only support a safer community but also, increase forest resiliency, depending on how its done. If done correctly, the amount of carbon sequestered, and forest saved can be more effective than all of us changing to electric cars in our climate change actions. Both actions are good but in rural areas, as an elected representative, I am focusing on WUI management for forest resiliency as a climate change strategy.

Duncan Dam

BC Hydro presented and reviewed their emergency plans for the Columbia Basin, Duncan Dam is a part of this plan. The meeting reviewed operational considerations, what occurs should there be flooding alerts, what the chain of command is as well as mapping for inundation of areas. Duncan and Hugh Keenleyside are considered extreme risk due to loss of life, environmental impact, and social impacts.

Roads

Roads in rural areas are owned and managed by the Ministry of Transportation. Maintenance and operations are through a contract with YRB.

Historically, I did have a pretty good connection and annual tours with the regional manager for MOTi, but due to COVID and staff changes, there is less engagement from MOTi to rural directors. Regardless, the issues have not reduced.

Three issues as of late are the high hazard in Johnson Landing, capital upgrades on Hwy 31 north of Howser and subdivision approval with private roads.

Johnson Landing High Hazard

Residents of Johnson Landing have requested to verify the operating map for YRB post the high hazard slide area, I am happy to confirm that YRB does have the same classification for management from Houston Road to McNichol up to Kootenay Joe RD. post that location it does veer into the active part of the hazard and no maintenance occurs.

I was also asked to have the high hazard reviewed. The Ministry of Forest was the original entity to assess and require the high hazard, but it is RDCK mapping and designation that labels it. As we have heard that Forestry is interested in no longer monitoring the hazard, I have requested staff to reach out and verify if this is accurate and if so, request they do an updated review that would support ceasing the monitoring program and, enable the RDCK to lift the high hazard area designation. I will keep the community updated on this review.

Hwy 31 Upgrades

Highway 31 capital upgrades of bridge replacement and road widening resulted in community members raising concerns with safety, environmental impacts of working in a stream during active spawning and seeding with potential contaminants to fish. These were all forwarded to the MLA office to raise with the Ministry of Transportation.

Subdivisions

Subdivisions are approved through the Ministry of Transportation. These subdivisions come to the RDCK on referral to ensure all applicable local regulations are adhered too. However, with no zoning, there tends to be little to no prescriptive regulations for the RDCK to name.

One that is causing serious issues that RDCK would not have authority on is road classification when a subdivision is approved. Most subdivision are approved with private road designation which results in a developer being the responsible entity that a private landowner must rely on for maintenance, operations, and access. This is not working well in several locations. All subdivision referrals I receive, while I do not have an authority or a regulation to point to, I do oppose any that do not result in a public road vs a privately owned and operated one.

Forestry

Cooper Creek Cedar Forest Stewardship Plan

The RDCK received the CCC FSP on referral, it was sent to the Area D Advisory Planning and Heritage Commission, emergency services, planning and myself for review. To see the response, send me a request and I am happy to share it.

BC Community Forest AGM

I attended the first in person BC CF AGM in a few years, held in beautiful Nakusp late October. Presentations focused on climate change, forestry legislation, wildfire mitigation and community engagement. Highlights for me were:

- Consistent messaging from various CF entities that are interesting in broader, longer-range planning for values of carbon sequestration and management for forest resiliency
- Mitigation measures such as wildfire prescriptions can greatly reduce the carbon release of massive forest fires while enhancing the resiliency of a forest to withstand impacts of climate change
- We must change how we manage forests

All presentations can be found here: [2022 Conference and AGM Presentations – British Columbia Community Forest Association \(bccfa.ca\)](#)

I was honored to be their parliamentarian for the Annual General Meeting, a role I had not played for an external agency before. Thank you for the opportunity BCCFA!