

ECONEWS #201

A monthly newsletter funded by your donations that dreams of a world blessed by the harmony of nature, the pleasures of community, and the joys of personal fulfillment, guided and protected by our active citizenship.

Many thanks to Andy Robertson, Alan Drengson, Joan Hurwood, Norah Forrest, May Henderson, Cedona Holly, Bob Willard, Germaine Taylor & Wendy Crawford.

<i>The Money</i>	Feb	March	April
Copies printed	1700	1800	1700
Sent by email	3100	3130	3130
Print, postage	\$756	\$729	\$750
Editorial	\$450	\$450	\$450
Donations	\$472	\$380	You?
Advertising	\$65	\$17	
Balance	\$1857	\$1075	

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By email: www.earthfuture.com/econews

THE ECO-PERSONALS

\$1 a word. Max 5 lines, non-profits, low-income free. 1" box ad \$50

* **Lovely room to rent**, close to ocean, downtown, \$30/night, 250-382-3810.

* **For rent**. New community-oriented green building, Nanaimo Univ. district. Unfurnished, 2 BR, new appliances, \$950/mo + utilities. 250-758-1305.

* **Wanted**: Organically-minded people required to help Dave Friend develop and expand Mr. Organic's Educational Programs to school students. 250-655-9156. davefriend@friendlyorganics.ca

* **Wanted**: House and large yard for long-term urban permaculture homesteading in Victoria. Open to renting, leasing to own, sharing/labour exchange. oakandcamas@gmail.com

* **Global Village Store** is moving 2 doors down to 527 Pandora. Come and see our fair trade wares in our new, beautiful space, starting April 12. On Sat May 1st, all faithful Victoria shoppers are invited to our official opening celebration.

* **Wanted** - Volunteers for Organic Islands Festival 2010; variety of roles. Be a part of a very dynamic green team! See www.organicislands.ca

BEAUTY, LOVE, and NATURE

April is the month when Nature on Vancouver Island puts on her very best displays, and goes dating. The wetlands are full of tree frogs calling out their love-songs, and the Garry oak meadows are full of Easter lilies, fawn lilies, shooting stars, camas, satin flowers, and chocolate lilies. The Victoria Natural History Society has many outings

(www.vicnhs.bc.ca); CRD Parks has many Nature Programs for adults and children (crd.bc.ca/parks); Club Tread has many walking, hiking and cycling events (www.clubtread.org). So whether you go with friends or go alone, *don't miss out* on Nature's finest. For the beauty right downtown in Beacon Hill Park, take five minutes with Jim Chapman's awesome photos at www.beaconhillphotos.com.

NO MORE BOTTLED WATER!

Plastic water bottles should have no place in our world, except for earthquakes and emergencies - and yet 200 billion bottles are sold every year - that's 30 bottles for every single human on the planet. The plastic is made from toxic chemicals derived from oil that is 200 million years old. It takes 3 litres of water to manufacture a 1-litre bottle and 1 kWh of electricity - the equivalent of running a vacuum cleaner for an hour. And what are they filled with? Mostly tap water, trucked across Canada. Some bottled water is even flown in from Fiji or San Pellegrino, Italy. It is used for a minute, and the 52% of bottles that are not recycled in Canada sit in a landfill for 20,000 years, before finally breaking down. Statistics Canada says nearly a third of Canadian households are choosing bottled over tap water, even though it's between 240 and 10,000 times more expensive.

What can we do? Try to get your workplace, municipality or place of worship to stop using it. For a municipality to use bottled water sends the signal that "our water is not safe", which is totally false. Three Canadian universities have signed a declaration to end the sale and distribution of bottled water on campus; the race is on for the first campus in BC. San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Chicago, and St Louis have all made it illegal to spend city dollars on bottled water. Which community will be the first in Canada to do so - Tofino? Victoria? Saanich? For detailed information, see

www.bottledwaterfreeday.ca
www.bottledwaterblues.com
www.insidethebottle.org
www.beyondthebottle.org

THE CVRD's 12 THINGS

The Cowichan Valley, sometimes thought of as the Tuscany of BC, has an Environment Commission with 15 volunteers appointed by the CVRD Board who believe "we must start right

away to strengthen our environment and community by growing in smart ways, repair the damage we have done to our natural assets, and preserve them for future generations." They have 12 Big Ideas which are spelt out in more detail at www.12things.ca

- Get real about climate change.
- Eat local - food security matters.
- Be energy smart.
- The new green economy.
- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Don't hog the water.
- Grow up, not out.
- Revive biodiversity.
- Get serious about zero waste.
- Be carbon neutral.
- Audit our assets.
- Lead the way.

The CVRD Board has adopted the 12 ideas, and directed its staff to identify priorities and action plans. It has also agreed to embed an environmental lens into all decision-making, to eliminate the artificial separation between environment and economy, and to provide resources to the Commission to continue the community conversation that would lead to a strong, resilient, sustainable Cowichan. Cynics might say it's just talk - but this is how you lay the foundations for real change.

Seeds of Victoria

Locally grown - Open-pollinated
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At all Dig This stores & online:
www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/Seeds_Catalogue.htm

SMART GREEN TAXATION

We should pay more taxes - that's the controversial idea being developed by the BC Sustainable Energy Association.

The idea started when the government announced that BC would adopt the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). As part of the change, the 7% PST tax-breaks for things such as bicycles, solar panels and home insulation will end, but the tax-breaks for transport and heating fuels will remain.

This makes no sense, except as lazy politics, for it continues a 7% subsidy for fossil fuels at twice the level of the carbon tax (3.5 cents per litre).

The motivation is easy to fathom, for including a 7% tax increase on heating and transport fuels in the hugely unpopular HST would be difficult, at best - but how can it be right to subsidize the very fuels that are causing climate change and air pollution, while

simultaneously trying to turn BC into a Clean Energy Powerhouse?

When the BCSEA spoke to people at the Tax Policy Division, they learned that by keeping the subsidy BC was forgoing \$300 million a year in transport-related revenue, and \$200 million a year in buildings-related revenue, money which could be used to fund the urgently-needed transition to sustainable transport and buildings.

So they're brewing a campaign to build public support for ending the 7% heating and transport fuels sales tax subsidy, using the \$500 million a year income to create a Sustainable Transportation Transition Fund for transit, cycling, ridesharing, etc, and a Sustainable Buildings Transition Fund for energy efficiency retrofits, and free insulation for people on low incomes, etc. The restored LiveSmartBC budget for energy efficient buildings is \$35 million over three years; ending the subsidy would supply \$200 million a year for efficient buildings.

Ordinary people, faced with a 7% increase in the price of heat and fuel, could then use one of new funded programs to reduce their costs by 15-20%. This way, everyone wins - taxpayers and the environment. It's a smart policy, but will the public support it, and will BC's political parties be courageous enough to do the right thing? www.bcsea.org.



EARTH DAY, 2010

It's 40 years ago that the world's first Earth Day was held on April 22nd, 1970, with 20 million Americans participating in coast-to-coast teach-ins and rallies. By 1990, there were activities in 141 countries, paving the way for the big United Nations Rio Earth Summit in 1992. But something's gone amiss with Earth Day recently, except in Primary Schools, where it is still celebrated as a birthday. It's as if too many people in the environmental movement have got stuck on being angry and blaming, instead of celebrating the Earth, with

the result that the spark has gone out of the day, and most ordinary people feel totally disconnected. There are 364 other days for being angry - can't we have *one* day a year when we lay aside our differences and celebrate this One Amazing Earth, and our shared desire to live together in harmony with Nature? Here in Victoria, the 29th Annual Earth Walk is on Saturday April 24th, leaving the Legislature at 12 noon and gathering for music and celebration in Centennial Square. See www.earthwalkvictoria.ca

EARTH DAY - WHAT CAN I DO?

Here are some ways in which your family can celebrate Earth Day, and thank the Earth for everything she gives us:

1. Join Victoria's Earth Walk.
2. Call City Green, and arrange a home energy audit. See www.citygreen.ca
3. Visit SolarBC, and look at installing a solar hot water system on your roof. The \$2,000 incentive has been extended for a limited period. See www.solarbc.ca
4. Take your family to one of our amazing parks, and admire Nature wearing her best clothing.
5. Eat 100% vegetarian food for a day, so that none of Nature's creatures need suffer in order for you to eat.
6. Buy some seeds, dig some soil, and sow them in your garden to bring you fresh organic food this summer.
7. Switch your investments from mining and tar sands to renewable energy and green technologies. For socially responsible investment advice, call Frank Arnold at 250-405-2420 (www.pinchgroup.ca) or Stephen Whipp at 250-405-3550. (www.stephenwhipp.com)
8. Write a thoughtful, personal letter to your MP (webinfo.parl.gc.ca) or your British Columbia MLA (www.leg.bc.ca/MLA) explaining why you care about our Earth, and beseeching him or her to do more.
9. Buy some locally grown organic food and local beer or wine, and invite your friends to an Earth Day Birthday Feast.
10. Give an Earth Day donation to The Land Conservancy to help them raise the funds for Madrona Farm (\$224,000 still needed, final deadline May 15th), or to save 2,350 hectares of Western Forest Products Land, from the Sooke Potholes to Jordan River. www.conservancy.ca.

TRAVELLIN' GREEN

There are two big transport events happening this month. On Tuesday April 6th there's a big Sustainable Transport Forum at the Gordon Head Rec Centre (see Green Diary); and the following Sunday the Shelbourne community is joining 1000 cities and towns around the world that are celebrating World Health Day by opening streets to people and bikes and closing them to cars. Shelbourne St will be closed to cars from 11-1pm, and there will be a big Community Celebration and bike-ride. Meet at the Gordon Head Recreation Centre at 11am. See www.shelbournecorridor.ca

ACTION OF THE MONTH

OFF-ROADERS IN OUR PARKS

There are two kinds of aliens in our CRD wilderness parks - alien plants like ivy, and alien speed-makers who ride off-road motorbikes and 4x4 vehicles for the thrill of the ride.

They are currently banned, but they are mounting a heavy-duty lobby of CRD Directors to be allowed in the Sea to Sea Greenbelt, a 10,000 hectare swath of wild country and parkland that stretches from Saanich Inlet to the Sooke Basin.

Using our taxes and donations, the CRD and The Land Conservancy have spent millions of dollars to buy these lands, to be preserved forever for future generations, and we didn't do it to have off-roaders roar through the wilderness, destroying the native plants and grasses and frightening the mammals, amphibians, reptiles and birds.

Action: Write to CRD Board Chair Geoff Young and Board Members, 625 Fisgard St, Victoria, V8W 1R7. Be sure to state that the letter is for the CRD Chair *and* Board. gyoung@victoria.ca with a copy to esheridan@crd.bc.ca.

* Ask to speak at the CRD Parks Committee on April 21 at 9:30am. To book a speaking slot, go to www.crd.bc.ca/about/board/addressing.htm or call the Admin Dept at 250-360-3129 to request a form.

* Call Anne Marie at the CRD Parks Office (250-360-3344) and ask to make a presentation to the Regional Parks Strategic Plan Citizens Advisory Panel.

Thanks to Alison Spriggs at The Land Conservancy for alerting us to this danger to our parks.