

Social Planning Cowichan

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News for June 2009



Message from Valerie Nicol, Board Chair

2009 promises to be a busy and productive year for Social Planning Cowichan.

We are moving forward confidently thanks to funding from the CVRD and a grant from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (Labour Market Division). The federal government grant is to create the second updated Status of the Community Research Project. It enables us to hire a project co-ordinator and two research assistants.

We are continuing with several other initiatives: the Cowichan Child Care Council is working to improve child care in our Region; the Affordable Housing Directorate is steadfastly working toward a Region-wide strategy to encourage safe, quality, affordable housing; and the Status of the Community Report (2) is well underway.

An important goal this year is to continue the legacy of the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) through the newly formed Cultural Connections Council. The Council consists of key community leaders committed to a greater understanding and stronger connections between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. We are also continuing our research on the implications of regional growth particularly as it relates to an ageing population.

On behalf of the board, I would like to thank Executive Director Michelle Nowzek for her excellent work. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome several new faces to Social Planning Cowichan: Linden Collette, Project Coordinator Status of the Community Report (2); Dianne Wilbee, a practicum student with Vancouver Island University, working toward a diploma in Social Services; Allison Conway, the Status of the Community Research Assistant; and summer students Chelsea Duncan, who will be doing research on affordable housing, and Justin McNutt, who is doing research for the Implications of the Regional Growth Project.

Wishing you a healthy and happy summer!

Valerie Nicol, SPC Board Chair

Michelle Nowzek Becomes Executive Director of Social Planning Cowichan

At an SPC Board Meeting on February 23, 2009, members unanimously voted that **Michelle Nowzek's** title be changed from Executive Assistant to Executive Director. Michelle joined SPC in early 2008. "We are so pleased with the calibre, depth and responsibility of Michelle's work. It is only fair and fitting that she be named Executive Director," said **Valerie Nicol**, Board Chair.



Social Planning Cowichan Partners with CVRD in Community Disaster Recovery Project

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has invited Social Planning Cowichan to partner to develop community recovery guidelines in the event of an earthquake, flood, major storm or wildfire or other disaster. The purpose of the guidelines is to help the community return to a state of normalcy, as quickly as possible, following a major disaster. SPC will hold a series of meetings with community representatives from local agencies and organizations to establish the guidelines. Once they are established the guidelines will be incorporated into the CVRD Disaster Recovery Plan. SPC board member Candace Spilsbury will take the lead role facilitating the process.

Volunteer Cowichan and SPC Co-host Community Capacity Building Workshop

There is general agreement that the public, private and voluntary sectors can accomplish far more by working collaboratively. By being creative and flexible, local organizations can create solutions to complex problems.

On March 3, 2009, Volunteer Cowichan and SPC joined forces to co-host a Community Capacity Building Workshop. The free one-day session was facilitated by **Tam Lundy** and **Ali Grant** of West Coast Integral Initiatives. Funding was provided by Volunteer Cowichan, SPC and Children First.

Green Mapping

"Green maps provide a vision for healthier communities today and a more peaceful sustainable future."

*Wendy Brawer, Green Map Founder
(www.greenmap.org)*

Executive Director **Michelle Nowzek** will represent SPC on the Cowichan Land Trust's Green Mapping Advisory Council. The goal of the Council is to bring people together to talk about their connections to the Cowichan Valley and to create a map – a collective expression – of what is important to them. The map will be a resource for learning about and helping to protect sensitive habitats and threatened ecologies, says the Land Trust's website (www.cowichanlandtrust.ca). Groups who want to protect and restore ecological features can use community mapping as a way to organize, plan and initiate action.

Disaster Recovery Plan Draft Completed



Facilitator Jim Lamorte of Smart Risk Control receives thank you gift from Sybille Sandeson (L) and Candace Spilsbury (R).

The first draft of the Cowichan Community Disaster Recovery Plan was recently completed. More than a dozen government departments, non-profit groups including SPC, and community organizations gathered to consider the challenge of rebuilding communities following a disaster, such as an earthquake, flood, or wildfire.

"The ability to recover from the personal injury, physical damage, economic impairment and human suffering resulting from a disaster is a critical element of any sustainable community," the document states. "For the Cowichan region, planning for disaster recovery includes attention to the economic, psycho-social, and cultural needs of its inhabitants."

For more information about the plan please contact **Dan Derby**, General Manager Public Safety/Emergency Program Coordinator CVRD at 250-746-2562 or **Sybille Sanderson**, Public Safety Education Coordinator at 250-746-2560.

News from the Cowichan Child Care Council

The purpose of the **Child Care Council**, which includes representatives of both the private and public sectors, is to "promote high quality, accessible and affordable child care in the Cowichan Region."

The group recently adopted Terms of Reference and work has started on the development of a regional child care strategic plan. The plan includes a way of gathering information about child care spaces, wait lists and vacancies; addressing training; and staff recruitment. Other key objectives include keeping the public informed and working closely with provincial and island child care councils, regional advisory bodies, agencies, businesses and elected representatives at all levels of government.

The Victoria Child Care Council will be forming an island-wide network of Child Care Council of which The Cowichan Council will join.

Social Planning Cowichan Board Members

Valerie Nicol
Chair

Mark Buchanan
Vice Chair

Veronica Scott
Secretary

Debbie Williams
Treasurer

Pam Alcorn

Mike Coleman

Gerry Giles

Ian Kalima

Anne Murray

Gifty Serbeh-Dunn

Candace Spilsbury

Joanna Winter

New Faces at Social Planning Cowichan!



Linden Collette

Welcome aboard to Linden Collette the new Project Coordinator of the Status of the Community Report. Linden and her partner moved to Cobble Hill from Vancouver last July. Since then she has been volunteering with the Cobble Hill Parks Commission and the Cowichan Hospice Society. She has also worked part time with Cowichan Community Kitchens and is involved with the Food Security Mapping group and the Island Grains project at Makaria Farms.

Linden's background is in psychology although she has spent most of her career managing social programs for people with disabilities and with homeless and street involved youth. Her last job was at Vancouver's Covenant House managing a transitional living program for people exiting the street. "I am excited to have this opportunity to work with citizens, community leaders, and members of local government who are interested in promoting sustainable development and a just society," she said. If you would like to know more about the Status of the Community Report please contact Linden at 250-746-1004. She would be happy to hear from you.

Dianne Wilbee

Dianne will be with Social Planning for the summer months working with **Michelle Nowzek** and **Candace Spilsbury** on various organizational projects.



Dianne is a practicum student with Vancouver Island University. She is working toward a diploma in Social Services after which she hopes to "work with the community to address issues of poverty." Before attending VIU, Dianne was a residential care aide with the Cowichan Lodge for 16 years. Dianne was born in the Cowichan Valley. "My roots in the community are as deep as my love and commitment to it," she says. Dianne and her husband **Bruce** are the proud parents of four children.

Allison Conway



SPC Research Assistant **Allison Conway** has lived in the Cowichan Valley for most of her life. Most recently she was Projects and Events Assistant for the Northwest Science & Innovation Society, Leisure Services Programmer with the City of Terrace and Program Assistant for the Island Saving Centre. She has skills in computer applications, planning, supervision and event management. "I really enjoy working with non-profits and I have hopes of one day founding my own in an area of community need." To further her goal, Allison looks forward to attending Vancouver Island University this fall or winter to earn a certificate in Business Administration.

Cultural Connections Council Making Plans

Social Planning Cowichan created the **Cowichan Cultural Connections Council** to continue building understanding and respect between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in the Region, following on from the highly successful North American Indigenous Games last summer. The purpose of the Council is to act as a catalyst for building bridges between cultures.

The Council includes community residents from the Cowichan Region. Social Planning Cowichan Directors **Gerry Giles & Candace Spilsbury** with Deb **George** and **Tousilum (Ron George)** are the co-chairs. At a meeting on March 31, 2009, the Council formed two sub-committees to form Terms of Reference and aid in the organization of another Walk of Nations. The Walk of the Nations is scheduled for October 4th, 2009.

About Social Planning Cowichan

Social Planning Cowichan (SPC) is a registered society founded in May 2004 to provide leadership that brings the community together to create a sustainable quality of life for everyone in the Cowichan Region.

Our Mandate is:

- To conduct research about the social health of the Cowichan Region
- To educate and inform the Cowichan Region community about social planning issues
- To facilitate partnerships and community consensus on issues and action plans
- To recommend action plans and short and long term strategies to improve the quality of life in the Cowichan Region



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New Faces (cont'd)

Chelsea Duncan

Chelsea is a summer student researching affordable housing in the Cowichan Valley.



Chelsea has a Bachelor of Arts degree specializing in both psychology and anthropology. She is currently completing her second degree in Child and Youth Care with a specialization in Child Protection. Chelsea is also finishing her practicum with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Duncan Branch.

When she graduates she hopes to work for the Ministry in Child Protection. "I believe that SPC will benefit my professional career by giving me plenty of opportunities to create closer connections with the issues that affect children, youth and their families in our community," she said.



Justin McNutt

Justin will be with SPC for the summer as a Research Assistant with the Implications of the Regional Growth Project. Justin has two more years to go in his pursuit of a Bachelor of Civil Engineering degree. His ultimate goal is to become a successful Structural Engineer.

Justin is a native of the Cowichan Valley and an honours graduate and provincial award winner from Cowichan Secondary School. He is also a sports enthusiast.