



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

INFORMATION RELEASE

November 26, 2015

Regional District Seeking Community Input on Environmental Strategies

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) is holding a series of public information meetings to outline changes to Environmentally Sensitive Development Permits (ESDPs), as well as gather public feedback on the establishment of a nature conservation fund.

Since 2009, RDOS has been working in partnership with the South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP) to create the biodiversity strategy, *Keeping Nature in Our Future*. Completed in 2013, the strategy refines information on sensitive areas in the RDOS and makes up-to-date recommendations for critical directions and opportunities for conservation and stewardship.

“Based on the updated information coming out of *Keeping Nature in Our Future* we wanted to refine and improve the science-based ESDPs for clarity and consistency,” says Christopher Garrish, RDOS Planning Supervisor. “We were delighted to work with the SOSCP on this very important strategy for the long-term health and sustainability of this region.”

ESDPs have been used in the RDOS since 1997 to assess the impact of development on the natural environment and help protect ecosystems and biological diversity. The upcoming meetings will provide information on how ESDPs will continue to benefit our region and outline the refined ESDP areas with updated mapping and guidance.

A second initiative that came out of *Keeping Nature in Our Future* is the need for increased financing to protect important environmental values through the establishment of a local conservation fund. Conservation funds are dedicated sources of revenue held by a regional district or municipality for the specific purpose of undertaking conservation projects. Several BC communities such as Central Okanagan Regional District, Regional District of Central Kootenay and Regional District of East Kootenay have had great success with local conservation funds.

“Without a doubt we live in one of the most spectacularly beautiful regions in the world,” says Bryn White, SOSCP Program Manager. “Our natural environment contributes greatly to our enjoyment and quality of life, including essential resources and services. A healthy environment ensures clean air and water, rich soils, pest control, fire prevention and pollination, among many other benefits. These natural assets are at risk of being lost forever, and along with them, the benefits they provide to our economy and our communities.”

A tentative schedule for the upcoming public information sessions follows:

SCHEDULED OPEN HOUSES

Community	Date	Time	Location
Electoral Area "F" West Bench, Faulder, Meadow Valley	December 2, 2015	6:00 – 8:00pm	West Bench Elementary School (1604 West Bench Drive)
Electoral Area "D" OK Falls, Kaleden, Apex, Twin Lakes, Eastside Road	December 8, 2015	5:00 – 7:00pm	Community Centre (1141 Cedar Street, OK Falls)
Electoral Area "A" Anarchist, Kilpoola, Rural Osoyoos	December 14, 2015	5:00 – 7:00pm	Sonora Centre (8505 68 th Avenue, Osoyoos)
Electoral Area "E" Naramata	January 11, 2016	5:30 – 7:30pm	Old Age Pensioners Hall (3 rd & Ritchie Ave., Naramata)

If residents are unable to attend the public information meeting in their district, additional information regarding the ESDPs is available at the RDOS website:

<http://www.rdos.bc.ca/departments/development-services/planning/projects/esdp-area-update/>.

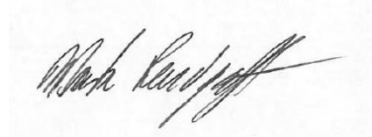
More information on the Conservation Fund proposal is available at www.soscp.org and residents are invited to share comments there as well.

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