Dealing with BC wildlife interface: deer, bears, wolves, geese & more

In some areas of BC it will be targeted for culls, relocation or immuno-contraception. A plan in Oak Bay was recently not approved by the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. In Sooke there is no deer management plan. (Photo: deer on a driveway in Sooke.)

An orphaned bear cub found on the road alone, a deer “fully entangled” in Christmas lights, and a cross-county skier’s dog killed by a wolf on a trail... these are some recent examples of the interface of wildlife with humans in various scenarios in BC. To be discussed in a news conference by Chris Doyle, Deputy Chief, Provincial Operations, BC Conservation Officer Service on December 15.

In Sooke, on Monday night (December 12) Sooke Council explored their proposed Bylaw No 659 aimed at allowing farmers to protect their crops from unwanted wildlife intrusion using guns, pellet guns and arrows. One of the restrictions is that the ammunition be used beyond 150 metres from buildings or groups of people (higher than the 100-metre BC-wide specification). And it’s a BC-wide regulation that weapons cannot be fired across highways, so that is included too.

Backstory: Earlier this year, after a pro-farmer crop-protection presentation (on geese overpopulation in particular) to Sooke council by Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Director Mike Hicks, Sooke realized it didn’t have much of a firearms bylaw. Presently on the books is Bylaw No 59 (passed in 2001) which prohibits “the discharging of firearms, including air guns, rifles, air pistols and spray guns”. There is no mention of bow/work use, or any other parameter other than a $500 fine.

In the March 14, 2016 agenda of Sooke council are some letters from residents concerned about people shooting deer with arrows. One letter from Judy Holzemer in Whiffen Spit says: “…a deer with an arrow in her head went running by my neighbor’s front window. A few minutes later, a man was cutting through the yard. I asked him if he was hunting. He explained that he was going on at the Brooks Christmas Tree Farm and a deer had been shot and it got away.” Two other Whiffen Spit residents – Don and Bonny Gibson in their February 24, 2016 letter to Council – made the dear issue of the interfacing rural and urban boundaries, saying that safety within their own yard “should outweigh any ‘right’ to hunt”.

At Council on December 12, Councillor Brenda Parkinson reminded Council of these letters, as part of her opposition to passing the new proposed Bylaw 659 that would include shooting the use of firearms to scare off or kill wildlife that is considered to be a threat to crops on farmland. The Bylaw passed 1st, 2nd & 3rd reading and only needs final approval at the next meeting of Sooke council on January 9 (or thereafter) to become an enforceable bylaw.

Sooke Councillor Kevin Pearse who voted in favour of proposed Bylaw 659 told West Shore Voice News this week that the bylaw is “supposed to be practical”, saying that people are getting emotional about the issue of deer being killed. “We have a number of people moving to our community in an urban setting,” said Pearse. “But a denser more urban-like population is ‘still surrounded by and is in pockets of areas with a rural feet’. Lifestyle of Sooke, Pearse adds: “The hunting community and the urban community have coexisted since the beginning of Sooke.”

Mayor Maja Tait told West Shore Voice News that she feels the bylaw will take care of any problems. Some residents suggested on social media this week to have deer professionally culled and provide the meat to residents in need, or to use contraception to control deer populations. And with fencing height restricted to 2m, probably it is more realistic to keep deer out of yards.

New sidewalk, new puddles. The sidewalk happiness of Sept 2016 in Sooke has turned to icy angst in cold weather, as rainfall now pools on the sidewalk and along West Coast Road.

On portions of the sidewalk there is no cover for pedestrians and cyclists than to walk through the puddles or running water. This presents safety challenges in about five spots along the stretch of sidewalk from 6700-block West Coast Road (Hwy 14) over to Maple Ave South.

Notably for motorists, at West Coast and Maple a pooling of water becomes ice in sub-zero temperatures. Vehicles turning the corner could slip into traffic on either West Coast Road or Maple.

The District of Sooke and the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure have been made aware of the issue. Meanwhile, more water infrastructure

 Infrastructure & water: winter challenges

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MSP Premiums adjusted for 2017

- BC Medical Services Plan premiums for 2017 will provide sticker-shock increases for some, but non-increases or even decreases for others that are particularly appreciated. The determining factors for premium rates now primarily rest upon income level and marital status. While the government says that starting this year the number of children in a family (i.e. on an MSP account) no longer impacts the premium, thresholds have been increased for families with children, care expenses on their taxes.

Individuals with income under $42,000 or couples with income under $45,000 will see decreases in their MSP premiums in 2017 compared to 2016. Single parents with incomes under $48,000 will see decreases of $30 to $45. Couples with two children with combined income up to $51,000 will see decreases of $60 to $80 in their MSP premiums in 2017. Effective January 1, 2017 there are no additional premiums for adult medical services if combined income is less than $45,000. If $45,000 is a combined income for two people, that really sets the bar equivalent to a non-working income of about $22,500 for an individual (that is a level that is premium-exempt for single individuals). Horgan says over 500,000 BC families will be hit with an MSP increase in the new year.

The BC Liberal government has increased the MSP premiums for several years in a row and has only in the past year or so appeared to have bowed to public pressure to provide some kind of financial relief to the structure of MSP, which supports the delivery of health care.

**WEB COURTESY EDITION**

The telephone town halls are open to 4pm Friday, December 16, 2016 and will remain open until 4pm on Monday, January 30, 2017. The government town hall website provides an online forum for questions to be submitted to the Finance Minister and all participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and participate. The provincial government has also recently announced a list of priorities and recommendations that are to be taken forward. This includes a list of recommendations that are to be implemented in the budget and three-year fiscal plan. The next provincial election is May 9, 2017 (less than five months away). So far there has been little discernible impact on the budget.

The budget consultation website allows for online questions to be submitted to the Finance Minister as well as through traditional town halls. This includes the requirement for all participants to register. There will also be open dialogue forums, dates to be announced. The website opened December 16 and remains open until 4pm on Monday, January 30, 2017. The telephone town hall websites are intended to give everyone the opportunity to talk to the Finance Minister, de Jong, who will take questions directly from callers. Citizens without a landline need to sign up on the website to participate in the telephone town hall. Apparently the technology accesses only those with a landline. Citizens without a landline need to sign up on the website to participate. The budget consultation website is available to 4pm Friday, December 16, 2016 and will remain open until 4pm on Monday, January 30, 2017. The telephone town hall websites are intended to give everyone the opportunity to talk to the Finance Minister, de Jong, who will take questions directly from callers. Citizens without a landline need to sign up on the website to participate in the telephone town hall. Apparently the technology accesses only those with a landline. Citizens without a landline need to sign up on the website to participate.

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10,000 goal produced 37,000+ 

The students of both Belmont and Royal Bay collected over 26,000 non-perishable food items for the food bank on Dec 7. That by far exceeded their “Ten Thousand To- nite” goal. Connected with 11,007 items that EMCS students collected on Dec 1 the total of 37,000+ is a certain boost for the Goldstream and Sooke food banks. “Thank you so much to all who contributed their time, food and best wishes!!!”, wrote SD62 Trustee Ravi Parmar on his Facebook page. While students worked hard going door to door in Langford, Colwood and Sooke, residents could also take their donations directly to the high schools in their area.

SD62 report

- Sooke School District 62 (SD62) wrapped up 2016 with their Dec 13 board meeting. Presentations were made about an upcoming EMCS student trip to Ireland and also the growing involvement of youth in the annual Sooke Fine Arts Show.

SD62 Chair Bob Phillips was clearly elated about BC Student Excellence that was evident in the recently released Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results (in which Gr 7 students tested). BC students ranked well despite high child poverty in this province (showing some strong support by parents and teachers, and increased success of aboriginal students). Canadian students stood 4th overall worldwide for science.

- SD62 Chair Bob Phillips also welcomed a toronto think-tanks for open analysis that was held in Toronto earlier in 2016. She was particularly impressed with the group of directors who are new to elected Chamber leadership. Cavers says a fresh set of eyes and minds can bring some new perspectives, and that many of the directors are already eagerly engaged in various portfolios.

- There are some businesses we have disappointed in the past and that we have some trust to rebuild. I am very excited for next year. We have an amazing group of people dedicated to helping businesses in the Sooke region thrive,” said Cavers.

- Mayor Tait noted at the December 12 Sooke council meeting that most of these directors are new to elected Chamber leadership. Cavers says a fresh set of eyes and minds can bring some new perspectives, and that many of the directors are already eagerly engaged in various portfolios.

- As 2016 winds down and we look toward the New Year, I am energized by the support from people all across the region, but especially from those in Juan de Fuca. I will continue to work hard for the people of Juan de Fuca and all across British Columbia, amplify your voices in the legislature and wherever I go. I wish you all the very best this province, but especially from those in Juan de Fuca.

Sooke Lake Reservoir Levels:

The Lake Reserve 

The Sooke Lake Reserve is used by the Capital Regional District to supply water to most of the Greater Victoria area. It normally refills nicely each year, though dry summer months can present more dramatic drops. The reservoir was full at Apr 3, reaching its lowest point this year on Oct 9 at 64.6% of capacity. At Dec 11 the reservoir was 95.1% full, with 4.9% being lost to evaporation. 90% was achieved by Dec 20.

Christmas Letter from John Horgan,
MLA, Juan de Fuca & Leader of the Official Opposition of BC

It was an absolute pleasure to host another Christmas Open House at my community office this year and visit with many people in our community. I always look forward to this annual event and the opportunity to talk with constituents and share ideas, stories and a cup of hot apple cider.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by and for your generous donations to the Goldstream Food Bank.

As the MLA for Juan de Fuca and Leader of the Official Opposition, I’ve spent much of 2016 hammering the government on the increasing cost of housing, MSP and electricity rates In seniors’ care, child welfare and public education. I am proud to be a strong voice on issues that people in this province care about and they want to see change.

During this year’s legislative spring session I introduced legislation that would curb real estate speculation and improve housing affordability, legislation that would address the impact of hydro increases on low-income families and also called for measures that would take big money out of politics in British Columbia. I also spent time travelling to communities across the province discussing the crisis in our education system, seniors’ care, our environment and the rising cost of living.

And I had the pleasure to attend many memorable events in Juan de Fuca this year and join in celebrating the great accomplishments in our community. I was honoured to be part of the ribbon-cutting grand opening of BC’s first cohousing community – Harbourside Senior Cohousing – located on the beautiful Sooke Harbour. The Westshore Learning Centre has celebrated its 30th anniversary this year, as did the Sooke Fine Arts Show – both impressively showcasing the region’s culture and creativity. And when thousands of School District 62’s students, teachers, community leaders and music makers joined together in The Q Centre to raise awareness for music education I was pleased to join them as May 2 was officially proclaimed Music Monday.

As 2016 winds down and we look toward the New Year, I am energized by the support from people all across the province, but especially from those in Juan de Fuca. I will continue to work hard for the people of Juan de Fuca and all across British Columbia, amplify your voices in the legislature and wherever I go. I wish you all the very best this holiday season and in the coming new year. ~ John Horgan, MLA, Juan de Fuca
Busy ‘year 1’ for Alistair MacGregor serving broad region

Alistair MacGregor, MP, Cowichan-Malahat-Langford has had a busy year. Now a year since the 2015 federal election and serving in his first term of office, for MacGregor 2016 has been a year full of important issues. At the top of the list were electoral reform, environmental protection and international trade deals.

“I’ve been able to raise our voice in Ottawa on many issues and priorities that matter to the people of the Cowichan-Malahat-Langford federal riding,” MacGregor said. “This has included the contaminated soil facility in Shawinigan Lake, protection of our water resources, funding for First Nations children, seniors care, funding for BC Ferries and infrastructure, tax changes, the softwood lumber deal, reconciliation with First Nations people, affordable housing, and health care,” says MacGregor.

The Duncan-based MP has two offices – one in Duncan and the other in Langford. This year he hosted public meetings on elder care, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, climate change, and electoral reform, where he was able to hear from public directly and bring their views back to Ottawa.

MacGregor has tabled two bills in the House of Commons, one that would remove barriers to apprenticeships and the other that would support veterans and better serve Indigenous families in court – it seems this appears to be proceeding to take place sometime in 2017 or 2018.

“I’m particularly proud of the work we have done to improve how our justice system helps Indigenous people. This work has been ongoing for many years and is expected to continue in 2017,” MacGregor said. “This includes working with Indigenous communities to ensure they continue to be at the forefront of the process as we work to improve how our system functions.”

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While costs for administering the ‘core vaccine’ or the ‘HCP’ vary from $23.45 to $52.95, vaccination is considered highly effective as a preventative measure. “Knowing that the virus is in Sooke, we implore cat owners to ensure their pets are up to date on vaccinations, and for all new owners to have their cats checked by their veterinarian for appropriate vaccinations,” says Lambert.

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What whale-watchers want for Christmas

West Shore Voice News

The fate of orca whales off the coast of Vancouver Island and the northwest US coast is of continued concern. The spectre of increased tanker traffic off the BC coast (that would result from a tripled-capacity output by Trans Mountain if their project as approved by the federal government goes ahead) is one factor affecting their survival.

Also, the supplies of salmon are continually challenged, especially when summers present conditions that diminish the fresh-water rivers and streams that support salmon migration and spawning.

Mandy Garrison (Esquimalt-Saanich-Sooke) has promoted the need to protect the south coast resident killer whales. Orca's are integral to the west coast ecosystem. They are an iconic BC and west coast symbol that supports tourism. Whales are imbedded in First Nations arts, culture and legend.

Monitoring orcas to see how and what they're doing is carried out by The Center for Whale Research out of Washington State. They are pitching gift memberships and donations this Christmas season, and a hope for a stronger salmon food supply for the orcas in 2017: www.whaleresearch.com

Here on Vancouver Island an important orca monitoring project has been operating for years at the Sheringham Point Lighthouse west of Sooke. Coordinated by the Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the project has been ongoing as long as the Sheringham Point Lighthouse itself, which was constructed by the federal government in 1911.

The Sheringham Point Lighthouse Preservation Society (SPLPS) is dedicated to continuing this conservation project, helping to expand knowledge of the lives and habits of the endangered local orca whale population. SPLPS offers gift memberships and accepts sponsorships to help support this and other important work at the lighthouse, including the current project to shore up the causeway for full and safe access to the lighthouse.

Find your closest Multi-Material BC (MMBC) recycling depot with the search tool at http://recyclinginbc.ca/mmbc-depots/

Use the search tool at www.crd.bc.ca/service/waste-recycling/reduce-reuse-recycle/blue-box-program to confirm bluebox pickup dates for your area.

Use your voice from the District of Sooke by calling at any time and Committee of the Whole meetings are open to the public. The next regularly scheduled meeting will take place on December 6th at 7pm at the Municipal Hall, 9660 Island Highway East, Sooke, BC. For more information please see the West Shore Voice News or visit www.sooke.ca

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This holiday season, Ken is giving Paul two weeks of dog walking (and sitting) services.

REMEMBERING J28
Mother whale J28 was noted to be losing body condition in January 2016, presumably from birthing complications, and by July was clearly emaciated. The Center for Whale Research says she likely succumbed in mid October 2016.

Oceans, hydrophones (large, under-water microphones) were placed in the Strait of Juan de Fuca to monitor and listen to the transient and resident killer whale populations that regularly pass by the lighthouse site. The Sheringham Point Lighthouse Preservation Society (SPLPS) is dedicated to continuing this conservation project, helping to expand knowledge of the lives and habits of the endangered local orca whale population. SPLPS offers gift memberships and accepts sponsorships to help support this and other important work at the lighthouse, including the current project to shore up the causeway for full and safe access to the lighthouse.

Goods held in an additional mobile clinic in Sooke on Dec 19, and the next regularly scheduled clinic in Cowichan on Boxing Day, Dec 26. www.blood.ca

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Happy Holidays
From Mayor & Council
And District Staff

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Happy Holidays
From Mayor & Council
And District Staff

Closed on December 25, 2016

Page 5 of 6

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www.westshorevoice.com

West Shore Voice News
**Events & Christmas Store Hours**

**West Shore Voice News**

**Winter Break Camp at Juan de Fuca Rec Centre, 1767 Island Hwy. Mon Dec 19 to Dec 23 (Dec 28 & 29). Some spots may still be available: ages K-Gr. 8. 8am to 5:30pm. 250-478-8384 www.westshorecreawation.ca**

**EMCS Retro Robotics Gaming Tournament Mon Dec 19 fundraiser to send techies to a Skills Canada competition! 10:30 am to 4 pm, EMCS Theatre. $10. Blood Donor Clinic, Mon Dec 19. At the Sooke Legion. 11:30 am to 6:30 pm. www.blood.ca**

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**What’s Going On**

**showcase weekly:**

**Monday to Thursday: 8am-8pm**

**Friday: 8am-6pm**

**Saturdays: 9am-6pm**

**Sundays/Holidays: 10am-5pm**

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**Colwood: ‘Making Waves’**

Colwood has just over 16,000 residents. And from that population has been a great deal of interest in providing public input about planning Colwood as an emerging community to a new level on south Vancouver Island.

Under the leadership of Mayor Carol Hamilton and Planning and Land Use Committee Chair Gordie Logan and all of Colwood council, a series of ‘Making Waves’ public engagement sessions were held this fall. Top areas of public interest that emerged:

- **Town Centres:** Colwood Corners, Royal Bay, Allandale Lands, Village centres where people can eat, shop, gather, relax and play.
- **Transportation:** Create walkable centres, cycling connections, increased transit and dedicated bus lanes, reduced vehicle speeds, improved infrastructure. Take steps to support regional transportation solutions.
- **Trees & Topography:** Urban forest strategy, tree preservation areas, protection of wetlands and natural areas, main- tain views.
- **Tidelines & Waterfront:** Celebrate and protect the wa- terfront, preserve the lagoon, improve walkability, consider a boardwalk to Royal Bay, plan for waterfront restaurants and parks.

During January and February 2017 a draft plan will be developed for review. A rigorous plan will be developed during December and January 2017.