

TUWANЕК NEWS

Volume 37, Issue 1

September 2007

FALL 2007

An interesting year!

The Tuwanek Ratepayers Annual General Meeting is being held at the Spit again this year. Please try to attend. Bring along your ideas for Tuwanek's park.

Tuwanek: The Name

I had a great holiday this year camping out for nine days on Okeover Inlet near Lund. Imagine my surprise as we drove into the camping area and saw the name of the Park – Tuxwneck. That's odd, I thought.

The campsite is located on an immense First Nation clam shell midden representing 4,000 years of continuous clam processing by three different Bands – the Klahoose, Sliammon and Homathko. The beach is absolutely teeming with clams and the oysters first introduced to North American shorelines by Japanese sailors seeding food supply sources for future voyages.

The midden encompasses an area the size of three football fields stretched along the beach and is over 3 metres high. The clams the first people harvested were prepared by boiling and then smoke dried for later use.

For many years we have wondered what the name Tuwanek actually means. I think we may be getting warmer. First recorded by the Oblate mission established at what later became Sechelt (during the 19th century European expansion into North America) Tuwanek was given as the name of one of the five "Septs" of what has become the shishahl people.

Tuxwneck, pronounced Tuhwaneck (the x is pronounced in the back of the throat as a guttural "h") roughly translated means "long, strung-out, back-end" referring to Okeover Inlet. I believe we may find that our community's name - Tuwanek - means the same thing referring to Sechelt Inlet and that the Tuwanek people were the people who occupied the "back-end" of Sechelt Inlet.

Tuwanek Ratepayers Association Since 1970

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, September 22, 2007
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
The Spit

This year's AGM is once again being held at the Spit. We hope you can make it for the Tuwanek Ratepayers Association's 37th Annual General Meeting.

AGENDA

- ▶ Call to Order
- ▶ AGM Minutes: Wendy Morrison
- ▶ President's Report: Linda Williams
- ▶ Treasurer's Report: Matt Hardisty
- ▶ Discussion & Questions
- ▶ 2007-2008 Elections: President, Secretary & Treasurer
- ▶ Discussion
- ▶ Directors' Sign-up
- ▶ Announcements
- ▶ Adjournment
- ▶ 2007-2008 Membership Dues

In Memory Of Our Friends And Neighbours

Glyn Jenkins
Michael Duncan
Robin Caesar
Diane Sperring
Hans Jensen

THE TUWANЕК HOTEL

Since the last AGM a number of seemingly interminable issues in Tuwanek have been resolved or are about to be resolved in due course. Of interest to many, the Tuwanek Hotel, has been resolved by Supreme Court Justice Sigurdson who found that the "accessory building" use (Beach Cottage) was illegal and had not been legal prior to the zoning bylaw amendment in March 2007, as claimed by the Cutlans' lawyer.

As a result the Tuwanek Hotel's expensive accessory building cannot be used as a cottage for the owners' friends, family or paying guests. Neither can Knotty Pine Cabin at Tranquility Bay B&B be used for such purposes.

Under the Injunction, use of the accessory building for sleeping accommodations would be in contempt of the Supreme Court, not just their neighbours and Zoning Bylaw 25, neither of which has deterred them in the past.

The Cutlans built their "accessory building" knowing that a cottage or second dwelling was not permitted on their undersized lot. When they finally had to face the fact that the District was not playing along, and was not going to approve the non-conforming structure, they decided to sue the District for permitting them to construct it claiming they spent \$100,000 of their life savings to do so. Unfortunately, their permit, actually for a \$30,000 building, gave them no such right and specified they couldn't use it for sleeping accommodations.

The owners had no "proof", which consisted entirely of self-serving "explanations" made in support of

their claim. Justice Sigurdson consequently found for the District. The Cutlans are liable for Court costs, both the District's and their own.

The Decision has reconfirmed the Home Occupation provisions of Zoning Bylaw 25, as they pertain to the Tuwanek Hotel and Tranquility Bay B&B. These operations must also adhere to the two rooms, four guests total for all B&B operations within Sechelt

How the District will deal with the Beach Cottage (now determined to be a second dwelling by Justice Sigurdson) is not known at this time. The building is an illegal structure, which requires that it be demolished, removed or converted to a structure that qualifies as an accessory building and conforms to the Bylaw.

Since the Cutlans were recently observed staying overnight in the building, while prohibited by a Supreme Court injunction, it is safe to say that the cottage is going to be a perennial problem while it remains on that property.

Still outstanding are the issues of "his and her" B&Bs (Tuwanek Hotel and Tranquility Bay), the engineering status and legality of the Cutlans' rock retaining wall that encroaches onto public beach, and the use of "Lot B" (belonging to the District) for the Tuwanek Hotel development.

According to advertisements on Craig's List and in the local Realtor, the Cutlans are currently willing to let Tranquility Bay go for \$1,600,000 and are advertising for caretakers to run the two B&Bs because they are intending to move to Kelowna to manage a third one. But, who knows?

COMMUNITY WATERSHEDS

Regionally, the long standing community watershed issue came to a head after the Ministry of Forests approved logging in the Chapman Creek Watershed Reserve and logging and road building commenced. Public protests ensued and a small group of residents formed a blockade on the road into the watershed reserve. Western Forest Products (WFP) one of the largest forestry companies in BC, immediately initiated Court proceedings and acquired an injunction against the residents leading to a series of events now still unfolding.

The Sunshine Coast Regional District was in Supreme Court recently defending the Stop Work Order against WFP issued by its Local Board of Health (LBH).

Western Forest Products accuses the LBH of being "biased" against logging and has challenged the SCRD's right under the Health Act to override Ministry of Forest approvals.

Residents argued that historical information and the conflicting information provided by WFP's forest industry consultants was sufficient to give the LBH "reason to believe that a health hazard exists". WFP argued that the LBH process was a kangaroo court and the Order was unsupported by any qualified expertise.

What will be learned from this Appeal is whether the Health Act has any teeth with regard to the public's interest in the protection of community water supply and whether communities have any tools to affect how their community water supply is managed and protected.

THE SPIT

The Tuwanek Community Association informed the TRA by letter that they intended to save the Spit, which is being trampled to death by tourists.

There hasn't been any further communication about this project although we were told they would keep us informed. No public meetings have taken place.

We suggested that very carefully protecting all the dune grass and the existing trees, including the wild crab apples that grow along the Spit and hold it in place is fundamental to holding the Spit and providing an area for natural accretion to occur. All the English ivy, currently strangling the trees will need to be removed.

Unfortunately the TCA decided to go it alone and were obviously not interested in any input, deciding unilaterally that rip-rap should be placed to protect the Spit. That option had been considered and rejected 10 years previously based on scientific opinion at the time.

When it became known that the Cutlans were behind this plan and were going to contribute "the machine" to do this work any support for the project evaporated. Jim Dickey then took the plan to the District instead and requested that they do it. At least the District thought we should be informed and the matter was finally referred to the Ratepayers.

It is extremely sad to see the current condition of the Spit. Four years ago it was a lovely natural area cared for by the TRA Work Party for all our benefit. Today it looks like a war zone just waiting for winter to rid itself of the

oblivious creatures destroying its integrity.

The final insult is the Porta-Potti (placed for the convenience of divers without consulting our association) shoved up against the big tree having obliterated the only remaining patch of the rare and endangered snowberry remaining in the vicinity.

Since the majority of the historical parking for the beach access was unwisely sold to the Tuwanek Hotel a long overdue assessment of the actual carrying capacity of this community resource should be undertaken. The Spit's original purpose, sensitivity to use, small size and lack of parking should dictate its usage.

Many of you have noted the argumentative and belligerent reactions to requests that divers vacate the no-parking areas or to comments that they are occupying too much area. This attitude is an abrupt change from the past. 101 Dives of BC described a completely different relationship with the community of Tuwanek. In those days divers were advised to tread lightly and to impose infrequently upon our hospitality.

Divers, once respectful of its use and maintenance by Tuwanek residents now come and act like Tuwanek doesn't exist and therefore manners are optional.

This change occurred when Tranquility Bay started marketing the Spit as part of their "getaway packages" and then convinced the former owners of the Dive Shop to change its long term policy of not advertising Tuwanek as a dive location. Suddenly, the narrative became one where we were "trying to privatize" their dive spot

while of course the actual plan behind the posturing was to commandeer our park.

It is Tuwanek's only park, while divers have numerous choices of where to go for a day of diving. BC Parks advisories to divers and kayakers state that recreational users should access these waters only by watercraft and specifically not through the residential community of Tuwanek.

The Spit's current state is deplorable. It is proof that our initial reaction to the commercial activity was entirely justified. A long-term strategy is urgently needed given rising sea levels and the wild winter weather we have been experiencing of late. Perhaps a neutral third party assessment is in order.

TUWANEK SUBDIVISIONS

Within the District of Sechelt, new development proposals appear to be slowing down following an unprecedented expansion in the past three years. Council's Visioning process unfortunately occurred too late in the current boom cycle to affect most developments on the books.

Tuwanek's two new proposed subdivisions seem to be at least temporarily on hold because they have encountered problems with their design concepts. The Eden Bay plan is on hold primarily due to sewage disposal limitations inherent in the property. The development plan for the former Interfor property (now Publico) is in abeyance because it was so poorly conceived.

Our Association submitted comprehensive assessments of these proposals to the District.

NATURALIST NOTES

Tuwanek is changing. We have many new neighbours and new homes being built on the lots that have been empty for nearly forty years. This is a wonderful corner of the world and we are all lucky to have "landed on these shores".

However "things" are changing. We have new species inhabiting the areas that have been cleared. We are also missing some old friends. It has been nearly four years since we last heard the soft hooting of a Screech owl – Tuwanek having been one of the last known outposts of this species on the lower Sunshine Coast.

It has been replaced by the much larger Barred owl that can be recognized by its rather raucous call that sounds a lot like it's rudely demanding, "Who cooks for you?" This owl is a prairie species that has been steadily moving into BC and inhabiting clear cut areas right to the coast. The clearcut above Tuwanek seemed to have tipped the balance.

The main flock of Band-tailed pigeons also seems to have bypassed us this year despite the abundance of ripe Dogwood fruit for the taking. The large Dogwood grove that was logged seems to have been the reason they were here. Hopefully some of these stands will regrow over time.

Black tailed deer seen rarely in our yards are now regulars. Last year a doe and fawn stayed all year round not following the ancient migration up Mt. Richardson and over to the Tetrahedron and back to winter above us on the sun catching, south facing bluffs. This change is typical all over the Sunshine Coast.

Tuwanek was one of the few places where gardens were largely left alone by deer because the old spring, summer and winter ranges on Mt. Richardson were still intact. Government figures indicate that deer populations have plummeted on the Sunshine Coast. The majority remaining are found clustered around subdivisions.

Coyotes can now frequently be heard yipping and kiyying early in the morning.

Have you "observed" Civet cats in Tuwanek lately? These cute little skunks used to be quite common. They came and went as they pleased! Actually they were quite well-mannered and rarely needed to spray to exert their authority. It was considered lucky to have one living nearby because it was believed that they kept the mice away.

Tuwanek has had a front row seat to witness the exuberant antics of the White-sided dolphins that have been residing in Sechelt Inlet for the past several months. These incredibly graceful swimmers have been frequently sighted skimming along and leaping in the air in groups of up to forty individuals at a time.

Reports of bears have been intermittent and not of the exciting variety. Currently, a fairly young, shy bear is being spotted occasionally. To give this bear a chance to reach maturity please be Bear Aware!

UPDATE:

We are happy to report that a Screech owl was recently heard late at night in Tuwanek. This is welcome news and indicates a healthy tree frog population, also!

FIRSTS FOR 2007

Robins on lawn	March 17 th
Tree Swallows nesting	April 16 th
Hummingbird feeder	April 23 rd
Tree Frogs courting	May 5 th
Band-tailed pigeons	August 13 th
Cricket fiddling	August 30 th
Screech owl hooting	Sept. 15 th

NEW RESIDENTS

Welcome to Tuwanek!

The Tuwanek Ratepayers Association invites you to become a member.

Established in 1970, the TRA is one of the oldest (and most respected) community associations on the Sunshine Coast. During that time the TRA has been front and centre on all issues affecting Tuwanek.

The TRA has been instrumental in dealing with issues as diverse as parks, including Mt. Richardson Provincial Park, creating and maintaining the Spit, safeguarding community water supply and health and, since amalgamation with the District of Sechelt in 1986, protecting residents right to the "quiet enjoyment" of their rural residential properties.

Please consider joining thereby lending your voice and support to the long list of volunteers who work tirelessly on Tuwanek's behalf.

Membership is open to all Tuwanek residents and/or property owners over 18 years of age.

An application form is attached.

CURRENT TRA CONTACTS

President	Linda Williams (604) 885-4747
Vice President	Colin Jacobsen (604) 885-0421
Treasurer	Matthew Hardisty (604) 740-0012
Secretary	Wendy Morrison (604) 885-6177

Would you like to receive Tuwanek Updates by e-mail? To be added to the email list just let us know:

syeates@dccnet.com
linwil@sunshine.net