



# John Horgan MLA Malahat-Juan de Fuca

## Community Report APRIL 2009

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### Our Rural Communities Need Attention

#### Community Offices

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The world economic restructuring we are experiencing is causing governments, businesses and communities to search for new and innovative ways to generate wealth and manage the transformation of how we live together. In these challenging times the protection of rural values and communities is particularly important.

Boom and bust resource industries drove our economy in past centuries. Recently, residential housing and other large-scale developments have been essential to local job creation. Regional growth strategies are more important than ever as we look toward an uncertain future. Development guidelines will help shape the south Island with Langford leading the way in residential and commercial growth. But what about the rural counterpoint to the concrete and asphalt of urban development? What economic activity will sustain our rural way of life in the coming years?

The District of Sooke has long been the economic centre west of Victoria. Careful planning and some strategic investments in infrastructure will ensure it remains the commercial hub for the west coast. But what does the future hold for communities like Highlands and Metchosin as well as the

unincorporated areas out to Port Renfrew?

Can we develop a value added forest sector from the ashes of the old economic model of the big companies? Access to the land base will be vital if smaller, more locally focused forestry is going to succeed.

Local food production will be increasingly important in a carbon-constrained future. Transportation costs will make our local producers more competitive and demand from local consumers to support their neighbours will turn more retailers to our farms for local products. That emerging reality means that our agricultural areas will become increasingly valuable and the protection from the Agricultural Land Reserve all the more important.

Despite the dramatic decline in traditional resource industries over the past decade, there have been a few bright spots for our more remote west coast communities, notably the growth in sport fishing and eco-tourism.

Sport fishing has increasingly become an activity that draws anglers, anxious to try their luck fishing for halibut, chinook or coho salmon, to communities up and down the coast. Sooke and Port Renfrew have been real beneficiaries of this growth in sport fishing because of their proximity to Victoria and the

Lower Mainland and the consistent quality of the area's fishing opportunities. Sport fishing has the added advantage of creating significant economic benefits while having a small impact on our fisheries resource.

Stream revitalization projects and watershed protection, things that we need to preserve the very character of our rural communities, are essential if we are to save our salmon stocks for future generations. A commitment to our rivers and streams provides jobs on the land base to grow the local economy.

Maintaining our rural character is a priority for the majority of residents along the coast from Metchosin to Port Renfrew. But economic opportunities based on rural and wilderness values must be nurtured. Niche market agriculture, value added forestry and tourism cannot be fully realized without a plan that is formulated at the community level and supported with public investments from senior governments. In many cases the costs are modest; in others they are significant. But our way of life on the west coast is precious and certainly worth the hard work to preserve it.

#### COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Apr 10 Highlands Youth Centre members are going swimming.** Pick up at Old School House at 5:30 pm and return at 8:30 pm. Everyone welcome. Info: Amy at WestShore at 250-478-8384 Ext 2261 or Bob at 250-478-4403.

**Apr 11 Easter Egg Hunt.** Kinette Club of Juan de Fuca's 9th annual hunt. Meet at 10 am to hunt for eggs in the upper field behind Juan de Fuca Library. \$3 entry is donated to Cystic Fibrosis. Egg hunt is open to 13 years and under.

**Apr 17-20 Evergreen Exhibition's 21st Annual Spring Home & Garden Show.** Bear Mountain & Juan de Fuca Arenas.

**Apr 25 West Shore Earth Day.** 10 am - 3 pm. Visit the Westshore Town Centre and participate in green events, activities, performances, and demonstrations. Info: 250-474-3269, ext 204.

**Apr 26 Spring Plant Sale.** 10 am - 2 pm at the West Shore Teaching Garden, 2139 Sooke Road. Info: 250-391-9002.

**May Farmers Markets** start in May. Highlands Market call 250-478-7338; Metchosin Market call 250-478-7871; Luxton Station Market visit www.luxtonstationmarket.ca; Sooke Country Market 250-642-7166

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**John in our community**



↓ Cutting the birthday cake on Canada Day 2008 in Sooke.



↑ John joined with members of the community at public meeting to discuss the Western Forest Products land sale. The meeting was held in the Shirley Community Hall.



↑ John enjoyed meeting people at Metchosin Day last year. Seen here with local MLA and colleague, Maurine Karagianis.

↑ Friday, March 27th, John sews a fabric piece for a community quilt after officially opening the 2009 West Shore Quilters Guild "Symphony of Quilts" exhibition.

→ John was in Langford joining thousands of participants in 14 cities across the country taking part in the Winners Walk of Hope. Funds raised went to Ovarian Cancer Canada to inform the public and health professionals about the disease, support women and families touched by ovarian cancer and fund research in early detection. He's seen here with organizer, Nicole Fredrickson.



← John was one of many happy people attending the official opening of the new playground at Willway Elementary School in Langford on September 10, 2008. Seen here with John is Jennifer Jasechko, VP of the Queen Alexander Foundation, cutting the ribbon to open the new playground.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**May 1–8 Youth Week.**

There's a lot going on. All events are free at Juan de Fuca Rec Centre. Visit [www.jdfrecreation.com](http://www.jdfrecreation.com) for a complete schedule.

**May 9+10 Mighty Metchosin Garage Sale.**

Not to be missed. Taking place at Metchosin Community House. Call 250-478-5155 for info and hours.

**May 9 Sooke Lioness Lions' 3rd Annual Rubber Duck Race and Juvenile Diabetes Awareness Day.**

Gates open at 11 am, Ducks race at noon. Fun for the whole family at the Sooke Flats.

**May 10 Mothers' Day Paint-In** on the beautiful Royal Roads campus. Info: [www.hatleypark.ca](http://www.hatleypark.ca)

**May 10 Move for Health Day Challenge.** All recreation centres in Greater Victoria will offer drop-in admission for families at \$2. Check it out.

**May 12 Provincial Election Day.** Get on the voter's list. Register to vote at [www.elections.bc.ca](http://www.elections.bc.ca)