

B6 - Green Bylaws Successes: New Local Government Initiatives

Presentation title: Green Bylaws Successes: New Local Government Initiatives

Presenters:

Deborah Curran - Environmental Law Centre & Ducks Unlimited

Brooke Marshall - City of Vernon

Cheeying Ho - Whistler Centre for Sustainability

Abstract

Ecological function and resilience are primary indicators of healthy and livable communities. Local governments in B.C. are at the forefront in Canada of integrating development into ecosystems and maintaining ecological services. From urban growth boundaries to development permit areas for protection of the natural environment, they are using a variety of policies and bylaws to maintain ecosystem function. The Green Bylaws Toolkit (www.greenbylaws.ca), introduced in 2007, documents these efforts and explains the range of tools available to local governments for environmental protection. Throughout 2008 contract planners and lawyers across B.C. have worked with local governments to implement the Green Bylaws Toolkit. Through workshops and direct input on policy and bylaw development, a variety of new green planning initiatives are underway. However, with increasing rates of change on the landscape, both from development pressures on the less than 2 percent of land available for development in the province, and climate change impacts of wetter winters and drier summers, many communities are taking another look at what land use and regulatory strategies are needed to create ecological resilience and management approaches that adapt with changing ecosystem conditions. Adopting comprehensive environmental management strategies and overall sustainability framework, several local governments are building on the recommended approaches set out in the Green Bylaws Toolkit to create new best practices for local governments in B.C. This workshop will explore the vision and practical implications of these new initiatives for creating ecological resilience, and will explain the policy and bylaw approaches used to achieve integrated ecosystem protection. An interdisciplinary panel involving planners, lawyers, and biologists, the discussion will highlight new initiatives from the City of Vernon and other local governments working with the Green Bylaws Toolkit team across the province.

Speaker Biography

Deborah Curran is a senior instructor with the Environmental Law Centre, Faculty of Law University of Victoria and land use lawyer. She has worked with Ducks Unlimited and local governments for the past three years to develop and implement the Green Bylaws Toolkit.

Brooke Marshall is the Environmental Planner for the City of Vernon and was responsible for the environmental policies in the new Vernon official community plan.

The Whistler Centre for Sustainability is a new enterprising non profit established by the Resort Municipality of Whistler to share the sustainability successes of Whistler.