

Electoral Area Director Candidates

Contents

Questions to the Director Candidates	2
Edwin Grieve Electoral Area C (Puntledge-BlackCreek)	3
Gordon Kennedy Electoral Area A (Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands)	3
Tamara Meggitt Electoral Area A (Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands)	3
Matthew Ellis Electoral Area C (Puntledge-BlackCreek)	4
Daniel Arbour Electoral Area A (Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands)	4
Arzeena Hamir Electoral Area B (Lazo North)	5

Questions to the Director Candidates

1. Please tell us how you currently use the Cumberland Trail Network?
2. Do you support mountain biking and how do you envision mountain biking being part of Comox Valley's future?
3. Why do you feel that the Cumberland trails are an important community asset/amenity for the Comox Valley, and how would you champion them?
4. Would you support a permanent regional funding stream for UROC to continue to manage the Trail Network? What would a sustainable local government funding model for the Cumberland Trail Network look like to you?

For reference we included the UROC Trails Strategic Plan to every candidate.

Edwin Grieve Electoral Area C (Puntledge-BlackCreek)

As you know it was Area "C" that first gave public money in the form of a \$10,000.00 Grant in Aid when Mike Manara (first came to Committee of the whole back ten years ago). Courtenay and Comox said what's in it for us.

Quite a lot apparently as it become a major tourism driver. Now the whole Board gives money every year.

With much of the Cumberland trails in area "C" my hope is that, in the future, we can look at working through the UROC and private forest companies and developing the Forbidden Plateau Wood Mountain Park Area. I also worked hard with the Forbidden Plateau Reclamation Society to remediate the old ski hill.

There are possibilities working with K'omoks and the Province and the CVRD.

Gordon Kennedy Electoral Area A (Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands)

1. Presently I do not. Bought my first mountain bike in 1986 when I worked on the Canadian Base in Lahr Germany. Still have it. Before coming here, I lived in Vancouver and biked daily. Unfortunately, I have arthritis in my hips and fell 5 times getting on and off my bike. So, I do not use it very often now. I used to ride up cypress mountain weekly and believe biking is a fabulous sport and leisure activity.
2. Great activity not only for locals but tourists as well. I belonged to a cycling group in East York years ago and it was a great experience. People from the group would choose a route each week and we would all meet up at a school on Wednesday night and take the mystery ride. Great to meet people and good for family outings. We should do all we can to promote this type of environmentally friendly recreational activities.
3. Before I moved here I only knew two things about the valley. Mount Washington skiing and Cumberland biking trails. Perhaps better information and access for tourists from within the valley and outside. These 2 activities already have a great reputation. The only other thing is infrastructure in parking washrooms and rest places need to be increased. Perhaps a change in zoning bylaws could facilitate this.
4. East York was a small borough of Toronto and did not have a lot of money for recreational facilities. So, they set up clubs like the cycling club I belonged to. I also was a member of the cross-country ski club. Both were supported by the municipality but managed very well with volunteer management. I believe the draw of tourist dollars would justify municipal support for this type of trail network. I also believe anyone who promises you permanent funding can only promote that for their time in office. Solutions need to be ongoing and sustainable.

Tamara Meggitt Electoral Area A (Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands)

Thank you for the email. It is clear that UROC has done extensive research. I have read through your package this morning and although I know it's a heavily used trail network, I did not know it was used by that many. So, thank you for the education. I'm not a mountain biker myself, but I know many who use it several times a week. As a longtime resident of the Comox valley, I've seen many changes. Over the last few years, I have seen Cumberland grow and become the mountain biking hub. One doesn't have to go far to speak with someone who uses those trails. There is no doubt that the trail system brings value to the Comox Valley as a whole. A walk downtown Cumberland is an easy visual of the many businesses supported from the mountain bikers.

As an equestrian I very much value trails and having space to enjoy our activities. I don't know if you are familiar with the back country horseman, but it's quite similar in the way that the landowner leases land to a group for a period of time. The group builds and maintains the trails. There is one in particular on the island called the MemeKay. Backcountry horseman has been able to build a shelter along with a camping area with paddocks for the horses. They work with the landowner (western forest products) when it comes to harvesting certain areas. They also work with BC Parks which has provided grants to help with projects.

I see that your group has done an extensive amount of work to gather the user data. As a candidate for Area A (Royston, Union Bay, Fanny Bay, Denman Island and Hornby Island) it would be helpful if you were perhaps able to poll your membership to see how many are from this area.

In order to respond to your in-depth questions, I would also like to speak to the other stakeholders. As you have a close working relationship with them, I wonder if you have contacts I could reach out to and chat with them.

Question number 4 is perhaps something that could be looked at on a provincial level. To fully answer all of your questions it requires further engagement with others.

Do I see the value of the trail network- Yes

Do I support mountain biking - Yes

Do I feel they are an important part of Cumberland - Yes and your numbers are impressive and much greater than I would have thought.

I look forward to hearing back from you and having further conversations with other stakeholders as to what a permanent solution would look like for them. As always, it's important that we look at and listen to all sides in order to find solutions that best fit everyone.

Matthew Ellis Electoral Area C (Puntledge-BlackCreek)

1. I currently only use the Cumberland trail network for walking, as I haven't owned a mountain bike in quite some time, following several bad crashes about ten years ago. I am, however, acutely aware of the improvements made to area, and am proud at the all the work UROC has accomplished over the years. I was at one time, a member of UROC, as I used to race downhill bikes, and I may start riding again someday soon.
2. I do support mountain biking, as a former mountain biker myself, and I believe that mountain biking in the Comox Valley is here to stay. In the future I could see mountain biking become an even larger source of economic prosperity to the area, as it brings in people not only from the mainland, but the rest of North America. Should a highway ever be built, connecting Powell River to Squamish and Whistler, this area of British Columbia could become the premier spot for mountain biking, possibly in the entire world.
3. I believe the Cumberland Community trails are an asset not only to the village of Cumberland, but as noted above, could become an even larger economic draw, not to mention the opportunity they present to promote a healthy youth population, as well as encouraging healthy activity for people of all ages. Should I be elected, I would be in favor of a permanent land purchase from Mosaic, and having the area protected from development as a park.
4. I would support a funding stream to the trail network in the same way that we fund all our current parks. This would also alleviate tax burden on Comox Valley property owners, as if it were to become a provincial park, would receive funding from the province, as well as have access to the larger pool of resources available to the provincial government. I'm proud of the work that all of your volunteers have provided to the area over the years, and I trust that the area is in good hands currently and would support maintaining all current funding streams.

Daniel Arbour Electoral Area A (Baynes Sound-Denman/Hornby Islands)

1. I don't use them, as I am not a mountain biker and split my time between town and Hornby Island, as Area A Director.
2. Yes of course. On Hornby the mountain biking scene is big, and it is a healthy activity which has a light footprint on the environment. The Comox Valley has a lot to offer for mountain biking, and I am sure the sport will continue to grow.

3. At the CVRD Board we have received financial support requests from UROC and I supported it. As Chair of the Recreation commission for the last three years, I have also promoted looking outside our facilities and supporting outdoor activities. While so far, we mostly do this through the Active Comox Valley vehicle, I could see partnerships continue to grow in the future and mountain biking is a good fit, including as we start forming our regional park service. All trails are wonderful amenities for the Valley and UROC should be thanked for all their work in Cumberland (and spilling into Area A might I add!).
4. Am not too sure on the specifics, as UROC has mostly lived under the Cumberland umbrella to date. A permanent stream may lead to questions as to whether the Hornby Mountain biking group, which also maintain trails, could be included. I think the best approach is for UROC to come and present their case, explore possible levels of contribution, and start a discussion at either the CVRD Board or the Comox Valley Recreation Commission.

Arzeena Hamir Electoral Area B (Lazo North)

1. I don't regularly but my family does use the mountain biking trails.
2. Mountain biking is a fantastic physical activity that gets people outside and connecting to the land. I support the responsible use of our forests and organizations like UROC have been fundamental in educating mountain bikers how and why they should stay on trails so to lessen the overall impact. I continue to see mountain biking as a tourism draw and would love to see our Tourism Staff continue to work with UROC on how to best balance the needs of all the people and animals who use the forests and trails.
3. I think the evidence shows that the trails are tourism draw, which is an important economic driver for the entire valley, not just Cumberland. But also, for locals, I think there so much education value in using the trails to learn about our history, the history of the First Peoples of this land, and to educate ourselves about the other creatures who depend on this area. I have participated in fantastic walks developed by the Cumberland Museum and by the Cumberland Forest Society. I highly recommend the night-time bat walks! Using my own social media platforms, I have helped to amplify the good work that is being done in the community. Financially, I support the CVRD's grants to all the groups who help maintain the trails and programs that support both tourists and locals.
4. I think it's a great idea to move the funding for groups like UROC, who apply and receive an annual grant from the CVRD Recreation Service, to a more stable funding source that they don't have to apply for every year. I know from my history in the non-profit world that stable funding is so critical for organizations that can then leverage those dollars when applying for other grants. It also shows, as a community, we understand that the Cumberland Trail Network benefits us all.

Thanks for all the great work you do!

No response recieved from:

- Richard Hardy Electoral Area B (Lazo North)
- Keith Stevens Electoral Area B (Lazo North)