



sustainablecowichan

TAIJI BRAND GROUP / CITIZEN PLAN

Final Report to CVRD Environment Commission

November 2008



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Executive Summary

Environment Commission's big ideas reach thousands

The Environment Commission's public consultation process was a resounding success. In an extremely short period of time, over 1,100 Cowichan residents provided direct input into the Cowichan Valley Regional District Environment Commission's big ideas for achieving regional sustainability. In less than three weeks, over 560 people filled out an online survey, over 300 people filled out a short form survey, and more than 280 people attended community conversation events.

Thousands of others read about the Commission's ideas in the newspaper, learned about them via several mass email-outs, saw posters around town, or talked with Commission members or consultants at a variety of events (e.g. Cowichan Capitals hockey game, Victoria Symphony, Mother's Morning Out group, senior's centre presentation).

Plus, every single household in the Cowichan region (a total of 30,711 homes) received the Environment Commission's "householder" in their mailbox.

A website (www.12things.ca) launched on October 25th quickly became the hub of activity for people wanting to know more about the Environment Commission's ideas, and to date has been visited over 2,000 times.

In the coming weeks, even more people will learn about the Environment Commission's approach to building a strong, resilient Cowichan. Presentations are being organized for groups that are eager to hear about the Commission's ideas, but were not available during our tight timeline, such as Cowichan Station Area Association, Duncan Chamber of Commerce, Duncan Rotary Club and the Cobble Hill Community Association.

The time is now to build a Sustainable Cowichan region

These results clearly indicate that Cowichan residents are ready to talk about and embrace sustainability principles and practices. Furthermore, residents are saying that they want to keep talking about the environment and want local government to keep engaging them in this vital dialogue.

Survey findings show that an overwhelming majority of respondents (94-96%) are looking to local government to immediately and bravely take the lead in strengthening the Cowichan region's environment and community by:

1. Protecting our ecological systems (96%)
2. Repairing the damage we have done to our natural assets (94%)
3. Growing in smart ways (94%).

Participants expressed a vital need to start embedding a sustainable future into all policies and practices – beginning today.

Environment Commission on the right track

The Environment Commission's objective for conducting this community consultation process was to get a solid sense of what citizens of the Cowichan region had to say about four key questions. This is how they answered:

1. **Are we on the right track?** Respondents answered with a resounding "yes," with an urgent caveat: get on with it.
2. **Are we missing anything?** Respondents indicated that the "12 big ideas" captured the vast majority of their concerns. However, respondents also continually and forcefully spoke of the need to develop a region-wide growth management strategy.
3. **What are your priorities?** The majority of respondents indicated that being **energy smart, reducing waste** and **eating local** were top priorities. These choices seem to indicate that people are ready to do their part, and have selected actions that are readily achievable.

Other big ideas that were highlighted and belong more in the realm of responsibility of local government were: **auditing and protecting our assets, shifting taxes to reward low-impact activity, getting real about climate change, reviving biodiversity and leading the way.** (A complete ranking of "big ideas" can be found on Page 25.)

4. **What do you see as local government's role?** Respondents unequivocally commented that they want strong leadership from local government; they want decision makers who are willing to take a stand, who can think beyond the short term and who are willing to take political risks in the name of environmental protection.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The findings of this public consultation process point to five key recommendations for the CVRD Environment Commission:

1. Seek CVRD Board confirmation of the Environmental Strategy and develop an implementation plan that focuses on the priorities identified in public feedback on the “12 big ideas”, outlined above.
2. Work to embed an environmental lens into all local government decision making immediately, and to eliminate the artificial separation between the environment and the economy.
3. Continue to gather best practices and give guidance to local government on matters of environmental sustainability.
4. Report out to the community about:
 - > The findings of this public engagement process and the CVRD’s response
 - > Real changes in policies, decision making and outcomes that are currently underway and/or in the works (e.g. protection of important lands, reduction in waste, completion of natural asset audit).
5. Keep the dialogue with citizens going by organizing more opportunities for information sharing, and perhaps launch a major public education/awareness campaign in 2009.

A word about statistical relevance

We were successful in reaching beyond the typical demographic that participates in such public consultation processes, and our local leaders can feel confident that the feedback presented here is representative of the diversity of the population (and its range of views); however it is important to note that participation was largely through self-selection. In other words, most respondents initiated interaction with our online survey and community events, rather than being randomly selected to participate. People who filled out the in-person, or ‘short’, survey did not self-select to the same degree; they were randomly approached at community events such as a hockey game and symphony.

It is also notable that Ladysmith Secondary teachers encouraged over 140 grade 10-12 highschool students to get involved in shaping the sustainability plan for the Cowichan region by filling out the online survey. While data from these students arrived too late to be fully incorporated into this final report, highlights can be found in Appendix G.



Background

The Environment Commission was formed by the Cowichan Valley Regional District in early 2007 to address a need to deal with environmental concerns in an integrated, systematic way across the region. The Commission was tasked with developing a Draft Environmental Strategy for the Cowichan region (see Appendix A for details about the draft strategy). The Regional Board accepted the Strategy in draft form in September 2008, and requested that it be shared with the community for input. In mid-September, Taiji Brand Group and Citizen Plan were contracted to develop a public consultation process. The consultants worked in partnership with the Environment Commission to design and implement this process. This is the final report of our combined efforts.

Project Objectives

We identified three main objectives for this public consultation project:

1. Promote education/awareness of the Environment Commission's Draft Strategy
2. Gain widespread (geographic and demographic) input on the ideas contained within the Draft Strategy, including priority ordering of these concepts
3. Begin to develop engagement and commitment around "Sustainable Cowichan" shared values.

Our secondary objectives included:

- > Promote the exchange of ideas and perspectives
- > Build momentum and trust around the CVRD's leadership of environmental issues
- > Signal and prepare the region's citizens for change.



Guest speakers at the "Community Conversation on the Environment and the Economy" event included representatives from the CVRD Environment Commission and the CVRD Economic Development Commission.

Right: A young Community Conversation event participant talked about the environmental impact of excessive packaging in toys.



Approach

Honing in on "12 big ideas"

The first step in this public consultation process involved translating the CVRD Environment Commission's Draft Strategy (see link in Appendix A) into a document that was accessible to a broad, diverse audience. The Draft Strategy contained 26 immediate and long-term ideas for achieving a more sustainable community, organized under the Commission's four strategic goals. These 26 ideas were part of a much longer list of potential actions that the Environment Commission had developed during its research phase.

To begin, we separated out the four strategic goals, and reframed them as the Environment Commission's vision. These are:

1. To **protect** the environment from harm
2. To **restore**, rehabilitate and enhance the natural environment
3. To encourage economic and social development compatible with environmental **stewardship**
4. To **lead** by example.

Then, we identified commonalities amongst the Commission's "26 ideas", and "long list of ideas," and separated the truly "big ideas" from "examples of actions." The result was "12 big ideas," each of which included several implementation examples. Great care was taken to capture all of the Commission's ideas, and to use highly readable language in order to reach as wide an audience as possible.

Next we added context. The Environment Commission had had the benefit of one full year of researching and discussing fairly complex environmental and sustainability concepts. We needed to bring citizens up to speed on these complex concepts in a far shorter period of time, and so added concise contextual information about the health of the region's environment, the present and projected impact of climate change and other key concepts. We felt this context was vital to enable them to authentically respond to our request for input on the "12 big ideas."

Finally, we stopped using the word "strategy" to describe the Environment's Commission's ideas – and as a result we were able to genuinely say to the citizens of the Cowichan region: "Help us turn our '12 big ideas' for a strong, resilient Cowichan into a solid plan that gives local government clear direction for the future."

We reasoned that citizens would be much more interested in providing input if they felt that they were being consulted at the beginning of a process, instead of at the end. This is in fact the case, because the results of this consultation process will constitute the final version of the "Draft Strategy" and convey a clear message about the region's sustainability priorities to the Environment Commission and the CVRD Board.

In summary, the "12 big ideas" are simply a re-organization and distillation of the Environment Commission's Draft Strategy.

Creating a strong personality

To help share the Environment Commission's vision for a "Sustainable Cowichan" and build momentum, we developed a strong personality (a pre-brand) for all communications around the strategy. This personality includes very focused key messages, a logo, font and colour scheme, as well as signature visuals (photos/icons). The brand successfully evoked a "call to action" to Cowichan residents that enabled them to quickly grasp the Environment Commission's ideas and get engaged in discussing and supporting regional sustainability solutions.

This personality is already starting to build regional unity around the guiding principles and values of a "Sustainable Cowichan," and will serve the Commission and the CVRD Board well with subsequent public education and awareness building activities.

Building a solid platform for dialogue

The focal point of this public consultation process was an easy-to-use website with a catchy URL: www.12things.ca. All of the tools of this process (householder, posters, bookmarks, press releases, short survey, presentations) were designed to drive people to the website – and, ideally to compel them to complete the online survey while there. (See Appendix B for samples of these tools.)

This website received over 2,000 visits in the 2.5 weeks since its launch on October 25, 2008, with many people making multiple visits to the site. Over 560 of these visitors were willing to spend the ten minutes or so that it took to fill out the online survey. (More website stats in Appendix C.)

Other ways people were engaged in this process were through several organized – yet informal – public meetings:

- > Cowichan Tribes Elders Luncheon – October 31, 2008
- > Cowichan Tribes Conversation on the Environment – November 4, 2008
- > Community Conversation on the Environment and the Economy – November 5, 2008

Cowichan Tribes Elders Luncheon – October 31st (45 participants)

Steve Alphonse and Kate Miller made a presentation to the Elders Luncheon about the role of the Environment Commission and the "12 big ideas." The elders' main concern was the decline of fisheries and the impact of that decline on their community and culture. They were not able to attend the Cowichan Tribes Conversation on November 4th, due to other important events, and so appreciated the presentation during their luncheon. Environment Commission member Clare Frater was also in attendance.

Cowichan Tribes Conversation on the Environment – November 4th (65 participants)

Environment Commission member Ernie Elliot gave an overview of the Commission's "12 big ideas", and then Cowichan Tribes members spoke on a variety of environmental initiatives currently underway or recently completed within their traditional territory. They identified a wide array of issues and concerns, including the impact of climate change on flood plains where many Tribes members live, the devastation caused by invasive species, and the urgent need to conserve water and energy.

Participants expressed a great deal of interest in the Environment Commission and a need to integrate Tribes' efforts with those of the Commission. They put forward a recommendation that an alternate Tribes representative be appointed to the Commission, so that they are always at the table in the event that the main Tribes representative is unable to attend.

Additional details about this event can be found in Appendix D.

Community Conversation on the Environment and the Economy – November 5th (170 participants)

This event began with a presentation of the Environment Commission's "12 big ideas", and featured a lively discussion about the relationship between the environment and the economy. Local 'big thinkers' kick started the conversation, and audience members were quick to get involved – sharing ideas for close to three hours. A prize was offered for the person who arrived at the meeting by an alternate form of transportation; two cyclists who came from four kilometres away took home a gift certificate from a local book store.

Additional details about this event can be found in Appendix E.

Note: All three of these Community Conversation events were designed to be informal, safe and non-confrontational. We believe this resulted in a different kind of dialogue and input from what local government normally gathers during open houses. For example, a seven-year-old girl spoke at one event, as did an autistic youth, and Cowichan Tribes members spoke on their own territory with their own members facilitating the discussion.

Other ways we engaged people

In addition to the community conversations listed above, people were informed about the "12 big ideas" and encouraged to provide their thoughts and opinions via the short survey (delivered in unusual places such as a hockey game, symphony, libraries, banks), and via information shared during 'speed dates' (short presentations to community groups such as the Cowichan Valley Naturalist Society, Chemainus Healthy Babies, Margaret Moss Mom's Group, and staff of the Chemainus Quay project).



As well, we directly contacted a wide range of other community and business organizations (e.g. Downtown Duncan Business Improvement Association membership, CVRD Parks Board group email list, Chambers of Commerce, and community service agencies and every school principal in the region) to tell them about the Community Conversation event and to offer a number of ways to get involved/engaged. In turn, some of these organizations got in touch with their contact lists to spread the word (e.g. information posted on the Youbou Timberless Society website, and the Chemainus.com website).

Results

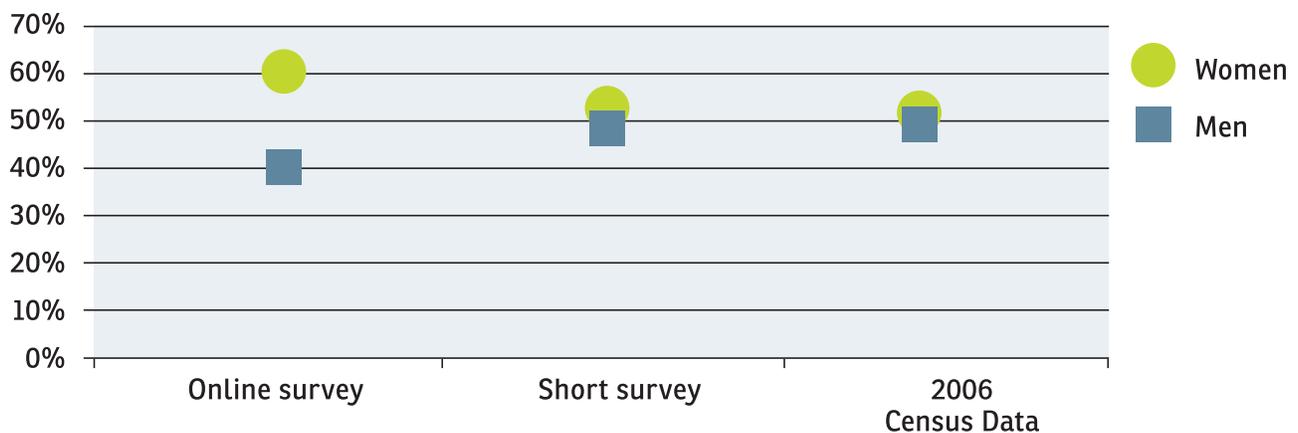
Over 1,100 people participated in the Environment Commission's public consultation process. Of these people, 860 completed surveys, and 280 attended community events and presentations. A comprehensive record of statistical and anecdotal public feedback can be found in Appendices E and F. Here are some highlights.

Statistical Results

Quantitative feedback was gathered from Cowichan citizens via an online survey, a 'short survey' administered at several public venues, and a ranking tool installed on the 12things.ca website. The online survey was made up of specific questions related to the Environment Commission's vision and "12 big ideas" and was intended to solicit direct feedback. The 'short survey' contained more general questions about people's awareness of regional environmental issues and the role of local government in addressing them, and was designed to gauge the community's level of interest.

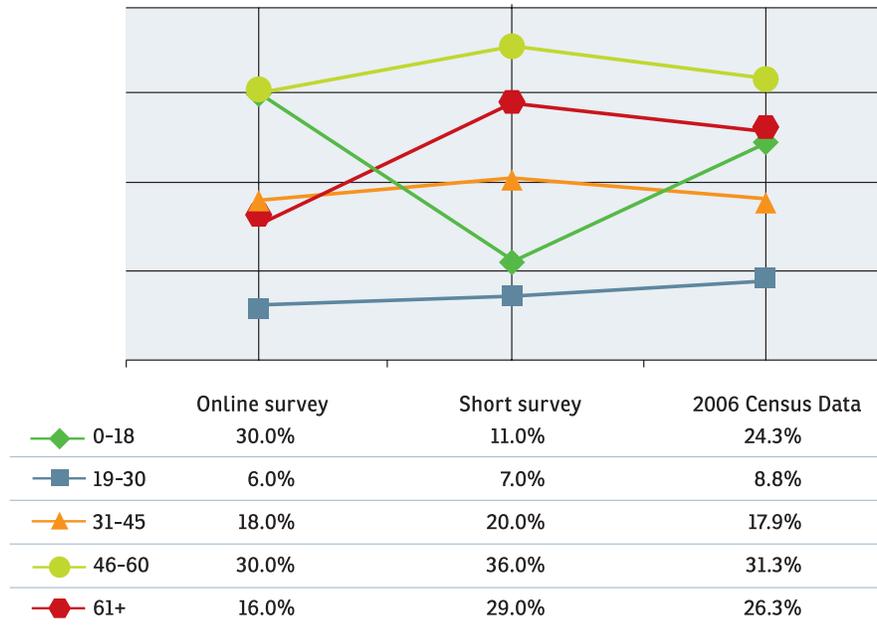
The following four charts offer insight into who provided input, broken down by gender, age, subregion and livelihood.

Participation by gender



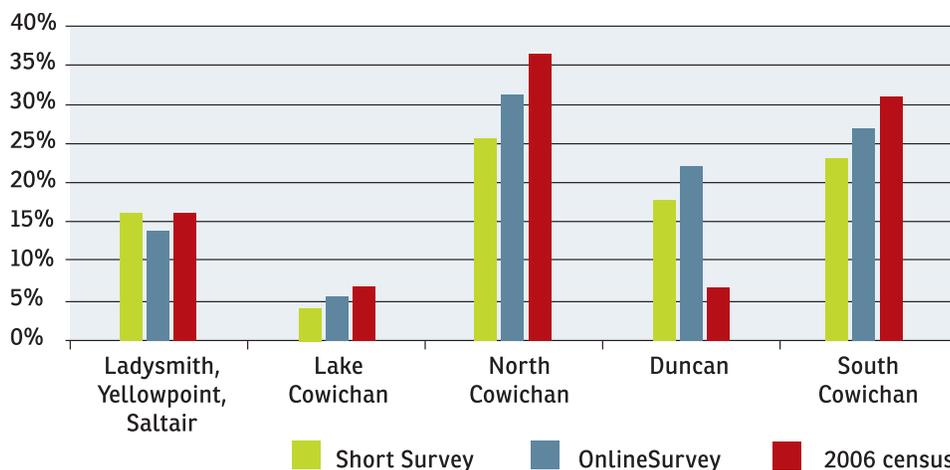
Participation by age group in both the short survey and the online survey was relatively close to the age breakdown identified by 2006 census data, with the exception of youth participation in the short survey and online survey respondents aged 61+

Participation by age



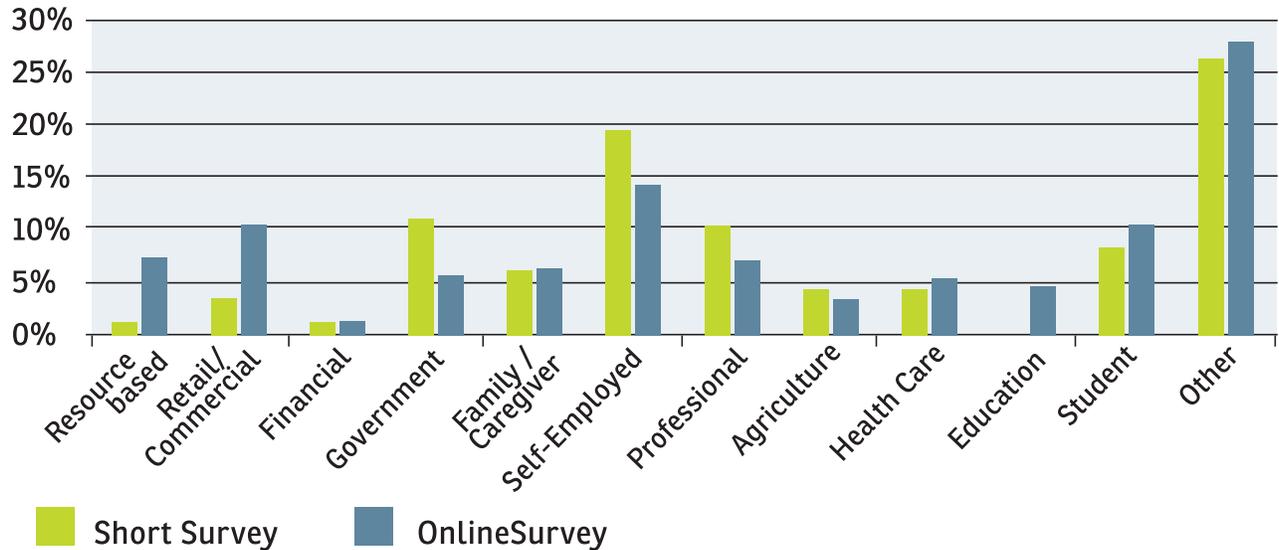
Participation by age group in both the short survey and the online survey was relatively close to the age breakdown identified by 2006 census data, with the exception of youth participation in the short survey and online survey respondents aged 61+.

Regional participation



Participants from all across the region participated in either the online survey or the short survey. The results for the "Duncan/Central Cowichan area" include residents in the Duncan, Cowichan Bay, Cowichan Station, Sahtlam, and Glenora areas. Note: Over 140 Ladysmith highschool students filled out the online survey. However, these results have been excluded from this graph so as to not skew the data. See Appendix G for highlights of the input offered by these students.

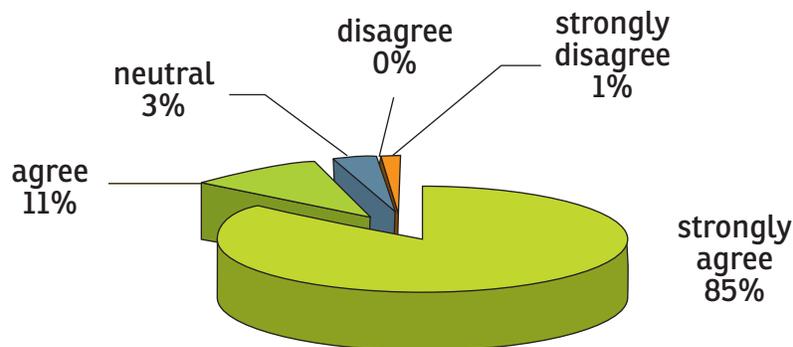
Breakdown by livelihood



Survey respondents represent a wide cross-section of occupations. Those who chose "other" were retired or worked in sectors not identified in the question, such as tourism, manufacturing, communications, and construction/development.

Key findings – online survey (420 responses tallied)

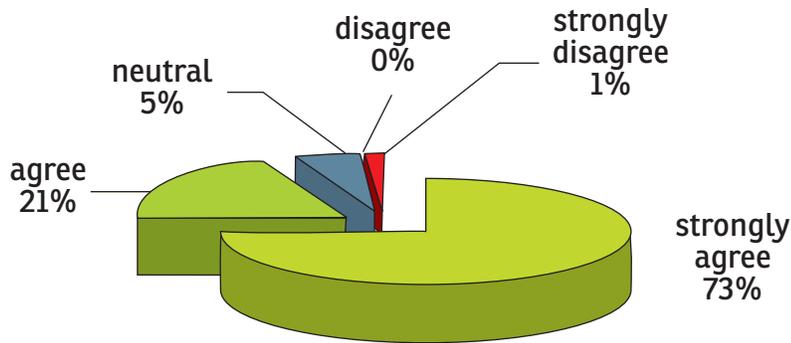
> 96% of respondents either strongly agree (85%) or agree (11%) with the statement "We need to protect our ecological systems"



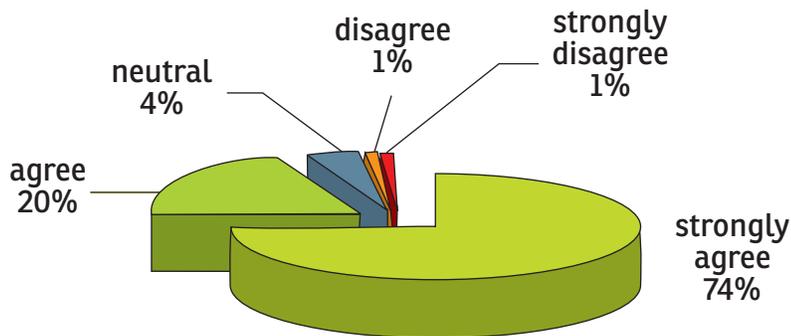


The "Cowichan Tribes Conversation on the Environment" event included presentations by a number of Tribes members involved in a variety of environmental initiatives.

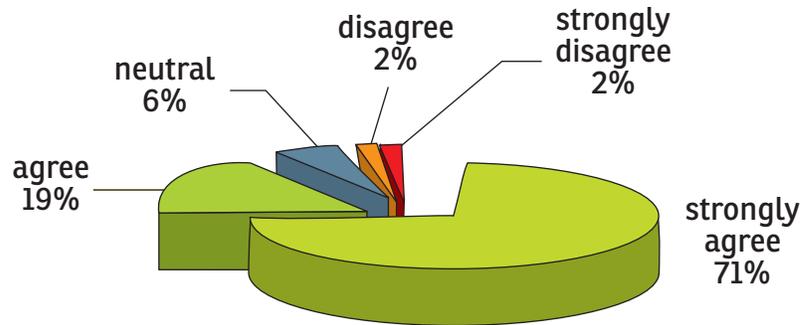
> 94% of respondents either strongly agree (73%) or agree (21%) with the statement "We need to repair the damage we have done"



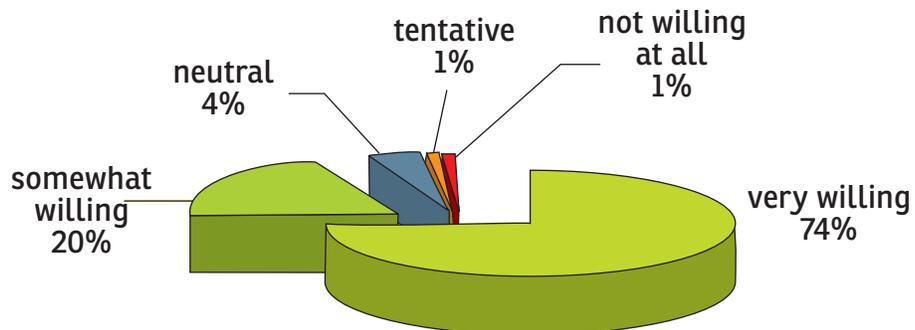
> 94% of respondents either strongly agree (74%) or agree (20%) with the statement "We need to move to a greener, more resilient local economy"



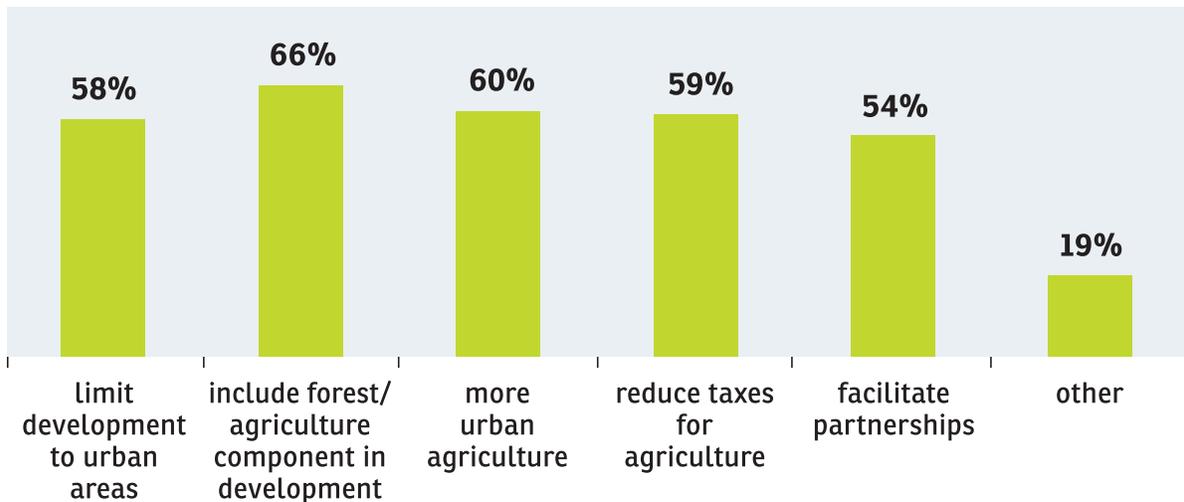
> 90% of respondents either strongly agree (71%) or agree (19%) that our **local government** has a real opportunity to encourage a green regional economy and needs to start playing a much more active role



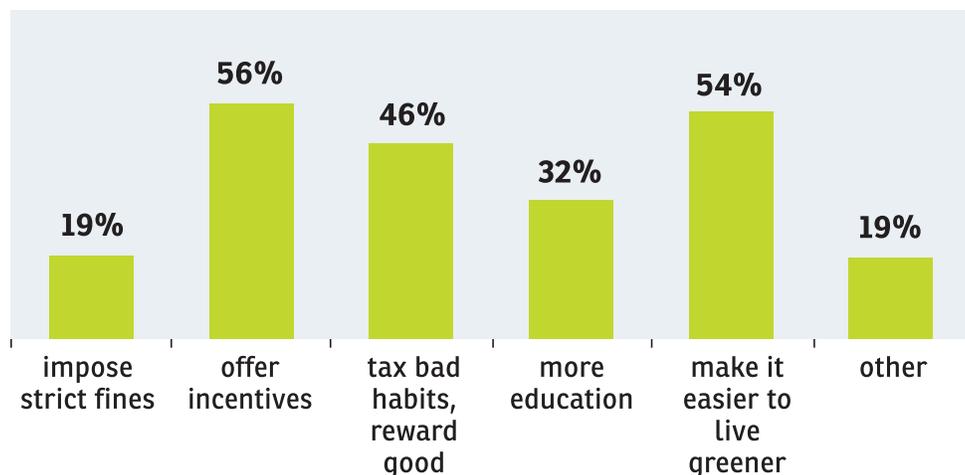
> 94% of respondents report being either very willing (74%) or willing (20%) to **make changes to their personal lifestyles and work habits in order to be part of the Sustainable Cowichan solution**



> Respondents seemed to prefer incentives (56%) to penalties (19%) as a means of encouraging personal compliance with principles of sustainability, and responded favourably to the related concept of taxing bad behaviour and rewarding good (46%). The responses for how best to influence the behaviour of businesses and industry were similar.



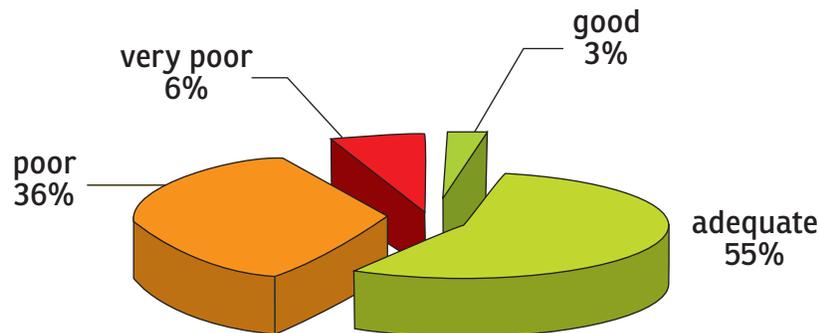
> Respondents showed strong support for progressive measures that protect agricultural and forest land, including enforcing urban containment (58%), promoting urban and small-scale agriculture (60% and 59% respectively) and requiring development to have a forestry or agricultural component (66%).



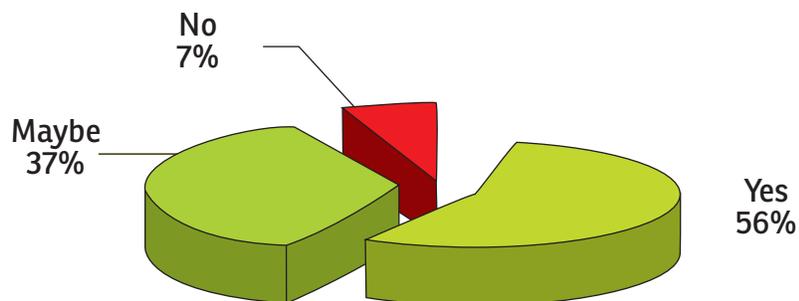


Key findings – short survey (300 responses tallied)

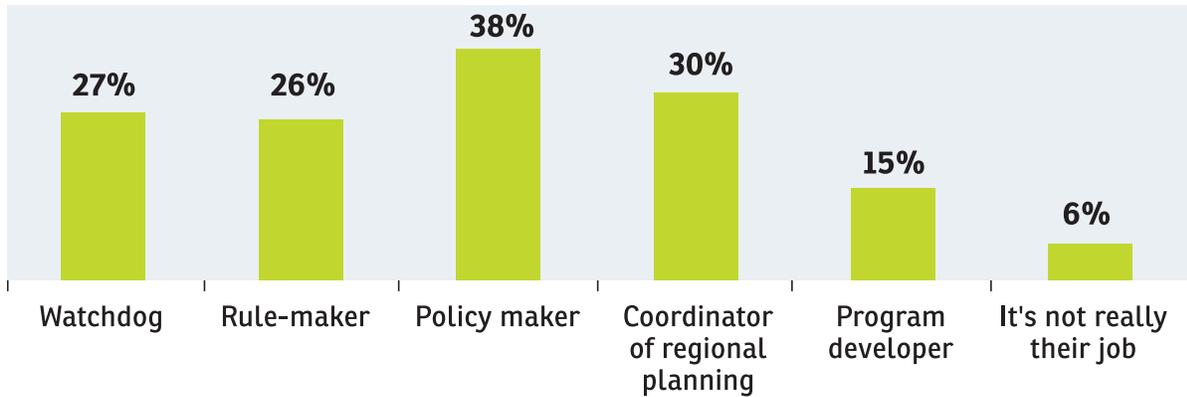
> Slightly more than half of short survey respondents (55%) feel that local government is doing an adequate job to protect the environment, while 42% feel that they are doing a poor or very poor job. It is notable that only 3% feel that local government is doing a good job.



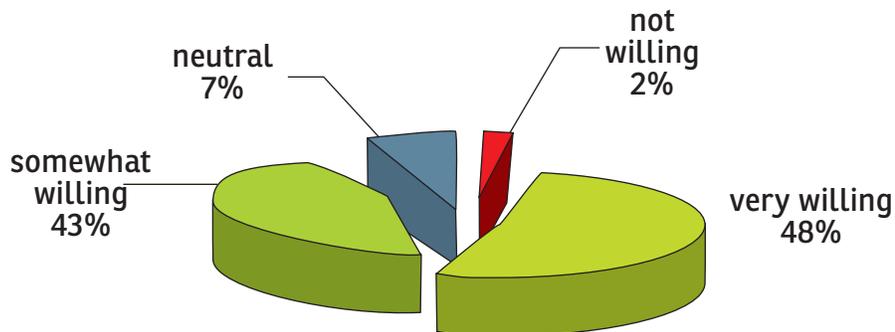
> 93% of short survey respondents felt that there was a link between the environment and the economy.



> Respondents indicated a fairly even split in environmental protection roles for local government: policy maker (37%), watchdog (26%), rule-maker (26%), co-ordinator of efforts (30%)



> 48% of people are "very willing" to change their lifestyle in support of sustainability principles, and 43% are "somewhat willing". Many people identified "insufficient transit and bike lanes" as key barriers to making these changes.



Anecdotal results

Qualitative feedback was gathered at the three community events, during 'speed dates' (short presentations to community groups) and from open-ended questions on the surveys.

The hundreds of comments provided by participants indicate a remarkably high level of understanding about the environmental issues and pressures facing our region, and demonstrate a great deal of knowledge about how to resolve and respond to these problems. Many participants expressed frustration that local government was not doing enough; others urged them to immediately start making the kinds of changes outlined in the "12 big ideas."

A complete list of comments can be found in Appendices E and F. Here are a few examples from the Community Conversation event:

- > "We need a Regional Growth management strategy."
- > "In these uncertain economic times, we would do well to establish a vehicle where we could all invest our savings into our own community."
- > "It is imperative that when we think of how we can all live sustainably, we consider the experiential gaps of the many families in the region who live in poverty - some of whom must go hungry for days, so that their children have enough food."
- > "The protection of Agricultural Land Reserves needs to be seen as an economic policy - and the practice should be extended to 'Environmental Land Reserves'."
- > "Zoning is a key tool to sustainability (allow mixed and complementary uses, different housing options to allow communal living as a way to meet the new demands of farming)."
- > We don't have to invent the wheel. We just need to get on with it, and show some leadership."

For the handful of detractors that participated in this public consultation process, the overwhelming concern seems to be that local government would make uninformed decisions when it came to the environment (without considering the impacts of these decisions). Ironically these are the same concerns expressed by supporters!

sustainablecowichan

TAIJI BRAND GROUP/CITIZEN PLAN > Final Report to CVRD Environment Commission

12 big ideas for a strong, resilient Cowichan

Here are our 12 big ideas on which to build a sustainability plan for the Cowichan region, and some examples of what our big ideas would look like 'on the ground.' Some of these things you could do personally, and some we could do together as a community and through local government. Are we on the right track? How would you prioritize our big ideas? Are you ready to do your part, and to support local government to do theirs?

Let us know at www.12things.ca

01

Get real about climate change.

- Plan for the uncertainty ahead (more winter rain, summer drought, violent winds)
- Make new development and redevelopment designs 'climate smart'

02

Eat local because food security matters.

- Support small-scale agriculture (rural and urban)
- Develop a regional agricultural plan

03

Be energy smart.

- Conserve energy wherever possible by using efficient systems and appliances
- Produce our own power (solar, geothermal, excess heat from industry)

04

Get up to speed on the new green economy.

- Promote green businesses like agro-forestry, alternative energy and eco-tourism
- Account fully for the cost of products and services, shift taxes to reward low-impact activity

05

Clear the air to reduce carbon emissions.

- Plant carbon-eating vegetation, upgrade wood burning stoves
- Pass air quality bylaws, regularly monitor and enforce air quality

06

Don't hog the water so there is enough for all.

- Price water to encourage conservation, use efficient systems and appliances
- Manage industry and 'green infrastructure' to protect aquifers and wetlands

07

Grow up, not out.

- Put people, jobs and transportation closer together
- Establish and enforce urban containment boundaries and add natural values (shade trees, raingardens)
- Adopt a green building code that reduces water and energy use and site impacts

08

Revive biodiversity.

- Restore and protect valuable habitat and ecosystems
- Eliminate invasive species, allow only zero impact development
- Acquire key tracts of land, forge land partnerships like farms with cluster housing or community forest

09

Get serious about zero waste.

- Make use of unused resources and minimize environmental impacts
- Rethink how we handle our sewage and other wastes
- Say no to plastic, and avoid excessive packaging

10

Be carbon neutral.

- Create better ways to get around (light rail, bike lanes, more buses), set up a regional carbon trading system
- Reforest our communities and watersheds to capture carbon and create jobs

11

Audit and protect our assets.

- Assess sensitive areas, species at risk, wetlands, watercourses and air and water quality
- Undertake a connectivity analysis to make sure species have room to adapt to climate change

12

Lead the way.

- Challenge government to embed a sustainable future in every rule and regulation
- Support local government to help us make real changes
- Do your part: join a committee, be a watchdog, voice your concerns and priorities

Thank you for photo contributions to the Town of Ladysmith: EDC, Nik West, Andrew Leong, Wayne Taiji and Riley Taiji.

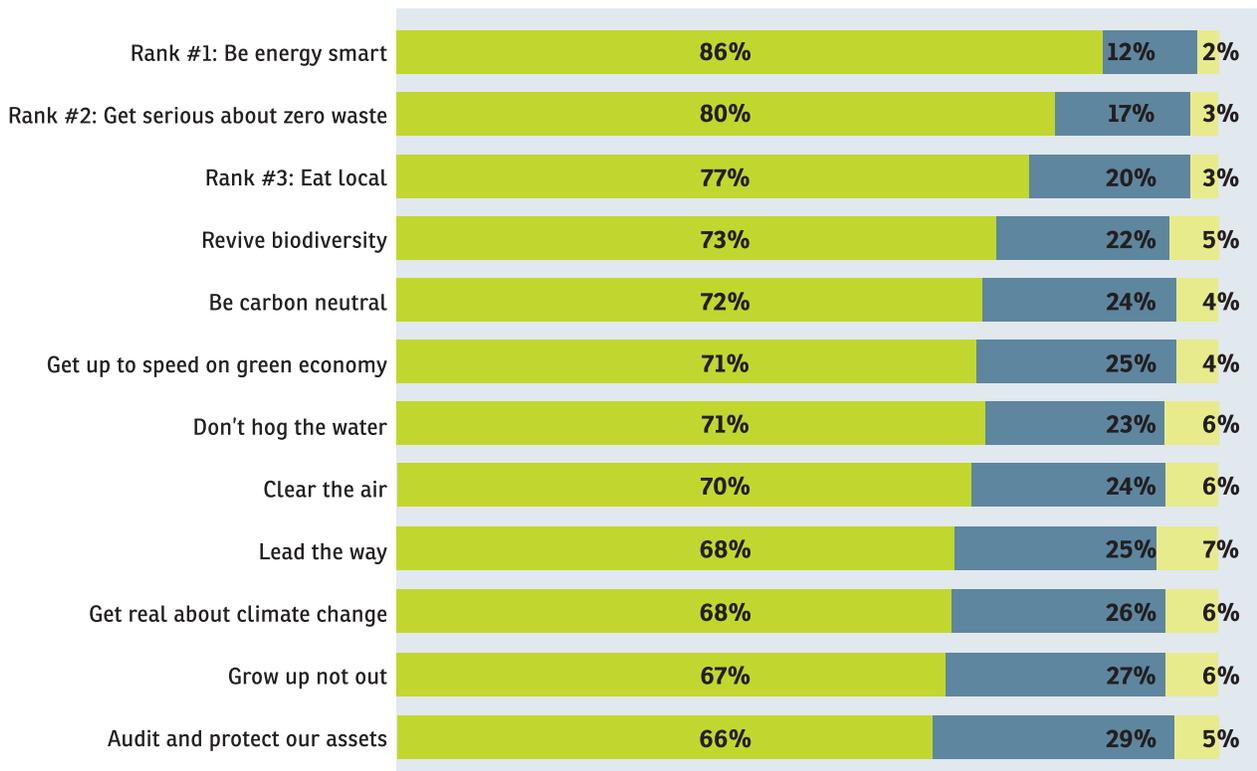
Prioritizing the big ideas

All of the “12 big ideas” received a remarkably high level of ranking (over 68% for each idea in the online survey). Here are some top ‘hits’, as indicated by respondents:

- > Online survey respondents said they are concerned about being energy smart, reducing waste and eating local. These top priorities seem to indicate that people are ready to do their part, and have selected actions that are readily achievable.
- > At the Community Conversation event, participants sent a very strong message that their top priority is to **‘audit and protect our assets’** and that no other actions are possible until we gather this information. Participants also sent an extremely strong signal (by way of spontaneous and prolonged applause) that **shifting taxes to reward low-impact activity** is vital for promoting sustainable local economic development.
- > Participants at the Cowichan Tribes Conversation event spoke of the need to **revive biodiversity, get real about climate change, be energy smart**, and the imperative role we all play in **leading the way**.
- > People who used the online ranking tool chose the following ‘top three big ideas’: **be energy smart, eat local, and get real about climate change**.

Ranking of the 12 Big Ideas

High Medium Low



In addition to ranking the Environment Commission's "12 big ideas", online survey respondents had some ideas of their own. A complete list of their suggestions can be found in Appendix F. Here are some examples of their comments:

- > "Mapping and planting eelgrass is vital."
- > "Health and environment are inextricably linked."
- > "Educate the citizens about these issues."
- > "Technology pollution - cell towers, WiFi in schools."
- > "Consider hemp as a renewable resource and another industry for the Valley."
- > "Micro-hydro as a form of energy alternatives."
- > "Consider Bio-Regional perspective (Cascadia)."
- > "Stimulate citizenship and civic activities."
- > "Edible landscaping."
- > "Ban pesticides."

Information about the "12 big ideas" was not included in the "short survey." Instead, respondents were asked to identify what they thought were the top two environmental issues in the region. Even though their responses were not easy to classify, some themes emerged clearly enough to be able to select two top issues:

- > Water quality and quantity/supply (69%)
- > Waste management and recycling (32%)

Other issues identified by short survey respondents included: logging and forestry practices, air quality, development/urban sprawl, sewage treatment, climate change, biodiversity and transportation.

Recommendations / Next Steps

The findings of this public consultation process point to five key recommendations for the CVRD Environment Commission:

1. Seek CVRD Board confirmation of the Environmental Strategy and develop an implementation plan that focuses on the priorities identified in public feedback on the “12 big ideas”, namely:
 - > Be energy smart
 - > Get serious about reducing waste
 - > Eat local
 - > Audit and protect our assets
 - > Shift taxes to reward low-impact activity (part of the new green economy)
 - > Get real about climate change
 - > Revive biodiversity
 - > Lead the way
2. Work to embed an environmental lens into all local government decision making immediately, and to eliminate the artificial separation between the environment and the economy.
3. Continue to gather best practices and give guidance to local government on matters of environmental sustainability.
4. Report out to the community about:
 - > The findings of this public engagement process and the CVRD’s response
 - > Real changes in policies, decision making and outcomes that are currently underway and/or in the works (e.g. protection of important lands, reduction in waste, completion of natural asset audit).
5. Keep the dialogue with citizens going by organizing more opportunities for information sharing, and perhaps launch a major public education/awareness campaign in 2009.

A big thank you

We wish to thank the members of the Environment Commission sub-committee, CVRD staff, and the Environment Commission as a whole, for their timely and vital feedback during the development phase of this public consultation process.

Appendix A

Environment Commission Draft Environmental Strategy

In September 2008, the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board approved in principle the Environment Commission's Draft Environmental Strategy. This strategy contained four strategic goals, and 26 recommendations for action.

Four strategic goals:

1. To **protect** the environment from harm
2. To **restore**, rehabilitate and enhance the natural environment
3. To encourage economic and social development compatible with environmental **stewardship**
4. To **lead** by example

Twenty-six recommended actions

To **protect** the environment from harm

- > Protect clean air and reduce emissions through bylaws
- > Develop a water plan for the entire region
- > Develop a regional biodiversity plan
- > Launch campaign to build awareness of nature and impact of individual actions
- > Implement the new BC Living Water Smart program
- > Promote stewardship and acquisition programs to protect species and their habitats

To **restore**, rehabilitate and enhance the natural environment

- > Implement bylaws and incentives that enhance and rehabilitate natural resources (agricultural production/practices, forest practices, urban/suburban /rural impacts)
- > Restore valuable natural green infrastructure
- > Implement water price principles to support water conservation region wide
- > Update Liquid Waste Management Plans to reflect best practices
- > Support policies ensuring restoration and enhancement of natural habitat

To encourage economic and social development compatible with environmental **stewardship**

- > Ensure settlement patterns encourage carbon reduction
- > Develop one collaborative sustainable agricultural plan for the CVRD
- > Create and implement policies that stimulate local economies by supporting green development
- > Implement measures to ensure development occurs with no net loss of biodiversity
- > Inventory all contaminated sites and implement policies to encourage brownfield re-development
- > Support node based development to protect outlying lands
- > Develop multi-modal transportation plan consistent with principles and goals

To lead by example:

- > Engage and support the public and others to work collaboratively on environmental issues.
- > CVRD decision-making and policy should be informed by environmental principles and goals
- > Permanently fund the environmental programming and initiatives
- > LEED or better building standards for all new and major CVRD and local government renovations
- > Explore the use of waste as a resource or fuel
- > Continue energy and GHG audit process
- > Support development of a local premium carbon market
- > Implement employee award program for low cost suggestions for reducing CVRD environmental impact

Performance Measures

Undertake and implement annual state of the environment report on:

- > Water resources throughout the region
- > Air quality issues
- > Biodiversity throughout region
- > Land use impacts
- > CVRD as a model of leadership

This Draft Environmental Strategy can be viewed at:

<http://www.cvrld.bc.ca/html/whatsnew/CVRDDRAFTEnvironmentStrategy.pdf>

Appendix B

Engagement Tools – Samples

Community Conversation advertorials

Environment Commission wants to know “how green is your Cowichan?”

The CVRD’s Environment Commission is asking Cowichan residents to provide input into their Sustainable Cowichan Plan.

The Commission has come up with 12 big ideas to build a stronger, more resilient community, and are now taking their ideas ‘to the street’ to get public input.

Have your say by going to their website: www.12things.ca, or by attending their “Community Conversation” event on Wednesday November 5, 2008 at 7pm at 930 Trunk Road in Duncan.

“This event will begin with a short presentation of our 12 big ideas,” explains Environment Commission member Peter Keber, “and will feature a lively discussion about community economics with the help of some local big thinkers.”

The Environment Commission is made up of 15 community members appointed by the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board. The Commission was formed in April 2007 by the CVRD to provide advice to the Board on a variety of environmental issues and concerns in an integrated, systematic way across the region.

The Commission has spent the past year thinking about how our region can best adapt to climate change and other pressures that have the potential to seriously impact our economy and ecosystem. Then they put together a list of big ideas that they think can make a real, positive difference.

This list of 12 big ideas is made up of small, medium and large actions they feel we – as individuals and as a community – need to take to increase our region’s ability to respond to the realities of climate change, including droughts, fires, failed crops, and severe water restrictions in the summers, and flooding, power outages, violent winds and colder, wetter weather in the winters.

“The good news is that our environmental backbone is in fairly decent shape, so there is still hope,” says Environment Commission member Clare Frater. “We just need to do things differently,

starting today. Now is the time to come together as a region and decide whether we value our natural assets – forests, rivers, plants, animals, land, air and water – enough to invest in them over the long term.”

Investing doesn’t mean raising taxes, it means changing how we think, plan, act and live today and into the future in order to balance both biodiversity and growth.

Doing things differently on a personal level might look like committing to new habits that recognize and value the environment as the backbone of our work and home lives – like carpooling, and reducing water and energy use.

At the community level it might look like supporting our local government to put in place policies and regulations that create greater regional self-sufficiency and manage our natural assets in a sustainable way.

Do you agree with their ideas? Add your voice and thoughts to this important community discussion about regional sustainability by going to www.12things.ca, or by attending their Community Conversation event on Wednesday, November 5th.



If we carry on living for today and not thinking about tomorrow, we run the risk of losing some of our natural assets forever. This is why the Environment Commission has put together a list of big ideas for making our region more sustainable.

Then they put together a list of big ideas that they think can make a real, positive difference.

This list of 12 big ideas is made up of small, medium and large actions they feel we – as individuals and as a community – need to take to increase our region’s ability to respond to the realities of climate change, including droughts, fires, failed crops, and severe water restrictions in the summers, and flooding, power outages, violent winds and colder, wetter weather in the winters.

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The Commission has come up with 12 big ideas to build a stronger, more resilient community, and are now taking their ideas ‘to the street’ to get public input.

Have your say by going to their website: www.12things.ca, or by attending their “Community Conversation” event on Tuesday November 4, (dinner served at 5:30) at Si’em.

“This event will begin with a short presentation of our 12 big ideas,” explains Environment Commission member Ernie Elliott, “and will feature a lively discussion about environmental economics with the help of some local big thinkers.”

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If we carry on living for today and not thinking about tomorrow, we run the risk of losing some of our natural assets forever. This is why the Environment Commission has put together a list of big ideas for making our region more sustainable.

Community Conversation ads

sustainablecowichan
A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

How Green is your Cowichan?

Help us turn 12 big ideas for a strong, resilient community into a solid plan that gives local government clear direction for the future.

We're the CVRD Environment Commission. We're Listening.

We're starting a Community Conversation about Community-based Economics

Please join us for a short presentation about our 12 big ideas, and for a lively discussion about the relationship between environment and economy.

We've invited some local big thinkers to help us with this conversation, including Donna Morton, Chris Corp, Brandy Gallagher, Chris Wood and others.

Where: 930 Trunk Road (Duncan Christian Reform Church)
When: Wednesday November 5, 2008 at 7pm

Everyone is welcome to this free event. In the spirit of sustainability, arriving by carpool, foot, bus or bike is highly recommended and will be rewarded with a chance to win a door prize! Light refreshments will be served.

If you can't come, but want to let us know if you think we are on the right track with our 12 big ideas, please visit our website and complete our survey and feedback form: www.12things.ca

Big vision. Little footprint.

Cowichan Valley Regional District Environment Commission
175 Ingram Street | Duncan, BC | V9L 1N8 250.746.2500



sustainablecowichan
CONVERSATION WITH THE CVRD ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

How Green is your Cowichan?

Help us turn 12 big ideas for a strong, resilient community into a solid plan that gives local government clear direction for the future.

We're the CVRD Environment Commission. We're Listening.

We're starting a Community Conversation about Community-based Economics

Please join us for a short presentation about our 12 big ideas, and to participate in a discussion (with help from some local community members) about the relationship between environment and economy. We can all make a difference.

Where: 930 Trunk Road (Duncan Christian Reform Church)
When: Wednesday November 4, 2008 at 6pm (dinner served at 5:30pm)

Everyone is welcome to this free event. We will be offering a light dinner so everyone can enjoy the evening. Community speakers on the environment include Donna Morton, Chris Corp, Brandy Gallagher, Chris Wood, Peters, Larry George and Ken Elliott among others.

If you can't come, but want to let us know if you think we are on the right track with our 12 big ideas, please visit our website and complete our survey and feedback form: www.12things.ca

Big vision. Little footprint.

Cowichan Valley Regional District Environment Commission
175 Ingram Street | Duncan, BC | V9L 1N8 250.746.2500



sustainablecowichan

TAIJI BRAND GROUP/CITIZEN PLAN > Final Report to CVRD Environment Commission

Website

www.12things.ca

TAKE OUR SURVEY

sustainablecowichan

Resources | Media | Contact

01 02 03 04 05 06

12 big ideas for a strong, resilient community

07 08 09 10 11 12

CVRD Environment Commission

- About us
- Membership
- How to get involved

Read our plan

- Our 12 big ideas
- Background information
- Interesting and fun tidbits

Tell us what you think

- Take our survey
- Rank our big ideas
- Give us feedback
- Win fabulous prizes!

Big vision. Little footprint.

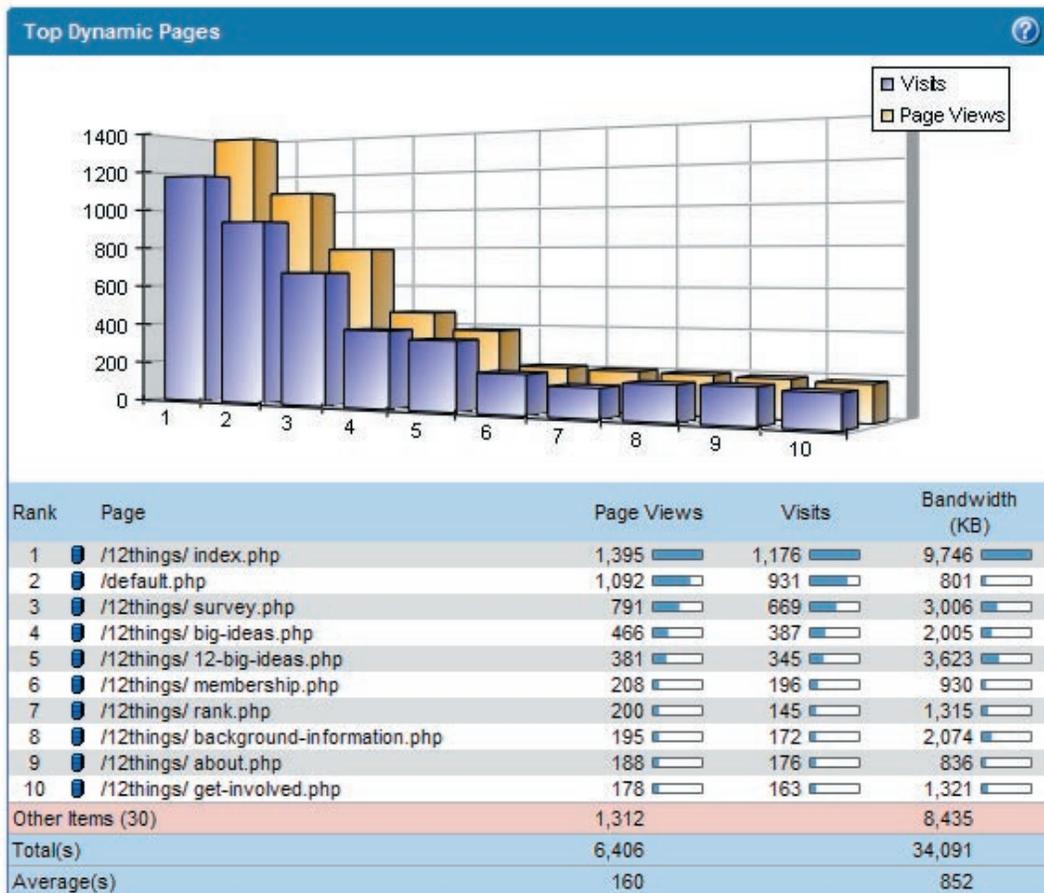
Cowichan Valley Regional District Environment Commission | 175 Ingram Street | Duncan, BC | V9L 1N8 250.746.2500



Big vision. Little footprint.

Appendix C

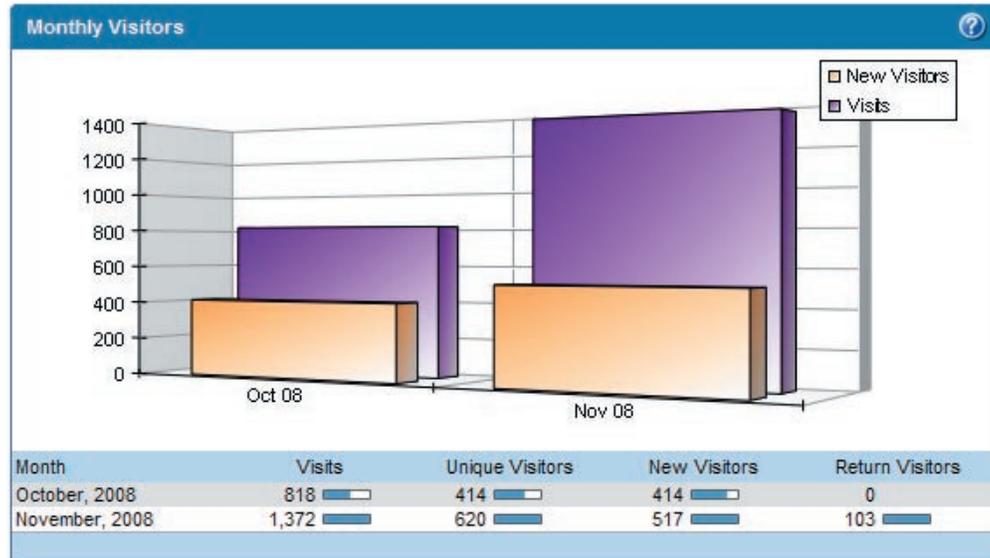
Website stats from www.12things.ca



Page Views - A page view is a successful request for a file on your web site that is considered to be a page. These usually mean files with extensions such as .txt, .asp, .aspx, .php, etc. Views generated as a result of an error (either a 400 or 500 level error) are not counted as actual views for your site, and are kept separate from successful views.

Visits - Visits represent the total number of times people have visited your web site. A visit is counted whenever a web site user requests one or more files from the web server. If the user becomes idle for more than a certain amount of time (usually 20 minutes), a new visit is generated when they come back

Website stats from www.12things.ca



New Visitors - A new visitor represents a visit by a computer that has not yet been to the web site in the time period of the report.

Return Visitors - A return visit is counted when a computer that has already been to the site before returns for another visit.

Unique Visitors - A unique visitor represents any number of visits from the same computer. If a person returns to the site again, a visit is counted, but a unique visit is not.

Visits - Visits represent the total number of times people have visited your web site. A visit is counted whenever a web site user requests one or more files from the web server. If the user becomes idle for more than a certain amount of time (usually 20 minutes), a new visit is generated when they come back.

Appendix D

Cowichan Tribes Conversation on the Environment

On November 4, 2008 a meeting was held in the dining hall of the Si'em Lelum Gymnasium. Cowichan Tribes members, as well as the broader public, were invited to a dinner and presentation of the draft strategy, introduced by Cowichan Tribes Chief Executive Officer and Environment Commission Member Ernie Elliot, and facilitated by Steve Alphonse. The evening was designed as a series of presentations by Cowichan Tribes members who are passionate on a variety of environmental initiatives.

The following is a summary of each presenter's topics and key points.

Stephanie Peters, a young mother and tireless community educator, has recently returned from an engagement overseas (Cook Islands) working with indigenous people to help them prepare for the changes they are facing due to climate change. She opened the discussion by acknowledging that because indigenous people live on the land, "climate change is very real for us." She spoke of her focus on educating the children, through storytelling and song, as well as through the re-introduction of the Hul'qumi'num language.

Sage Point, a youth representative, focused on energy. She works to convey to members ways in which they can conserve significant energy through everyday activities such as changing habits around laundry, the use of hot water, clotheslines and being more diligent about not leaving things unnecessarily plugged into the wall. After providing a number of compelling statistics regarding significant carbon emission savings that can be realized by energy savings, she addressed our collective lazy approach to charging one's cellphone (which is often fully charged in an hour or so, but we typically leave it on overnight) by decreeing "just unplug it!"— a simple, focused and surprisingly powerful reminder about "vampire energy."

Ken Elliot operates the Cowichan Tribes Native Plan Nursery. He addressed the green economy and some of the unexpected consequences that can emerge if we are not careful. He cited an example from the nursery, where they thought the cultivation of some household plants was a harmless activity, because it was 'green.' But he watched the birds come down, eat the seeds, then fly up into the surrounding hills, and spread 'invasive species' into sensitive ecological areas. He urged a commitment to education - understanding the full impact your business can have (scientific emphasis) as well as tapping into the wisdom and knowledge that Cowichan elders have about the area. He spoke about 'opening the heart' to the interconnectivity of the plants, fish, trees and animals, and the very powerful knowledge that comes from that. He reminded us that we have all collectively lost a lot of knowledge and understanding and that we must all work together (without blame), collaboratively, to repair our environment and to move forward with light steps.

Stella Johnnie, an educator and traditional weaver, spoke about "non-timber forestry" and the role of the cedar tree has played in Cowichan culture: providing transportation, clothing, and material to make catchments for fish, baskets for collecting berries and roots and strainers for clam digging. The grasses and branches on the floor of the forest have also been a source of resources for traditional industries. Stella reminded participants that the Cowichan people, with their near legendary skills in weaving, could build bridges made of woven grass. The sanctity of the forest has long provided a kind of 'church' for the Cowichan people – offering a place to clean the spirit.

Shelly Thorne, an educator and the Cowichan Tribes representative on the Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan development project, addressed the important issue of water management, and spoke of her outreach work. There is an urgency in the need to address the fact that the reserves and communities are in a flood-plain, and "how we bring the table to the people is going to be hugely impacted by climate change." She challenged people to speak out about the very 'anti-smart growth' development that is taking place both on and off reserve. She urged us to work towards building consensus and momentum for change. Shelly spoke of her positive experience working collaboratively with other jurisdictions during the 'crisis on the river' in 2003. She urged us to set aside our particular interests and get back to Nuts'a'maat Shqwaluwun – 'working together for a purpose.'

Steve Alphonse, Cowichan Tribes Fish Habitat/Environmental Steward, addressed the issue of restoring the region's biodiversity through his work building finger channels on the river to improve the survival rate of fry. He noted that in the short time since he returned to the Cowichan Valley, he has noticed that the river is getting 'shallower and shallower' and he fears that one day the Cowichan River may become a dried up river such as those he has seen on the mainland. He is passionate about the salmon's journey, biological functions and requirements and the work he is doing to support the rebuilding of their habitat, and encourages others to embrace this learning or to re-visit the knowledge they may already have. Just like the little fry he works to save, he went on a long journey, but eventually found his way home - to the river.

Ron George, Cultural Advisor and Cowichan Elder, addressed the importance of 'auditing our assets.' He feels that by far the most important asset the Cowichan people have is to reinforce the strength of the Hul'qumi'num language. Language is a powerful tool, as it reinforces the strength of a people, and their knowledge and connection to the land. With a strong oral tradition, his biggest fear is that the next generation will have to look at a picture to know about a particular species of extinct fish. Whereas, he believes that if they speak of that fish, it will not be forgotten and will not be threatened with extinction. He has witnessed sacred bath holes on the river dry up in his lifetime, and imagined that this would never have happened if the Hul'qumi'num language was in evidence everywhere. Ron urged us all to work together to ensure a strong and resilient Cowichan.

Mathew Louie spoke about his role as a youth leader. He is guided by a quote from Ralph Nader - "A leader's role is not to create more followers, but to create more leaders." He echoed Stella's call for Nuts'a'maat Shqwaluwun, so that we can work towards a common purpose by challenging the local governments. In his involvement with the youth treaty negotiations, he has been happily surprised by the level of knowledge his friends have about the natural environment - for example, the level of understanding of the migrating patterns of birds, their relationship to the animals on the ground and the complexity of the connectivity of all living things. He urged the CVRD to tap into the knowledge of Cowichan youth and to look to Cowichan Tribes as a resource. On a personal level, Mathew drew our attention to the Earth Charter as an excellent, globally relevant document that focuses on what individuals can do to shift our relationship to the land on which we live.

Appendix E

Community Conversation Event – Linking the Environment and the Economy

On November 5, 2008 a meeting was held at the Duncan Christian Reform Church. Members of the public were invited to a presentation of the Environment Commission's "12 big ideas" and to begin a dialogue about the environment and its relationship with the economy, with the help of some local "big thinkers." The meeting was facilitated by consultant Sue Hallatt.

Over 170 people attended this event – an excellent turnout for an information-based gathering of this kind. (Typically, a similarly large turnout is generated as the result of a contentious issue.)

The evening opened with a traditional welcome and prayer by Joe Thorne and Garrett Elliott, Cowichan Tribes members, followed by a brief Powerpoint presentation of the Environment Commission's "12 Big Ideas."

The main purpose of the event was to engage the community in a dialogue about the state of the local environment, to showcase the linkages between the environment and the economy, and to receive feedback on the draft strategy. To paraphrase Environment Commission member Chris Wood, the goal of the event was to garner some direction with respect to the following key questions:

"Are we on the right track?"

"Are we missing something?"

"What are the priority areas?"

To help tease out this information from the attendees, a number of 'expert' community members were asked to begin the conversation with their observations about the "12 big ideas." Because each person was picked for his or her diverse background, a wide range of topics were covered – from what we must do at the personal level to changes required at the institutional / political level with respect to taxes and management of the public 'commons.'

Guest speakers were:

- > Jean Crowder – MP Nanaimo-Cowichan
- > Brandy Gallagher – O.U.R. Eco-Village
- > Chris Corps – Asset Strategics Ltd. (integrated business and real estate decisions)
- > Mark Hazell – Author, consultant (Golden Moon Consulting)
- > Bill Jones – Slow food chef, author, founding member of the FarmFolk/CityFolk Society
- > Donna Morton – Executive Director, Centre for Integral Economics; Environment Commission member
- > Mike Kelly – Tourism planner, CVRD Economic Development Commission member
- > Chris Wood – Journalist, author of "Dry Spring: The Coming Water Crisis of North America"; Environment Commission member

For the next hour and a half, audience members responded to the guest speakers' comments and/or offered some thoughtful ideas of their own. The tenor of the evening was excited and animated. Many people wanted to make a contribution to the public record, and as such the hoped for back-and-forth dialogue was not fully achieved. It was clear that further, longer and deeper conversations were both desired and needed. The phrase "this is the start of the conversation" was heard a number of times in the lobby after the event. Some of the highlights are as follows:

- > "We must get a handle on what we have before moving forward"
- > "We need a Regional Growth management strategy"
- > "A new definition of 'sustainability' is in order, one where we go beyond zero impact (1:1 ratio) but seek reparation (repair the damage at a ratio of 3:1)"
- > "We should consider the notion of 'complimentary currencies' - where the value of money increases, the more it is spent (versus the dollar, which has more value the more it is hoarded)"
- > "Forests offer greater value than just timber"
- > "Community supported farms have the potential to address the competitive edge that imported foods have over local food, by bringing the cost of production down"
- > "As citizens, WE have the power to improve the economy by focusing on the demand side of economics, and therefore influencing supply (i.e.: healthier choices, sustainably produced products)"
- > "We can use taxes as an innovative tool for moving towards sustainability"
- > "In these uncertain economic times, we would do well to establish a vehicle where we could all invest our savings into our own community"

- > “ Our economy has, heretofore, been skewed away from sustainability, because there has been too much environment – we now are being forced to shift the model of supply and demand, because we are running out of resources (environment)”
- > “We must return to our original agriculture-based imperative, where we guarded ourselves against ‘consumption of the commons’ - we can no longer accept this as a legitimate economic strategy for business”
- > “We need to shift our economic model to enhance green business”
- > “The protection of Agricultural Land Reserves needs to be seen as an economic policy – and the practice should be extended to ‘Environmental Land Reserves”
- > “Zoning is a key tool to sustainability (allow mixed and complementary uses, different housing options to allow communal living as a way to meet the new demands of farming)”
- > “It is imperative that when we think of how we can all live sustainably, we consider the experiential gaps of the many families in the region who live in poverty - some of whom must go hungry for days, so that the children have enough food”
- > “One of our sharpest but underutilized tools that we can use is the notion that ‘Common Law’ (the law that governs public lands) is, and always has been, ‘unwritten.’ Whereas written law (regulation) is inherently limiting to our leaders, common law is a ‘blank cheque’, allowing us to make interpretations that reflect our current values, and to exercise judgment so long as it is in ‘the public interest”
- > “We should be looking to other innovative communities who have passed bylaws that support sustainable living”
- > “We don’t have to invent the wheel. We just need to get on with it, and show some leadership”
- > “We must ‘push’ for sustainability”
- > “Never accept ‘no’ from people who don’t have the power to say ‘yes”
- > “Sustainability starts with the ability to build community. And in this region, there are people who want to live communally, on the land, and they want to farm, live sustainably, and contribute to food security for all. But the zoning regulations and other restrictions do not allow for emerging trends in how we live and work together - how we make community”
- > “When we ‘Audit our Assets’, we need to include our social assets. There is some very good work going on in the region, and many efforts are duplicated, or underutilized, due to lack of coordination”
- > “Stacking functions” - a term, which refers to getting many uses from one element in our local system or a multiple lens through which to look at things. For example, a tree can provide shade, shelter wildlife, produce mulch and building materials, be a wind break, fertilize the soil, prevent erosion, raise the water table, etc.
- > “Education is going to be the key to moving forward”
- > “Our children will be the force behind ensuring we make changes at the personal level. Their relentless pestering and determination is needed. We must include our kids in this work”

Appendix F

Complete online and short survey results

Appendix G

Online survey results for the Ladysmith area, with select cross-tabulations designed to draw out input from Ladysmith Secondary students