

# COMMUNITY

## WEST HOWE SOUND

# Anonymous concerns about short-term rentals



*West Howe*  
**SOUNDER**  
Elizabeth Rains

I recently came across a Langdale resident fixing a staircase that ran downhill from a road frontage to his home. The wooden stairs leaned sideways about 75 degrees.

"A car must have hit the railing. They should have left a note," he said as I watched him shovel dirt around a runner.

The vehicle could have belonged to one of the short-term renters who stay at the vacation cot-

tage next door, he said. An out-of-towner may have had trouble navigating the twisty, narrow gravel road in front of his property.

His wife called me later asking, "Please don't use our name. We don't want problems with our neighbour (who owns the rental cottage)."

Ian Winn, Area F director for the Sunshine Coast Regional District, encountered many similar requests this summer. He talked with about 20 West Howe Sounders who were miffed about nearby vacation rentals. He advised them to submit formal complaints to the SCRDC if warranted.

"Maybe five to 10 per cent of people with a complaint actually filed a formal bylaw complaint," he wrote to me in an email. Many others wanted to withhold their names in order to avoid tension in the neighbourhood, Winn said. "But

they still expected the SCRDC to do something about it."

Winn encouraged them to complete a short-term rental survey on the SCRDC website, so that the SCRDC can make fact-based decisions on the issue.

The survey, which collected several hundred responses, is now closed. The results were set to be presented in a report to the SCRDC's infrastructure committee on Sept. 21, according to senior planner David Rafael.

In another SCRDC effort affecting West Howe Sound, the regional district is collecting applications for its Waste Reduction Initiative Program. The program will provide grants for projects that reduce waste in measurable ways.

The West Howe Sound Community Association plans to apply for one of the grants. An SCRDC grant-in-aid earlier this year allowed the

association to buy a community composter. A grant under the new program may help fund an education campaign that would teach people how to use the composter properly.

In the month after the composter was placed on Langdale Road on July 30, scores of area residents dumped food waste into it. The composter was shut down Sept. 5 because there was no room for even another corn cob.

On Sept. 16 dozens of West Howe Sound residents were among 82 volunteers who took part in the SCRDC's Backroad Trash Bash. This year's event targeted illegal dump sites in West Howe Sound and Elphinstone.

My husband and I joined in and were sent with SCRDC waste reduction coordinator Kara McDougall and Beth Brooks, a former Coaster who now lives in

Courtenay, to clean up three sites on McNair Creek.

We pulled out wood waste, piping, plastic planters, a garden hose, a baseboard heater, and a well weathered sofa that sat at the edge of the creek. In all, fifty-two pickup loads were collected from 18 illegal dump sites.

If you didn't make it to the trash bash – or if you

did – I hope to see you at the West Howe Sound Community Association annual general meeting. It takes place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 11, in Eric Cardinall Hall at Shirley Macey Park.

I'll be on break for the next few weeks in New Brunswick and Ottawa, and will be back in October with news about the AGM. In the meantime, I would love to hear from you about what's happening in West Howe Sound. Elizabeth@Rains.ca.