

Important Update: New Burning Regulations in the Highlands

The District of Highlands has adopted new burning regulations to better protect air quality and public health. These changes are based on recommendations from The Ministry of Environment and the British Columbia's Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation (OBSCR), as the Highlands is designated a **High Smoke Sensitivity Zone**.

What's Changing?

Effective immediately: **Any fire other than a campfire** may only be ignited on days when the **Ventilation Index** is rated **"Good."**

The Ventilation Index is a daily forecast that measures how well smoke will disperse in the air.

- **Good:** 55–100
- **Fair:** 34–54
- **Poor:** 0–33

This requirement helps reduce smoke impacts on residents and the environment.

Why These Changes?

The Highlands is classified as a **High Smoke Sensitivity Area**, meaning smoke from open burning can significantly affect air quality and public health. Limiting burning to days with **good venting conditions** helps ensure smoke disperses properly and keeps the District in compliance with provincial regulations.

How to Check the Ventilation Index

Online:

- District of Highlands Website: <https://www.highlands.ca/community-services/protective-services/fire-services/wood-and-backyard-burning>
- BC Ventilation Index: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/air/air-pollution/smoke-burning/ventilation-index#check-ventilation-index>

By phone: Call 1-888-281-2992 for the daily forecast.

The forecast is updated daily, and the **Southern Vancouver Island zone** applies to the Highlands

Other Key Points

- Permits are still required for all outdoor burning in the Highlands.
- Burning prohibited materials (plastics, garbage, treated wood, etc.) remains illegal.
- Always follow all restrictions for each permit type as they differ

What You Can Do

- Consider alternatives such as chipping, mulching, or green waste recycling before burning.
- If burning is necessary, **plan ahead and check conditions daily**.

Thank you for helping us keep Highlands' air clean and our community healthy.

All **winter-season burning permits (October–April)** will expire on **April 1, 2026**. Everyone will need to reapply for **spring burning permits**, which have shorter timeframes for each permit type based on **weather conditions and fire danger levels**.

For questions or to obtain a burning permit, please visit www.hvfd.burnpermits.com or contact the Fire Department at 250-474-1773.

New Burning Regulations



Only burn on **GOOD**
Ventilation Index days
(55–100)

Check Conditions Daily:

District of Highlands Website: <https://www.highlands.ca/community-services/fire-services/wood-and-backyard-buning>



Community and Council News

Over the past two months, Council has focused on strategic planning, community priorities, election readiness, and infrastructure planning, while hearing from many of the volunteer groups that help make Highlands a vibrant and connected community.

Strategic Planning and Priorities

In January, Council held a Special Council meeting to complete its **annual review of the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan**. Council reviewed accomplishments to date and confirmed priorities for 2026, including work related to the upcoming local government election, emergency preparedness, environmental protection, and key infrastructure initiatives. The draft 2026 Strategic Priorities timeline was referred to Select Committees for further review and feedback before final consideration.

Election Preparation for 2026

Council adopted a new **Election and Voting Procedure Bylaw** to modernize how elections are conducted in Highlands. Updates include increased nominator requirements, random ballot order to improve fairness, and the use of automated vote counting equipment. These changes align Highlands with current legislation and practices used by other local governments in the region and will support a smooth and efficient election process in 2026.

Financial Planning and Budget Process

Council approved the **2026 Financial Plan Review Schedule**, setting out key dates for budget discussions and public input this spring. Residents will have opportunities to follow budget deliberations and share feedback before the Financial Plan and Tax Rates Bylaws are adopted later this year. The Council approved 2026 budget meeting schedule is as follows:

March 23, 2026 Committee of the Whole	Financial Plan presentation and discussion
April 13, 2026 Committee of the Whole	Financial Plan discussion
April 20, 2026 Regular Council Meeting	Consideration of readings for Financial Plan Bylaw & Tax Rates Bylaw
May 4, 2026 Regular Council Meeting	Consideration of adoption for Financial Plan Bylaw & Tax Rates Bylaw

Community and Volunteer Group Highlights

At the February 17th Council meeting, Council received annual updates from several community volunteer organizations, including:

- **Highlands Heritage Park Society**, which reported on park maintenance, community events, rentals, and capital improvements at the Caleb Pike Heritage Park.
- **Highlands Community Garden**, highlighting a busy year of work parties, workshops, harvest events, and progress on the Native Plant Garden as an act of reconciliation.
- **Highlands District Community Association**, which shared updates on community events such as the Highlands Fling, Easter Egg Hunt, speaker series, cleanup days, and ongoing efforts to connect residents through newsletters and bulletin boards.

Council thanked the many volunteers whose time and energy continue to strengthen community life in Highlands.

Transportation and Road Safety

Council reviewed the results of a **Bicycle Lane Feasibility Study**, which examined options for cycling facilities along Millstream Road, Millstream Lake Road, and Munn Road. The study found that constructing formal bicycle lanes would be very costly for a small municipality. Based on the findings, Council will consider **more frequent sweeping of paved shoulders** as a more practical and cost effective way to improve cyclist safety as part of upcoming budget discussions.

Community News

Accessibility and Community Facilities

Council discussed **accessibility upgrades at the Municipal Office**, including next steps for community engagement and future improvements to better serve residents and visitors. Council also adopted a new **Flag Protocol Policy** to ensure consistent and respectful flag display practices at District facilities.

Accessibility Upgrades Complete – We Want Your Feedback!

The District of Highlands has completed new accessibility improvements at the Municipal Office, including:

- A new accessible front entrance door
- Upgraded driveway and parking surfaces for safer, smoother access

These upgrades are part of our Accessibility Plan and support more inclusive access to municipal services and were supported through the SPARC BC Local Community Accessibility Grant Program, with input from the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee.

We're inviting residents and visitors to share feedback on these improvements and help inform future accessibility initiatives. Send your comments to:

accessibility@highlands.ca

Your input matters—thank you for helping us build a more accessible Highlands.

You can find more information regarding this project on our website:

<https://www.highlands.ca/news/public-feedback-requested-accessibility-upgrades-municipal-office>



Highlands Twinflower Park (Municipal Park)

Highlands Council would like to remind residents that a fun Tot Lot playground area is located within Twinflower Park at 1560 Millstream Road, just north of the Highlands West Firehall.

The Tot Lot area includes a small parking lot, two picnic tables, and playground equipment such as children's swings, a slide, monkey bars, a seesaw, and a merry-go-round.

West of the Tot Lot, you will find a small basketball court (please bring your own ball) and public washrooms, which are open annually from June through September 30.

Further west within the park is a smaller-sized baseball field suitable for casual games and practices. To the south, a large natural wetland area provides important wildlife habitat, along with opportunities for education and wildlife observation. Many bird species can be seen here, including Red-winged Blackbirds, whose distinctive songs can be heard during nesting season.

Across the street at 711 Caleb Pike Road, near Highlands Park Terrace, there is a small equestrian riding ring with a parking area. Access is via a narrow, unpaved driveway on the south side of the road. From Caleb Pike Road, you can also view the park's natural wetland from a bench located below road level on the north side. Look for a small trail leading to the bench, where you can also follow a footpath along that side of the wetland.

Twinflower Park is a beautiful natural area that Council encourages you and your family to explore. It may just become one of your favourite regular destinations.

If you notice any damage within the Tot Lot or elsewhere in the park, please contact District of Highlands staff at 250-474-1773 or info@highlands.ca ~ Councillor Marcie McLean



Community News

Highlands District Community Association Update

Hold onto your hats — spring is here, and the HDCA has a full calendar of events for Highland residents!

Spring Speaker Series – Star Party

March 20 | 7:30 pm | Twinflower Park (next to the West Firehall) (Rain/cloud date: March 22). Join us for a special evening under the night sky as we honour the late Sid Sidhu, who brought astronomy to the Highlands. Sid passed away suddenly on October 25, 2025, leaving a huge void in our volunteer community.

Dan Gentile, longtime friend and fellow astronomer, will lead this year's Star Party in Sid's memory — including a guided quest to spot Jupiter.

Easter Egg Hunt

April 5 | 11:00 am | Highland Heritage Park
Bring your children — and a bag of treats to hide! While the children wait inside the Pike House, parents hide treats throughout the park. When the doors open, stand back and watch the fun as every last treat is discovered.



Community Roadside Clean-Up April 25 | Highland Heritage Park

Celebrate Earth Day by helping keep our roads and parks garbage-free. Pick up gloves, bags, and safety vests at the Pike House. Claim a section of road to clean and return filled bags to the on-site dumpster before 3:00 pm.

Sneak Peek: Summer & Fall

- Summer Markets return to Heritage Park on the second Sunday in June, July, and August.
- Highland Fling — mark your calendar for Sunday, September 13!

Our annual community festival features games, farm and craft market, displays, live music, hot dogs, corn, ice cream, face painting, and a giant tug-of-war.

Staying in Touch Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064562177401>

Website: <https://highlands-hdca.weebly.com>



Explore The Night Sky

March 20th - Friday
7:30pm - 9:00pm

Twinflower Park
1564 Millstream Road
Next to the Fire Hall

Cloudy sky date
Mar 22 - Sunday

Amateur astronomer Dan Gentile will facilitate a Highlands Star Party in honour of renowned Highlander Sid Sidhu, who sadly passed suddenly on October 25th.

Sid & Dan built some of their first telescopes together.

Dan will lead our quest for a view of Jupiter.

If you use glasses bring them.

There will be a fire, chairs, hot chocolate and cookies.

Call Scott at 250-478-2526 with any questions

Brought to you by the Highland Heritage Park Society (HHPS) and the Highlands District Community Association (HDCA)

APRIL 5 **11:00 am**

Highlands Annual - Easter Egg Hunt -

All Highlanders and guests are welcome

Caleb Pike House | Easter Sunday
1589 Millstream Rd | April 5 | 11AM

Please bring "nut-free" treats to hide.

Brought to you by the Highland Heritage Park Society (HHPS) and the Highlands District Community Association (HDCA)

Highlands Roadside Clean Up



SAT, APRIL 25 9AM-3PM
Join your neighbours for a volunteer clean up of garbage from our roads & municipal parks.

Brought to you by the Highlands District Community Association (HDCA) and the Highland Heritage Park Society (HHPS)

Come to the Pike House for your free garbage bags and pick a section of road to clean.

Please drop off collected garbage in the bin at the Caleb Pike Heritage Park - 1589 Millstream Road by 3pm.



For more information, please visit the HDCA Facebook page

We hope everyone had a wonderful winter — was that really winter? We look forward to seeing you at some (or all!) of our spring and summer events. Warm greetings from your HDCA ~ Doone Watson

WELCOME TO THE 15TH ANNUAL SPRING POTLUCK & SCOTTISH DANCE



Saturday, March 21st
Highlands Community Hall, 729 Finlayson Arm Rd
Sponsored by the Highland Heritage Park Society. **Free to attend!!**



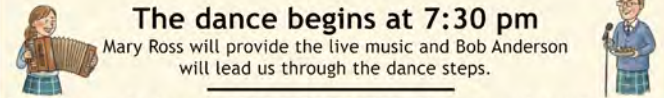
The potluck supper begins at 6 pm

Please bring your own plates, cutlery, drinking vessel, beverage and a delicious dish to share. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Labeling dishes with main ingredients would be appreciated

The dance begins at 7:30 pm

Mary Ross will provide the live music and Bob Anderson will lead us through the dance steps.



Let us know whether you and a partner and any children want to join the fun - either supper and dance, supper only or dance only. If you have any friends or family who might enjoy the occasion, please bring them along!

RSVP to Ingo Lambrecht
Email: ingomail@ymail.com

Spring Potluck & Scottish Dance

March 21 | Community Hall Potluck at 6:00 pm | Dancing at 7:30 pm. Organized by the Highland Heritage Park Society and supported by HDCA, this lively evening is a wonderful opportunity to meet your neighbours, share a meal, and try Scottish country dancing. No dance experience — or kilts — required! Just bring your sense of humour and a good appetite. RSVP or questions:

ingomail@ymail.com

Highland Music Nights

Second Saturday of each month | 7:00 pm | Caleb Pike Heritage Park Next dates:

- March 14 **Los Gringos Locos**
- April 11 **Daniel Cook and the Radiators**
- May 9 **Harmonic Waves**

Info contact: zhinoos219@gmail.com



Highlands Broom Bash

Cut Broom in Bloom
BroomBusters.org

Join us!

ALL OF MAY

Cut Broom in bloom. Don't pull.

Deliver your cut broom to the field behind the
Community Garden off Finlayson Arm Rd.

Drop off open every Saturday in May

from 8-1pm

Contact Paul: 250-478-7885



Come, meet your neighbours & get wonderful local goods & produce!

Sunday 10am - 1pm
June 14 / July 12 / August 9

Enjoy locally made & grown vegetables, baking, preserves, woodwork, cards, garden sculptures, art, handmade candles, crochet, eggs, & much, much more!!

Caleb Pike Heritage Park
1589 Millstream Rd

Brought to you by the Highland Heritage Park Society (HHPS)
and the Highlands District Community Association (HDCA)

Highlands District Community Association AGM & Bear-Proofing Talk

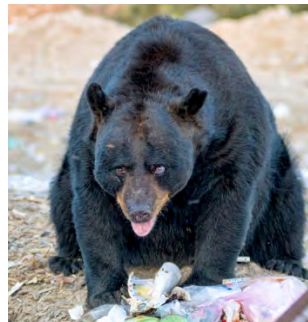
April 12 | 7:00 pm | Highland Heritage Park. Meet your neighbours, learn what your Community Association does for you, and hear from local residents about practical ways to bear-proof your home.

If you've considered electric fencing, this is a great opportunity to learn helpful tips. The AGM will be brief — and we're always happy to welcome new volunteers.

Highlands Community Garden Update

Every year a cold snap in February seems to come around. But the days are stretching longer and we're looking forward to warmer weather. Those of us who had overwintering plants have been enjoying cold-hardy greens like kale and others who planted garlic in the late autumn are seeing leaf blades boldly rising up from the cold soil.

Our first work party this year focused on pruning the trees in the orchard. And a few weeks ago, a large pile of Garry Oak leaves were offered to our community so a group of us headed out with trucks, bins and pitchforks to bring back the rich organic material to build up the soil for the future native plant species garden.



UPDATE: Community Hall Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The new EV chargers are expected to be installed over the next month or so.



Stay connected to your District through:

- The District of Highlands Website <https://www.highlands.ca/>
- Our official Facebook Page
- The Alertable App for real-time updates <https://alertable.ca/signup/index.html?site=BC7B>

Mayor Ken Williams
kwilliams@highlands.ca
250-882-5481

Councillor Leslie Anderson
leslie.corvidconsulting@gmail.com
778-350-8180

Councillor Ann Baird
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Councillor Karel Roessingh
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Councillor Rose Stanton
rose26@telus.net
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Fire Chief Ford
firechief@highlands.ca
250-920-6970

Municipal Office
info@highlands.ca
250-474-1773

CRD Animal Control
250-478-0624

CRD Bylaw Enforcement
250-474-3351

CRD Parks
250-478-3344

Wildlife Information
1-800-663-9453

Upcoming Council Meetings

March 16 – Regular Council
March 23 – Committee of the Whole
April 7 – Regular Council
April 13 – Committee of the Whole
April 20 – Regular Council
May 4 – Regular Council
May 19 – Regular Council
June 1 – Regular Council
June 15 – Regular Council