

JUNE 2013

# Community Report

*Dear West Vancouver Resident:*

*Spring is here, and the season heightens our awareness of the natural world around us. How can citizens of West Vancouver live in a more sustainable way? There is no single, simple answer: sustainable living is the sum of dozens of small and not-so-small decisions we make every day about consumption, conservation and waste.*

*And how can your municipal government help you live more sustainably? The District of West Vancouver is developing many programs and policies that promote sustainability and environmental responsibility. This report highlights programs, services and policies in effect or under development that enable citizens, families, businesses and community groups to live and work in a greener way.*

*See inside to learn more about what we're doing and how you can help to enhance this beautiful corner of the world that is West Vancouver, and the world beyond. Together we are working toward a sustainable and vibrant municipality now and for the future.*

westvancouver



*West Van's mountain slopes are symbolic of our community.*

## Upper Lands Working Group to guide review of planning policies for Upper Lands

The forest-carpeted slopes of Hollyburn Mountain in West Vancouver, also known as the Upper Lands, are symbolic of our beautiful coastal mountain landscape and natural ecosystems. They have also long been the focus of interest due to the important role they play in defining our community through the environmental and recreational values they exemplify.

It's not a small area. Spanning 6,265 acres (2,535 hectares), the undeveloped Upper Lands are bordered on the south by the Upper Levels Highway, on the east by the Greater Vancouver Regional District Capilano Watershed, on the west by the Sea to Sky Highway and on the north by Cypress Provincial Park and watershed lands.

In October 2012, the District of West Vancouver appointed a group of West Vancouver residents to the Upper Lands Study Review Working Group with the purpose of reviewing the 2001 Upper Lands Report and the Official Community Plan and determining if the goals and policy direction of those documents are still sufficiently robust to meet the District's land use goals for the Upper lands.

A key component of the Working Group's efforts will be the review of existing information regarding the Upper Lands and the engagement of the public and key stakeholders to identify the relevant values of the Upper Lands and the community's priorities for this area. Based upon this review and the engagement, the Working Group will make recommendations to the District of West Vancouver Council regarding the Official Community Plan's Upper Lands policies and, if appropriate, identify potential amendments to the OCP, District bylaws and programs. Further details on the Working Group, their terms of reference and background information can be obtained from the Working Group's web page. See address below.

A full public engagement program is planned for the fall to secure public input and opinion of the Districts policies regarding our valued upper lands. For more information or to provide input, please send a message to the Upper Lands Study Review Working Group at [westvancouver.ca/ulsrwg](http://westvancouver.ca/ulsrwg).

# Invasive Plants Working Group to stem a growing problem

West Vancouver is, unfortunately, an adopted home to a number of invasive plants. As non-native species, invasive plants aren't subject to the natural predators and pathogens that normally keep their populations under control in their countries of origin. Invasive plants establish themselves quickly and easily, destroying food sources and taking over important habitats for native plants and animals.

How do they get here? One source of invasive plants is dumping of green waste in parks, creeks and on the road side. Some people do this with the mistaken belief that "it's all green." But once those plants take root, they take off. Two species of concern are Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed. Giant Hogweed can pose a serious risk to human health, and Japanese Knotweed spreads swiftly, able to grow a new plant from a fragment of stem.

Earlier this year, Council established an Invasive Plants Working Group to develop a five-year strategy to manage and control invasive plants in West Vancouver.

The group's work will:

- form the basis of an Invasive Plant Species Strategy and provide recommendations to Council by the end of 2013
- guide public consultation for an Invasive Plant Species Strategy
- create engagement and educational opportunities for the public
- be used to create communications and educational materials that focus on prevention, control and rehabilitation.

Several information sessions took place in April and May. To find out about upcoming working group sessions visit [westvancouver.ca](http://westvancouver.ca), or learn more about invasive plants at [westvancouver.ca/invasiveplants](http://westvancouver.ca/invasiveplants).

*Left: If you see Knotweed, don't disturb it. If you do, you'll probably spread it. Call for professional help.  
Right: The Giant Hogweed's sap causes a serious skin reaction that may cause redness, swelling, heat and irritation.*



# New data! More residents using their Green Can, reducing garbage as biweekly garbage pick-up begins

New data released in April show that West Vancouver residents are adopting the District's Green Can Program, diverting food scraps into their Green Cans for weekly pick-up and lowering their garbage volumes.

Since the Green Can Program was launched in May 2012, West Vancouver's garbage diversion rate—the percentage of waste that is diverted from landfills—has climbed to 62 per cent. Since 2009, our diversion rate had been stalled at 58 per cent, even with the success of the Blue Box recycling system for newspapers, mixed paper and mixed containers. New tonnage data also reveal the amount of combined organics collected (food waste and yard trimmings) has exceeded the amount of garbage collected, for the first time ever.

We are now one month into the District of West Vancouver's move into the new era of biweekly garbage pick-up from homes. Garbage is collected every other week and there is a new limit of six yard trimmings items (including Green Can). Weekly collection continues for recycling, Green Cans and yard trimmings.

The District of West Vancouver will lead the North Shore in reaching regional diversion targets of 70 per cent by 2015, and remain one of the most efficient and cost effective Solid Waste services in the region. Waste reduction is important environmentally, and financially. Service adjustments are part of our on-going efforts to manage and reduce waste, and will help to avoid future service charge increases for residents.

## Garbage and Yard Trimmings Limits

- two garbage cans per collection day (totalling 154 litres)
- a tag is required to remove more than 154 litres of garbage per collection day (one tag for each extra can or bag)
- purchase tags for \$6 each at the West Vancouver Community Centre, Gleneagles Community Centre and Municipal Hall
- new limit on yard trimmings is six cans, bags, or bundles per week (including Green Can).

## Curbside Pick-up Times

- set your garbage, recycling, yard trimmings and Green Can out in the morning of collection day no earlier than 5 a.m. (but not the night before)
- service can begin as early as 7:30 a.m. depending upon your location and collection schedules can change without notice.

For more information about service adjustments, visit to [westvancouver.ca/garbage](http://westvancouver.ca/garbage) or refer to your new 2013 Recycling & Garbage Collection Schedule.



Recycling, Green Cans and yard trimmings are collected **weekly**.

Garbage is collected **every other week**.



*Top Left: Mayor Michael Smith and children cut the ribbon at the official opening of the Memorial Park Centennial Rearing Pond. Clockwise: Salmon fry are released into McDonald Creek as part of the annual Adopt-a-Fish event.*

## Kids get fun lesson in salmon, trout ecosystems at rearing pond

Constructed in 2012, the new rearing pond is a Centennial initiative and partnership between West Vancouver Streamkeepers, Pacific Salmon Foundation, the District of West Vancouver and dozens of organizational and individual donors.

The new pond is designed to sustain aquatic life, even during storms and droughts, by providing a restful habitat, consistent water flow, food and protection for juvenile Coho salmon, Cutthroat trout and the insects on which they feed.

Visitors to the Memorial Park Centennial Rearing Pond will get a better understanding of why stream conservation is important and how the health of our ecosystems is integral to the lifecycle of Coho salmon and Cutthroat trout.

Project partners look forward to the arrival of Coho fry, which emerge from the gravel in McDonald Creek and reside there for a year until they grow into salmon smolts. In spring, they migrate to the ocean, then return 18 months later to spawn in McDonald Creek. Juvenile Coho are brown in colour, hard to see and tend to form schools. Cutthroat trout are now visible in the rearing pond. They're solitary fish, black and tend to dart from cover to feed.

Learn more about the Memorial Park Centennial Rearing Pond at [westvancouverstreamkeepers.ca](http://westvancouverstreamkeepers.ca).



## Foreshore program lets nature do heavy lifting to protect, restore shoreline habitat and beaches

The District of West Vancouver's Foreshore Habitat Restoration Program is now undertaking work between Ambleside and Dundarave to preserve and enhance the waterfront and foreshore.

The work involves large boulders, being placed below the low tide zone (sub-tidal) and between the high and low tide (inter-tidal) zones to create reefs, helping to retain the supply of sediment to the foreshore and reduce the impact of waves and currents—in other words, we're doing heavy lifting now so that nature can do the heavy lifting going forward. This season's work near Dundarave will continue until fall 2013.

The enhanced foreshore will restore marine habitat both under the water and on the shoreline. It will also protect and enhance waterfront infrastructure and its natural beauty. The entire project will take place over several years. All work is being carried out with the direction of certified professionals and appropriate government approvals.

The District's Shoreline Protection Plan (SPP), approved by Council last year, is a long-term commitment for the protection and restoration of West Vancouver's treasured waterfront. Marine life will return in the initial 18 to 24 months and increase over the years. Beach development relies on natural effects of upland sediment runoff and ocean current to create new fine grain accumulations in a three- to five-year time frame.

The SPP relies on continuing collaboration between the public and private sectors, community volunteers such as the West Vancouver Shoreline Protection Society (WVSPS), private citizens and the development community. West Vancouver gratefully acknowledges the generous cooperation of British Pacific Properties and Onni Group in donating the surplus boulders essential for undertaking the shoreline work. The District also recognizes the cooperation of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as well as Transport Canada.

The foreshore work is an important part of the District's adaptation strategy for climate change. With growing emissions of greenhouse gases, the average global temperature is expected to increase, causing drier summers, wetter winters and more frequent extreme weather events, much like the community witnessed during the storm surge of December 2012. With global temperatures increasing, snow and glacial melt will lead to rising sea-levels which will impact the waterfront and coastal infrastructure. As the District works with nature to build up the West Vancouver foreshore, wave energy will be inhibited as the marine and shoreline natural habitat is restored over time.

By working with nature, the District's Foreshore Habitat Restoration Program is designed to encourage the growth of indigenous wildlife while protecting foreshore infrastructure and reducing maintenance costs.

The West Vancouver Engineering Advisory Committee's (EAC) *Long-Term Shoreline Planning Framework* was published in 2005, the same year that the WVSPS was created. These events were the catalyst to act on

Large boulders are placed below the low tide zone (sub-tidal) and within the high and low tide (inter-tidal) zones to create reefs, helping to retain the supply of sediment to the foreshore and reduce the impact of waves and currents.



over 30 years of research to set up a workable, cost effective task list to initiate the process of restoring one of the District's greatest assets—its natural beaches. The SPP is a living document designed to respond to the needs of the shoreline, directing available resources, such as funds and no-cost materials, and be opportunistic to direct the greatest benefit to the foreshore.

The first actions of the SPP were the creation of nine municipally-funded pilot projects located between the Capilano Groyne and Navy Jack Point. Each project involved an array of coastal engineering and habitat enhancement strategies to restore sites to a more natural state and provide self sustaining *soft* shoreline protection measures.

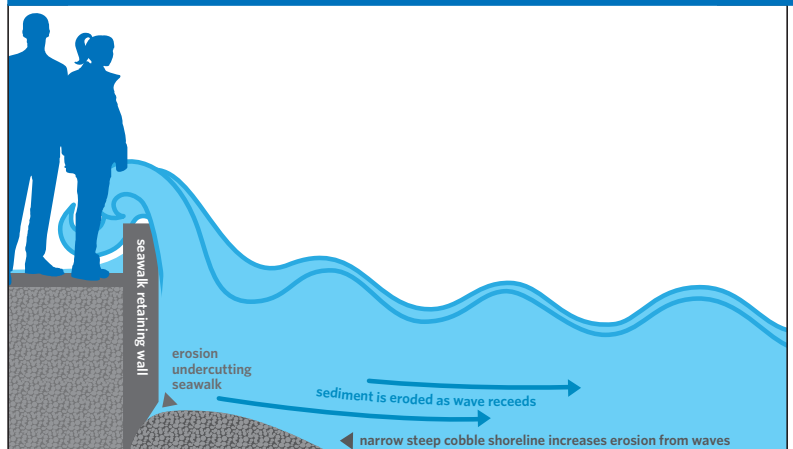
The benefits are:

- reduced wave energy
- more balanced sediment transport mechanisms
- increased riparian, inter-tidal and sub-tidal biodiversity
- improved creek access for salmon and spawning species
- reestablishment of functioning surf smelt habitat
- increased public access through the installation of bridges and near-shore pathways
- improved shoreline stability and high beach habitat through the accumulation of large woody debris and organic material.

The success of the pilot projects paved the way for five privately sponsored projects. Private stakeholder participation in the shoreline protection works demonstrates the potential for a more sustainable approach for the entire 30 kms of West Vancouver's privately and publicly owned waterfront. Private works have resulted in more than \$3 million in shoreline restoration work between Dundarave and Horseshoe Bay.

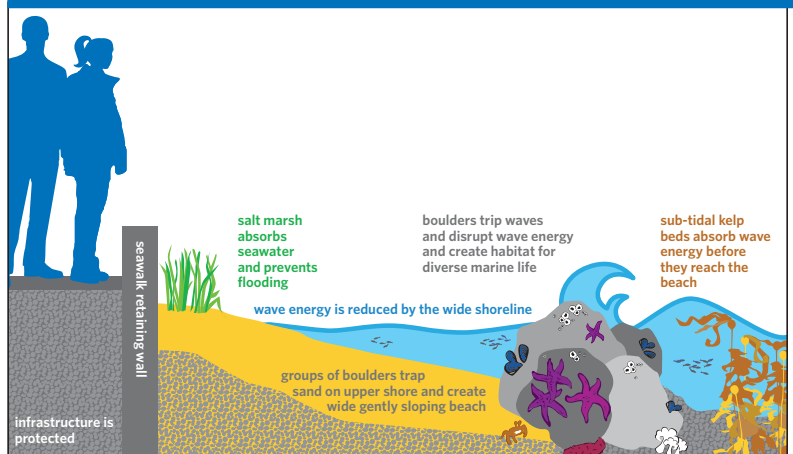
To learn more about foreshore work on West Vancouver's waterfront, visit [westvancouver.ca/foreshore](http://westvancouver.ca/foreshore).

## EXISTING SHORELINE CONDITIONS



Decades ago, the waterfront area and upland areas were blanketed with thick vegetation that absorbed rainfall and inhibited erosion. A vast network of creeks and streams carried sediments from the mountains to the waterfront, while waves and currents redistributed material along the shoreline. Today, piers, wharves and other structures block the natural movement of sediments along the shoreline, resulting in narrowing beaches.

## RESTORED SHORELINE HABITAT



Once restored, the enhanced foreshore will restore marine habitat both under the water and on the shoreline. It will also protect the waterfront infrastructure and enhance its natural beauty.

# John Lawson Park Playground Upgrade



## John Lawson Park Playground Redevelopment Plan

FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT IS PROVIDED BY

The new playground will be inspired by nature and its waterfront location.

## Upgraded John Lawson Park will let kids make a splash

John Lawson Park playground is under construction but the park is open for play! Pack a picnic and watch the construction from the deck at Lawson Creek Studios. Bring a ball, a kite or some bubbles and play on the grass or search for treasures on the beach. Construction should be completed by August 2013.

When complete, the new and improved John Lawson playground will be a significant upgrade with its creative concept designed to stimulate learning and play opportunities for both younger and older children. The District's combined budget for the playground and water play area is \$800,000, including community contributions of \$169,000 and a contribution of \$244,200 provided by Western Economic Diversification Canada, a department of the Government of Canada.

Learn more about John Lawson Park Playground, and get some suggestions for other fun things to do this summer while the playground is under construction. Visit [westvancouver.ca/jlp](http://westvancouver.ca/jlp).





## John Richardson Park revitalization underway

Revitalization of John Richardson Park is underway with completion targeted for early summer 2013.

The park occupies a triangular green space where Fulton Avenue meets Marine Drive, near 22nd Street, and to the west of the new development of the Westerleigh Retirement Residence.

The park will be following the preliminary design plans developed after community consultation in 2010. Minor modifications are required due to a review of site conditions, including the removal of

some small trees that are in poor health and several large shrubs entangled with invasive plants.

These plants will be replaced with healthier native species to help maintain a thriving green space. The small retaining wall on the Marine Drive side will also be replaced with a gentle slope and vegetation, which will provide a landscaped setting for a new sidewalk parallel to Marine Drive.

To learn more, view design plans or contact us, visit [westvancouver.ca/jrp](http://westvancouver.ca/jrp) or call 604-925- PARK (7275).



*Residents will enjoy improvements to this area before the end of summer.*



## Are coach houses the right fit for West Vancouver?

Coach houses are well-known in Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver and Kelowna, but are they the right fit for West Vancouver? West Vancouver's Housing Action Plan calls for an examination of coach houses as one option to support greater housing diversity.

The District receives regular inquiries from residents wishing to build a coach house on their properties, because they see it as an opportunity to:

- downsize into a smaller housing unit on their own property
- provide accommodation for an elderly parent, adult child or an on-site caregiver
- design a custom housing unit for a family member with special needs or limited mobility
- create a detached secondary suite to maintain the privacy of the principal dwelling unit.

The District is currently engaging the community in a dialogue on whether coach houses could provide an appropriate housing option for our residents, and to discuss specific questions related to location, size, design and tenure. Staff will report to Council in July 2013 on the results of this engagement program, and will seek Council direction to draft implementing bylaws.

To find out more about West Vancouver's coach house examination, visit [westvancouver.ca/housing](http://westvancouver.ca/housing).

*A coach house is a detached dwelling unit, which is accessory to, and smaller than a primary dwelling on a residential lot, and may be attached to a garage.*



## Electric vehicle (EV) drivers get charged up at District community centres

West Vancouver and Gleneagles Community Centres offer EV charging stations at two parking spots in each location. A provincially funded program that will see over 400 EV stations installed in BC communities, including the other North Shore municipalities, sponsored this initiative.

How it works:

- Use your electronic access card to initiate charging. If you don't have a card, you can borrow one from the front desk at the Community Centre (in exchange for your driver's licence)
- Unlock the charging head using your access card
- Replace the head back into the station when charging is complete
- There's no charge for using West Vancouver charging stations (the cost of electricity to charge is about \$1.50)
- You can park for four hours maximum (*a full charge typically takes four hours*).

To learn more about EV public charging stations, visit [westvancouver.ca/eve](http://westvancouver.ca/eve).



Park at either community centre and get a full charge while you work out!

## Spirit Trail to connect North Shore communities

The Spirit Trail continues to grow across the North Shore. It won't be long until you'll be able to hike, bike, walk, run or skate from Ambleside to Lonsdale Quay. In 2012, West Vancouver completed a multi-use trail along Bridge Road and Welch Street connecting Ambleside eastward from 13th Street, through Park Royal, and the Capilano Reserve, to Whonoak Road and into North Vancouver. In the future, the connection over the Capilano River will be improved with a new pedestrian and cycling bridge.

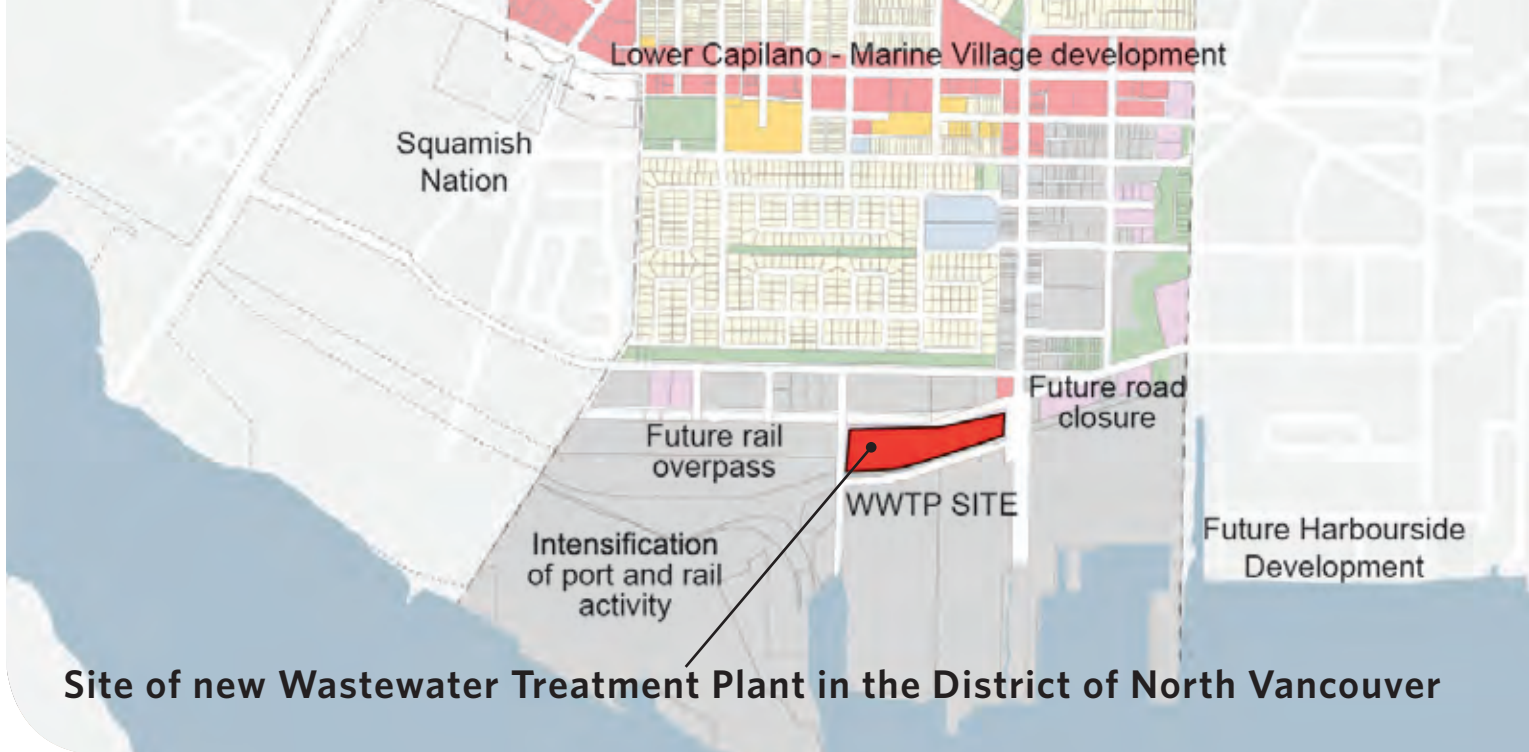
The City and District of North Vancouver have also been building new Spirit Trail segments, and the Spirit Trail is nearly complete between Ambleside Park and Lonsdale Quay.

Recently, West Vancouver has also been engaging with the public about a portion of the Spirit Trail for the western part of the District, between Eagle Harbour and Horseshoe Bay. The Spirit Trail is a cooperative effort with the Squamish Nation, North Shore municipalities, the provincial and federal governments and TransLink.

Explore the trail to see how it links the North Shore communities. For more information, please visit [westvancouver.ca/spirittrail](http://westvancouver.ca/spirittrail) or email us at [spirittrail@westvancouver.ca](mailto:spirittrail@westvancouver.ca).



Once completed, the Spirit Trail will cross the North Shore, from Horseshoe Bay to Deep Cove providing a greenway for pedestrians, cyclists, inline skaters and people with wheeled mobility aids.



## Planning continues for secondary waste-water treatment plant for North Shore

Every day, residents, businesses and industries of Metro Vancouver produce billions of litres of wastewater just by carrying out daily activities, such as using sinks, toilets, showers, washing machines and dishwashers.

For the last 50 years, the Lions Gate Plant has provided primary wastewater treatment to the North Shore municipalities, including the District of West Vancouver and the City of and District of North Vancouver. Today, new federal and provincial standards require all primary-level treatment plants be upgraded to secondary-level treatment.

To continue managing wastewater safely and effectively, Metro Vancouver has partnered with the three municipalities and First Nations to build the new Lions Gate Secondary Wastewater Treatment Plant on the North Shore.

Secondary wastewater treatment decreases the environmental impact of wastewater, accommodates the increasing size of our communities and provides sustainable commodities to the North Shore. A primary treatment plant can remove 40 to 60 per cent of materials in wastewater that settle or float. At a secondary treatment plant, materials that have dissolved from the primary treated wastewater are further removed by a biological process that removes 90 per cent or more of these materials before being released back into the oceans and rivers.

A question yet to be answered is who will pay for the plant designed to meet new federally and provincially-mandated regulations. While the District generally supports the move towards secondary wastewater treatment, potential costs to West Vancouver taxpayers are worrisome. Unless senior governments can demonstrate an equitable system of sharing costs between municipalities, West Vancouver residents could see a major increase in their per capita regional sewer levy.

Staff, Council and residents have been involved in ongoing advisory committees, community forums, open houses and public meetings.

Learn more about upcoming public information sessions by visiting [metrovancover.org/lionsgate](https://metrovancover.org/lionsgate) or call the Metro Vancouver Information Centre at 604-432-6200 or email [icentre@metrovancover.org](mailto:icentre@metrovancover.org).

## New Manager of Environment and Sustainability sharpens District focus on stewardship of natural assets

The District of West Vancouver filled the vacant position of Manager of Environment and Sustainability in May when Sandra Bicego joined the District's management team.

Sandra brings graduate and legal degrees in environmental stewardship to her ongoing work in the field of sustainability. For the District, Sandra's skill-set will translate to a more caring and careful focus on our terrestrial and marine environments and streams. This will include deepening West Vancouver's shoreline protection practices and championing the broader environmental interests represented by diligent volunteers across the community.

As a strategic planner and public engagement specialist, Sandra has fifteen years' experience working on environmental and natural resource issues. She holds an environmental law degree from the University of Western Australia and a master's degree in sustainability planning from UBC. Sandra has worked for Dovetail Consulting and was also the principal of PacificaBlue Consulting where she focused on land use and marine planning with government and non-governmental organizations for several years. Sandra joins the District from Metro Vancouver, where she managed public engagement on solid and liquid waste and air quality planning.



*Sandra Bicego will lead the District's efforts to capture the community's special regard for the environment and our progressive movement toward a sustainable future*

Join us August 2-11 for the 2013 Harmony Arts Festival, presented by Odlum Brown.



### Got the Lions Gate Bridge blues? Take a Blue Bus!

Next time you're stuck in traffic heading over the Lions Gate, take note of those Blue Buses whizzing past your crawling car. Taking public transit is environmentally responsible AND it's an efficient way to get from West Vancouver to Vancouver (and back), especially when the Lions Gate Bridge is congested. Buses have priority lanes and can bypass heavy traffic. You can get across the bridge to downtown on the Blue Bus much quicker than you can by car—and beat those Lions Gate blues.