

Challengers aim to unseat director in Area B

By Sarah Simpson, Citizen November 2, 2011

PROTECTING WATERSHED KEY FOR FRASER

Dr. Bruce Fraser wants to add the title of Area B's regional director to his ever-expanding resume. The Shawnigan Lake ecologist has been a professor, a college president (Selkirk and Malaspina Colleges), an employee with the Ministry of Education, and has spent 17 years as a consultant on community, education, and economic development.

"I've worked in about 20 different countries around the world," he said last week. "Wherever I've lived, all my life, I've always paid my dues to the community I lived in."

Fraser most recently retired from his six years as chair of the BC Forest Practices Board and it was during that time he became familiar with the issues related to logging in the Shawnigan Lake area and throughout the province.

"It's a very difficult issue," he said. "So great a portion of the whole regional district is in private forestlands. It's hard to talk about managing the land for conservation purposes and watershed purposes and development purposes without looking at the huge proportion of the area that's in private forest," he said.

"And you don't want to cut off your nose to spite your face. You want an active forestry community and you want jobs and industrial activity but you also want it to be kindly to your watershed and that requires pretty careful management."

Living in an off-grid cabin on an island in the middle of Shawnigan Lake for four years made Fraser personally aware of what was going on in the watershed.

Now a member of the CVRD's environment commission and the Cowichan Water Board, he's already working on improvements.

"I've gotten to know some of the issues and how to tackle them and I thought, well, maybe it's my turn to do that job, so I threw my hat in," said the candidate.

Sitting still doesn't sound like a very interesting option for Fraser. "I still have lots of energy left and I thought, what better to do than to work in your own community, right close to home," he said.

"That's the whole intent - to put my life experience to work locally."

Fraser believes firmly in ideas of re-localization and food self-sufficiency and all the things that are the antidotes to globalization.

"I think that's where a lot of the future energy has to go - into building the strength and resilience into our own local community," he said.

Visit www.fraserforshawnigan.ca for more information on this candidate.