

Earth Week and Climate Action By Mayor Boot

Happy Earth Day, Summerland!

Earth Day is observed by more than 1 billion people each year from 190+ countries. It is a day of action to change human behaviour and create global, national and local policy changes. First observed by Americans in 1970, the fight for a clean environment continues with increasing urgency, as the ravages of climate change become more and more apparent every day.

In Summerland, we celebrate more than Earth Day—we celebrate Earth Week. This year, the 15th annual, Summerland's Earth Week Celebration runs from April 19 – 25 and is full of COVID-friendly activities for all ages.

Details are on the District of Summerland webpage: www.summerland.ca/earthweek. Highlights include:

Earth Week Family Bingo (All week): Complete as many Bingo items as possible on the Earth Week Bingo Card and be entered to win great prizes! You can download your bingo card beginning April 19, or drop by the Summerland Aquatic Centre for a paper version.

Earth Week Film Series (All week): Award-winning films available to stream from the comfort of your own home.

Clean Air Partnership Webinar (April 21, 11am): Summerland will be featured in this webinar exploring how local governments can leverage green power to benefit their communities.

Community Planting Days (April 23 and 25, 10am to 1pm): Plant native trees and shrubs to create a dryland, natural habitat around the perimeter of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

One-Day Recycling Depot (April 24, 8am to 3pm): Bring your glass jars/non-refundable bottles, styrofoam, plastic bags and overwrap, other flexible plastic packaging, residential batteries and lightbulbs, electronics, TV's and small appliances to the Summerland Arena Recycling Compound and help us keep recyclables out of our landfill.

Electric vehicle (EV) Education (any time) EV ownership is rising in B.C. and all levels of government are supporting this clean-energy technology as drivers choose to go electric for affordability, lifestyle, and reducing their carbon footprint.

Visit www.summerland.ca/evcharging to learn about driving an electric vehicle, Summerland's EV charging network, read stories from local EV vehicle owners, and much more.

Well beyond a single week each year, Council and staff are committed to climate action.

The first Climate Action Plan was created in 2011 and, in 2016, Council made the decision to hire a full-time Sustainability/Alternative Energy Coordinator who advances climate action initiatives and dedicated 0.001% of annual operating expenses to greenhouse gas emissions reductions projects.

The Coordinator's work falls under three themes of Council's 2019-2022 Strategic Priorities: Infrastructure Investment, Community Resilience and Alternative Energy. Some initiatives include:

- Completed Summerland's [Community Energy & Emissions Reduction Plan](#) (February 2020) and [Corporate Energy & Emissions Management Plan](#) (March 2021), following consultation with key stakeholders, staff, community members, Council, and Simon Fraser University's Adaptation to Climate Change Team. The Community Energy Association assisted in developing the plans; the work was funded by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Fortis BC.
- Signed on to the BC Climate Action Charter and, in 2018, recognized as a Level 3 (of four Levels) Climate Leader.

As one of only five municipalities in the province that own their electric utility, Summerland is uniquely positioned to be able to generate power within the District.

- Partnered in 2018 with the Solar Now organization to install solar arrays on the Arts and Cultural Centre and municipal hall. Thanks to generous matching funding from the North Growth Foundation, these buildings will have a combined total of over 22 kW of solar arrays, producing almost 30,000 kWh of power each year.
- Modernized the Distributed Generation Resources Interconnection Program ("net-metering") that provides residents and businesses with tools to maximize their investment in renewable energy.
- Work continues on the Integrated Solar Project—expected to be fully operational late in 2023.

If you wish to receive updates on Summerland's climate action initiatives, please email climate.action@summerland.ca to have your name added to the mailing list.