

Environment Summary

Q #1

There's a lot of information about the environment floating around the community – some negative, some positive, some neutral – and the average person sees it all as wallpaper. People have become immune to it; they don't see function there is for them as an individual. The perception is that there are interest groups taking care of everything.

For example: there's a perception that the compost from the landfill can't be used for anything, although soil tests from the research centre and other places shows it is good for lawns.

Also, there's misunderstanding over what can and cannot be put out for recycling; there are different rules in every province and it creates confusion.

Everyone has garbage; it affects everybody. In the Lower Mainland, garbage trucks run on natural gas, which reduces the carbon footprint.

Summerland should be working on ways to become carbon neutral; for example by developing an urban forest.

Earth Day/Week has been great for public awareness; we just need somebody at the schools to be receptive and more passionate about the event to get students involved at the community level.

While there is a lot of public participation during Earth Week, attention to the environment needs to become a habit for people. We need to identify how Earth Week activities can be followed through. Many groups come together to make Earth Day/Week a success but they then go their own way. We need these groups working together on a regular basis.

Local environment includes public art like sculptures in the park. For every development project, the budget should include a small portion for public art.

Parkland in Summerland is currently mediocre. Other than walking spaces, we need to improve the waterfront and complete the trail around Giant's Head Mountain.

QUOTE: "We could always use more green space. Kelowna is getting new parkland; are we?"

Many Summerland parks are not being used to their full potential. For example, the baseball park is only used for baseball. The Rodeo Grounds are not used as much as they used to be. The Rec department could encourage greater use of parks. There could be more tennis courts in the parks, or outdoor ball hockey rink or an outdoor basketball court. In the past, when the circus came to town, they would perform in the arena – why not in a big tent in a park?

Q #2

We should continue to build on our successes, like Earth Day/Week. This year, there were also activities down at the lake, showing riparian areas.

Meadowlark should have more Summerland events. Don Gayton's and David Gregory's tours are great, but there could also be a geological tour of Summerland, for example.

We should undertake community restoration projects, for example the daylighting of the stretch of Prairie Creek that runs underground through Dale Meadows. There's an opportunity to have the path run alongside the creek with signage about the restoration, which would aid public education.

The municipality or Arts Council could sponsor writing/painting/photography contests about nature.

We can take advantage of the ornamental gardens centennial and ask them to take an environmental focus, eg feature their xeriscaping and naturalistic landscaping.

Local people should be able to recognize the region's most important plant life – Ponderosa Pine, Saskatoons, blue bunch wheatgrass, sage bush. Needs public education, eg, through the chamber/municipal website, municipal newsletter.

Need to make ActionFest a greener event. A lot of people come and leave their garbage. Eg. There should be recycle bins in community parks.

There could be a brochure or workshops for all community groups on how to make your event green.

Q #3

We need people who are skilled in writing grant applications. (The ornamental gardens has someone.) There needs to be Municipal staff who are good at getting grants.

A cultural/environmental co-ordinator position would be useful.

Also, just the ability to access information and resource people; even municipal committees like the climate action committee struggle with this.

The municipality could put up a small amount of money for competitions. For example, the Fall Fair had a competition for the transformation of your front lawn. (You had to provide before and after photos); this could be a part of Earth Week if the Fall Fair isn't resurrected.

Like Bottleneck Drive, there could be a self-guided tour of local environmental sites. Also one for heritage sites, etc. David Gregory is putting together a guide of stone houses of Summerland. All these should be made into brochures like the Bottleneck Drive brochure.