



**For immediate release
October 3, 2014**

SQUAMISH-LILLOOET REGIONAL DISTRICT ADOPTS AGRICULTURAL PLAN:

Cross-jurisdictional plan articulates vision for agriculture, charts course for the future

Lillooet, BC – The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Board adopted the SLRD Electoral Area B, District of Lillooet & St’at’imc Agricultural Plan at its meeting on October 1. As a Board-approved plan, the Agricultural Plan will inform future Official Community Plan (OCP) amendments in Electoral Area B and provide guidance for policy-making and zoning regulations. The adopted Agricultural Plan has been forwarded to the District of Lillooet and the St’at’imc Chiefs Council as they were key participants in the planning process.

“I am pleased that the SLRD Board supported full adoption of this plan,” said Jacquie Rasmussen, Chair of the Electoral Area B Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) and Working Group. “With the planning phase complete, it will be exciting to move into the implementation phase and start on action items that will continue to support and enhance agriculture in our region.”

The Agricultural Plan process was initiated in April 2013 with significant input and in-kind support provided by the Agricultural Plan Working Group, composed of the Area B AAC, as well as representatives from the SLRD, the District of Lillooet and St’at’imc communities. Throughout the planning process, valuable feedback from local citizens and agricultural stakeholders was gathered through extensive community engagement which included public open houses, surveys, technical workshops and face-to-face interviews.

“We would like to sincerely thank everyone who gave their time, expertise and passion for agriculture and for the region to help shape this plan,” said Mickey Macri, SLRD Electoral Area B Director. “We’re especially pleased by the involvement and support of the northern St’at’imc communities. This plan is a true collaborative effort.”

Having an adopted Agricultural Plan as a policy tool is an important step towards achieving the plan’s priorities, which include:

- Enhancing the agricultural market viability of the region;
- Developing supportive policies and regulations;
- Fostering collaboration between the St’at’imc and farming community;
- Promoting awareness and education;

- Supporting sustainable agricultural practices;
- Encouraging water conservation and climate change preparedness; and
- Creating an implementation plan.

“Preserving agricultural land and supporting farming are integral to the well-being of Area B residents, and to the region as a whole,” says Patricia Heintzman, SLRD Board Chair. “The adoption of this plan, along with the adoption of the Pemberton Valley Agricultural Area Plan in 2010, is an important step towards diversifying our regional economy, increasing our food security, and ultimately, creating a more sustainable and resilient region.”

Initiated and coordinated by the SLRD, the Agricultural Plan was developed by Upland Consulting and funded by the SLRD and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C., through programs it delivers on behalf of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture. Additional funding to enhance the engagement process was provided by the Northern Development Initiative Trust, through the Northern Economic Development and Initiatives (NEDI) Committee of the SLRD Board.

For more information about the planning process or to download a copy of the two-part Agricultural Plan, please visit www.slrd.bc.ca.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Claire Daniels
Planner
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 235
Email: cdaniels@slrd.bc.ca

Jeannette Nadon
Communications & Grants Coordinator
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 239
Email: jnadon@slrd.bc.ca