

5. AGRICULTURE

The maintenance of farmland and encouragement of farming operations in the Plan area is one of the primary objectives of this Plan. Lands that have been placed in the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), shown in Figure 4, have soils with high agricultural capability and are protected for future agricultural use. They are concentrated in the Robertson River valley, the lower reaches of the Sutton Creek watershed and the upper level bench lands immediately south of the Town of Lake Cowichan.

AGRICULTURE - OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Regional Board pertaining to Agriculture are:

- a) to maintain the agricultural land base and encourage agriculture,
- b) to prevent the development of agricultural land for non-agricultural uses which could preclude subsequent agricultural production,
- c) to minimize conflict between agricultural and non-agricultural activities, and
- d) to recognize and encourage the needs and activities of agricultural operations when considering the development of residential uses on adjacent lands.

AGRICULTURE - POLICIES

The policies of the Regional Board pertaining to Agriculture are as follows:

POLICY 5.1:

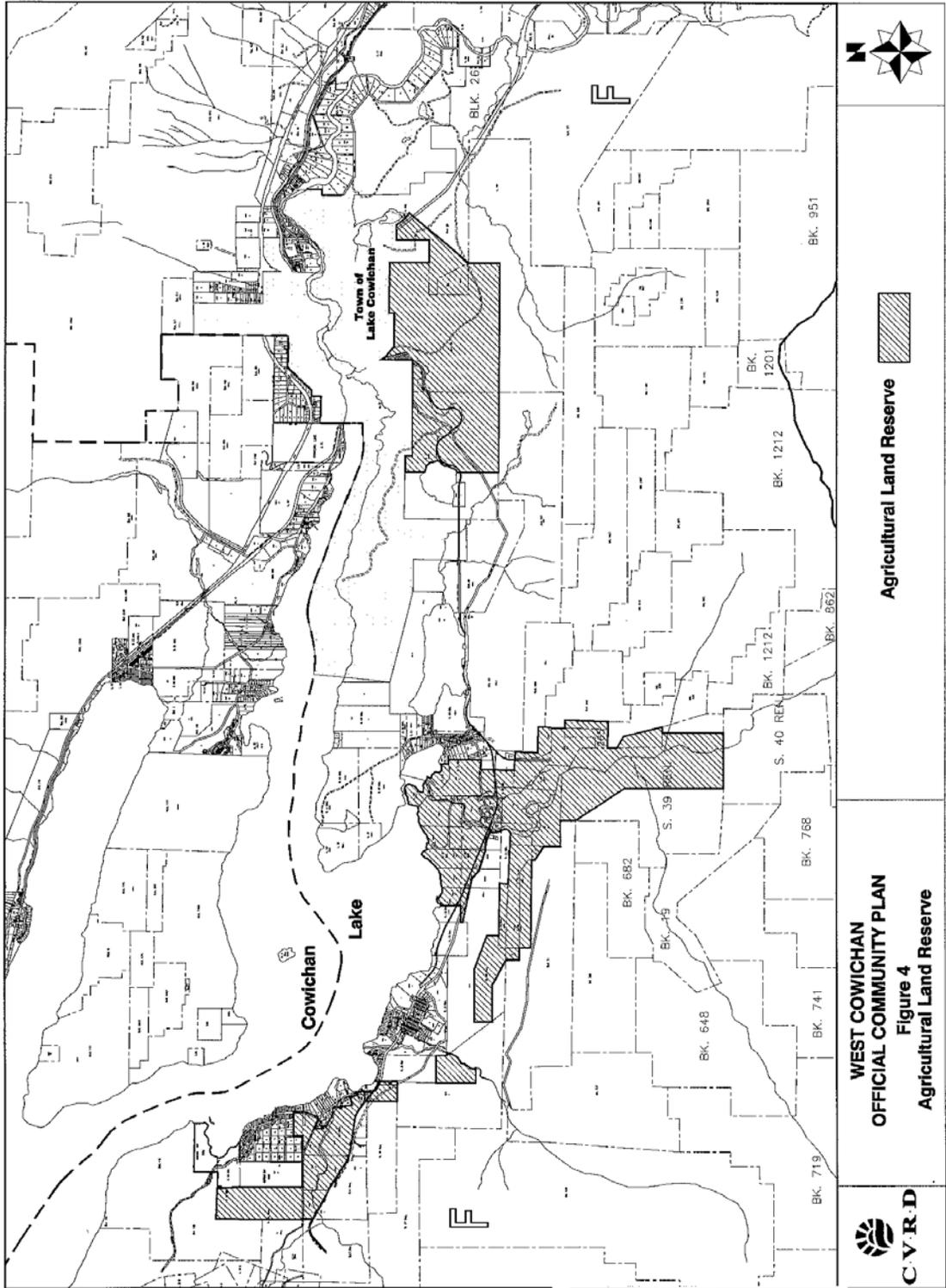
All lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) as well as other lands considered to be agricultural in character or supportive of agriculture shall be designated as Agricultural on the Plan Map.

POLICY 5.2:

Agricultural pursuits shall be given priority within the Agricultural designation, provided they adhere to the policies of this Plan, and any activity or form of development which could damage the agricultural potential of agricultural lands shall not be permitted.

POLICY 5.3:

All uses and subdivision of ALR land shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Agricultural Land Commission Act, regulations thereto, and orders of the Agricultural Land Commission. The subdivision of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve shall be discouraged where it would render the land uneconomical to maintain in agricultural use.



**WEST COWICHAN
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
Figure 4
Agricultural Land Reserve**

Agricultural Land Reserve

POLICY 5.4:

Lands designated as Agricultural shall have a minimum parcel size of 12 hectares, except in cases where the land is not in the ALR or the Agricultural Land Commission has authorized subdivision into smaller sized parcels, wherein the minimum parcel size shall be not less than 2 hectares.

POLICY 5.5:

In the event that land is excluded from the ALR, the land shall remain in the "Agricultural" designation unless and until the lands are re-designated by an Official Community Plan amendment.

POLICY 5.6:

Additional dwellings for farm help may be permitted on parcels designated as Agricultural provided that:

- a) the parcel has farm classification on BC Assessment Authority records,
- b) the parcel is used as a bona-fide farm,
- c) additional dwellings are located on low agricultural capability lands so as to not interfere with or alienate useable farm land, and
- d) the applicant demonstrates that additional dwelling(s) are necessary to accommodate bona-fide farm help in the farm operation, and that the farm help dwellings are critical to the overall operation of the farm. The primary consideration is whether the scale of the farm operation is large enough that permanent help is deemed necessary for:
 - i) reasons of security,
 - ii) regular feeding, watering and caring of livestock, or tending of equipment, or
 - iii) other agricultural activities which are required in the operation of the farm.

POLICY 5.7:

The zoning bylaw may permit one farmer operated agricultural outlet or produce stand per farm in the Agricultural designation.

POLICY 5.8:

The Regional Board supports the Farm Practices Protection Act and other legislation designed to protect agriculture.

POLICY 5.9:

Buffering, as required by the Agricultural Land Commission's "Landscape Buffer Specifications," and adequate arrangements for the disposal of storm and waste water to ensure that no negative impacts are caused on agricultural areas, is required on all parcels located adjacent to parcels designated as Agricultural.