Water Re-Use Technology Workshop

This past summer more than 70 people crowded into the Gabriola Agricultural Hall for a water re-use technology workshop hosted by the RDN’s Team Watersmart Program. The outstanding turnout demonstrates a keen public interest in this alternative method of water conservation. The Gabriola workshop was the first of several that Team WaterSmart plans to host within the RDN. By promoting awareness and supporting use of this technology, the RDN has the opportunity to be leaders in BC in terms of water conservation.

At the August 11 workshop, Ron Hartman of Hartman Land Design explained two systems – one that uses grey water to flush the toilet, and another that delivers rainwater from a rain barrel or cistern to a drip irrigation system. Hartman and Team WaterSmart stressed that while the safe use of grey water from showers or toilet flushing is beneficial, any use of grey water in the home must meet plumbing code requirements.

Outside use of grey water was not discussed at the session, but it is important to note that any outside use of grey water is regulated by the provincial sewage disposal regulations.

For more information about water re-use technology, visit www.teamwatersmart.ca or contact Team WaterSmart at 250-390-6560 or 1-877-607-4111.

Emergency Generator

The Joint Emergency Preparedness Program, a federal funding initiative, provided $8,584 towards the overall purchase and installation of a new generator on Gabriola Island. Installed at the Rollo Seniors Centre in the spring of 2009, the generator will allow Emergency Social Services volunteers to provide service to evacuees in most emergency situations.

The RDN has a License of Use Agreement with the Gabriola Senior Citizens Association, allowing the seniors centre to be used as an emergency reception centre if necessary.

Being prepared for an emergency is particularly important on Gabriola Island, where we face a number of challenges during emergency situations. Power goes out often in the winter, repairs take longer, and one main road circumventing the island can be problematic in adverse weather.

Emergency Social Services is always in need of volunteers, so please call Gabriola ESS Director Nancy Rowan at 250-247-8105 if you are interested in getting involved.

Toilet Rebate Incentive Program

Property owners in the Electoral Areas of the Regional District of Nanaimo are now eligible for a new toilet rebate incentive program offered through the RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program. The idea behind the incentive is to help property owners protect community water supplies for the future and reduce stress on septic systems and waste-water treatment systems.
Low flow toilets use just six litres of water per flush, and ultra low flow models use either six or three litres. Older toilets can use 13 litres or more per flush, so by taking advantage of the toilet rebate program a property owner could save up to 80,000 litres per year.

To qualify for the rebate, property owners must be within the Regional District of Nanaimo Electoral Areas A, B, C, E, F, G, or H. Eligible property owners can apply for up to two rebates per property. Low flow toilet upgrades are eligible for a $50 rebate, and dual flush upgrades are eligible for a $75 rebate. The low flow toilet sales receipt must be dated after October 28, 2009, and applicants must be replacing a toilet with a flushing capacity of 13 litres or more with a CSA Approved low flow or dual flush model. The toilet flush volume is usually printed on the inside of the tank, on the tank label, on the back of the bowl, or on the flush valve.

Application forms are available at the Regional District of Nanaimo office at 6300 Hammond Bay Road, or at www.rdnrebate.ca. Applications must include a sales receipt for new low flow toilets and a recycling receipt for the old toilet (From either the Nanaimo Recycling Exchange or the Church Road Transfer Station). For more information about the application process, contact RDN Water Services at 250-390-6560 or 250-954-3792 or email watersmart@rdn.bc.ca.

**Green’s Landing Wharf**

At the request of the RDN Board of Directors, RDN staff is now preparing a report on the costs and any other aspects that would be associated with taking over the operation and maintenance of a wharf at Green’s Landing. Green Wharf is important to Mudge Island residents in particular, as it allows them to access their homes and to travel back and forth to Gabriola. The wharf is also needed for ambulance access in the event of medical emergencies on Mudge.

**Low Season Camping Rates at Descanso Bay Regional Park**

If you have friends or family interested in camping on Gabriola, make sure to let them know about the Regional District of Nanaimo’s low-season camping rate at Descanso Bay Regional Park. Until mid-May, campers pay just $10 per site per night. The campground is open year-round and offers a wide variety of outdoor experiences and chances to enjoy nature. No reservation fees apply.

To inquire, call 250-247-8255 or visit the RDN web site at www.rdn.bc.ca.

**Team WaterSmart**

Team WaterSmart expanded region-wide in 2009 as part of Drinking Water and Watershed Protection, a new service in the RDN’s seven electoral areas.

We are fortunate to have this program available in all areas of the RDN.

Approved by referendum on November 15, 2008, Drinking Water and Watershed Protection is aimed at sustaining the regional water supply and protecting surface and groundwater sources. The RDN’s Drinking Water/Watershed Protection Coordinator is currently developing a working plan for 2010 with the RDN Water Services Department and the Drinking Water/Watershed Protection Advisory Committee.