Whiskey Creek Water Service Area

Upgrades are coming for the Whiskey Creek system following a successful petition by residents to have the utility operated by the Regional District. Capital improvements in 2011 of up to $85,000 will include a new control panel and alarms in the raw water pumping station, installation of water meters, and upgrading the alarm system for communications with the Regional District Water Services Department. Longer-term improvements over the next two to five years will include upgrades to the water reservoir and upgrades to the water distribution pumping station, at an estimated cost of $120,000.

Over the summer residents in 88 of 128 properties in the Whiskey Creek Water District submitted petitions to the RDN to acquire their water system after years of volunteer effort to maintain the aging infrastructure. Residents submitted a formal request in April for the RDN to take over the WCWD, and were asked to show majority support for the request through a petition process. In September following the petition the RDN Board approved the acquisition.

The Whiskey Creek water system was constructed in the 1970s, and supplies water from Crocker Creek, a tributary of Whiskey Creek. Prior to 2002 the system was owned and operated by the original developer of the Whiskey Creek subdivision. During this period it fell into disrepair and was issued a series of boil water advisories from the Ministry of Health. In 2002 residents formed the WCWD to assume control of the utility, but were unable to secure funding for much needed maintenance and upgrades.

With the RDN acquisition of the utility, residents will see increased costs to accommodate system management and upgrades. Fees will increase from $540 per property to a parcel tax of $710 to finance the upgrades, combined with an average annual user fee of approximately $210. Future upgrades to the system pending residents' approval and additional borrowing could include upgrades to pumping stations to provide emergency fire flows, water main upgrades, and installation of more fire hydrants.

The Whiskey Creek Water Service Area is now one of eight Water Local Service Areas owned and operated by the RDN.

Building Inspection Service Expansion

In June the Regional District Board approved the expansion of Building Inspection into parts of Areas A, C, F, and H not previously within the service. Phase one of the expansion took effect October 1 for new construction within the following land use designations: Village Centres; Urban Containment Boundaries; Rural Separation Boundaries (Area F only); Commercial, Industrial, Conservation, Public Management, Forestry, Agriculture, Industrial Mixed Use, Salvage & Wrecking, Institutional/Community, and Water Use lands; Comprehensive Development not specific to single family; and all newly subdivided lands regardless of zoning designation.

The final phase of the service expansion on April 1, 2011 will include new construction on all remaining properties, including land zoned for single family and duplex use.

The primary goal of Building Inspection is to ensure the health, safety, and protection of persons and property by ensuring that new construction and installations generally conform to relevant bylaws, the BC Building Code, and other applicable standards and regulations. Building Inspection also enables current and prospective owners to access records on construction.
history of their property, helps ensure consumer protection through warranty coverage, and confirms that all new construction meets applicable environmental standards and development permit regulations.

More information on Building Inspection services, and when to apply for a Building Permit, is available at www.rdn.bc.ca.

C.W. Young Side Channel
A salmon rearing channel situated largely within Englishman River Regional Park and Conservation Area (ERRPCA) is making a strong contribution to the local fishery. Recently released data collected in 2009 by Fisheries and Oceans Canada credits the 4.1 kilometre side channel for 42 per cent of the 85,467 coho that left the Englishman last year.

In spring 2009 researchers captured and marked juvenile coho in the C.W Young side channel, then caught a large sample of coho in the lower river for comparison. The resulting 42 per cent marked fish is the largest percentage ever credited to a constructed side channel habitat in the Englishman River.

The C.W. Young side channel in ERRPCA was originally constructed in 1992 and tripled in size in 2007. The side channel now covers 8.3 hectares on the northwest side of the river. Pre-expansion studies conducted from 1998 – 2005 showed the channel contributed between 7.7 and 22 per cent of coho entering the ocean.

As a flow-controlled man-made stream that diverges and later reconnects with the river approximately 5 kilometres from the estuary, the C.W. Young Channel provides juvenile salmon with year-round rearing habitat, as well as refuge during winter floods and summer low flow periods. Unlike other salmon, coho require one year in fresh water before they migrate out to sea.

Fisheries and Oceans is currently analyzing data from the 2010 coho count carried in the C.W. Young Side Channel.

The Green Bin Program
Local households are starting to send less waste to the landfill with the region-wide Green Bin Program now underway. The Regional District thanks all residents for making the transition to the new program, and your patience as new green bins, collection schedules, and Curbside Collection Guides have been delivered to more than 32,000 single family homes in all seven Electoral Areas, Qualicum Beach, Parksville, Lantzville, and Nanaimo. If your home now has a green bin and weekly food waste collection you may have seen that it can help reduce garbage disposal by about half.

All single family homes in Electoral Areas starting the Green Bin Program have new 15 month curbside collection schedules for food waste collection, garbage, and recycling. Comprehensive information on the Green Bin Program, such as acceptable materials for disposal, and tips for green bin storage, is included in your Curbside Collection Guide. You can also find the latest information on RDN garbage and recycling in the Guide.

More details on curbside collection, as well as recent changes to the recycling program, is also available at www.beyondcomposting.ca and www.rdn.bc.ca, or by calling 250-390-6560, 250-954-3792, or toll free 1-877-607-4111.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Our Communities
The need to address climate change is now officially recognized in the Electoral Area F Official Community Plan. In May the Regional District fulfilled one of its pledges as a signatory of the 2007 Climate Action Charter by adding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to the Area F OCP and five other OCPs for rural areas throughout the region. Area F is now committed to a 33 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2007 levels by 2020, and an 80 per cent reduction from 2007 levels by 2050. The RDN is one of 177 local governments throughout BC that have signed the Climate Action Charter, pledging also to achieve carbon neutral operations by 2012.

So how can local governments use community planning to help reverse climate change? The first step is to identify the main causes of climate change in our communities – the broad information we have tells us that carbon emissions from road transportation account for 60 per cent of local greenhouse gas emissions in the region, while building energy consumption is the second highest contributor. Our new OCP policies encourage more efficient local transport and building construction, compact communities, urban containment, the protection of forest land, and local food production.

The next priority for the RDN is to gather specific data on greenhouse gas emissions in each electoral area, and develop a Community Energy and Emissions Plan. Following the completion of the CEEP rural areas starting the Green Bin Program you may have seen that it can help reduce garbage disposal by about half.

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More information on greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in OCPs is available at www.rdn.bc.ca.