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## ELECTORAL AREA UPDATE

AREA 'B' | GABRIOLA & SURROUNDING ISLANDS

ISSUE 13 • SPRING 2012

### Water Budget Project

The RDN's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program recently embarked on a water budget project in order to gain a better understanding of our local water resources.



Director  
Howard Houle

This information will assist the RDN Board in making informed land use decisions that ensure we have enough water, now and in the future, for people and for the environment.

Ensuring a sufficient, safe

and sustainable supply of water requires an understanding of how much water is available, how much we are using, and how future land use and climate change will affect water resources and watershed health.

Much like a household budget that looks at expenses today and in the future, a water budget looks at how much water enters a watershed, how it is stored, how much is needed, and how much water leaves. It also considers how much water may be available for human uses after ensuring there is enough for natural processes.

The first phase of the Water Budget Project includes the development of a three-dimensional model that will show where various elements of the hydrologic cycle are located (such as soils, aquifers, streams, lakes), how much water they hold, and how water moves between these elements. It will also assess the

level of stress in each watershed, by identifying areas where the water that is taken out of the ground or rivers is close to the amount of water that is available in those watersheds. Areas that may be experiencing high or moderate stress will be prioritized for future data collection and more detailed investigation.

The Water Budget Project is divided into two main projects: the Gabriola, Mudge and DeCourcy Water Budget Project, and the Vancouver Island (RDN) Water Budget Project. Both are anticipated to be completed by the end of 2012.

*For more information about the Water Budget Project, call the Water & Utility Services Department at 250-390-6560 or visit [rdn.bc.ca](http://rdn.bc.ca) and click on Services, then on Drinking Water and Watershed Protection.*

### Rainwater Harvesting Incentive Program

After its success as a pilot program in 2011, the Rainwater Harvesting Incentive Program will now expand to all seven Electoral Areas and the four municipalities in the RDN.

The program applies to residential property owners installing or updating a rainwater harvesting system in existing or new homes, for a maximum of one rebate per property.

The installation of a rainwater harvesting system can receive up to **\$750 total rebate**.

Required Component:

- Cistern rated for potable use with storage capacity of 4,545L (1,000 gallons) and up

Up to \$450



### DRINKING WATER WATERSHED PROTECTION

Other eligible expenses:

- Downspout Transport Piping
- Debris Trap / Filter
- Expenses for items in "Tank Installation Checklist"
- Installation costs
- Plumbing inspection for indoor system

Up to \$300

The 2012 application process has two steps:

- 1) Applicants must complete a **pre-application form** describing the system to be installed, including "before" photos of the site. Pre-approved applicants will have funds set aside for them. Upon receiving written approval from the RDN, the applicant will have four months to complete the purchase and installation and submit their documents to receive the rebate.
- 2) The final **document submission form** must include:
  - a **sales receipt or invoice** marked PAID dated after July 27, 2011, indicating all the items applied to the rebate

## highlights

- \* Water Budget Project
- \* Rainwater Harvesting Incentive Program
- \* RDN Rebates and Incentives

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- **photo(s)** of the system installed (see form/website for specific requirements).
- The completed **Tank Installation Checklist** (included in the Document Submission Form).
- a copy of the **Building Permit and Inspection Document** from the appropriate Building Inspection Department - **only if** altering indoor plumbing or installing a new potable water line.

Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a maximum of \$10,000 of the total budget (\$30,000) to be allotted for any one Electoral Area/ municipality. The program will be reviewed at the end of September 2012 and funds may be reallocated beyond the maximum where necessary.

*Application forms and program information are available online at [www.rdnrebates.ca](http://www.rdnrebates.ca) starting May 1st, 2012.*

## RDN Rebates and Incentives

Through the **Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program** and the **Green Building Incentive Program** the RDN offers a variety of rebates to encourage home owners and owner-builders in the region to protect our watersheds by conserving water, reduce emissions by improving home energy efficiency, and invest in green building, renewable energy systems and low-impact development.

The previous article describes the rebate of up to \$750 provided to homeowners who purchase a 1,000 gallon (3,785 litre) cistern or larger for use in a rainwater harvesting system. For residents interested in learning more about rainwater harvesting, the RDN will be completing a Green Building Best Practices Guide on Rainwater Harvesting for homeowners later this year.

ACTION INCENTIVES	
ACTION	INCENTIVES
Woodstove Exchange	\$250
Home Energy Assessment	\$60 to \$200
Graded Site-Cut Timber	Up to \$250
Toilet Replacement	\$50 (Electoral Areas only)
Solar Hot Water System	\$250
Residential Electric Vehicle Charging Station	\$250
Rainwater Cistern	Up to \$750

  

CHECKLIST INCENTIVES	
Score	Incentive
55-74	\$500
75-89	\$750
90+	\$1,000

The Toilet Replacement program will continue this year, with the RDN providing up to two \$50 rebates to households in the region's Electoral Areas that replace a conventional toilet with a high efficiency or dual flush alternative.

The Green Building incentives that were available last year will remain, including the popular \$250 woodstove exchange incentive and the \$60 rebate for a home energy assessment. Incentives of up to \$200 will now be available to residents who complete a follow-up assessment that shows an improvement in home energy efficiency. Also new is a \$250 rebate for up to five home owners who install an electric vehicle charging station.

In addition to action-specific incentives, the RDN Sustainable Development Checklist and Guide serve as a valuable resource to homeowners and owner-builders interested in optimizing the performance of their building, while

minimizing its impact on the natural environment. The Checklist provides a comprehensive rating system for development projects, while the Guide offers information on green building practices. Residents who meet with the RDN's Sustainability Coordinator to review the Checklist and submit the completed Checklist with a Permit application are eligible for a \$50 incentive. Residents who achieve a high score on the Checklist are eligible for an additional incentive from \$500 to \$1000.

*All rebates and incentives are limited and provided on a first come, first served basis. For details on any of the RDN incentives, call 1-877-607-4111, or email [sustainability@rdn.bc.ca](mailto:sustainability@rdn.bc.ca).*

If you own or operate a business that provides products or services eligible for incentives, contact the RDN for assistance in getting the information you need.

If you are a resident with ideas for incentives that will conserve energy, reduce emissions, or result in greener, more sustainable homes in the region, let us know. We will consider your ideas as the program evolves in the future.

