

Perspectives

A REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO PUBLICATION

RDN Transit Update

RDN Transit has seen some big changes over the past few months. **In September, transit service increased by 5000 hours**, a new route numbering system was introduced and the new Rider's Guide now includes Transit Network Maps and on-street information to help riders understand directions, transit connections and information. There is also a **new express route** that serves Woodgrove Centre, Nanaimo North Town Centre, Country Club Centre, VIU and Downtown Nanaimo.

To find out more about the enhanced services, visit www.rdn.bc.ca/transit



Network Maps

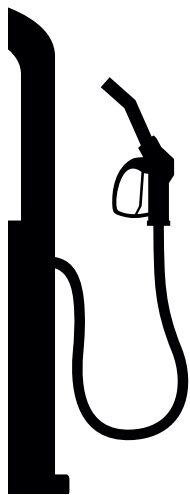
Agriculture Bylaw and Policy Update Project

Work continues on several projects supporting agriculture in the region. Last year, community feedback provided us with a list of obstacles to agriculture and ways to remove or reduce them. This year, staff visited local farmers' markets, hosted open houses and met with farmers and agricultural organizations to share this information and gather feedback on potential changes.



Bylaw amendments could include a new agricultural zone which would apply to ALR land; flexible minimum setback requirements for agricultural buildings; new general regulations for temporary sawmills, kennel facilities, and agricultural fencing; and new definitions related to farm uses. If the potential changes are supported by Area residents and the Board, the next step in the project would involve additional public consultation as part of the bylaw amendment process.

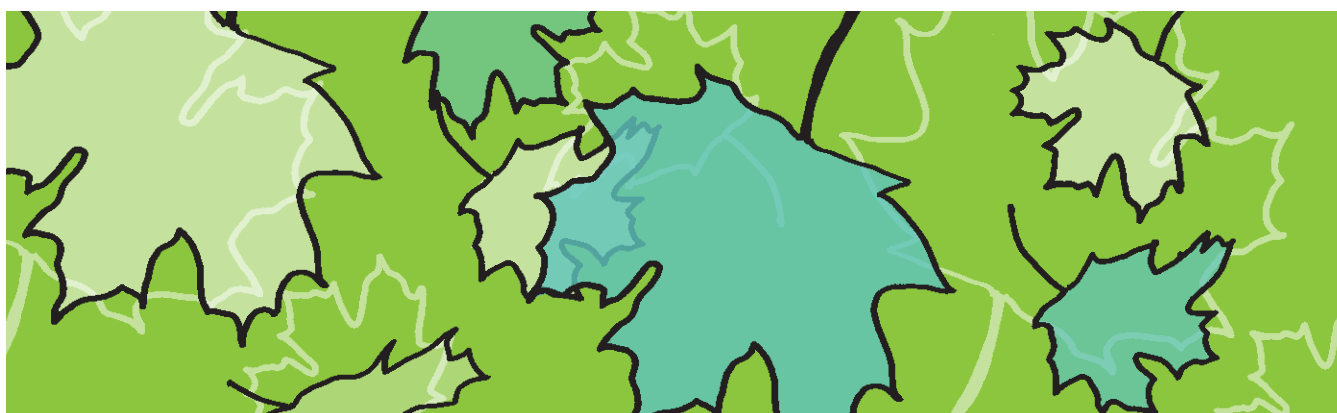
To learn more about the Project, visit www.growingourfuture.ca.



RDN Transit to Ditch Diesel

By January 2017, the entire RDN bus fleet will be running on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). The fleet is currently made up of 25 new CNG buses and 24 diesel buses nearing the end of their life cycle. A business case completed by B.C. Transit demonstrated a significant cost savings by making the switch to CNG and the RDN Board has voted to make that change. The switch will be cost-shared with B.C. Transit and Fortis B.C.

The diesel buses will be replaced by January 2017 making RDN Transit the first in Canada to be completely CNG. The benefits of switching to CNG buses include improved air quality through reduced greenhouse gas emissions, reduced particulate emissions, lower fuel costs, and quieter engines.



What's Inside:

- 2 CHANGES TO 9-1-1 SERVICE
CONSERVING OUR WATER RESOURCES
- 3 REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY UPDATE
STATE OF OUR STREAMS
- 4 ENGLISHMAN RIVER WATER SERVICE UPDATE
WASTEWATER UPGRADES AND EXPANSIONS

Changes to 9-1-1 Service

Emergency 9-1-1 calls from Central Vancouver Island are now being answered by E-Comm, the emergency communications centre located in Vancouver. Prior to November 17, this service was provided by the RCMP through a contract with the Central Island 9-1-1 system – a partnership between the City of Nanaimo, the Regional District of Nanaimo and Cowichan Valley Regional District.

What does this mean for me?

The change to E-Comm will have no impact on the public's experience when dialing 9-1-1. Calls are answered by E-Comm staff who quickly transfer the caller to the agency they

9 - 1 - 1



request. In the Central Island 9-1-1 partnership, calls will continue to be transferred by E-Comm to dispatch centres located in Nanaimo (fire), Courtenay (police) and Victoria (ambulance).

Why E-Comm? An independent study found that transferring the Primary Public-Safety Answer Point portion of 9-1-1 response would mean considerable cost savings for the Central Island partnership and provide access to additional staffing resources and the necessary expertise to satisfy current and future technical requirements for 9-1-1. E-Comm currently serves 23 other regional districts and communities across B.C., managing approximately 1.25 million 9-1-1 emergency calls each year.

Call for Volunteer Firefighters

All six RDN Volunteer Fire Department Societies regularly seek volunteers to **serve as firefighters** and in operational roles such as office administration and truck and equipment servicing. Anyone interested in volunteering is encouraged to contact their local Fire Department. RDN property taxes fund Volunteer Fire Departments in: Bow Horn Bay, Coombs-Hilliers, Dashwood, Errington, Extension and Nanoose Bay. *For more information about fire protection in the RDN, including contact information for all Fire Departments, visit www.rdn.bc.ca/fireprotection.*



Don't forget to make sure your address is visible on the road to emergency services.

EVERY DROP COUNTS

Conserving our Water Resources

This summer's drought and resulting watering restrictions in Water Service Areas gave residents the opportunity to get creative and show off their water conservation efforts.

We are happy to report that our weekly water champion contest was very popular. We received many nominations and gave out lots of "Saving Water" yard signs to recognize those going above and beyond to be water-smart during such a dry summer. Thank you all for participating in conservation efforts in your neighbourhoods.

What's in store for 2016?

The long-range forecast from Environment Canada indicates that El Nino will be influencing our climate this coming winter with another warmer and slightly drier than normal season ahead. The warmer winter temperatures could

mean another year of very low snowpack, which affects river levels and groundwater recharge in the spring. The drought we experienced this summer could very likely be repeated next summer as part of a longer-term trend.

What is the RDN doing to prepare?

The RDN has a comprehensive monitoring program in place to study current water resources and longer-term trends in our region. Our Drinking Water & Watershed Protection program has been a front-runner in water education, awareness, science, monitoring, and incentive programs since 2009. **We are committed to long-term protection of our water resources.**

The RDN has in place (and is working on implementing more) monitoring programs for:

- Groundwater Monitoring
- Surface Water Monitoring
- Climate Monitoring

Continuing public education and providing residents with resources and rebates to assist with conserving and protecting water is another focus of the RDN's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program and our Team WaterSmart outreach efforts.

What can residents do?

A Cultural Shift towards more efficient and conscious water use habits is necessary for the well-being of our communities over the long-term.

For more information including tips and tricks for saving water on your property, visit www.rdn.bc.ca/drought2015 and www.teamwatersmart.ca

Our Water Regions | Drinking Water & Watershed Protection Program | www.dwwp.ca



Fire Services Update

The Office of the Fire Commissioner recently updated the Structure Firefighters Competency and Training Playbook (Playbook) which establishes levels of service and related training standards for fire services across the province. In the RDN, there are 10 fire service areas and five independent improvement districts required to establish service levels in relation to the Playbook.



Full implementation of the Playbook is required by June 2016 and in order to reach that target, the RDN has engaged Dave Mitchell and Associates to meet with fire departments and provide recommendations on how the RDN can best support the various rural fire service areas and ensure implementation of the Playbook standards. The work will include consultation with Fire Chiefs, volunteers, Board members and RDN staff.

Regional Growth Strategy Update

The RDN continues to monitor progress towards the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy. **We are currently in Stage Five which includes monitoring, collection and analysis of data for the indicators, and finally, report preparation.**

A web-based reporting system was established earlier this year so that all interested parties can track progress towards the goals. Information for some of the indicators is now available.

To track progress, and for more information on the project, visit www.rdn.bc.ca/rgsmonitoring.

The RDN is currently reviewing the Regional Growth Strategy's criteria for minor amendments. Proposed changes are intended to clarify what qualifies as a minor amendment. Opportunities for the public and other stakeholders to provide input on the proposed changes will be posted on the RDN's website early in 2016.

Septic Rebates Prove Popular

The RDN's Septic Maintenance Rebates were offered again this year, providing up to \$600 to help residents maintain their septic systems. In 2014 – the first year they were offered – 70 families received more than \$25,000 in rebates.

Offered through the SepticSmart program, the rebates promote long-term maintenance habits to maximize the longevity of existing onsite systems. Rebates were available beginning in June, following a series of SepticSmart workshops on how to properly care for your residential septic system.



A few rebates are still available for 2015. Visit www.rdnrebates.ca for more information. Information on next year's rebates will be available in January.



Our new website www.dwwp.ca is a hub for water information, providing a friendly map-based way to learn more about water in your area and across the region. Residents can use the interactive map to learn about:

- Streams and Waterbodies; Aquifers; Land Use; Water Supply; First Nations Significance; and Community Programs. The site is part of our Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) program which is working to educate, collect data, and improve decision making related to water and land-use planning in the region.

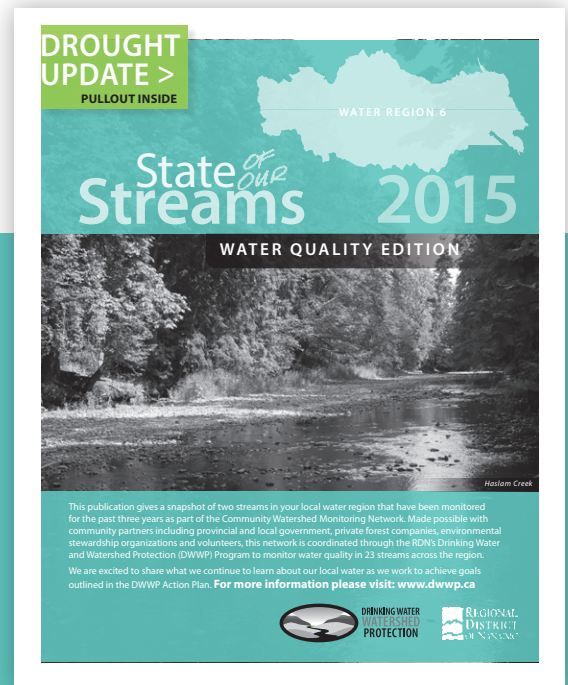


State of our Streams

For the past four years, the RDN and a network of partners have been working to expand water monitoring in our region, compiling water quality data to track stream health. This network is called the Community Watershed Monitoring Network and is made up of the RDN, local stewardship group volunteers, BC Ministry of Environment and Island Timberlands. Coordinated through the RDN's DWWP Program, the data collected through the network improves our understanding of the quality of surface water in local creeks and streams.

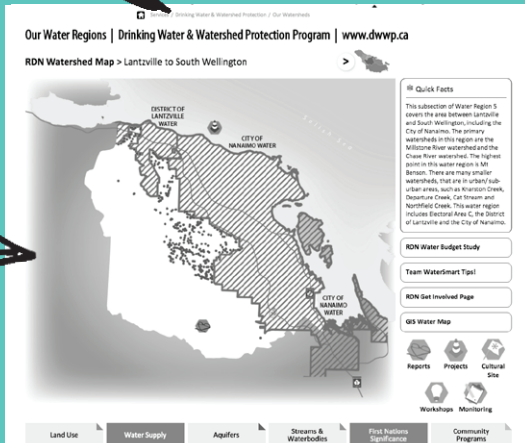
Network volunteers have been sampling water quality in 17 watersheds at 51 sites across the region and we are excited to share what we are learning about our local water. This year, for the first time, RDN residents received a State of our Streams publication in the mail detailing water information specific to where they live.

To view the publications, visit www.dwwp.ca, click on your Water Region and click on Reports.



Going forward, we are committed to continued monitoring in local waterways to help provide more local data, promote watershed health awareness, train environmental stewards, and take action in areas that would benefit from additional monitoring, management, assessments, outreach and education.

For more information on the network and how you can help protect our watersheds, visit www.dwwp.ca, click on your Water Region, and click on Projects.



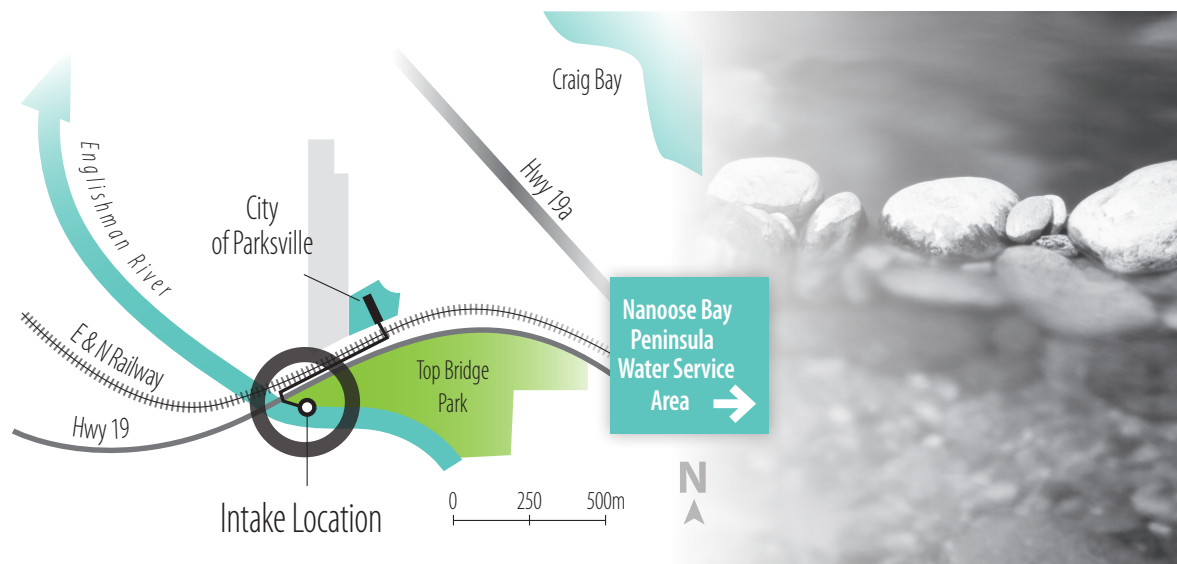
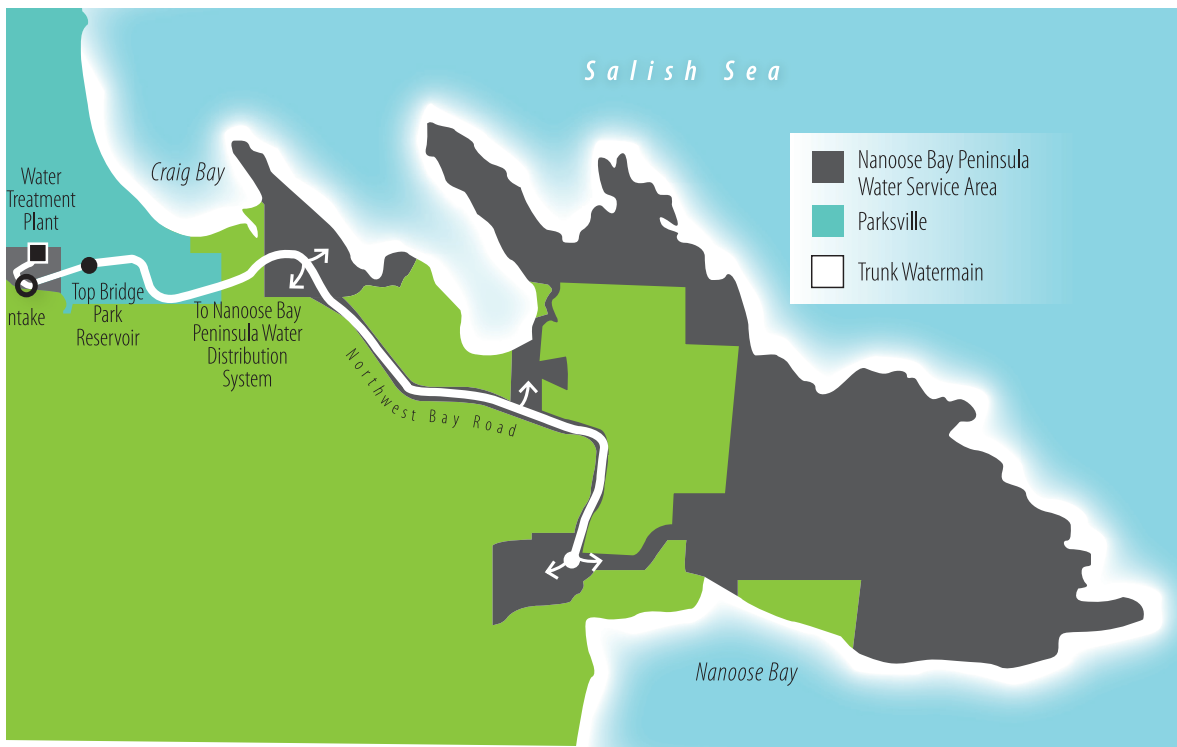
www.dwwp.ca

Update on the Englishman River Water Service (ERWS)

Thanks to additional funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of B.C., the City of Parksville and the RDN (Nanose Bay Peninsula) are moving forward with the planned expansion to the drinking water supply.

The next phase of this project involves **construction of the river intake which will draw water from the Englishman River**. Design of the intake is underway and construction is scheduled for June 2016. This will be designed to reflect how residents and visitors access and use the river and to protect aquatic habitat, while ensuring the community has an adequate and usable source of potable water for current and anticipated future needs.

For more information on the project, visit www.rdnrws.ca.



Wastewater Services Update

Expansions and upgrades are underway at the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre to increase capacity to meet demand, replace ageing infrastructure, and improve effluent quality. The upgrade will also meet federal and provincial regulations which require secondary treatment and meet commitments in our Liquid Waste Management Plan.

Site preparation and detailed engineering design for these projects are underway. Construction is scheduled to begin mid-2016 and should be complete in the fall of 2018.



The RDN is in the process of replacing the outfall pipe which was installed in 1973 and is reaching the end of its functional life. Replacement is expected to be complete in 2016.

This summer, the RDN repaired a leak in the outfall pipe which discharges treated sewage effluent from the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre. The outfall line runs through Morningside Park, near Hammond Bay Road and while the leak has been repaired, the park remains closed until the park surface is restored and all machinery is removed.

For more information contact Wastewater Services Department at rcu@rdn.bc.ca or 250-390-6560 (250-954-3792 in District 69) or visit www.rdn.bc.ca/wastewater.