



NORTH OKANAGAN

Wastewater Recovery Project

Project UPDATE

Enriching Environment & Economy

June 19, 2018

Next steps are to complete Feasibility Study and secure funds

The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), Township of Spallumcheen, and Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) continue work on the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project. Next steps are to:

- Complete Phase II of the Feasibility Study; and
- Submit grant applications for funding from federal and provincial governments.

Decision-makers agree that for the project to be viable, user fees for potential residential, commercial, and industrial customers must be comparable with what other jurisdictions are charging for similar services. This can only be achieved with federal and provincial grant funding. To that end, a grant application will be submitted prior to the August 29th deadline for the federal *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program*.

Project partners have also decided that, if the wastewater recovery facility is built, residences within the corridor will not be forced to connect. Residential properties will be encouraged to tie in through reasonable connection fees and other incentives, but the three participating local governments will not make residential connection mandatory.

Decision-makers are also committed to getting the public involved in this exciting project. A multi-sector working group of volunteers is being established to help guide the process and ensure community needs are met (see sidebar).

BACKGROUND

In 2015, elected officials from RDNO, Spallumcheen, and OKIB struck a formal partnership to address environmental challenges and enhance economic opportunities within the Swan Lake Corridor. The resulting initiative is the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project.

Wastewater Recovery Community Working Group

An area-wide, multi-sector Wastewater Recovery Community Working Group will be established to ensure community insights and ideas are reflected in project design, construction, and start-up.

Working group volunteers will collaborate with RDNO, Spallumcheen, and OKIB elected officials and staff and other key stakeholders to build awareness and participation, and to ensure project outcomes reflect community wants and needs.

Stay tuned for more information about how you can be involved! To share any comments or questions, please contact Leah Mellott at leah.mellott@rdno.ca.



The project Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2015 by RDNO Area C and B Directors Mike Macnabb (left) and Bob Fleming (right), OKIB Chief Byron Louis, and Spallumcheen Mayor Janice Brown.

Historically, septic systems have been used to treat residential and commercial/industrial wastewater within the corridor. Research has shown that many of these systems are now leaching contaminants into Swan Lake, thereby impacting surface and groundwater quality, bird habitat, and recreational use of the corridor.



Additionally, economic development in all three jurisdictions is compromised by the corridor's lack of sewer. Ideal for commercial and light industrial uses, the corridor requires a wastewater treatment facility and reclaimed water storage sites that enable sewer connections to optimize business growth and the jobs it brings. Wastewater recovery and reuse would also benefit agriculture in the area, as growers are constantly looking for new sources of irrigation water during the hot summer months.

A collaborative and cost-sharing Memorandum of Understanding among the three jurisdictions outlines project objectives and guiding principles.

OBJECTIVES

- Preserve Swan Lake and surrounding wetlands; and
- Improve opportunities for economic development.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Wastewater is a resource.
- Collaboration, and the sharing of human and financial resources, achieves better results.
- Respect for each partner's mandates and decision-making processes strengthens the partnership.
- Open and transparent communication among the parties and with the public optimizes project support and success.



Swan Lake Corridor provides abundant environmental, recreational, and economic opportunities for RDNO, Spallumcheen, and OKIB. Wastewater recovery would restore and protect Swan Lake, enhance recreational use, support suitable economic development, and provide much-needed irrigation water to local growers during the hot summer months.

TECHNICAL FINDINGS SUPPORT WASTEWATER RECOVERY

To date, RDNO, Spallumcheen, and OKIB have collaborated to:

- Assess existing environmental conditions (i.e., water quality analyses conducted in 2015, 2016 and 2017 confirmed that leachates from septic systems are impacting Swan Lake health);
- Identify existing and potential commercial and industrial uses in the plan area (i.e., 2016 RDNO Employment Lands Report); and
- Identify wastewater treatment, reuse and disposal strategies and options (i.e., 2016 Phase 1 Feasibility Study prepared by Urban Systems).

Research outcomes, in all cases, support construction of a wastewater treatment facility and associated water storage facilities in the corridor to address environmental challenges, enhance economic growth, and provide much-needed irrigation water to area farmers.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE PROJECT INFO! In the meantime, please forward any comments and questions to Leah Mellott (RDNO) at leah.mellott@rdno.ca