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MEDIA RELEASE
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\$24.3 Million for new Wastewater Recovery System benefits environment, economy, and agriculture in North Okanagan

The environment, economy and agriculture in the North Okanagan's Swan Lake area received a major boost with the announcement of a \$24.3 million grant from the Investing in Canada infrastructure plan for construction of the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery System. The Government of Canada contributed \$13,255,148, and the Province of British Columbia contributed \$11,044,852. The project will provide homes and businesses with a safe and sustainable wastewater treatment facility and sewer system that will protect Swan Lake water quality, provide reclaimed water for agriculture, enhance recreational opportunities and support economic development.

The project is the result of a unique and innovative partnership formed in 2015 between the Township of Spallumcheen, the Regional District of North Okanagan and the Okanagan Indian Band. For the past four years, the Partners have been setting the foundation for the success of this project, including conducting environmental and economic impact studies and obtaining community and financial support. While currently planned to service portions of Electoral Areas B and C, the Township of Spallumcheen's south-east industrial area and Okanagan Indian Band lands within the proposed service area, it will have the ability to expand to meet future growth.

The grant funding will cover approximately 66 percent of the total \$36.9 million cost, with the remaining amounts to be funded by RDNO borrowing (\$5.2 million), an Okanagan Basin Water Board grant (\$5.9 million) and Township of Spallumcheen reserves (\$1.5 million).

The next steps include design, development, tendering and construction of the facility and sewer lines over the next two to three years. The process will be aided by the continued support of the Wastewater Recovery Community Working Group of dedicated community volunteers providing local perspectives as the project moves forward.

For more information visit the project website, hosted by the RDNO on behalf of the partners at: www.rdno.ca/wastewater

The North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project Partnership Members will be holding a public celebration event with details to be shared soon.

Quotes

“Modern efficient water infrastructure is essential to ensuring Canadians’ health and well-being. These essential projects are key to ensuring that all BC residents have access to safe and reliable drinking water, whether they live in a large city or a remote community. These projects also reflect our commitment to protecting our ecosystems and fostering sustainable economic growth that will ensure our children and grandchildren can enjoy British Columbia’s beautiful waterways and coastlines for years to come.”

- **Pamela Goldsmith-Jones, Member of Parliament for West Vancouver–Sunshine Coast–Sea to Sky Country on behalf of the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities**

“Through this landmark investment in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, we are helping to deliver the services people count on, while helping to keep our communities and environment healthy. The Province is working in partnership with the federal government to invest in critical infrastructure for communities in a way that works for the people that live in these communities while building a healthy, green future for all British Columbians.”

- **Sheila Malcolmson, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Nanaimo, on behalf of the Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing**

North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project Partnership Members

“This project has huge benefits for the entire region, especially for sustaining local agriculture. The highly treated wastewater will provide much-needed relief for our farmers during the hot, dry summers. And the only way we could achieve the many benefits this project offers is with the Investment in Canada Infrastructure grant from our federal and provincial governments, and our partnership with the Okanagan Indian Band and the Regional District of North Okanagan.”

- **Mayor Christine Fraser, Township of Spallumcheen**

“This substantial grant makes this project a reality and will help us create the future we envision, one that balances environmental protection with economic opportunities. The Partnership has been instrumental to moving the project forward over the past four years and key to ensuring we continue to be stewards of our environment and our economy for future generations.”

- **Chief Byron Louis, Okanagan Indian Band**

“We’re thrilled to see the project all come together. Our Partnership Committee has been working at this for four years, since we signed our first Memorandum of Understanding in 2015. It shows how much we can achieve working together toward a common vision to protect water quality, support agriculture and enhance economic opportunities.”

- **Electoral Area B Director, Bob Fleming, Regional District of North Okanagan**

“We’re ecstatic about receiving this grant. Without this funding, the project wouldn’t proceed. We are especially thankful to our Community Working Group of dedicated volunteers who were active participants, helping to host an open house and even going door-to-door to increase community awareness and answer questions.”

- **Electoral Area C Director, Amanda Shatzko, Regional District of North Okanagan**

BACKGROUND

About the partnership

- The North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project is a unique and innovative partnership between the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO), Township of Spallumcheen and Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB). Launched in 2015, the collective goal is to address concerns over environmental health of Swan Lake, the challenges of drought-conditions for local agriculture and the limited ability to sustainably meet the demands for industrial, commercial and residential growth in the area.
- The Partners have also committed to continue to work together with implementing the construction, operations and maintenance of a Wastewater Recovery Facility and related sewers systems.
- The project will initially provide sewer service to residences and businesses in portions of RDNO Areas B and C, the Township of Spallumcheen's south-east industrial area and will have the capacity to expand to meet future demand. OKIB plans to connect in the future.

Project benefits

Through this partnership, the Wastewater Recovery Project provides many benefits:

- Protect Swan Lake water quality by reducing contaminants such as phosphates from septic systems leaching into the lake.
- Support local agriculture with a reliable and continuous supply of reclaimed water for irrigation, especially critical during summertime drought conditions.
- Provide development opportunities for residential, commercial and industrial properties within the proposed service areas (with supportive zoning) by ensuring access to sewer and wastewater treatment instead of hauling wastewater or having on-site septic systems.
- Enable appropriate and sustainable economic development beyond the current service areas in all three jurisdictions with the ability of the plant to expand capacity to meet future growth
- Enhance recreational use of Swan Lake.
- Provide jobs during the estimated multi-year construction of the \$36.9 million treatment facility, related sewer systems and ongoing operations.

Project Funding

- More than 66 percent of the \$36.9 million project is being funded by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program grant of \$24.3 million.
- The rest of the project is being funded by an Okanagan Basin Water Board Sewerage Facilities Assistance Grant of \$5.9 million, and \$1.5 million from Township of Spallumcheen reserves, in addition to the approval from Area B and C property owners for their share equal to \$5.2 million.
- In addition, a potential site was presented at an RDNO open house and shared via media releases as part of communicating about the overall project. On behalf of the Partners, the Township of Spallumcheen has purchased a 2.5-acre potential project site on L&A Cross Road, secured a 99-year lease for reclaimed water storage from an adjacent property owner, and arranged a partnership with an existing biosolids composting facility near the project site.

Community Engagement

- A dedicated [website](#), currently hosted by the RDNO, news releases, advertising, newsletters and open houses have helped increase awareness about the need for the project and provide information about opportunities for input.
- The Wastewater Recovery Project Community Working Group of committed volunteers has been instrumental in increasing community awareness and understanding for the project, leading to the successful outcomes of the Petition of property owners in the RDNO service area, with 63 percent of the parcels and a further 78 percent of the value of those parcels voting in favour.
- Community information and engagement will continue throughout the course of the project.

North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project Partnership

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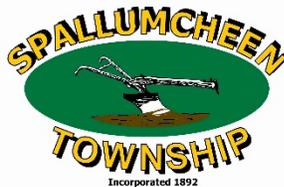


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