
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elected Officials Support Caution on New Groundwater Wells

A recent preliminary study has identified the connection between groundwater in the Coldstream Valley and the water supply that supports Kalamalka Lake, either directly or through flows into Coldstream Creek.

These findings come at a time when Kalamalka Lake is experiencing historically low water levels, prompting Greater Vernon Water (GVW) staff to take a precautionary approach while additional research is completed. As a result, staff have recommended that the Province of British Columbia not approve new groundwater well applications within the Coldstream Valley until more information is available about the potential impacts of groundwater withdrawals on the water supplies that flow to Kalamalka Lake. This recommendation was supported by the RDNO Greater Vernon Advisory Committee (GVAC) through a motion passed at the committee's meeting on July 29.

Discussion at the meeting noted that preliminary findings suggest a meaningful connection between groundwater in the Coldstream Creek valley and the water levels in Kalamalka Lake. With the lake at historic lows and local creeks drying up, the RDNO will continue to assess the sustainable volumes of groundwater that can be extracted.

"Protecting water resources today can help prevent future challenges for residents, businesses, and agriculture," stated GVAC representative Teresa Durning. "Kalamalka Lake is a critical water source for domestic, agricultural, industrial, and commercial users throughout the Greater Vernon Water service area, and protection of this resource is critical."

The study findings are preliminary, and further work is underway to better understand the relationship among groundwater supplies, Coldstream Creek, and Kalamalka Lake. "GVW staff are currently working to obtain a Regional Groundwater Study to further assess and quantify the groundwater-surface water interaction and develop a sustainable management plan for the Coldstream Valley aquifer to ensure that groundwater extractions are completed so that Coldstream Creek and Kalamalka Lake are not negatively impacted," stated Zee Marcolin, RDNO General Manager of Utilities.

The RDNO remains committed to working with provincial agencies, technical experts, and local governments to support decision-making and the long-term sustainability of regional water resources.

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