

Answers to common questions regarding the Conversion of the Beaver Creek Improvement District water system to a local service area of the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District

Submit your questions to rdyson@acrd.bc.ca

- 1. Where do I get the total costs estimated for the Regional District to manage the Beaver Creek water System?** The “Water Services Option Report” by Tom Reid identifies all the costs including operating and maintenance costs and total costs for a regional water option. The proposed budget, fees and tax estimates include all projected costs. They are compared to the Improvement District continuing to administer the system. The report is available at the Regional District’s website www.acrd.bc.ca and copies can be provided at the Regional District’s office.
- 2. Why are future costs for water going to be so much higher for Beaver Creek?** The costs are high on account of the improvements required for new water treatment, watermain upgrades and reservoirs. The “Water Infrastructure Analysis” prepared by Koers and Associates details specific improvements to the system that would be implemented through a Regional District local service area. The report is available from the ACRD website www.acrd.bc.ca and copies can be provided at the Regional District’s office.
- 3. What level of accountability is there for the Regional Districts services, the works that get completed and the costs I will incur as a Beaver Creek property owner?** A full accounting of all expenditures will be available from the Regional District regularly and upon request. The annual budget, taxes and tolls are subject to a public process including opportunities for input.
- 4. How will upgrades be completed by the Regional District when they don’t have the staff or equipment to undertake major projects?** Major works will require engineering design by a consulting engineer. A competitive tendering process by qualified contractors will ensure materials are secured and work is performed cost effectively for each and every project.
- 5. How does the Regional District respond to the statement that Sproat Lake water is not adequate for a community water system?** Our consultants have reviewed available water quality records collected over the past 15 years by the Ministry of Environment, the Sproat Lake Community Association, Catalyst Paper, and the City of Port Alberni, from water samples taken at various points in Sproat Lake and from the intake of the Catalyst Mill water supply. These all indicate excellent water quality, well within the parameters of the Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines and the expected VIHA requirements to approve a Sproat Lake secondary water source for a filtration deferral, allowing double barrier treatment by ultraviolet disinfection followed by chlorine disinfection. An ongoing monitoring program for the important Sproat Lake water quality parameters is being undertaken by the City of Port Alberni on their water service from the Catalyst water supply main.

- 6. Why can't you just install individual filters within each home rather than an expensive system treating water for fire flows as well as consumption?** Individual filters on service connections to homes are not acceptable to VIHA as a substitute for treatment of the entire community supply at source. The reason is that there would be no control over how well these systems would be maintained or whether they are actually meeting the water quality criteria. Regardless, the cost of adequate filtration units for the entire home, including the garden use, would be prohibitive, compared to the per connection cost of any of the proposed BCID options. Filtration units for kitchen faucets could be affordable, but would not be accepted by VIHA, as water quality could not be reliably monitored and as this would leave other points of potential drinking water use in the home, such as bathroom faucets and garden hose, unprotected. Most of the homes on Sproat Lake are not on a community water system and are therefore not under the jurisdiction of VIHA.
- 7. If a local service area is established through the Regional District when will we see improvements to the water system?** Works could take place in 2012, that is the objective. Timing of work will depend on a number of things including the legal requirements of the conversion as well as provincial approvals and funding.
- 8. What will it take for the Regional District to improve water quality and when will we see a difference if conversion to a Regional District service proceeds?** The quickest means to improve water would be to secure a water use agreement with the City and install a pump station to utilize their water. This can be done with or without conversion. It would be an interim measure toward the realization of a regional water supply where all participating jurisdictions share in the management of water supply. The pump station could be realized within 16 months and the regional District has applied for a grant to fund this work.
- 9. Does conversion to a local service area of the Regional District service guarantee access to City Water or regional Water?** No that will be a separate decision made in consultation with the Beaver Creek Community and the City. The City has previously agreed in principle to provide water to Beaver Creek and a detailed agreement will have to be negotiated.