

Project Overview

WHAT IS THE CENTRAL SECTOR LWMP?

A liquid waste management plan (LWMP) is a guidance document that outlines solutions for managing wastewater (ie: sewage) and polluted runoff. LWMPs are developed through extensive public consultation processes led by a local government and are tailored to meet the specific needs of the community. The Cowichan Valley Regional District's (CVRD) Central Sector LWMP was developed in 1999, to serve the City of Duncan, Municipality of North Cowichan, Electoral Areas 'D' and 'E,' and part of Cowichan Tribes land. The existing sewage infrastructure collects wastewater from these areas and treats it via a secondary treatment plant, commonly known as the Sewage Lagoons system with final discharge into the Cowichan River.

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE CENTRAL SECTOR LWMP?

The CVRD is currently pursuing an amendment to the Central Sector LWMP to move the existing outfall in the Cowichan River to a new location. If that amendment is accepted, a separate amendment addressing a number of other issues, such as non-point source pollution, will be pursued.

WHY DOES IT NEED TO BE CHANGED?

There are several reasons why a change to the outfall discharge location is being considered:

- Climate change is affecting the Cowichan River. There are periods of the year when there is not enough river water flow to dilute the treated effluent according to provincial requirements. Such low flows are expected to continue and get worse in years to come
- A lease agreement with Cowichan Tribes for the land where the treatment plant is located includes a commitment to move the outfall from the river
- Outfall infrastructure is at risk of damage by log jams and gravel bars in its current location in the river
- Moving the outfall from the river is an important step toward reopening shellfish harvest in Cowichan Bay
- Relocating the outfall would include re-routing the sewer main, creating opportunities for resource recovery (ie: using reclaimed water for irrigating forest lands, heat recovery for community energy projects)
- The current CSLWMP makes a commitment to consider siting/routing options for a new outfall discharge

WHY IS THIS AMENDMENT OF THE LWMP BEING CONSIDERED NOW?

The outfall is quickly becoming a pressing issue due to the importance of health and environment values of the Cowichan River— one that will need attention in the near future. Recently, the CVRD became aware of potential funding that could – if awarded – offset the cost of the project by up to 50 per cent. In order to meet deadlines for this grant opportunity while still meeting the significant investigation and consultation standards required for a LWMP amendment, the LWMP project partners have decided to move forward on the most critical portion first – the outfall relocation – and follow up with the other topics at a later date.

The CVRD's LWMP partners and the Public and Technical Advisory Committee, which includes representatives of stakeholder groups and the public, strongly support this staged approach to amending the plan.

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

To meet provincial dilution requirements and fulfill the terms of the Cowichan Tribes lease agreement, an ocean discharge is being proposed. The specific discharge location is still under consideration.

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HAVE OTHER OPTIONS BEEN REVIEWED OTHER THAN AN OCEAN DISCHARGE?

Preliminary reviews have been done on other discharge options including:

- a) Routing to Catalyst Paper Crofton (the mill) facility for reuse
- b) Routing to the Catalyst facility for sewage treatment and discharge
- c) Disposal to ground
- d) Irrigation
- e) Disposal to other surface waters

Some of the above have had early warning flags raised that suggest they should not be considered further, including possible risk to existing water resources and insufficient supply for efficient reuse. Others are still being investigated. For more about these options see *Infographic - Options Review* at www.cvrld.bc.ca/lwmp.

IS SATELLITE CHANNEL THE PREFERRED DISCHARGE LOCATION?

Preliminary studies have identified a location in Satellite Channel as a suitable option for further study. However, before any location is selected, the LWMP process must be completed – and that includes identifying and assessing other possible options, conducting comparative evaluations, consulting with First Nations, consulting with the public and stakeholders and completing an environmental impact study. In the interim, Satellite Channel was proposed as a discharge location in a funding application made by the Joint Utilities Board (JUB), on the understanding that the location could be amended if the LWMP identifies a different preferred option (provided it is still a marine discharge). The sewage treatment plant is owned by the JUB, however is included within the CVRD's Central Sector LWMP.

WHAT IS THIS GOING TO COST AND WHO WILL PAY FOR IT?

While it is hoped that a significant portion of the estimated \$22-million capital cost will be offset by senior government grant funds, remaining costs for relocating the outfall would be divided between users of the JUB sewage treatment plant. Information will be provided on options for appropriate cost sharing and the public will be asked to provide input on what is proposed. Public support for the plan and approval by the Ministry of Environment would be required prior to going ahead with the project and charging any fees.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Many steps are required before a final LWMP amendment can be submitted. These include: identification of options, further investigation and assessment of those options, public consultation opportunities, identification of a preferred option and completion of an environmental impact study. To learn more about the process of the amendment, please see the *Project Timeline* available at www.cvrld.bc.ca/lwmp

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE? HOW CAN I PROVIDE INPUT?

Learn more about the Central Sector LWMP Amendment process by visiting www.cvrld.bc.ca/lwmp and reviewing the information there. Watch also for monthly newsletters, website updates and community infossessions in the coming months. Information on those will also be posted at the website above, or can be found by phoning 250-746-2530 or emailing CSLWMP@cvrd.bc.ca