

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cowichan #TrashTag clean-ups bring awareness to illegal dumping

Duncan, BC – The Cowichan Valley Regional District and Mosaic Forest Management are partnering to support illegal dumping clean-up efforts throughout the month of April.

All around the world, groups of residents are taking up the #TrashTag challenge in their communities, cleaning up dump sites and litter while raising awareness about the issue through social media. Over the coming weeks, the CVRD and Mosaic are encouraging residents to organize and/or participate in a clean-up event around the region. The CVRD will be providing resources for clean-up materials and waiving the garbage landfilling tipping fee for qualifying community groups who register their events with the CVRD's Solid Waste & Recycling Division. Mosaic will provide further incentive for volunteers in the form of gift cards to purchase refreshments for registered clean-ups events, as well as prizes for individuals and community groups who promote their efforts on social media.

"Illegal dumping not only negatively impacts our forests and waterways, but our wallets through the resources needed to clean-up dump sites and track down illegal dumpers," said Ian Morrison, Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. "We're enthusiastically supportive of all the community organizations and their volunteers who give their time and energy to keeping Cowichan clean. We're more than happy to help make those efforts a little easier through this campaign."

Research shows that illegal dumping is more likely to occur in areas that are hotspots for littering and other illegal activity. Cowichan residents have numerous low-cost recycling and waste disposal options. Most of the materials that are found illegally dumped each year are in fact free to drop off at CVRD recycling centres. When the cost of driving out to rural areas to dump waste is factored in, properly sorting and disposing of waste at public and private drop-off depots is far less expensive.

"Many of us have come across cases of inexcusable illegal dumping in our communities, and this is an opportunity to help ensure they are rectified and not repeated," said Domenico Iannidinardo, VP Forests and Sustainability and Chief Forester for Mosaic Forest Management. "We look forward to playing a part of creating more opportunities for people to get outside, beautify their neighbourhoods, and ultimately eliminate this issue in our region."

The Sahtlam Neighbour Association is one community group that has routinely organized clean-ups around frequented illegal dumping sites. On Saturday, April 13, volunteers will be assembling at the Sahtlam Firehall at 10 a.m. and focusing on removing litter and garbage around the Trans-Canada Trail, the Duncan Chinese Cemetery and along roadways throughout Sahtlam.

“Creating greater awareness for the issue of illegal dumping is the first step to reducing this illegal and harmful behaviour across our region,” said Jack MacNeil, event organizer with the Sahtlam Neighbourhood Association. “We appreciate the support from the CVRD and Mosaic to make this clean-up event easier for us and others to execute. Getting more people out into their communities will only help strengthen the network of vigilant residents who are ready to report polluters, and reduce the need for these big clean-up efforts in years to come.”

Community groups and individuals participating in clean-ups throughout April are encouraged to share their stories on social media using the #TrashTag and #CleanUpCowichan hashtags. Cowichan residents can also help prevent illegal dumping by reporting polluters to the Ministry of Environment’s RAPP line at 1.877.952.7277 (or #7277 from cellphones) and increase the chances offenders are caught and fined.

For a list of registered community clean-ups across the Cowichan region, visit the CVRD’s website at www.cvrld.bc.ca. To learn more about the waste disposal options near you, visit www.cvrld.bc.ca/Recycling or call the Recycling Hotline at 250.746.2540.

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