

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 12, 2015



New CVRD Website Showcases How To ‘Live The New Normal’

Duncan, BC - Drought and flooding are the ‘new normal’ in the Cowichan region, and are putting our watersheds and communities’ water supply under extreme stress. The good news is Cowichan residents, farmers and business owners now have access to a wide variety of practical, effective solutions to do what they can to minimize the impacts of these very serious problems, thanks to the Cowichan Valley Regional District’s NewNormalCowichan.ca website.

“Gone are the days when we could expect some significant rainfall in the drier months leading up to summer and trust that our aquifers and lakes would be adequately supplied with water” says Board Chair Jon Lefebure. “The summer dry season has extended on both ends and we can no longer count on a predictable snowpack and reliable rain to keep our watersheds healthy. This NewNormalCowichan website is meant to give everyone a clear picture of what ‘living the new normal’ looks like.”

NewNormalCowichan.ca offers tips and resources to make ‘living the new normal’ easier, including options for summer water conservation and flood preparedness. The website also enables users to receive email updates, track current conditions – including storage levels, regional water usage and fire risk, and offers background information about the changing climate change conditions and modifications to the natural landscape that have resulted in this new normal situation. New information and resources will be added regularly over the summer months.

“The impacts of drought are broad and critical: fish populations and the integrity of our valuable ecosystem are threatened, public health issues are on the rise, our economic strengths in forestry, pulp and paper, tourism and fishing are jeopardized, and the risk of damage to people and property due to forest fires is much higher,” continues Chair Lefebure. “Our region and each of us individually needs to adopt new ‘water smart’ management practices so we have enough to support our ecosystem and economy year-round. NewNormalCowichan.ca’s main message is that we all have a part to play in establishing a culture of water conservation.”

NewNormalCowichan is a regional climate adaption initiative led by the CVRD as part of the Regional Integrated Planning Strategy. The first phase of the New Normal program is the development of long-term, strategic water preparedness plans across the region to deal with a range of emerging issues to make sure our water supply is protected during drought conditions. Strategies include increasing storage capacity during the wet periods to make sure there is enough for summer dry periods, working with key sectors such as agriculture to ensure they have the tools and resources they need to thrive, and developing updated flood management and early warning systems to minimize damage during extreme rain events.

For more information, please contact:

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