

Capital Regional District hosting watershed tours in Greater Victoria



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The Capital Regional District (CRD) is holding five-hour tours around the Greater Victoria watershed with the goal of educating the public on where their water comes from and the process it takes to get to residents taps.

Throughout the spring, the CRD has been touring residents through the West Shore and Sooke, showing them the Sooke Reservoir, its tributaries, the CRD treatment plant, and everything in between.

APPENDIX A

“The way we treat our water in Victoria, is we don’t use a filtration system. So we don’t filter the water. It relies on a good source water. So right from that gate coming in, is where we start thinking about water quality,” said Kathy Haesevoets, who helped lead the tour.

The Sooke Reservoir, which is northwest of Victoria, is the primary source for water throughout Greater Victoria.

Water then travels through a number of pipes to an ultraviolet facility for treatment, which includes UV disinfection to kill bacteria and parasites, and a low dose of chlorine and ammonia which produces chloramine, a long-lasting disinfectant which protects the water from bacterial contamination.

The water system is about 90 per cent gravity fed, as the reservoir is over 150 metres above sea level, and there are multiple reducing stations throughout the distribution network as water moves throughout the city and up the peninsula.

An ongoing concern of the CRD is the looming threat of wildfires around the reservoirs, which would cause ash to cloud the water, which makes it more difficult for UV to disinfect the water properly, however there are currently initiatives being taken to reduce the risk of wildfire as much as possible.

“It’s a forested environment, previously harvested, so a lot of it is second growth in the CRD area. Almost 45 per cent has been logged at some time in the past. We don’t do the harvesting anymore, but what the legacy of that has left us with is a forest that is at quite a high density, and it’s a certain stage in a forest, where there’s a lot of fuels that build up,” said Haesevoets.

There are tours still available through June. To book a spot visit <https://www.crd.bc.ca/service/public-tours/watershed-tours>.

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