

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 19, 2023**

SUBJECT **Healthy Waters Project for Tod Creek on the Saanich Peninsula - Update - July 2023**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide the Environmental Services Committee with an update on existing baseline monitoring and identification of funding sources in support of the Healthy Waters project proposal for Tod Creek on the Saanich Peninsula.

BACKGROUND

The Capital Regional District (CRD) received an unsolicited proposal from the Raincoast Conservation Foundation (RCF) to monitor the Tod Creek watershed. The objectives of this proposed monitoring program are "to conduct a risk-based evaluation of contaminants of concern in the Tod Creek watershed in support of healthy fish habitat" and "to document possible sources of contaminants of concern in the Tod Creek watershed, including Hartland Landfill and local land use."

At the May 10, 2023 CRD Board meeting, staff were directed to: "help identify sources of funding and supports for the Healthy Waters project proposal for Tod Creek on the Saanich Peninsula," and "prepare a report on what baseline data exists for contamination including Tod Inlet when they report back to the Environmental Services Committee next meeting."

Staff have since met with representatives from the RCF and confirmed that the monitoring program could be designed to align with both existing CRD monitoring programs and RCF objectives.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Action

After meeting with the RCF, staff have confirmed that the Healthy Waters study design objectives will not be able to identify whether Hartland Landfill is a source of contamination to Tod Creek. The RCF's primary objectives are to provide a baseline summary of contaminants in a watershed for comparison to other watersheds across coastal BC; to provide a high-level summary of general contaminant levels as they relate to pathways from various land uses (e.g., road runoff, agriculture, sewage, atmospheric deposition, etc.); and to assess risk to fish health. Existing environmental regulatory programs at the landfill are designed to evaluate whether landfill-related contamination is contained on-site and not migrating beyond the property boundary.

By incorporating existing CRD stormwater and Hartland Landfill monitoring stations into the study design and by expanding the list of contaminants to be analyzed to include the full suite proposed by the RCF, the study may:

- have enhanced scientific and technical value for both the CRD and RCF; and
- provide value to the community in the form of reassurance that the CRD and community-based monitoring programs are adequate to confirm that past and current landfill activities are not linked to contaminant-related concerns in the watershed.

Including new stations throughout the watershed will:

- provide additional background or control stations for comparison to existing CRD monitoring station results; and
- satisfy the RCF's objectives for province-wide watershed comparisons and an assessment of risk to fish health.

As noted at the April 19, 2023 Environmental Services Committee meeting, the CRD, as well as the Friends of Tod Creek Watershed, have undertaken sampling for many years in the watershed. A summary of the data generated from these sampling efforts is provided in Appendix A. As requested, this summary also includes previous Tod Inlet monitoring undertaken by SeaChange and Peninsula Streams and also includes a contaminant analysis of CRD biosolids.

There is very limited existing baseline data for the majority of organic contaminants of concern targeted by the RCF study in the surface waters of the Tod Creek watershed. Limited data is available in a variety of media (e.g., leachate, biosolids, ground and surface water); this data will be useful during sampling location and target contaminant selection for the RCF study design.

Financial Implications

The original Healthy Waters project for Tod Creek proposal had an estimated cost of \$250,000 for a snapshot assessment that would inform subsequent seasonal monitoring. The bulk of the funding will be drawn from Hartland Landfill operating reserves. For other existing services to support this project, the Healthy Waters sampling design must align with the CRD monitoring program objectives. This alignment will allow limited funding to be drawn from the CRD Saanich Peninsula and core area stormwater, core area biosolid and wastewater, onsite/septic and Hartland Landfill monitoring service budgets.

Staff have capacity to assist in study design and provide some in-kind sampling support at existing CRD monitoring locations. Staff will not have capacity to support coordination of external groups; this coordination effort will be facilitated by RCF.

The CRD investigated potential external funding sources to support this project but did not identify any current provincial or federal programs to investigate ambient environmental conditions. Community groups are also more likely to have access to future, relevant grant opportunities and may be able to find some funding to enhance the project. The CRD could participate as partners through in-kind support for any grant applications that community groups take forward.

Intergovernmental Implications

The WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council (WLC) has expressed interest in the project and is meeting internally to determine how study goals might align with its interests. The CRD's support for this project through Hartland Landfill operational reserves may also support the WLC's desire to

enhance environmental assessment around the landfill, evaluate ambient conditions in the watershed, and provide opportunities for shared learning.

CONCLUSION

The Capital Regional District (CRD) received a request to consider an ambient watershed monitoring program for the Tod Creek watershed. This proposal will not identify point source contamination but could provide additional background information to support existing monitoring programs and broader service delivery. The proposal can be aligned with several services to characterize average environmental concentrations across the watershed. No external funding sources were identified for the program. The majority of funding will come from the Hartland Landfill operating reserve, with limited funds available from existing CRD monitoring budgets. The proposal may also align with interest and objectives identified by the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council for enhanced environmental monitoring around Hartland Landfill, better understanding of environmental quality across the watershed, and an opportunity for shared learning. Staff will be able to support and inform study design and provide some in-kind sampling support.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Glenn Harris, Ph.D., R.P.Bio., Senior Manager, Environmental Protection
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Summary of Background Data Available for Tod Creek, Tod Inlet and CRD Biosolids