



TOWN OF VIEW ROYAL

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July 18, 2017

CRD Board Chair Barb Desjardins & Directors
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street
PO Box 1000
Victoria, BC V8W 2S6

Dear Board of Directors:

RE: Lifeguards at Thetis Lake

The Town of View Royal writes once again to request that lifeguards be returned to Thetis Lake for the exceptionally busy summer season. We objected to the removal in 2003 and have since asked twice for their return.

As you are aware, there have been multiple tragedies that include drownings at Thetis Lake since 1999 and several more close calls and injuries including two already this year. Enclosed with this letter I have provided you with some information written in the Times Colonist regarding some of these tragic events.

In a near drowning incident earlier this summer, it was only the presence of paddle boarders in the right place at the right time that helped to prevent two more possible drowning victims.

We are aware that lifeguards may not have helped in all of the situations currently facing us and we are aware that the cliff jumping is a separate but connected issue. However, we do feel strongly that in one of the most popular lakes in the region, with some of the most inherent natural dangers, including steep drop-offs, that lifeguards are absolutely vital to public safety in this area.

Therefore, we ask the Capital Regional District Board for support and adherence in adding the costs of lifeguards to your budget for the 2018 summer season.

Sincerely,

David Screech
Mayor

Enclosure



Recycled Paper

Thetis Lake swimmer dies
Times Colonist (Victoria)
Sun Jul 21 2013
Page: A3
Section: Capital & Van. Isl.
Byline: Amy Smart And Sarah Petrescu
Source: Times Colonist

A 21-year-old international student died after swimming in Thetis Lake on Saturday.

Witnesses and emergency responders arrived on scene at 12:20 p.m. and attempted to revive the man. He was transported to Victoria General Hospital in critical condition, but died, said the B.C. Coroners Service.

"He was an apparently fit male who went into the water with his friends," said West Shore RCMP Cpl. Bryson Hill. Foul play is not suspected.

Esquimalt resident Mark Burnham called 911 after a group of eight to 10 international students communicated to him that their friend was lost in the water.

"Some of them started saying, 'We can't find our friend, we're looking for our friend,' " Burnham said. "There was a language barrier, so there was some confusion as to how alarmed [we should] be."

As he made the call, others dove into the water to help with the search, he said. They found the man under three to four metres of water, about six to nine metres from the shore of the main beach.

"There was this one bigger guy who found him at the bottom and was struggling to bring him up," Burnham said. "And then there was this 50-year-old

lady who actually swam him to shore."

Burnham yelled out, asking if anyone was a lifeguard, and a few people ran over.

"It was right at the main beach area. The lifeguard would have been watching them, if there had been one," Burnham said. His wife is a lifeguard but was at another part of the park at that time.

"Probably never would have happened if they would have paid someone \$15 an hour to sit there."

Esquimalt resident Jon Leney said the unconscious man was dragged onto the beach. Witnesses jumped in to give CPR and chest compressions.

"He was completely unresponsive," Leney said. Emergency responders arrived within minutes.

"They were working on him on the beach for a while and then put him on a stretcher. It didn't look good. It was pretty traumatic for everyone there," he said. "Adults were crying and holding each other. Some people were very quiet."

Leney said he was honest with his young son about what was happening when he asked. "I asked him how he felt. He said he wasn't upset but that he was sad because that man might die."

The man's name has not been released. The B.C. Coroners Service is investigating.

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WATER SAFETY TIPS Always wear a personal flotation device when boating or tubing.

Children, non-swimmers and weak swimmers should also wear one when wading or playing in rivers or lakes.

Be aware of water conditions. If you're hosting visitors from another province or country, make sure they know about water conditions, such as steep drop-offs and rapids, around swimming locations.

Don't drink and swim or boat. Always supervise children near water. Preschool-aged children can drown in a few centimetres of water.

Never dive into unknown waters.

DEATHS AT THETIS LAKE

July 21, 2006: Wan Ting Chang, a 24-year-old University of Victoria student, drowned after slipping off a rock shelf into deep water. Friends tried to save Chang, who couldn't swim, but she drowned.

May 23, 2004: Jeffrey Hearn, a 23-year-old navy sailor, dove off a 12-metre cliff and didn't resurface. His body was found the next day.

Sept. 4, 2004: The body of Harry Albert Burns, 57, was recovered in Thetis Lake after he drowned.

Aug. 3, 1999: Tim Sheu, 14, drowned while on a field trip with St. Michaels University School. His family asked the school to donate money to help fund more lifeguards at the popular swimming destination.