

## **Update on French Creek Water Service Area**

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) operates nine Water Service Areas (WSA), providing water to over 3,000 houses across the RDN. The French Creek WSA provides water to about 250 houses in the Sandpiper neighbourhood of Electoral Area G and relies on groundwater from several wells in the area as well as chlorine disinfection.

### **Water Quality**

The water in the French Creek WSA contains elevated levels of iron and manganese which makes it aesthetically unpleasing, but it is potable and the system operates under permit by Island Health.

In 2019, the Government of Canada's Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality proposed more stringent regulations on manganese concentration in drinking water. As a result, the RDN Water Services 2020 Business Plan includes this objective: *"Develop a strategy for the French Creek Water Service Area to be compliant with the new regulations on manganese concentration in drinking water."* Work on this strategy has been ongoing since February of this year. The RDN will provide further updates on the strategy and its cost to Sandpiper property owners as more information becomes available.

### **Background**

The French Creek WSA was established in 1980 and included the Eaglecrest and Chartwell neighbourhoods at that time. Those two neighbourhoods later became part of the Town of Qualicum Beach through resident petitions in 1993 and 2004.

In 2012, the RDN conducted a survey of French Creek WSA residents to gauge satisfaction with water quality and motivation to fund improvements:

- 33 per cent responded to the survey;
- 87 per cent were unsatisfied with water quality;
- 83 per cent were unwilling to spend \$500-\$600 per year in additional taxes over 20 years to fund improvements which focused on a dedicated water treatment plant at that time; and
- 63 per cent were willing to spend \$100-\$200 per year in additional taxes to fund improvements.

In 2016 and 2017, the RDN applied for a grant from senior government to offset the costs of a water treatment plant, but was unsuccessful on both attempts. In 2001 and 2013, the RDN attempted to purchase bulk water for Sandpiper from the Town of Qualicum Beach, but was unsuccessful on both attempts.

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