NORTH OKANAGAN
Wastewater
Recovery Project

NEWS RELEASE
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North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project moving ahead

Long-awaited sewer and water reclamation system will protect Swan Lake and give local farmers a reliable source of irrigation water during drought

SPALLUMCHEEN, B.C. – The Township of Spallumcheen and the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) are excited to announce that the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project (NOWRP), a sewer and water reclamation system is now under construction within the Township of Spallumcheen.

The NOWRP is a partnership between the RDNO, the Township of Spallumcheen, and the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) that was launched in 2015 to bring community sewer service to the Swan Lake area and reduce the impact of aging septic systems on the lake.

Construction was able to start in July after the project received its Municipal Wastewater Regulation permit from the Province of British Columbia, confirming the treatment process meets provincial environmental standards for reclaimed water use under the Environmental Management Act.

Centerfire Contracting Ltd. has been awarded the contract for the Township of Spallumcheen's portion of the work, which includes wastewater collection lines, lift stations, and the treatment and storage ponds on L&A Cross Road. Site clearing, dust control and silt fencing are already in place to limit impacts on surrounding farmland, and environmental and archaeological monitoring staff will be on site throughout construction. The RDNO's portion of the project will be tendered separately later this year.

Site grading and pipework will continue through 2026, with construction of the reclaimed water storage ponds planned for 2027. Commissioning is expected in fall 2027, and the system is anticipated to be fully operating by early 2028.

Once operating, the system will treat wastewater to a standard suitable for irrigating forage crops, such as silage corn and alfalfa, on nearby agricultural land under a long-term lease with the Toporchak family. A non-farm use application will be filed with the province before reclaimed water is applied to the land. Similar water reuse systems are already operating in Vernon, Kamloops, and Cranbrook.

The total cost of the project is estimated at $49.6 million. Funding sources include interest earned on the grant funds received as well as other sources such as:

- $24.3 million from the provincial and federal governments through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP),
- $9.5 million from other grants provided by the Province of B.C.
- $7.5 million estimated from the Sewerage Facilities Assistance Fund provided by the Okanagan Basin Water Board,
- $1.5 million from Township of Spallumcheen reserve funds, and

A final project cost will be confirmed once the RDNO tenders its portion of the work this fall.

A 2017 land use and water quality assessment of Swan Lake found that on-site wastewater systems were contributing to nutrient pressure on the lake and recommended sewer service for surrounding properties. This project will not change Swan Lake overnight, but it is a major long-term investment in the lake's health, helping protect water quality and improve conditions for the surrounding wetland ecosystem over time.

Once complete, the project will also give local farmers a reliable source of irrigation water during dry summers and periods of drought, reduce costly septic system failures for nearby property owners, and open the door to new housing, business, and recreational opportunities along the corridor.

Quotes:

Harwinder Sandhu, MLA for Vernon-Lumby and Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture
"This project reflects the values of people across the North Okanagan: caring for our environment, supporting local agriculture, and planning for the future. By helping protect Swan Lake and providing a reliable water source for local farms, it will strengthen our region and deliver lasting benefits for residents, families, and farming communities."

Christine Fraser, Mayor of the Township of Spallumcheen: *"This project is very important for our region. It provides much needed water for our local agriculture producers and relieves pressures on local aquifers. This additional water supply is gold for our farmers. The benefits of this system being in place will be felt by the region for generations. Seeing construction begin is the culmination of more than a decade of hard work, and I am grateful to see this important project moving forward."*

Bob Fleming, RDNO Electoral Area B Director*: "This project means a healthier Swan Lake and an opportunity for future development in a responsible and healthy way for the local eco-system. The economic and environmental benefits to the area will be huge. I'm excited to see construction starting up in Spallumcheen as it marks a major project milestone and a positive step forward for our community."*

Amanda Shatzko, RDNO Electoral Area C Director: "*This project reflects the kind of long-term thinking our region needs. Protecting Swan Lake while securing a reliable water supply for local farmers strengthens our environment, supports agriculture, and builds resilience throughout the North Okanagan as water scarcity becomes an increasing challenge. It's exciting to see construction begin and this important investment move from planning to reality."*

About the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project

The North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project is a partnership between the Regional District of North Okanagan, the Township of Spallumcheen, and the Okanagan Indian Band, launched in 2015 to protect water quality in Swan Lake and local streams, create economic development opportunities

through a community sewer system, and turn treated wastewater into a reliable irrigation source for local farms, a valuable resource during drought.

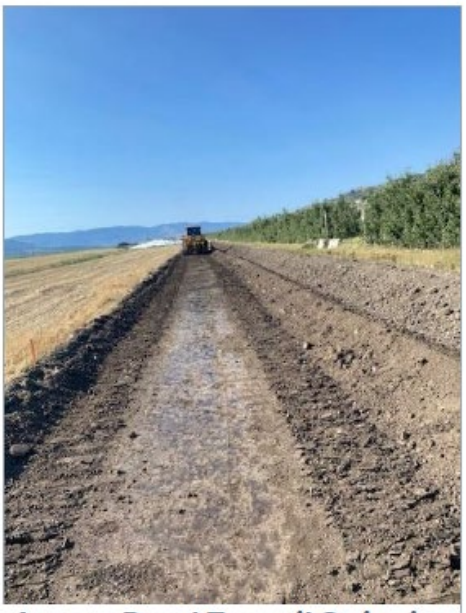
The project will serve residents and businesses in the following areas:

- Portions of RDNO Electoral Areas B and C
- Portions of the Township of Spallumcheen located near the southern border
- Future ability to extend service to parts of OKIB IR#4

The project website will be updated regularly with construction information. The website can be found at https://northokanaganwastewater.ca/.

Pictures of works commencing at 85 L&A Cross Road, Spallumcheen.

Aerated Lagoon Cell #1 Earthworks



Access Road Topsoil Stripping

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