

STAFF REPORT

TO: Committee of the Whole MEETING: September 4, 2018

FROM: Julie Pisani **FILE:** 5600--07

Drinking Water & Watershed Protection Program Coordinator

SUBJECT: Project Update – 10 Year Action Plan Review for Drinking Water and Watershed

Protection

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board receive this report on the 10 Year Action Plan Review for the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection program for information.

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) Action Plan Status Review taking place in 2018, the 10th year of program implementation. The review project is intended to assess the program status to date, taking stock of what has been completed, initiated or advanced and what has not. This review began in June 2018 and is nearly complete. A progress memo that outlines preliminary findings from the consultants leading the review is attached to this staff report.

BACKGROUND

Since the early 2000s, the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Board has identified drinking water and watershed protection as key factors for the long term resilience and prosperity of the region. The <u>current RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection (DWWP) Action Plan</u> was adopted by the RDN Board in 2008, and first implemented in 2009 with a 10-year scope. This year, the RDN has initiated a third-party review of the DWWP program implementation to examine the accomplishments of DWWP against the actions identified in the Plan and evaluate program effectiveness in the first decade. Attached to this report is the Project Update Memo from Econics, the Victoria-based water strategy consultants who were selected through competitive process to lead this review. Econics' memo outlines the preliminary findings of the review. This report outlines the progress on this key project.

Outcomes from this review will help direct the delivery of the DWWP program into the future, building on the foundation of work done to date. This review will inform the upcoming comprehensive update to the DWWP Action Plan, scheduled to take place in 2019.

The DWWP Action Plan addresses the protection of water resources, drinking water and watersheds, in cooperation with the many other stakeholders in the region. The overall objectives include to:

- o Increase the level of knowledge regarding drinking water sources and the challenges to their long term sustainability with respect to development and land use pressures.
- o Coordinate efforts of Provincial and Local governments and non-governmental organizations.
- Increase the level of public awareness and conservation regarding drinking water and watershed protection issues and RDN activities.

The DWWP Action Plan provides a roadmap for achieving the objectives through water resource awareness and education, water monitoring and science, and water policy and planning support. It addresses initiatives concerned with water quantity and water quality; for community needs and for ecosystem needs. It outlines key actions and activities and an accompanying budget. Most activities under the plan are understood to require partnership and collaboration for effective implementation.

The current DWWP Action Plan identifies 7 key programs with 26 discreet actions that fall into three general categories: 1) Water education & outreach; 2) Water science: data collection & monitoring; 3) Water policy advocacy and planning support. Many initiatives under these categories have been successfully implemented with several ongoing year-over-year.

As stated above, this *review* project precedes and will inform the DWWP Action Plan *update* project to take place in 2019, which will produce a revised DWWP Action Plan developed for the next 10 years. An updated plan will outline how the DWWP program should evolve to meet current needs, respond to the latest science, adapt to new challenges and acknowledge recent changes to the regulatory landscape, while building on the accomplishments in advancing regional water sustainability initiatives in the first decade. The Board, the public, several RDN departments, and key external stakeholders and rights-holders will be important informants during the Plan revision process next year.

ALTERNATIVES

This report is provided for information.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications of this staff report.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection program is a strategic function. It aligns with and acts upon the key Board Strategic Plan Focus Areas of "Economic Health", "Environment" and "Relationships", including the following strategic priorities:

We recognize the importance of water in supporting our economic and environmental health.

We will have a strong focus on protecting and enhancing our environment in all decisions.

We will include conservation of resources as a planning factor.

We look for opportunities to partner with other branches of government / community groups to advance our region.

We will facilitate / advocate for issues outside of our jurisdiction.

The project underway to complete the 10 Year Action Plan Review of the DWWP Program is a timely endeavour to ensure the RDN can best direct the delivery of the DWWP program as we progress into the future and build off of the foundational work done to date.

Julie Pisani jpisani@rdn.bc.ca August 17, 2018

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Reviewed by:

- M. Walters, Manager, Water Services
- S. De Pol, Director, Water and Wastewater Services
- R. Alexander, General Manager, Regional and Community Utilities
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

1. Econics Memo: Update on 10-Year DWWP Action Plan Implementation Review