

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Dikes Up and Ready for Stormy Weather in Duncan**

**Duncan, BC** - A partnership between the local governments, the province and the federal government has resulted in increased safety for the communities in the lower Cowichan area. The newly expanded and rehabilitated diking system will now provide greater protection against flooding in the area below the TransCanada Highway and has been engineered to withstand projected increases in precipitation.

During critical flooding events, the dikes will provide increased safety for the residents of Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), Municipality of North Cowichan, the City of Duncan and Cowichan Tribes. During the rest of the year, the dikes on the north side of the river will provide safe off-road trails for viewing the Somenos marsh systems and moving between the lower Duncan residential area and the new University Village complex. Work has also been completed to protect Quamichan Village and its road and sewage infrastructure from the direct force of the Cowichan River, just below the Joint Utilities Board Central Sewage Treatment Facility. On the south side of the river, the diking system has been rebuilt as a major setback system which allows the river to move naturally overbank and through a series of side channels, which have been reconnected to provide important and valuable fisheries-rearing areas.

This \$9.5 million project was made possible thanks to \$5.16 million provided by the federal and provincial governments through the Building Canada Fund-Community Component and the BC Flood Protection Program and \$1.19 million provided by the Government of Canada through the federal Gas Tax Fund. The Cowichan Valley local governments (CVRD, the City of Duncan, Cowichan Tribes and the Municipality of North Cowichan) provided the remaining funding of \$3.15 million from their own revenue.

The project created 110 local jobs and \$9.5 was spent within the community on everything from trucking and machine expertise to engineering, survey and biological work over the two year building window.

In 2008, the Government of Canada allocated \$136 million to the Communities Component of the Building Canada Fund to support local government infrastructure projects in B.C. communities with a population of less than 100,000 residents. Of this funding, \$25 million was specifically allocated to accommodate disaster mitigation projects selected through the provincial Flood Protection Program. Mitigation funds are assisting communities across B.C. by providing funding for new dikes, erosion protection, pump stations, flood boxes and other structures to better protect communities from flooding.

Through the federal Gas Tax Fund, the Government of Canada now provides \$253,276,892 in annual funding for municipal infrastructure in British Columbia. The Union of British Columbia Municipalities administers the Gas Tax Fund in B.C., in collaboration with Canada and British Columbia.

## Quick Facts

- 4.7 km of dikes built: The North project has 2.35 km and the South project has 2.36 km of dikes built to date.
- 35,500 metres cubed of new fish habitat created.
- 31,000 metres cubed enhanced.
- 214 metres of Cowichan River naturalized.
- 3.2 hectares of riparian ecological reserve created adjacent to Somenos Lake.
- Identified species-at-risk protected and enhanced.
- Area of land now utilized for flood protection complete with a multi-use path: 6.1 hectares along the North project dikes.
- Property Owners providing access for flood protection are: For the North project: two farmers, one school district, and one business owner and for the South project 22 landowners.
- 273 people impacted by the 2009 flood which had a probability of happening once in every seven years.
- Cost of response to the 2009 flood was approximately \$1.5 million.

## Quotes

"Our Government is committed to strengthening our communities and protecting Canadians. With our investments in these vital infrastructure upgrades, we have delivered on our commitment to providing greater safety for residents while contributing to the long-term prosperity of the community."

*The Honourable Michelle Rempel*

*Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification*

"The provincial investment of more than \$2.5 million through the Flood Protection Program is money well spent. Not only will it keep Cowichan families and businesses safe, it will prevent future flooding damages, saving money on recovery costs down the road. This is an example of how collaboration between multiple governments and First Nations is resulting in real progress towards keeping families in our province safe from these kinds of disasters."

*Suzanne Anton*

*Attorney General and Minister of Justice*

"Congratulations to all our partners in the successful completion of this significant flood protection initiative. Our communities are that much safer because of your efforts".

*Rob Hutchins*

*CVRD Board Chair*

"These dikes are essential to protect people and property in areas of our community that flooded in 2009."

*Jon Lefebure*

*Mayor, Municipality of North Cowichan*

"Hindsight can be 20/20 and in this instance, the 2009 Cowichan Flood became the catalyst for developing a long-term, comprehensive diking system that is significantly reducing our potential for future flooding in the lower Cowichan River floodplain. We are very grateful to all those who contributed financially and tirelessly to make this a reality".

*Sybille Sanderson*

*Manager, Public Safety, CVRD*

## Associated Links

- See how the federal [Gas Tax Fund](#) provides long-term funding to help local governments build and revitalize their local infrastructure.
- Learn more about the [New Building Canada Plan](#), Canada's largest long-term infrastructure plan, which will provide stable funding for a 10-year period.
- Consult [Canada's Economic Action Plan](#) to learn more about the Government of Canada's focus on jobs and economy

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