



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Two Tier Fees Dropped at Cowichan Aquatic Centre for South Cowichan Communities

Duncan, BC: The Cowichan Valley Regional District announced today that an agreement has been reached that effectively ends the two tier fee structure at the Cowichan Aquatic Centre for residents in Electoral Areas A – Mill Bay/Malahat, B – Shawnigan Lake, C – Cobble Hill and D – Cowichan Bay. In exchange for the Kerry Park Recreation Centre purchasing service from the Cowichan Aquatic Centre, residents from all four areas will no longer be required to pay the higher two tier fee to use the pool as of December 17, 2012. This deal was part of the terms of a recent agreement to end a service withdrawal process initiated by Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay. As part of this deal, Area D will continue as a Kerry Park Recreation Centre partner, but will not be responsible for any major capital improvements to the facility.

“This is great news for individuals and families who want to take part in a healthy active lifestyle” said Rob Hutchins, CVRD Board Chair, “this agreement provides a practical solution for all parties while increasing community access to a high quality recreation facility. I commend the hard work and determination of Area Directors and our Municipal partners to work out these longstanding issues for constituents.” Residents from these communities are invited to come into the Cowichan Aquatic Centre, have a look around and pick up an access card at no cost.

“I’m very pleased to see this issue resolved for the South Cowichan area,” said Mayor Jon Lefebure of North Cowichan. “The Cowichan Aquatic Centre is a great facility and we want to make it accessible to more members of the community.” Duncan Mayor Phil Kent acknowledged that “the Agreement is a positive movement forward. People in the Cowichan Valley want to have full access to recreation regardless of where they live. This will give residents of South Cowichan that opportunity.”

South Cowichan Directors can now begin preparing for the upcoming Holiday season with the collective satisfaction of having worked out a longstanding issue for their residents. “I’m thrilled to have this finally resolved”, said Lori Iannidinardo, Director for Cowichan Bay, “people in Cowichan Bay have been clear they want affordable access to the pool in Duncan.” For Gerry Giles, Area Director for Cobble Hill, fairness was a key part of the agreement. “This not only increases recreational opportunities for seniors and young families in our areas, it helps to equalize the tax rates for recreation purposes among South Cowichan residents. It’s great we could resolve this issue in time to allow area residents access to the pool over the holiday season.”



"It's rewarding to tackle a difficult historical problem and develop sensible solutions that are fair and equitable" said Bruce Fraser, Shawnigan Lake Area Director, "this again shows what can be accomplished when people sit down and work together." For Mike Walker, Director for Mill Bay/Malahat, finding a solution was matter of keeping promises. "Mill Bay residents made it clear they wanted this issue resolved when I ran for office; I'm glad we worked this thing out - it's a great facility."

The two tier fee structure will remain in place for the non-contributing areas of Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station/Glenora/Sahtlam, Area F – Cowichan Lake South/Skutz Falls, Area I – Youbou and the Town of Lake Cowichan. For these remaining areas, Lefebure offered to sit down and work out an agreement: "I would love to see every area in the Regional District accessing this facility. We don't want a two tier fee structure; I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss funding options with these areas so these people get access to the Centre."

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