



June 3, 2020

Outdoor Lifeguard Services Not Being Offered This Summer

(North Cowichan and Cowichan Lake, BC) – Due to the ongoing risk to the health and safety of the public and our staff caused by COVID-19, outdoor Lifeguard Services are not being offered this summer at the following locations:

- Arbutus Park (Youbou)
- Fuller Lake Park (Chemainus)
- Crofton Outdoor Pool

Unlike Arbutus Park and Fuller Lake Park, the Crofton Outdoor Pool cannot operate without a lifeguard. Consequently, the pool will not open for the summer season. The Lifesaving Society, in conjunction with Worksafe BC and the BC Recreation and Parks Association, is developing training protocols for lifeguards for rescue training, first aid, and use of personal protective equipment during COVID-19. These protocols would need to be met in order for lifeguards to be present at any indoor or outdoor swimming location. Even if these protocols were finalized the pool would not open in time for summer because it would take a considerable amount of time to hire and train staff on the increased guidelines for public health and safety.

In the absence of supervision by certified lifeguards, North Cowichan and the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) remind the public that if they are attending outdoor beaches to swim, they must maintain active and vigilant supervision of children and swimmers in their care. The use of Personal Floatation Devices (lifejackets) is recommended. Residents should use public water access points cautiously, and exercise proper physical distancing by keeping two-metres apart from others who are outside their immediate household. Remember to wash your hands frequently, especially if you are sharing equipment or making contact with common touchpoints.

“These decisions have been difficult,” said North Cowichan Mayor Al Siebring. “We recognize how important the pool is to parents in Crofton. However, the timelines simply don’t work for that facility. As for the decision not to have life guards at Fuller Lake, we’ve had to take a proactive role in protecting our staff as we continue to deal with COVID-19. I want to remind parents to take extra care in supervising their children while using Fuller Lake Park this summer.”



Despite the absence of lifeguards, there is a permanent portable aquatic life ring at Fuller Lake to be used in case of emergencies. Additionally, there will be a lifejacket loaner station available at Fuller Lake. However, a lifejacket loaner station will not be available at Arbutus Park, and parents will be required to supply lifejackets to their family members at that facility.

“The decision to not offer lifeguard services at Arbutus Park was made with a heavy heart, but reflects the unprecedented measures we’re taking in response to this pandemic,” said Linda Blatchford, Manager of Cowichan Lake Recreation for the CVRD. “Cowichan Lake Recreation staff hope that everyone will take extra care while visiting waterfront areas around the region this summer.”

For the most up to date information on how North Cowichan and the CVRD are addressing COVID-19 visit www.northcowichan.ca/COVID19 or www.cvrld.bc.ca/3267/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information

For details regarding any Vancouver Island Health Authority Beach Advisories, visit: <https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/environment/recreational-water-beach-reports>

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