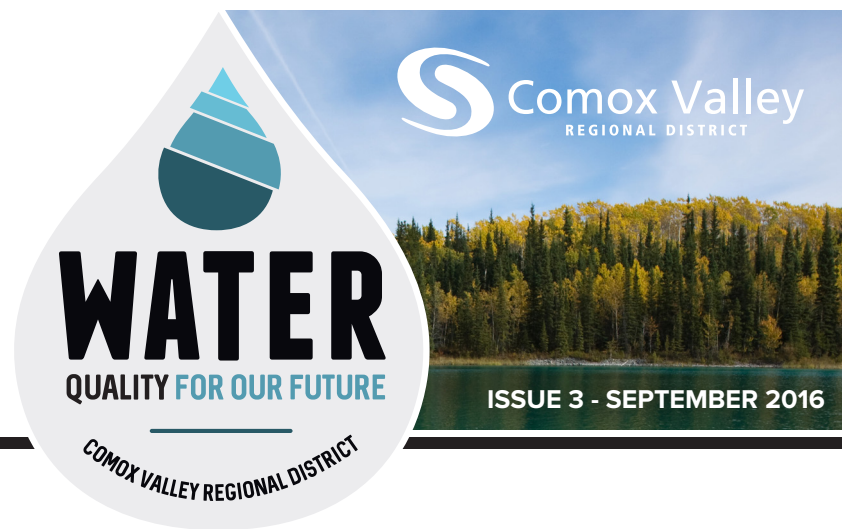


PROTECTING OUR WATERSHED

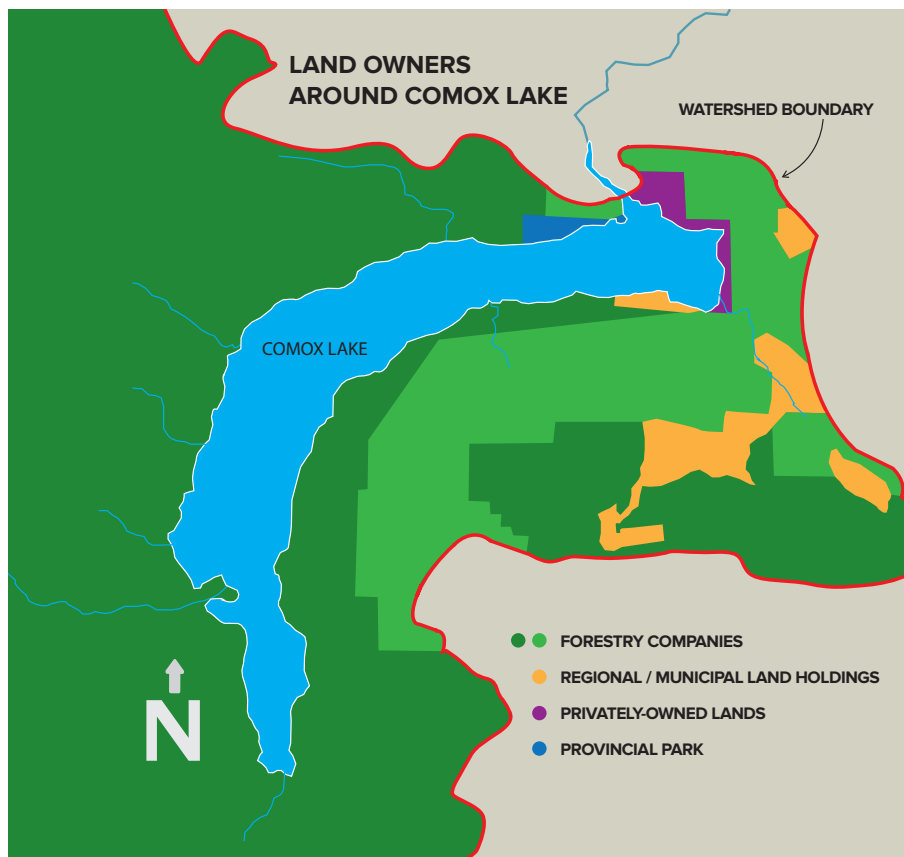


ISSUE 3 - SEPTEMBER 2016

The Comox Valley Water System (CVWS) draws its supply from Comox Lake reservoir. This vital resource provides drinking water to approximately 41,000 residents who work and play in Courtenay and Comox. Let's act smart when exploring our watershed!

» CREATING THE WATERSHED PROTECTION PLAN

The plan was developed in close consultation with the Comox Lake Watershed Advisory Group which is comprised of land-owners, regulators and technical advisors. Everyone involved has an interest in the protection of water resources and ecosystem function to ensure a healthy drinking water supply for the long term. The plan was officially adopted in the spring of 2016 and is available here: www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/watershed



» MULTI-USE WATERSHED

A major challenge in the Comox Lake watershed is that there are nine land-owners under four main categories: forestry; private; provincial; and municipal. The watershed is a popular recreational destination for swimming, boating, biking and hiking, along with active logging. Most importantly, the watershed provides drinking water to 41,000 residents along with fish and wildlife habitat and hydro-electric power. With such a diverse range of land and water uses and users, watershed protection is dependent on strong working relationships between the landowners, recreational users and governing authorities.



DID YOU KNOW THAT there were no roads in the watershed until 1947 when railway tracks built in the early 1930s were converted to roadways?

» KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A COMPREHENSIVE WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM

TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN

ADDITIONAL DISINFECTION **NO NEW DEVELOPMENT**

PURCHASE THE LAND **CAMPING OUTSIDE OF DESIGNATED CAMPGROUNDS SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED**

ATV USE SHOULD BE LIMITED **FORESTRY COMPANIES SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ANNUAL UPDATES**

VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND AND ROYSTON SHOULD JOIN THE COMOX VALLEY WATER SYSTEM

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

» RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment was conducted to update both natural and human-caused risks in the context of a deep-water intake in Comox Lake. After considering protective barriers already in place, the hazards that posed the greatest risks to water quality were:

- **Camping in undesignated areas** in the watershed, especially near the lakeshore or other riparian areas
- Augmentation/**concentration of streamflows**
- **Wildfire**
- **Off Road Vehicle use** (ATV's, side-by-sides, dirt bikes, snowmobiles) off of maintained roads
- **Flooding** on the order of a 100 to 200 year event
- **Drought**
- **Intentional harm** to the water source or watershed
- **Earthquake** resulting in the loss of the BC Hydro Dam
- **Aircraft accident** on Comox Lake
- **Sewage** management facilities
- **Body contact recreation** on Comox Lake (parasites and viruses)
- **Trails and non-motorized trail use** (hiking, mountain biking, horse riding, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing)
- **Timber harvesting** - cutblock location and extent
- **Wildlife contamination** of Comox Lake

» IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Actions recommended by the watershed protection plan to address the risks listed above are now being taken. One priority item for 2016 is the development and implementation of a more comprehensive raw water quality monitoring program. Understanding the range of water quality variability in the lake and its tributaries will assist the CVRD and land owners to better manage the watershed. If you would like to review the full plan, please refer to: www.comoxvalleyrd.ca/watershed