



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
3400 – 30 Street
Vernon, BC
V1T 5E6

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 9, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT: Christy Poirier, Manager, Communications & Grants

TELEPHONE: 250-550-3539

City of Vernon release of treated reclaimed water

The City of Vernon's Water Reclamation Centre (VWRC) is preparing for a release of high-quality reclaimed water following the treatment process.

Presently, the VWRC receives and treats approximately 13 million litres of influent every day, which is mostly domestic and commercial in nature, but also includes industrial wastewater. Following an advanced reclamation process, including the use of primary, secondary and tertiary levels of treatment, most of the reclaimed water (more than 98%) is piped to MacKay Reservoir, located 10 km from the VWRC on Commonage Road. The rest of the reclaimed water is piped to The Rise Golf Course, where it is used for irrigation.

Reclaimed water from MacKay Reservoir is used to irrigate local golf courses, ball diamonds, soccer pitches, agricultural land used for grazing and hay production, two seed orchards, a seedling nursery and other tree plantations.

The irrigation programs are permitted by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and allow the City to reuse valuable water resources and provide a unique service to land owners in the North Okanagan region.

"The highly treated reclaimed water irrigation program has a long history in Vernon, and the City is proud of our ability to irrigate local agricultural and recreational lands while reusing this precious and irreplaceable resource," said Mayor Victor Cumming. "The City is committed to continuing the spray irrigation programs for reclaimed water and is regularly looking for opportunities to expand or adjust the program to make it even better."

Over the last 10 years, inflow into MacKay reservoir has exceeded the output of the spray irrigation program. Output of the spray irrigation program is affected by many factors outside of the City's control including rain, smoke and cooler temperatures. In 2020, reclaimed water levels in the MacKay reservoir reached the maximum allowable level. Due to these circumstances, the City discharged treated reclaimed water from the VWRC to a deep lake outfall in Okanagan Lake in 2020 and again in 2021, consistent with all regulatory requirements.

In early 2023, MacKay Reservoir will be at its maximum storage capacity and will temporarily require a redirect of treated reclaimed water from the VWRC to Okanagan Lake via the deep

lake outfall. The intention is to use the 2023 summer irrigation program to draw down the reservoir to a more manageable level. The City is working with the Province to determine when discharge will end.

The deep lake outfall is located 7 km southwest of Kin Beach, is approximately 1.5 – 2 km from either shore, and is 60 m below the water surface. Reclaimed water from the VWRC meets all requirements of our Operating Certificate issued by the Ministry of Environment, and has been treated to protect the ecosystem within Okanagan Lake and its surrounding area.

Reclaimed water discharge is not an uncommon practice in the Okanagan Valley. Currently, communities located along Okanagan Lake (including the City of Kelowna, City of West Kelowna, District of Peachland, District of Summerland and City of Penticton) discharge the majority of their treated reclaimed water to Okanagan Lake or adjacent water courses every day.

To learn more about the water reclamation process in Vernon, please visit the City's website at vernon.ca/water-reclamation. A video describes the treatment process and provides an inside look at the Water Reclamation Centre.