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New Water Quality Monitoring System for City's Drinking Watershed

The City of Campbell River has installed a remote water quality monitoring station on John Hart Lake to measure long-term quality in our source water and to assist in providing advanced warning of potential changes in the quality of the community's raw water supply.

"This new monitoring device is important for providing safe, clean and reliable drinking water for the community," explains the City's water quality technologist, Allison Neill. "The key to maintaining high quality of water without additional costly treatment is to understand the water supply from source to consumer tap. This knowledge includes an understanding of the general characteristics of the source water as well as any potential threats to the water quality, which can be natural or created by human activity."

The Campbell River drinking watershed includes an area of about 1,800 square kilometres encompassing John Hart Lake, McIvor Lake, Lower Campbell Lake, Upper Campbell Lake and Buttle Lake. It currently supports a variety of activities, such as recreational use, power generation, logging and mining. Tours of the watershed hosted by the City during drinking water week helped participants better understand some of the water quality risks created by illegal activities in the catchment area, such as mud-bogging and garbage and yard waste dumping.

The new system will collect long term-water quality information such as temperature, pH and turbidity that will help the City formulate measures to better protect the future health of the community's drinking water.

"One of Council's strategic objectives is to improve protection of our drinking watershed. Having this remote monitoring unit will provide the City with 24-hour continuous monitoring and provide an early warning in the event of an incident in the watershed," says Mayor Charlie Cornfield. "We have higher quality water in Campbell River than almost anywhere in the world, and having a large multi-user watershed means we need to monitor it closely to see that it stays that way."

As part of the City's water system emergency response plan for the drinking watershed, the remote monitoring unit will enable improved response measures by the City and emergency services should an event in the watershed occur.

Community members can help protect the community's drinking water by reporting illegal activities in the watershed to the Forest and Range Enforcement Office at 250-286-9300.

More information about Campbell River's drinking water is available on the City's website at www.campbellriver.ca (under Residents/Water).

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