

Mayor's Message - June 2017

As the school year winds down, and vacation plans take shape, many of us will receive visitors from other provinces and countries. One thing we can count on: if we pour them a tall, cool glass of Gibsons tap water, they will enjoy it to the very last drop, and quite likely comment that it is some of the best water they have ever tasted.

That is why Town's Council and staff are so focused on protecting the Gibsons Aquifer, the source of drinking water for most of our community and the Town's most valuable asset. As just one example of this diligence, significant strides have been made to address the recommendations of an aquifer mapping study, completed in 2012, with the goal of enhancing the protection of the aquifer, and incorporating additional measures to ensure the aquifer continues to be managed against the impacts of pollution and development activities. One recommendation was the creation of a Development Permit Area for Aquifer Protection (DP#9) and instituting a long-term monitoring program. The Development Permit requirements came into effect with the adoption of the updated Official Community Plan in 2015. As part of the permit, works taking place near the sensitive aquifer areas, primarily located in lower Gibsons, have additional requirements, including peer-reviews by geotechnical and hydrogeologist specialists working on behalf of the Town.

The yearly monitoring program has been in place since 2013. Waterline Resources, in consultation with the Town of Gibsons, developed a suite of water quality parameters that are applied in our overall annual groundwater monitoring program to guide us in identifying any long-term trends and effects from current and future development in the Gibsons Aquifer.

At present, the Town is reviewing the development permit for the aquifer protection related to the George Hotel development. The Town's key priority is to ensure that the Gibsons Aquifer is protected from construction and existing site contamination. This process is taking longer than originally expected, due to the sensitive geotechnical and hydrogeological conditions of the site. The design and review process will continue until it has been demonstrated that the proposed project can proceed in a way that protects the Gibsons Aquifer.

We are confident that adequate measures are in place to protect the Gibsons Aquifer, and that the development processes are in line with the requirements put in place. For more information on the Gibsons Aquifer please visit: <http://www.gibsons.ca/aquifer>