



Factsheet #1

Wastewater Services for the Residents of Port Alberni

Wastewater Services

The City of Port Alberni (City) treats wastewater from approximately 18,000 people. To provide this service, the City uses a centralized wastewater treatment system that has been in place since the 1950's. This centralized system is made up of a number of elements as follows:

- An extensive collection system comprised of combined sanitary and stormwater sewer systems, sanitary sewer systems, and stormwater sewer systems;
- Five pump stations that move wastewater from low-lying areas to the treatment facility;
- A 5 hectare (50,000 m²) earthen lagoon system, which treats the wastewater using biological activity with the help of added oxygen through aeration; and
- An overflow structure and swale that conveys treated wastewater (effluent) to the Somass River and thus re-integrates “used water” with the watershed from which it originated.



A small portion of the City is not serviced by the centralized wastewater treatment system and is managed by on-site septic systems.

Why Does the City of Port Alberni Need a Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP)?



In recent years, the City's lagoon system has not been able to achieve regulatory requirements due to high wastewater flows. These high wastewater flows are the result of Port Alberni's wet climate and an aging sewer system, which over time, has become leaky. To actively address this regulatory compliance issue, the City has been working to define a technically-feasible and affordable solution for upgrades to the City's wastewater treatment system. These upgrades are needed to comply with provincial and federal wastewater regulations.



Laws governing wastewater management in British Columbia require public health protection and, over time, achievement of a standard level of wastewater treatment. These laws also encourage resource recovery from wastewater. By carrying out an LWMP, the City is committed to finding community-driven and cost-effective solutions to achieve the long-term management needs of Port Alberni.

A Public LWMP Process is Underway

The City is taking proactive efforts to ensure protection of public health and the environment through a comprehensive assessment of wastewater management solutions. As part of these efforts, the City initiated a three-stage LWMP in 1999 for approval by the BC Minister of Environment. The Stage 1 LWMP was completed in 2001. A Draft Stage 2 LWMP was completed in 2003; however, the wastewater treatment options were financially prohibitive for the City at the time. Since then, the City's LWMP has focused efforts on identifying more feasible opportunities, integrating the acquired industrial lagoon into the City's wastewater treatment system along with other improvements, and reducing combined sanitary and combined sewer overflows within the collection system.



The City is currently undertaking Stage 2 of the BC Ministry of Environment's LWMP process.

For more information, visit the City of Port Alberni's LWMP website at www.portalberni.ca/liquid-waste-management-plan or contact City of Port Alberni Engineering at 250-720-2830.