

# **The Prospect Lake/Tod Creek Action Plan:**

## **Protecting water quality in the watershed**

### **What is the Prospect Lake/Tod Creek Action Plan and why do we need it?**

The request for an Action Plan for this watershed came from the Prospect Lake Community Association to Saanich Council in 1994. The community was specifically concerned about declining water quality in Prospect Lake. Development of the Action Plan took place over the next five years, with community review taking place from winter 1998 to spring 2000. The goal of the Action Plan is to provide a set of measures to protect and improve declining water quality in the watershed. The plan outlines the community vision for Prospect Lake and Tod Creek Watershed as well as objectives and strategies for achieving the goal of improved water quality. The plan was endorsed by Council in August 2001.

### **What is the area covered by the Plan?**

The Prospect Lake/Tod Creek Watershed lies in the northwest portion of the municipality, between the Highlands and urban Saanich. The watershed encompasses 23 km<sup>2</sup> of rural lands and watercourses, eventually draining into Saanich Inlet via Tod Creek.

### **What are the objectives of the Plan?**

- Maintain and restore riparian areas. Riparian areas are the areas that parallel the edges of lakes, streams and wetlands. These areas are important to maintaining water quality. Bank and soil stability, filtration of pollutants and cooling of the water are a few of the functions of the riparian zone.
- Support community stewardship education. Through stewardship education, the community will be able to participate actively to protect and restore riparian areas, lakes, and stream water quality.
- Keep nutrients and pollutants out of surface and groundwater. Excess nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen cause excessive algae and plant growth and declining oxygen levels which negatively impact fish and other aquatic organisms.
- Minimize runoff into watercourses. Runoff increases as the amount of impervious cover in a watershed increases. Aquatic health declines as runoff increases, as it changes the hydrology and introduces more pollutants to waterbodies.

### **What strategies are outlined to achieve these objectives?**

Thirteen strategies are outlined in the document for implementation. Some of these strategies, have already been completed, while others have yet to be started.

- Establish a Development Permit Area;
- Extend coverage of Tree Preservation Bylaw;
- Offer a property tax incentive;
- Promote stewardship through “awareness zone” program;
- Develop a community stewardship water testing program;

- Support stewardship by agricultural producers;
- Stop nutrients from septic systems from entering watercourses;
- Reduce impact from agricultural waste;
- Apply building setbacks to more watercourses;
- Control uses and hard surfacing close to Prospect Lake;
- Minimize runoff from agricultural activity; and
- Amend the Deposit of Fill Bylaw.

### What can I do?

There are some simple steps you can take to protect water quality in the watershed.

- Purchase a copy of the Prospect Lake/Tod Creek Action Plan from the Saanich Planning Department;
- Check local regulations before building or making changes to land adjacent to a watercourse such as the **Streamside Development Permit Area** ([http://www.saanich.ca/business/development/laps/dpguide/streamside\\_text.pdf](http://www.saanich.ca/business/development/laps/dpguide/streamside_text.pdf));
- Leave a buffer strip of native vegetation beside watercourses –replant if necessary;
- Avoid spilling fuels, antifreeze, paint thinner or other chemicals on lands or water. Wash your car away from the water's edge;
- Don't use fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides near the water, and use only phosphate-free soaps, detergents, and cleaners in your home;
- Follow proper maintenance procedures for your septic tank – pump out regularly; and
- Join a local stewardship organization such as Habitat Acquisition Trust (<http://www.hat.bc.ca/>), Living by Water (<http://livingbywater.ca/>), the Prospect Lake Community Association (<http://www.prospectlakecommunity.ca/>), or the Friends of Tod Creek (<http://www.prospectlakecommunity.ca/TodCreek.htm>).

**Call or visit us for your free copy of “On the Living Edge: Your Handbook for Waterfront Living”**

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