



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

RDCK introduces Water Safety Ambassador program

Nelson, BC: With the weather heating up, more and more people are flocking to lakes and rivers across the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) to cool off and have fun. While the lakes and rivers throughout the RDCK are beautiful and inviting, they also pose serious dangers. To educate the public on water safety and drowning prevention, the RDCK has created a new summer initiative called the Water Safety Ambassador program.

Officially launched on July 2, the goal of the Water Safety Ambassador program is to promote drowning prevention and water safety through fun physical distance games and activities, as well as providing educational material such as water safety pamphlets with content from the Lifesaving Society, Red Cross, and National Drowning Prevention Coalition. Water Safety Ambassadors have been visiting beaches throughout the RDCK over the last three weeks and will continue to have a presence at as many beaches as possible within the RDCK this summer.

In light of recent events, it is imperative that everyone, residents and visitors alike, understand the inherent danger they take when swimming and playing in our lakes and rivers. On average there are 76 drowning deaths per year in British Columbia and drowning is a leading cause of death for children in the province. The importance of water safety education throughout the region cannot be overstated.

Water levels at beaches across the RDCK are unseasonably high this year. The potential for strong currents and undertows is unpredictable. Everyone needs to take the necessary precautions when going into the water. Prevention is key. Supervise your children at all times and if you, your child, a family member or friend cannot swim, ensure they are wearing an approved personal flotation device.

The new program has already garnered the attention of the National Drowning Prevention Coalition, who have invited the RDCK and its Water Safety Ambassador staff to apply for the 2020 National Drowning Prevention Coalition (NDPC) drowning prevention award. RDCK staff has also been invited to present at the virtual 2020 National Drowning Prevention Symposium.

“The Water Safety Ambassadors engage with community members both in person while physically distancing and via social media platforms to create awareness and educate the public on drowning prevention and water safety,” said Lisa Dear, Aquatic Programmer, RDCK. “With the interest and attention this program is getting and recognition from the National Drowning Prevention Coalition, this program could be the catalyst to start programs like this across Canada.”

For more information about the program or any other recreation program go to www.rdck.ca/recreation.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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