

### Backgrounder: Regional Water Supply System

The Regional Water Supply System is comprised of 20,549 hectares of water supply area, 6 lake reservoirs and 11 dams, primary and secondary disinfection facilities and 110 kilometres of water transmission mains, delivering on average, 130 million litres of water across Greater Victoria every day.

The Regional Water Supply Commission has been proactive in confronting water supply system infrastructure challenges and has invested more than \$130 million into infrastructure renewal projects and programs since 1995, to ensure an adequate source of water and a safe and reliable water disinfection and transmission system. In addition, the \$65 million purchase of the Leech Water Supply Area lands in 2007/2010 provides a sustainable future water supply area for Greater Victoria.

- Of this investment, \$20 million was used to raise the dam in 2002 to increase storage capacity of Sooke Lake Reservoir to provide adequate supply during drought conditions, such as those that were experienced this past summer throughout BC.
- Over the next five years, \$27 million in infrastructure upgrades are currently planned.

As a result of many years of infrastructure investments and responsible financial management of the resources, the Regional Water Supply System is not facing the severe infrastructure deficit that many local government utilities are facing across Canada.

Water conservation and demand management continue to be important components of the management of the water supply. The benefits of lower demand are:

- Capital project delay – Less water being used by the community can delay the need to build new water infrastructure that would be necessary to provide increased capacity if demand continued to increase.
- Fisheries releases – In addition to the water used by customers, water from CRD water reservoirs is released to enhance fish habitat in the Sooke River, Charters River and Goldstream River.
- Buffers against the unknown – Having as much water storage in the reservoir as possible, provides the assurance that not only will there be a sufficient quantity of drinking water for the year, but it also provides the flexibility to deal with changing weather and precipitation patterns.
- Water quality – Less annual fluctuation in Sooke Lake Reservoir water level contributes to a more biologically stable reservoir, through less opportunity for sediment re-suspension and nutrient loading, and longer water detention time within the reservoir (which has a number of resulting benefits such as lower turbidity, low colour, neutral pH, low bacteria, and low parasites).