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Cowichan urged to dive into lake rescue weekend



Roger Hart of the Quamichan Lake Stewardship Committee, at Trumpeter Pointe's storm-water settlement ponds. Runoff and more will be addressed during Saturday's community forum Sustainable Approaches to Healthy Watersheds.

Peter W. Rusland

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By [Peter Rusland - Cowichan News Leader Pictorial](#)

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Ways for citizens to help save Quamichan and Somenos lakes, while propelling Cowichan's rising eco-economy, will be explained this weekend in Duncan.

The Community Forum on Sustainable Approaches to Healthy Watersheds will feature a raft of local and national experts on sharing their knowledge spanning aeration and to dikes.

Those pros include David Anderson of the Cowichan Watershed Board. He'll discuss crucial local action in watershed management.

Nancy Olewiler will explain economic goods and services from watershed management.

Riparian biologist David Polster of the Cowichan Valley Naturalists will outline habitat buys and enhancement projects.

Ken Ashley will detail lake habitat restoration through aeration. Kate Miller, regional environment manager, will discuss valley flood tactics. And Saturday night's speaker is biodiversity scientist Richard Hebda.

He'll explain how climate change is hurting lakes and wetlands like Quamichan and Somenos.

"There'll also be a report on fisheries values in both lakes," said city Councillor Paul Fletcher of the co-hosting Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society.

Both lakes have water-quality problems, he said, so the goal is learning rejuvenating eco-strategies.

"The key for me is public participation in this process.

"Our society's focus is more wildlife-oriented and that's mostly about habitat and water quality and measuring and creating a database.

"We'll be telling people what we're doing."

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Locals are acting to save the dying lake from nutrient pollution that causes algae blooms and more.

Hart cited the lake's Trumpeter Pointe municipal park where the rotary club is installing trails and signage.

There are also settling ponds in a developer-donated wetland park to help plug nutrient flows into Quamichan, Hart said.

The stewards also want folks out to Sunday's 8 a.m. invasive-species removal work party and Rotary tours at the Pointe.

Somenos and Quamichan groups are urging North Cowichan council to make the area around both lakes a sort of eco-zone habitat to keep nutrients — such as manure, sewage and lawn chemical run-off — out.

"It comes down to political will," said Hart.

"We want people talking with experts to get a better understanding of what needs to be done. That's the way of the 21st century."

Your ticket:

What: Sustainable Approaches to Healthy Watersheds forum

When: June 5, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., dinner 6 p.m., keynote speech 7 p.m.

Where: Quw'utsun' Cultural Centre, Duncan

Tickets: Day \$15, dinner \$30, weekend pass, \$80. Call 250-717-1212 or info@bclss.org.

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