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## MEDIA RELEASE

# North Cowichan, Cowichan Tribes and the City of Duncan Partner on Long-Term Agreements

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**North Cowichan/Duncan, BC** – North Cowichan, Cowichan Tribes and the City of Duncan are pleased to announce the signing of two long-term agreements that will benefit our citizens for many years into the future.

The 49-year lease agreement will enable the continued operation of the Joint Utility Board (JUB) on the current 39-acre site owned by the Cowichan Tribes and its landholders, should all parties agree to do so. This facility currently provides approximately 31,000 citizens with treated sewage services.

This historic lease agreement demonstrates the value of forming partnerships to address our collective needs. The agreement provides certainty that the local governments can continue to offer cost-effective and environmentally sensitive sewer treatment services within the South End Sewer Area (including Cowichan Tribes, Cowichan Bay, Eagle Heights, City of Duncan and the south end of North Cowichan). The agreement provides the potential for triple bottom line benefits with respect to the economic, social and environmental interests of all the parties. The partners are committed to fulfilling their commitment to the environmental initiative set out in the Central Sector Liquid Waste Management Plan to remove treated effluent discharge from the Cowichan River within 10 years' time. We are also pleased with the economic commitments to provide an additional 130 sewer capacity units to the Cowichan Tribes for their community development purposes, and the provision in the agreement to share any profits generated by the sale of treated effluent for irrigation purposes as we move toward a resource recovery model.

The parties have also agreed to a perpetual Dike Permit to upgrade and maintain the portion of the South End Diking Network on Cowichan Tribes lands that protect some of their lands, and the urban cores of the City of Duncan, and the south end University Village area in North Cowichan. Under the terms of the \$2.7 million EMBC grant (for Phase 1), funding for upgrades to the diking around the JUB facility, and dike improvements between Somenos Creek and Lakes Road, was conditional upon the parties coming to this agreement. This project is part of an overall plan to build an upgraded dike network connecting the City Dike, JUB Dike, Lakes Road Dike and Beverly Road Dike system.

An EMBC Flood Protection (Phase 2) grant application has also been submitted to undertake upgrades of the Lakes Road and Beverly Road Dike system, as well as river works near Somenos Creek, to protect against the impacts experienced during the 2009 flood event. If approved, it is hoped this work will commence in 2012 and 2013.

Mayor Kent stated, "This lease agreement is a significant achievement for our communities, and the culmination of the sincere will to work collaboratively toward a more sustainable future for our citizens," adding, "the lease provides us with a stable foundation that allows us to collectively find the best solutions for waste treatments and resource recovery. Duncan Council looks forward to the opportunities to explore sustainable alternatives that

strive to deliver enhancement of the environment, and develop innovative ways to gain resources that will benefit the system users and the community.”

Chief Lydia Hwitsum states, “This is a positive demonstration of multi-jurisdictional cooperation to work together to safeguard human and environmental health,” and she added, “the Cowichan River is a life source for our Cowichan Mustimuhw (peoples) and we are so pleased to have a commitment from all governments to remove the discharge from the Cowichan River within the next 10 years.”

“I am so pleased that we have formed this partnership to provide sewer and flood protection services to our citizens,” stated Mayor Walker. “The Municipality of North Cowichan looks forward to forming future partnerships with the Cowichan Tribes, City of Duncan, School District No. 79 and the CVRD as we work together on a vision for the University Village area that will integrate our communities with complementary alternative transportation systems and infrastructure to ensure our collective residential, business and institutional needs are addressed in a socially, economically and environmentally sensitive manner.”

The parties look forward to building on this partnership that benefits all citizens of the Cowichan Valley.

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