Comox Strathcona Waste Management

News Release

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Food Scraps Returned as Compost for Community Parks

The Comox Strathcona waste management (CSWM) service has processed over 1,700 tonnes of food and yard waste since the pilot organics collection program began in June 2013, resulting in a nutrient-rich compost for various municipal landscaping projects.

The CSWM service has provided the participating municipalities -- the Town of Comox and the Village of Cumberland -- with compost to use as a soil conditioner for public area garden beds and community parks, creating a sustainable and completed food-back-to-soil loop.

"During the first year of the program the Town of Comox collected more than 1,500 tonnes of organic materials, including food scraps, food-soiled paper and yard trimmings," said acting mayor Patti Fletcher. "We look forward to increasing community participation to get even more organic material out the landfill -- extending the life of the landfill and continuing to work towards the goal of 70 per cent diversion by 2020."

When buried in a landfill, organic materials do not break down as they would in nature or in a compost pile. They decompose anaerobically, without oxygen, and produce leachate and methane gas. In the region's 2012 solid waste management plan it was estimated that one-third of the waste disposed of at the landfill was compostable material.

"The Village of Cumberland is proud of the first year results, noticing a net diversion rate of approximately 150 tonnes with the addition of food waste collection - as compared to 64 tonnes with just yard waste before the pilot project started," said village mayor Leslie Baird. "Instead of the organic material going into the landfill, it is composted and the end result is a compost that helps retain water and fertilizes gardens without the use of chemicals."

Comox Organics –As a result of the organic collection program that began in June 2013, Patti Fletcher (Town of Comox acting mayor) and Edwin Grieve (chair of the Comox Strathcona waste management board) assist the town's parks worker, Ryley Carr, in applying compost into the gardens at Marina Park

Cumberland Organics – After a year of participating in the organics collection program, the Village of Cumberland's mayor Leslie Baird, Comox Strathcona waste management's chair Edwin Grieve and Cumberland's manager of operations, Rob Crisfield, display the fresh compost now being applied in the local community parks

Over the last year, the Gore Cover system technology used to process the organics into compost has proven effective at odour control and in meeting regulatory processing requirements. At the June 19th CSWM board meeting, a staff report will provide details on the organics pilot project and will present information on costs and benefits of expansion of the project to a regional scale.

Details about the organics compost program are available on the participating municipalities' websites, http://www.comox.ca and http://www.cumberland.ca or by visiting the Comox Strathcona waste management service www.cswm.ca/organiccomposting.

The Comox Strathcona waste management (CSWM) service is a function of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and is responsible for two regional waste management centres that serve the Comox Valley and Campbell River, as well as a range of transfer stations and smaller waste-handling and recycling facilities for the electoral areas of the CVRD and the Strathcona Regional District. The CSWM service manages over 100,000 tonnes of waste and recycled material and oversees a number of diversion and education programs.

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