

**For immediate release
April 18, 2017**

**SQUAMISH-LILLOOET REGIONAL DISTRICT WEIGHS IN ON REGIONAL WASTE
MANAGEMENT GOALS:**

***Waste per capita falls for two years only to rise again in 2016, while access to organics
recycling opportunities gradually improves.***

Pemberton, BC – With Earth Day (April 22, 2017) and the 50th Annual Pitch-In Week (April 22 – 29, 2017) springing up this month, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District is taking stock of regional waste reduction goals.

The 2016 Solid Waste and Resource Management Plan (SWRMP) lays the framework for the region's shared waste management deliverables. Two major goals in the SWRMP to be achieved by 2020 are: to reduce the 2012 waste per capita of 525 kilograms per person to 350 kilograms per person, and for 75% of the SLRD population to be actively engaged in organics diversion. Additionally, the 2015 SWRMP Communications Plan lays out key strategic initiatives including the branding of regional waste management and creating signage standards to have a consistent look for waste management disposal infrastructure across the region.

Late in 2015, the regional *Love This Place, Reduce Your Waste* branding for waste management was introduced and in 2016 new signs complying with newly developed regional waste management signage standards were created. The SLRD now offers free downloadable graphics and ready-made signs at www.slrd.bc.ca/signage. By the end of this year, all SLRD facilities will be outfitted with the new colour-coded signage. The Pemberton and District Community Centre, Whistler Community Centre and the Whistler Library have also incorporated new systems to make recycling quick and easy for visitors. Research conducted at the Whistler Public Library by the Association of Whistler Area Residents for the Environment (AWARE) showed the effectiveness of the new colour-coded signs on waste collection bins. After installing the signs, the research found an increase of 13% in recycling rates and a 26% decrease in waste contamination. Recycling streams become contaminated when incorrect materials are placed into an appropriate collection bin, which can prevent the entire load from being properly diverted from the landfill. At the Whistler library, the contamination rate of collected recycled materials decreased to 11% from 37% immediately following the installation of new signage.

The 2014 and 2015 waste per capita average in the SLRD showed a slow downward trend from 520.89 kilograms per person to 513.3 kilograms per person. The 2015 District of Squamish residential curbside organics program was likely a keen contributor to this trend as that program resulted in a 14.6% reduction of landfill waste in its first year¹. Additionally, in 2014 the Pemberton Transfer station started accepting residential food waste, and the Lillooet Landfill created a yard waste composting program. While these initiatives are helping, it's clear more

¹ District of Squamish website: <https://squamish.ca/yourgovernment/news/residential-organics-collection-gets-off-to-promising-start/>

work is required as 2016 saw a spike in the per capita waste jumping to 544.20 kg/person. Program managers speculate that the region-wide construction boom may be playing a role in the increase; however, it will be hard to know the finer details until 2018 when the region is set to undertake a more comprehensive waste composition study.

“Reducing our waste and improving recycling requires the collaboration from everyone in our communities”, notes Jack Crompton, SLRD Board Chair. “Across the SLRD, we are working together to find solutions to shrinking landfill space by increasing diversion opportunities and community engagement on waste minimization. Every day we all play a role in the waste generated or the waste minimized in our lives.”

Communities across the region are stepping up to help, including:

- **The District of Squamish** has been hosting Repair Cafes and the Re-Use-It Fair (May 13, 2017), and developing Zero Waste Event Kits to be available for rent by event organizers.
- **The Resort Municipality of Whistler** is rolling out a 3 stream waste bylaw (organics, recycling, garbage to landfill) for commercial operations, such as restaurants, hotels and stratas; with workshops planned for May 10th, 2017. AWARE is also supporting this initiative with the creation of a strata toolkit and exploring the development of a Waste Wise Accreditation for cleaning companies. The RMOW is also working on improving streetscape waste bin signage and adding organics collection, as well as supporting initiatives that help residents without personal transportation get materials to the depots.
- **The Village of Pemberton** is hosting a FREE yard waste collection event on May 6th at the Community Barn and will explore more waste diversion opportunities in 2018.
- **The District of Lillooet** is undergoing a cost-benefit analysis of its operations to understand the opportunities to bring curbside recycling to residents. Additionally, the District is hosting a Recycling Fair on May 13th from 11 – 2 on the lawn of the community centre to help the community learn about the recycling opportunities in the community.
- **The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District** will be attending several events throughout the region, as well as developing informational videos for the facilities they operate. The SLRD also hopes to add organics recycling collection service for residents in Furry Creek and Britannia Beach. Additionally, the SLRD will be undertaking an illegal dumping survey to understand the scope of the problem better, as well as producing tools to help with food waste reduction and information about plastic recycling.

In addition to the above initiatives, several communities throughout the SLRD are supporting the 50th Annual Pitch-In Week Canada, April 22 – 29, 2017 coinciding with Earth Day April 22, 2017. These upcoming events are excellent opportunities to volunteer, meet your neighbours and make a positive contribution to our shared environment. Learn more about events happening in your community at www.slrd.bc.ca/lovethisplace. Let's make 2017 the year we all collectively love this place and reduce our waste.

About the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Located in southwestern BC, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is a local government federation consisting of four member municipalities (the District of Lillooet, the District of Squamish, the Village of Pemberton and the Resort Municipality of Whistler) and four unincorporated, rural electoral areas (A, B, C, and D). Headquartered in Pemberton, which is the approximate geographic centre of the region, the SLRD delivers a wide range of local, regional and sub-regional services to approximately 43,000 residents.

For more information, please contact:

Brooke Carere
Communications Coordinator - Solid Waste & Resource Management
[Email: bcarere@slrd.bc.ca](mailto:bcarere@slrd.bc.ca)
P: 604-894-6371 x226

Jeannette Nadon
Communications & Grants Coordinator
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 239
Email: jnadon@slrd.bc.c