

Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre - Celebrating 50 Years of Service to the Community

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to celebrate 50 years of the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre (GNPCC) providing wastewater treatment service to the community. The GNPCC is the largest of four wastewater treatment facilities owned and operated by the RDN. It currently serves 100,000 residents and businesses in the City of Nanaimo, District of Lantzville and on Snuneymuxw First Nation land and in 2025, GNPCC treated over 12 billion litres of wastewater. The facility also treats septage from residential onsite septic systems and wastewater from pump-and-haul properties.

The GNPCC was built in the early 1970's with primary treatment which used gravity and time to remove approximately 50 per cent of solids from the wastewater. The secondary treatment infrastructure was built from 2017 to 2020 and uses beneficial organisms which feed on organic matter left after primary treatment. Solids removed during treatment are treated further using a digestion and dewatering process to meet the provincial quality standards for biosolids. Primary and secondary treatment combined meet or exceed provincial regulations before treated effluent is discharged to the ocean.

The RDN uses the solids and biogas produced during primary and secondary treatment to improve local environments and supplement plant operations. Solids that are extracted during the treatment process are treated further and used to enrich forest soils and reclaim industrial sites. Biogas produced during this process is used to heat the plant. In addition, odours captured around the plant are removed by biofilter and carbon filters, improving air quality for neighbouring residents.

Key Infrastructure Projects

- 2013 – Added a third digester to increase the solids treatment capacity.
- 2016 – Replacement of the 2 km long outfall that sits at the sea floor and extends beyond the Five Fingers Islands
- 2020 – Commissioned the secondary treatment upgrade
- 2026-2031 – Departure Bay Pump Station and Forcemain Expansion Project. The forcemain and pump station move wastewater from over half of the population in Nanaimo. The upgrade, once complete, will accommodate current flows during storms and future growth. For more information on this key infrastructure project, visit getinvolved.rdn.ca/db-sewer-project.

For more information on the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre and wastewater treatment in the RDN, visit rdn.bc.ca/wastewater-services.

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Quote

“For 50 years, the Greater Nanaimo Pollution Control Centre has provided essential wastewater treatment services that help protect our environment, improve water and air quality and support the health of our communities. This milestone is a chance to recognize the skilled, dedicated staff who keep this essential service running every day and the investments that have strengthened wastewater treatment across the region. As our communities grow, the RDN remains committed to ensuring this important infrastructure continues to serve residents and businesses across the region for decades to come.”

Stuart McLean, RDN Board Chair

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