

Water fountain campaign nearing goal

By Saanich News

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New water fountains should be cropping up soon on the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails, thanks to a quiet fundraising effort by a former marathon coach.

Tom Macdonald launched A Drop In the Bucket campaign last fall to raise \$54,000, which would cover the cost of installing nine fountains between Sooke and Sidney. So far he's funneled \$43,800 to the Capital Regional District parks department, or about 80 per cent of his goal.

Macdonald expects three fountains to be installed this summer or fall – at the Goose-Lochside junction near Uptown, on Lochside at the Blenkinsop Greenway junction, and on the Galloping Goose in Colwood, near Sooke Road.

"I'd personally like to see nine put in this year, but (CRD parks) has other planning considerations. It has to dovetail with what they are doing," said Macdonald, who works as the executive director of the Local Government Management Association. "I've tried to nudge everyone on for this year, but you've got to be patient."

Karen Preston with CRD parks confirmed that three fountains will be installed this year, but details on precise locations or times haven't been set.

"We'd like to make something happen sooner than later," Preston said. "It will be three this year, but we don't have a final 'yes' on locations."

Macdonald launched the initiative after spending years as a volunteer marathon coach. He had to prearrange water drops along the regional trails for 30-plus kilometre training sessions, and thought there's got to be a better way.

He launched the website adropinthebucket.ca, and he and other volunteers have hit the trail on weekends to drum up cash and support. Hundreds of people have flipped in loonies and toonies into the hat, and some have gone home and donated \$500 through the website.

"I've spent many Sundays on the trail. My dog likes it," Macdonald said. "I hang out with a thermos of coffee and chat with people about it. Most people think its a good idea."

Morguard Investments (Uptown), Peninsula Co-op, Running Room and Don Mann Excavating have each donated \$6,000, the approximate cost of installing a fountain, adding to the 75 donors listed online. Macdonald is covering administrative costs, such as the website, to ensure all donated money goes toward A Drop in the Bucket.

Support has been almost entirely positive, although Macdonald said he was shocked when one cyclist rode past and yelled, "what a dumb idea." It turned out to be Tim Wood, the recently retired CAO for Saanich and a personal friend of Macdonald.

"Tim is a huge behind-the-scenes supporter of the project. He really believes in the project," Macdonald said laughing. "It caught me off guard with the 'dumb idea.' I had a good laugh. Really, the support has been fabulous."

See www.adropinthebucket.ca for more information or to donate, or www.crd.bc.ca/parks/beinvolved/adropinthebucket.htm.

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