



For Immediate Release

February 25, 2009

Cosmetic pesticide bylaw adopted in Invermere

First of its kind in East Kootenay history; expert organic gardener to give talks

Invermere, B.C. — On February 24, the District of Invermere became the first community in the East Kootenay to adopt a cosmetic pesticide use bylaw. The bylaw bans the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes in the Invermere district.

“This council showed true leadership,” said Heather Leschied, Wildsight’s Lake Windermere Project manager. “This bylaw will help create a healthier environment and community.”

Invermere Mayor Gerry Taft stands behind the bylaw: “The District of Invermere has passed the bylaw and we will work to promote education as far as alternatives, eventually leading to enforcement.”

Leschied said the bylaw itself didn’t happen overnight.

“There has been *a lot* of public education and cooperation since we started the Pesticide Free Columbia Valley Coalition in 2007,” she said.

The coalition, which includes the Canadian Cancer Society, Wildsight, the District of Invermere and others, has done several things to get the message across.

“We hosted events, gave out brochures, put up lawn signs and wrote articles,” Leschied said. “And it all helped. I think this community is ready for the bylaw.”

To help residents go pesticide-free, the coalition will bring in Carole Ruben, author of *How to Get Your Lawn and Garden Off Drugs*, for a series of talks this spring. (See below for dates.)

Ruben’s book is a classic in the field of organic gardening without harmful pesticides.

“Carole will share the ‘how-tos’ of going pesticide-free,” Leschied said. “She’s helped lots of people make the transition to healthier lawns and gardens.”

Leschied hopes other communities will follow Invermere’s example.

“There are pesticide-free initiatives in Fernie, Golden, Kimberley, Nelson and Cranbrook,” she said. “We just want to say: Hang in there! It’s worth it.

“People can visit www.pesticidefreecolumbiavalley.ca,” Leschied said, “to find out about safe alternatives to pesticides.”

Coalition chair Marion Stotts said, “I’d like to congratulate the Mayor and Councilors of the District of Invermere on being the first municipality in the East Kootenay to adopt a bylaw that bans the use of cosmetic pesticides.

“I’d also like to thank the members and supporters of the Pesticide Free Columbia Valley coalition who for nearly two years have contributed their time and energy to raising awareness in our community about the risks of pesticide exposure and what we can do in our families, neighborhoods and community to make a difference.” Stotts is advocacy leader of the Canadian Cancer Society Columbia Valley Unit.

Supplemental information:**Carole Ruben DATES: (Times and venues to TBA)**

Fernie – Monday, April 27th

Cranbrook – Tuesday, April 28th

Invermere – Thursday, April 30th

Golden – Friday, May 1st

Nelson – Monday, May 4th

About the bylaw

“Not all pest control substances are to be banned from use under the bylaw,” Leschied said. “A cosmetic pesticide bylaw does not apply to pesticides used in swimming pools, inside an enclosed building, for purification of water, to control or destroy animals or plants which constitute a danger for human beings, forestry or agriculture, or noxious weed control.”

152 Canadian municipalities have successfully enacted cosmetic pesticide bylaws. Communities range in size from Cumberland, BC (pop. 2,700) to Toronto, Ontario (pop. 2.5 million) and the entire province of Quebec (pop. 3.1 million)

About the Pesticide Free Columbia Valley Coalition

The coalition was formed in August 2007. It is a group of citizens, organizations and businesses from Invermere, Golden, and surrounding communities. Members and supporters include the Canadian Cancer Society, Wildsight, Interior Health, the Columbia Valley Botanical Gardens and Centre for Sustainable Living, as well as physicians, parents, environmentalists, and gardeners who share a vision of reducing the cosmetic use of pesticides in our communities.

About Wildsight

Wildsight works locally, regionally and globally to protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable communities in Canada's Columbia and southern Rocky Mountain region. This area is internationally recognized as a keystone to conservation in western North America. For more information, please visit www.wildsight.ca.

Contact

Heather Leschied, program manager

Wildsight • 250-341-6898

heather@wildsight.ca • www.wildsight.ca

Patti Moore, Community Action Coordinator – Kootenay Region

Canadian Cancer Society • 250-426-8916

pmoore@bc.cancer.ca • www.bc.cancer.ca