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For Immediate Release

Grand opening celebrated at West Fraser Aquatic Centre

Williams Lake, B.C. – Today, the Cariboo Regional District (CRD) and the City of Williams Lake, along with representatives from West Fraser, Northern Development Initiative Trust and the provincial government, celebrated the official grand opening of the Sam Ketcham Pool (SKP) Upgrade Project at the West Fraser Aquatic Centre in the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex.

The completed project includes a new fitness centre, lap tank, swirl pool, steam room and leisure pool. The leisure area features a waterslide, lazy river, tots area, kiddie carwash, teacup fountain, bubble pit, vortex and massage chairs. Phase Two of the West Fraser Aquatic Centre had a soft opening earlier this week; Phase One opened in August.

The pool upgrade project was delivered with a tax increase of about \$40 per \$100,000 of the assessed value of land and improvements on properties within the sub-regional recreation service area. The referendum that passed in 2014 gave the Cariboo Regional District authority to borrow up to \$10 million for the project; however, the CRD only ended up borrowing \$6.5 million thanks to the generous support from funding partners.

The final project cost was \$14.1 million. Additional costs were covered through capital reserves. About 55 per cent of the construction cost was spent on local trades and suppliers amounting to more than \$6.6 million.

External funding for the project included \$250,000 from Northern Development Initiative Trust; \$500,000 from the Canada 150 Community Infrastructure Program; and a total of \$4,427,500 through the federal Gas Tax Fund, including \$427,500 from the Regional District allocation of Community Works Funds for specific energy efficiency upgrades and \$4 million from the Strategic Priorities Fund. This support is in addition to the \$500,000 donated by West Fraser to support the project in recognition of the long-standing connection between the facility, the company and the Ketcham family.

In addition to the pool upgrade project, the parking lot at the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex was redesigned and upgraded. Completed in the fall of 2016, the parking lot cost \$1.3 million.

The Sam Ketcham Pool upgrade project is a joint initiative of the Cariboo Regional District and City of Williams Lake.

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Quotes

“Dynamic recreational infrastructure like the West Fraser Aquatic Centre helps make our communities places where families enjoy a high quality of life. The Government of Canada is proud to be making investments that contribute to people’s health and fitness while promoting economic prosperity and creating jobs for the middle class.”

- *The Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities*

“The upgraded Sam Ketcham Pool will be a gathering centre for fun and fitness for the people of Williams Lake. Our government is a proud partner to the federal Gas Tax Fund and is committed to supporting infrastructure investments that strengthen communities and create opportunities for British Columbians to fully participate in community life.”

- *The Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing*

“These upgrades will support healthy, active living throughout the region. This has been a big project, and I appreciate the generous support provided by the Government of Canada and West Fraser to make it a reality.”

- *Director Wendy Booth, Union of BC Municipalities President*

“Recreation facilities such as the Sam Ketcham Pool play a vital role in the economic growth of our communities across northern B.C. These upgrades will allow the entire community to enjoy the amenities offered by the centre and enable the facility to attract a greater number of visitors, gain additional revenues, and provide a better quality of life for the community and the surrounding region. The Trust is proud to have supported this project in partnership with the Cariboo Regional District, the City of Williams Lake and multiple other project funders.”

- *Evan Saugstad, Board Chair, Northern Development Initiative Trust*

“We are thrilled to be celebrating the grand opening of the West Fraser Aquatic Centre. Over 40 years ago, West Fraser sponsored the Sam Ketcham Pool at the Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex and we are so pleased to support this upgraded expansion, providing excellent recreation opportunities to our employees, their families, and the Cariboo region.”

- *Jordan Townsend, General Manager, West Fraser Mills, Williams Lake Sawmill*

“The West Fraser Aquatic Centre has been worth the wait. It is a beautiful new recreation space that will serve our communities well for years to come. Thanks to the support of our funding partners, this investment will help retain our residents and draw new families to the area.”

- *Joan Sorley, Electoral Area F Director & SKP Working Group Co-Chair, Cariboo Regional District*

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"I am truly proud of all of the local tradespeople who have worked so hard to meet tough deadlines and came back to finish the job after the fires. To be a part of this legacy project is very significant to me not only as a City councillor, but as a community member and grandparent. I can't wait to see all three of my grandchildren go down the waterslide!"

- Laurie Walters, Councillor & SKP Working Group Co-Chair, City of Williams Lake

Associated Links

- For pool hours, events and programs, find the [Cariboo Memorial Recreation Complex](#) on Facebook.
- Find further project information on the Cariboo Regional District website at [cariboord.ca](#) and on the City of Williams Lake site at [williamslake.ca](#).
- To learn more about Budget 2016, visit: http://www.budget.gc.ca/2016/docs/plan/ch2-en.html#_Toc446106678.
- To learn more about the federal Gas Tax Fund visit: <http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/gtf-fte-eng.html>.
- For more information about Government of Canada investments in British Columbia, visit: <http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/map-carte/bc-eng.html>.
- For more information on Northern Development's funding programs visit: <https://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/apply-for-funding/>

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Contacts

Emily Epp
 Manager of Communications
 Cariboo Regional District
 250-392-3351 or 1-800-665-1636
eepp@cariboord.ca

Infrastructure Canada
 613-960-9251
 Toll free: 1-877-250-7154
media@infcc.gc.ca
 Twitter: [@INFC_eng](#)
 Web: [Infrastructure Canada](#)

Paul Taylor
 Director of Communications
 UBCM
 250-356-2938

Brook Simpson
 Press Secretary
 Office of the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
 613-219-0149
Brook.Simpson@canada.ca

Kim Hayhurst
 Director of Marketing and Communications
 Northern Development Initiative Trust
 250-561-2525
kim@northerndevelopment.bc.ca
www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca