

MEDIA RELEASE

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Staying safe on the water this summer

It's summer in the Shuswap! It's time for boating, swimming, and paddling.

The Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) is reminding everyone on the lakes and rivers to play safe and be prepared for every outing on the water.

“We promote seven tips for safety,” explains Erin Vieira, the SWC’s program manager. “The number one tip of course is to wear a lifejacket or PFD every time you go out on the water. Nobody thinks an accident will happen to them – but they do happen, and when they do having a lifejacket on buys you time to be rescued.”

There are fourteen lifejacket loaner stations around the Shuswap, equipped with child-sized lifejackets, that can be borrowed for free on first-come, first-served honour system. The lifejackets are provided by the Royal Canadian Marine Search & Rescue Station 106 Shuswap and several community sponsors.

“This has been a very successful program, the SWC is pleased to have supported two of the kiosks,” Vieira says.

The SWC also wants everyone to be informed about drowning prevention. “A lot of people don’t know that drowning is silent,” explains Vieira. “But a swimmer in distress can’t call out for help, they are putting all their energy into staying afloat.” According to a poll done by the Canadian Red Cross in 2013, half of all parents believe they can effectively supervise children by simply listening – not watching – for signs of trouble. “That’s a scary statistic,” adds Vieira. “Caregivers need to give their undivided attention to young or novice swimmers. Don’t be distracted by your phone or a book. And, swimming with a buddy is always a better idea than swimming alone.”

The SWC’s other tips for staying on the water are to always have a sober skipper, watch for floating and partially submerged debris, use a spotter for tow sports, and to be fully prepared for every outing on the water, including having the appropriate safety equipment.

“There are a lot of apps out there that boaters can download that include safety equipment checklists. We encourage all the skippers in the Shuswap to do that,” Vieira says.

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About: The Shuswap Watershed Council is a watershed-based organization that works on water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap. For more information, contact Erin Vieira or Mike Simpson at (250) 314-9660.