



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Cowichan Watershed Board Members Announced

Duncan, B.C. – Today Chief Lydia Hwitsum, Chief Councillor, Cowichan Tribes and Gerry Giles, CVRD Chair, jointly announced the newly established Cowichan Watershed Board.

The Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB) is a recommendation of the Cowichan Water Basin Management Plan (the Plan) that was completed in March 2007. The CWB's mandate is to provide leadership for sustainable water management to protect and enhance environmental quality and the quality of life in the Cowichan watershed and adjoining areas.

The CWB does not have regulatory authority. Its job is to promote wise water management practices throughout the watershed by:

- advocating for the well-being of the watershed;
- guiding and coordinating the implementation of the Plan;
- providing timely, balanced and thoughtful advice to First Nations, federal, provincial and local government;
- securing stable funding sources to support water management activities,
- engaging local stakeholders in water management decisions;
- gathering information on and monitoring the health of the watershed;
- providing and accessing specialized expertise and knowledge for sustainable water management in the Cowichan watershed; and
- developing outreach and educational tools to enhance watershed thinking and increase understanding of water science, stewardship and management activities.

“Water is our most precious resource” said Gerry Giles. “It enhances our well being and enriches our environment, but if it isn’t managed well it can become a threat to our security. Given the November flooding, the dwindling numbers of Chinook returning to the river, summer droughts and the cultural, recreational and economic importance of water to the Cowichan community, it is time to ensure that we proactively manage this amazing resource. With the appointment of the Cowichan Watershed Board, we have an incredible foundation to build upon our knowledge and to develop capacity around the Cowichan Water Basin.”



Lydia Hwitsum spoke of the spiritual, cultural and ceremonial importance of the watershed to the Cowichan people. “Water is a shared resource; it is the life blood of our communities. Cowichan is committed to working towards the success of this important initiative. When Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD hosted John Slater the Provincial Parliamentary Secretary for Water Supply and Allocation for a water day this past fall we stressed the importance of establishing this cooperative venture. Clearly from the caliber of their recommended appointments both the Ministry of Environment and Federal Fisheries are taking this initiative very seriously.”

Rob Hutchins was clearly pleased to have been named a Co-chair of the Board with Chief Lydia Hwitsum. “With the establishment of this board we are breaking new ground both in the Cowichan Valley and in British Columbia. We have an important challenge before us, and I am optimistic that through this endeavour we will become better water stewards and in turn develop a model of effective water management for others to follow throughout the province.”

The CWB has 12 members.

- Three appointed from among CVRD directors
 - Mayor Rob Hutchins, Ladysmith, Co-chair
 - Lori Iannidinardo, Director Area D
 - Klaus Kuhn, Director Area I
- Two appointed from Cowichan Tribes Chief and Councillors
 - Chief Lydia Hwitsum, Co-chair
 - Darin George, Councillor
- Four appointed jointly by Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD
 - The Honourable David Anderson
 - Mayor Ross Forrest, Lake Cowichan
 - Dr. Bruce Fraser
 - Tim Kulchyski
- One recommended by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans
 - Don Radford
- Two recommended by the Ministry of Environment
 - Dr. Lorna Medd
 - David Slade



The CWB's first meeting will be at 6 p.m. on February 3, 2010 at the CVRD Boardroom in Duncan.

CWB member bios are attached

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Contacts:

Lydia Hwitsum, Chief Councillor, Cowichan Tribes and CWB Co-Chair (250) 748-3196

Gerry Giles, CVRD Chair, (250) 701-1756

Rob Hutchins, CWB Co-Chair (250) 210-1471



Attachment

Cowichan Water Board Member Bios

Mayor Rob Hutchins -Ladysmith

Rob Hutchins is currently serving his sixth term as Mayor of the Town of Ladysmith, having first been elected in 1993. He has also served as a Director on the Board of the Cowichan Valley Regional District since 1993, including two years as its Chair. Mr. Hutchins is currently both a teacher and counsellor. He also operates a small business with his family – “The Old Town Bakery” in the heart of downtown Ladysmith.

Chief Lydia Hwitsum - Cowichan Tribes

In December 2009 Lydia Hwitsum was elected Chief Councillor, Cowichan Tribes for the third time. Lydia has also worked as a Political Executive with the First Nations Summit and a Principle with Hwitsum Consulting. She has volunteered her time with the Minerva Foundation, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, the Valley Native Friendship Centre, and the Indian Home Makers Association.

Lori Iannidinardo – Director CVRD Area D

Lori Iannidinardo was elected an Area Director in November 2008. She has lived in the Cowichan Bay area for over 40 years. Lori has been an active volunteer for the betterment of local schools, parks and recreation local planning and the Cowichan Bay area. She has been particularly active in the local food movement. Recently she helped lead Cowichan Bay to become the first community in Canada to gain International Cittaslow status.

Klaus Kuhn - Director CVRD Area I

Klaus became an Area Director in 2008. He retired from a career as a financial planner in Campbell River to live on the shore of Lake Cowichan in 2000. Prior to becoming an Area Director, Klaus chaired his local Advisory Planning Commission. Klaus is an outdoor enthusiast pursuing hiking and water activities within the watershed.

Darin George - Councillor, Cowichan Tribes

Darin was elected as a Cowichan Tribes Councillor in December 2009. He also serves as the Alternate Director for CVRD Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora. Darin has lived on the Cowichan River all his life. He is passionate about angling and recreation and spends part of his year working as an angling guide. Darin is a strong advocate for a whole watershed approach to watershed management.



The Honourable David Anderson – Retired Member of Parliament

David Anderson's experiences include an Olympic silver medal (rowing), foreign service, environmental consultant, professor, Member of the BC Legislature, and Member of Parliament. David was elected as an MP six times and held four Cabinet portfolios including Transport, Fisheries and Oceans and Revenue. In addition he was Canada's longest standing Environment Minister. A fisherman, David is an active outdoors enthusiast and has a special fondness for the Cowichan region. In the 1990s he was instrumental in the Cowichan River being designated as a Canadian Heritage River. David has received numerous awards and two honorary degrees for his support for the environment.

Mayor Ross Forrest – Lake Cowichan

Ross Forrest was elected as the Mayor of Lake Cowichan in November 2008. Ross was born and raised in that community. He spent much of his working life in logging camps often as the Camp Chair or Safety Chair. He currently works for the Municipality of North Cowichan's Parks and Recreation Department. Ross continues to be active in and supportive of recreation and sports as well as other initiatives that contribute to a strong community.

Dr. Bruce Fraser – Chair, Forest Practices Board

Bruce has chaired the province's Forest Practices Board since 2003. He will complete his tenure in that position on March 31, 2010. Bruce has extensive experience as a consultant specializing in land use planning, community economic development and institutional management in Canada and internationally. He has served as President of Selkirk College in the West Kootenays and of Malaspina College on Vancouver Island. He is also a founding board member of the West Coast Community Leadership Training Society. Bruce and his wife live in the Region and he is an active member of the CVRD's Environment Commission.

Tim Kulchyski - Natural Resource Consultant

Tim has worked with a variety of clients assessing upland, freshwater and marine ecosystems for 15 years. His work often involves examining the impacts of development on cultural values. Recently he participated in a program to control invasive plants in the watershed. Tim has travelled extensively studying the interaction between resource issues and cultural heritage. Over the past five years he was involved in a major Hul'qumi'num language revitalization initiative.

Don Radford, Area Director -South Coast, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)

Don has worked for DFO since the late 1970s. He worked in various enforcement and biologist positions before becoming Manager of Aboriginal Fisheries and then North Coast Area Director in the 1990s. Subsequently Don served in senior management positions at DFO Regional Headquarters in Vancouver. In early 2008, he accepted the position of South Coast Area Director working out of Nanaimo. In his spare time Don enjoys paddle sports, cycling, photography and family.



Dr Lorna Medd – Medical Health Officer

Dr. Medd began her medical career as a general practitioner. Later she pursued further training in population health focusing on innovative community health practices in Primary Health Care and remote communities. Since completing her community medicine training, she has worked in the field of Public Health as a Medical Health Officer (MHO). From 1996 –2007 she was the MHO for the Central Interior Health Authority -Prince George. Since September, 2007, she has been the MHO for VIHA Central Island - Nanaimo. Lorna’s areas of focus include food security and ecosystem health.

David Slade - Past President, BC Groundwater Association

Since 1982, David has been a partner in the Duncan based, family business, Drillwell Enterprises Ltd. Drillwell provides well and environmental drilling services to a variety of clients. David is passionate about groundwater and its relationship to the rest of the environment. He has been very active with both the Canadian and BC Groundwater Associations recently serving as President of the BC Association. David is an active community volunteer and supporter contributing resources and spare time to volunteer firefighting and youth sports in particular.