

# **DRAFT Cowichan Watershed Board**

## **Public Education / Engagement Plan 2016-17**

### **Communication Objectives**

1. Improve Watershed Understanding - To increase the public's awareness and knowledge of the Cowichan watershed, key ecological services, threats to sustainability, domestic water sources and water-related issues.
2. Encourage Water Conservation - To engage residents in embracing a proud and positive culture of conservation, with demonstrated household water savings resulting.
3. Build and Support Watershed Partnerships - To encourage and support community partners in their public engagement efforts relating to achieving the seven targets\*, including;
  - a. Catalyst, Cowichan Tribes, CVRD, DFO, Living Rivers/BCCF, One Cowichan and others working to improve summer river flow through improved management of existing weir and actively seeking increased lake storage for the long term.
  - b. Regional water purveyors working towards a 20% reduction in household water use from 2014-2018.
  - c. CUPE working to build public appreciation for quality public drinking water.
  - d. DFO, MoE, Cowichan Tribes, Area D, farmers and others working towards acceptable water quality levels and edible shellfish in the estuary.
  - e. Cowichan Land Trust, Cowichan Valley docents, teachers and others working to improve grade 5 connections to and understanding of their watershed(s) through outdoor experiential education.
  - f. Cowichan Valley Naturalists, Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable, and others working to provide public education on our watershed and the seven targets
  - g. CLRSS, Living Rivers, Somenos Marsh Society, Cowichan Land Trust, Cowichan Tribes, MFLNRO and others working to protect and restore riparian habitats.
  - h. CLRSS, Cowichan Tribes, Safe Youth Cowichan, and business partners work to foster stewardship ethic for our river and lake through annual lake and river cleanups.
  - i. Cowichan Tribes, DFO, Living Rivers/BCCF, and others working to better understand, protect and recover sustainable fish populations, particularly Chinook and Steelhead.
4. Build Confidence in CWB Leadership – Continue to be known as a leading source of information, knowledge and expertise regarding the Cowichan Watershed and to build public confidence that collectively we will achieve our sustainability targets (derived from Cowichan Basin Watershed Management Plan).

## Audience Profile

| Key Groups<br>(Who are they?<br>location, attitudes<br>etc.)   | Their Values/Needs<br>(What's in it for them?)  | Call to Action<br>(What do we want them to<br>understand and do? How important is<br>this (priority) or by when?)   | Sources of Info<br>(Where do they get their<br>info? How to<br>communicate with<br>them?)  | Check Up<br>(How will we<br>know if they<br>"get it"?)  |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents of Cowichan Region</li> <li>- NGOs</li> <li>- Teachers</li> <li>- First Nations</li> <li>- Local Governments</li> <li>- Water managers</li> <li>- Other opinion leaders in the community</li> </ul> | <p>Meet the high level of interest and concern about water shortages and impacts on fish, agriculture, water, water supply, water quality, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-management governance model for watershed solutions.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be aware of the uncertainty and potential risks to the river ecosystem associated with more frequent summer drought conditions.</li> <li>- To support permanent solutions to address long-term patterns of low summer flow.</li> <li>- To reduce domestic water loss and consumption. To form water conservation habits to last a lifetime.</li> <li>- To support measures to improve water quality to the extent that shellfish in the estuary are safe to eat again.</li> <li>- To connect with, learn about, and enjoy our watershed.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On-street public engagement through "super-hero" mascot program.</li> <li>- Media – newspaper, magazines, radio, TV</li> <li>- Presentation and outreach material (e.g., VIU public lecture series, Nature Centre display, handouts)</li> <li>- Presence at community events</li> <li>- Facebook</li> <li>- CWB and Water Challenge websites</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Door to door surveys.</li> <li>- Public support for lake storage solution.</li> <li>- Number of grade 5 students doing outdoor watershed learning annually.</li> <li>- Attendance at events and CWB meetings.</li> </ul> |

## Key Communications Activities

| Activity                                 | Description / Communications Message  | Timing | Supporting Materials |
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| Develop and promote key public messages. | <p><i>Use Water Wisely.</i><br/><i>It's Hip to Fix a Drip.</i><br/><i>Save some for the Salmon.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The lakes, rivers, and groundwater are often too low in the summer now due to climate, and everything depends on water. Every drop conserved in an extra drop for fish, wildlife, agriculture, industry, recreation and home use.</li> </ul> <p><i>More Water Storage would Solve Many Problems.</i><br/><i>Just add water.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cowichan salmon and other fish and wildlife depend on adequate flow in the river from early spring when they are fattening up in the side channels before heading to the ocean, throughout</li> </ul> |        |                      |

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|  | <p>the summer for freshwater fish and salmon that rear in freshwater, and right through to fall when they need to get up river to spawn. Growing more local food also depends on being able to stretch our water farther, and flushing away pollutants safely also depends on abundant water flow.</p> <p><i>This is a New Normal.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not just in Cowichan but along the Pacific Coast. We have wetter winters and drier summers, and we need to adapt both our habits and water infrastructures accordingly.</li> </ul> <p><i>We need to Value water more.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Around the world, where people pay more for water they waste less. All local water districts need to charge more for water to make our water supply and river ecosystems sustainable.</li> <li>- There are ways you can conserve water at home so that your water bills stay affordable.</li> </ul> <p><i>We're all in this together.</i><br/><i>Get involved.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hundreds of people and dozens of organizations are collaborating on a daily basis through the Watershed Board and other ways to create a healthy sustainable future for the Cowichan watershed. The progress is slow but steady and we are seen as a model for other communities to follow.</li> </ul> |   |   |
| <p>“Super-Hero” mascots engaging public and youth.</p> | <p>As funding allows, hire street-theatre actors to develop characters and costumes to encourage a positive culture of water conservation and stewardship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Woman – promotes water conservation</li> <li>• Flow – builds understanding and appreciation for the need for adequate summer river flow.</li> <li>• Clam-Boy-ant – reveals a future where the Watershed Board has achieved our targets*, and we can eat the clams from the estuary and swim safely throughout the watershed.</li> </ul> <p>Activities include drinking water taste tests, “Leaky Lou” toilet dye kit tests, fortune telling in public square, activities with children’s camps, parades, events, video PSA series to encourage conservation, etc.</p>   | <p>Earth Week (April)<br/>Water Week (May)<br/>Summer River Clean up (Aug)<br/>BC Rivers Day (Sept)</p> | <p>- public handouts (dye tests, postcards, etc.)</p> |

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| BC Drinking Water Week                    | Work with volunteer teachers to develop water conservation classroom curriculum using Water Woman PSA for distribution across BC.  | April-May (done)   | BCWWA Value of Water website.  |
| Water Challenge engaging water suppliers. | Engage local governments and other water suppliers in a fun 4 year challenge to reduce domestic water use by at least 20%. Key message is that 20% reduction is easily achievable through reducing waste and fixing leaks.<br><br>Meet with purveyors as needed to share knowledge and ideas about how best to achieve water savings.  | Annual update<br>March 22 World Water Day. (press release)<br><br>Reports due mid Feb. | Water Status Report form for suppliers.<br><br>Websites                            |
| Speakers Series                           | Free monthly public lecture in partnership with VIU Cowichan. Criteria: Engaging/entertaining speakers on topics of interest to the public, by people with strong expertise on the topic, and relevant to the Cowichan watershed.  |  |  |
| River Clean-up                            | Good news story about shared stewardship of the lake and river.<br>Opportunity for people to get their hands wet.  | July-August  | Funds for Safe Youth Cowichan partnership, lunch, supplies, prizes. Media, poster. |
| E-Newsletter and Facebook                 | Share news, event notices, etc. from CWB and our partners (including opinion leaders)  | Year round   | Photos, text.  |
| Field trips                               | Standard watershed field trip to raise watershed literacy  | ?  | Field trip hand outs   |
| Media                                     | Respond as needed to local issues and media requests.  | Year round   | Media spokespeople – Chip, Jon, target group chairs, others?                       |
| Public survey every 3-5 years.            | Complete analysis of 2015 door-to-door surveys and disseminate results regarding changes in water knowledge/conservation.  |  | Contractor or student to do work.  |
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**Desired outcomes** – Over time instilling a water conservation and stewardship culture that:

- helps maintain and enhance the resilience of the Cowichan watershed to ecological changes associated with climate change; and,
- helps ensure ecosystems continue to provide the basic services, products, and benefits society depends on and values; and,
- supports the achievement of the Cowichan Watershed Board's seven targets.