



# WATERSHED SHOW: THROUGH THE LENS OF ART

by CVAC 2020 | Apr 1, 2021 | News

Art will combine with science and natural history to deliver a powerful message about the importance of our watersheds in the Cowichan Valley, all through the lens of art.

In the next few months, CVAC will offer education and art activities. Some already planned are:

A series of watershed science webinars starts **April 20 to May 18 at 7 pm. Here is the link <https://zoom.us/j/97614312722> Meeting ID: 976 1431 2722**

plein air painting (**June 15 and July 14,15**), and the photographing the essence of water (**Aug.12**).

As the centrepiece, CVAC is hosting the Watershed Art Show, **Aug. 27 to Sept. 25** at its large gallery in the Cowichan Community Centre. The inspiration for the show and programs will be the seven aspirational targets set by the Cowichan Watershed Board – everything from estuary health to protected riverside habitats and clean drinking water. Activities for families will include outdoor painting and crafts.

“Our goal is to use an experiential, artistic approach to raising awareness in the Cowichan community about the value of managing our watersheds wisely,” said CVAC President Janet Magdanz. “Art is a great way to help people experience nature.”

**Attention Artists: Registration begins April 15.** Step out of your comfort zone and value the Cowichan region's watersheds thru the lens of art!

We invite you to use the aspirational targets of the Cowichan Watershed Board as inspiration and bring science and art together in our show.

Consider the opportunity to collaborate with another artist enjoying the watershed together then creating a piece of art.

### **Aspirational Targets:**

Cowichan Watershed Targets for a Healthy and Sustainable Ecosystem

- 1) River Flows – We want to ensure that Cowichan River summer flows are at levels that support the needs of people and fish.
- 2) Fish – We want healthy fish populations in the watershed.
- 3) Water Quality – We want clean water in our watershed.
- 4) Estuary Health – We want to be able to eat shellfish from Cowichan Bay.
- 5) Riparian Habitat – We want to protect and enjoy the benefits of healthy stream, lakefront, and estuary habitats.
- 6) Watershed Knowledge- We want Cowichan watershed residents to increasingly know and value their watershed. We can't fully value what we don't understand.
- 7) Wise Water Use – We want Cowichan watershed residents to use water wisely

### **Think outside the picture frame! Ideas for artists and groups**

a.) Using the target called: ***Watershed Knowledge*** – *We want Cowichan watershed residents to increasingly know and value their watershed. We can't fully value what we don't understand.*

Choose a location in the watershed near a water course and *chronicle its state* once a week for several weeks. At the same time each week, visit and record the sounds, sights, smells and human and non-human interactions and changes that you witness over this time. Present this as an audio file of your comments on each visit, or a video file of the scene, or a series of sketches from a similar angle, or make as a series of colour fields that reflect your experience on that day, or write a poem or song with stanzas for each week about the connection that develops, or a develop a piece of dance movement...experience the watershed thru to lens of art any way that you wish.

b.) Using the target called: ***Riparian Habitat*** – *We want to protect and enjoy the benefits of healthy stream, lakefront, and estuary habitats.*

Choose a location near any public watercourse that has an intact (natural) vegetative edge. Photograph the flora that you see near the edges of the water. Research and identify their

names and purposes/places in the riparian ecosystem. Respectfully take samples of the plants and press them flat in a book press or similar device. Using lightweight fabric, make a natural, quilted, wall hanging by sewing the samples between the light layers. Build a simple fabric installation on the site on the watercourse and video the installation as others visit to experience it.

c.) Using the target called: **Wise Water Use** – *We want Cowichan watershed residents to use water wisely.*

Record the amount of water that your household uses in a set period of time (ie: one week). Make an installation using 2 litre soda bottles to demonstrate that volume of water. Add food colouring to the water to create a graduated or rainbow effect. The installation could involve laying the bottles side by side in a pattern or end to end on the street on your home or in your yard. Record the installation in any way that you choose. Reuse the water to nurture a plant or tree and recycle the bottles.

d.) Using the target called: **Fish** – *We want healthy fish populations in the watershed.*

Research the requirements of a species of fish that can be found in a lake/ocean near you. Using the style of your choosing, reproduce sketches, drawings, watercolours, etc. of the stages of life of that fish. Build a three dimensional fish sculpture and collage with portions of your work. Prepare it as a free hanging sculpture or mobile or as part of a circular life-cycle installation.

Research the number of freshwater fish taken from a local water course over a year's time. Based on an assumed average weight of a fish, convert that number to weight. Reproduce that weight in several different ways: as newspaper balls, as rocks, as mock humans, as grain, as rice etc. Display the weight in clear plastic bags. Pile or display as you wish. Record others' comments/reactions as you explain the symbolism to them.

e.) Using the target called: **Estuary Health** – *We want to be able to eat shellfish from Cowichan Bay.*

Take your artist's materials (paper, paints, clay, fabric, mosaic pieces, etc.) to the Cowichan Estuary and record the tidal movements, evidence of sea life, evidence of flora, evidence of human activity etc. in as many different ways as you are able. Create a free-standing sculpture incorporating those images. Accompany it with an audio file of the sounds of the estuary.