



Cowichan Watershed Board

To: Edmond Duggan & Rick Bryan, Vancouver Island Whitewater Paddling Society

May 16, 2022

Dear Edmond and Rick,

Thank you for the detailed correspondence package regarding the incorporation of recreation values in the design of the new Cowichan Weir forwarded to Cowichan Watershed Board Members this past March, and our apologies for the delay in responding.

We acknowledge, and sincerely appreciate the contributions that the paddling community make to the stewardship of the river and to introducing so many people to the “river experience” on both the Cowichan and Koksilah rivers. Your participation and support of numerous river and watershed focused community events adds an important dimension and perspective in terms of profiling the many ways the river supports our physical and mental wellbeing here in the Cowichan Valley.

As you mention in your letter, CWB members heard and supported the idea of incorporating a paddling feature in the weir design as presented in 2019, with the caveat that it would be feasible without slowing down the design process being led by Stantec under contract to the CVRD. It is our understanding that the option was sincerely considered by the Stantec team and a decision made that it would not be feasible within the scope of the current project. The weir design work was completed in Dec. 2021 and it has been made clear to us that, at this point, there would be significant cost and scheduling impacts associated with considering any changes. We understand and appreciate your disappointment but are not in a position to question the opinion of the technical experts retained to design the weir.

CWB members are still supportive of encouraging and enhancing paddling opportunities on the Cowichan River and we have asked our Executive Director, Tom Rutherford, to reach out and engage in discussions around the possibility of identifying other locations and options for realizing this visionary idea.

Again, we appreciate the contribution you and your organization make to our “river community” and acknowledge the importance of the connection to the river forged by paddlers, hikers, swimmers, naturalists, educators and many others.

Huy tseep q’u siem – Thank you with respect,

Chief Lydia Hwitsum
Co-Chair Cowichan Watershed Board
Chief, Cowichan Tribes First Nation

Chair Lori Iannidinardo
Co-Chair Cowichan Watershed Board
Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District