



Diana Gunderson participates in a volunteer-run project by lake residents to see what the Cowichan Water Use Plan's proposal for a higher weir would look like (approximately) on various shoreline properties. (submitted)

Guest column: Why “Weir” Ready: with Diana Gunderson

*This is part three of a feature series by the
Cowichan Watershed Board*

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Why “Weir” Ready

This is part three of a feature series by the Cowichan Watershed Board delving into the question of how the Cowichan River's low water flows affect residents in our community, and why more and more people are saying "Weir Ready" to replace the Cowichan River weir with a future-friendly model. More info at weirready.ca

Who are you?

Diana Gunderson, retired teacher, Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society member and board member (forever since it began)

What is Your Connection to Cowichan River?

I'm a year-round lakeshore resident and property owner (Meade's Creek Road), and resident of the Lake Cowichan area for 60 years. I love the lake, so as a volunteer, I helped develop the Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship Project (with the late Gerald Thom) to restore riparian health around the lake. I still volunteer with the project today.

Weir Ready! Cowichan Lake Beach Levels Demonstrat



Why do low river flows matter in your life?

The lake and river are fundamental to our environment, culture, and economy — basically to all life in this watershed, but this is particularly true for those of us lucky enough to live along its shorelines. We are always aware of changes in lake levels.

Personally, I depend upon the lake for my household water through a water licence. I also have docks, pilings and boomsticks that must be adjusted for the summer lows and the winter highs. With this year's unprecedented low as a result of the pumping, my water pump was nearing the lake bottom (I was preparing to pull it up) and my floating ramp settled on the lake bottom, which is not good for shoreline habitats. Thankfully, the rains came and the pumps have stopped for now.

What are your views on replacing the weir at Lake Cowichan to support better river flows?

It's crucial! We have yet to see what damage was done to the lakeshore riparian environment so far this year, and the science seems clear that until the weir is replaced, we may have to go through this (or worse) again next year and the next year! We need to improve water storage by replacing the weir so that we can support river flows without stressing the lake, its shoreline flora and fauna and its residents. But the weir isn't the whole solution — we also need to take steps to stop irresponsible damage to our lake, river and shoreline by developers and forest companies.

Last words:

Let's get moving....the sooner the better!



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