



James Buchan

Guest column: Why “Weir” Ready: with James Buchan

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

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Why “Weir” Ready

This is part two 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?

James Buchan. Corresponding Secretary for PPWC Local 2 and steam plant field operator at Catalyst Crofton.

What is your connection to Cowichan River?

The Cowichan River is the lifeblood of the community I live in and the place I work. It has supported this region and its people for a very long time, and I would like to see it continue to do so in the future.

Why do low river flows matter in your life?

The mill needs the river to run.

I have never been so acutely aware of the amount of water in the lake and river as I have been for the past several years at the mill. Low river flows can have a very direct impact on my livelihood and the livelihoods of the hundreds of people I work with. This, in turn, would have an impact on local businesses our families support with our paycheques. We all depend on that flow, and it's being threatened.

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

Climate change is here. No matter the cause, we are seeing its effects. The small armada of pumps in Cowichan Lake currently keeping the river flowing are very real evidence of this. What we're seeing is unprecedented, and pumping isn't going to solve the problem. We're just buying time.

Last words:

Our communities need a long-term solution to the challenges facing the river and replacing the weir has to be part of that.



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