



Cowichan Watershed Board: Cowichan Valley Regional District Update

April 26, 2023



The next 20 minutes...

a) Background – What is the Cowichan Watershed Board?

b) 2022 Annual Report overview

c) 2023 Business Plan

d) Setting the Course Workshop report



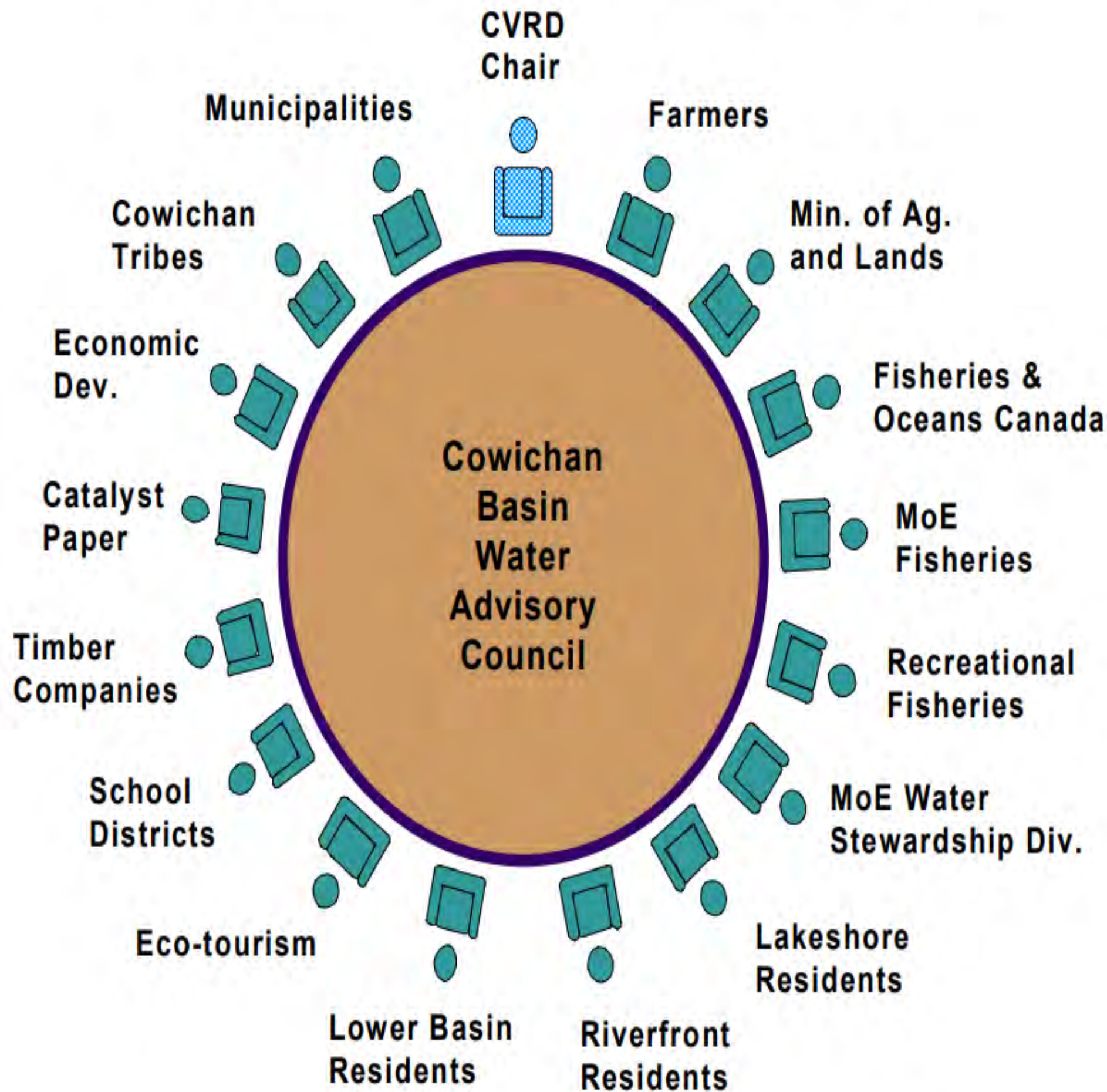
The Cowichan Watershed Board...

- Created in 2010
- Unique Partnership committed to watershed health in the Cowichan/Koksilah watersheds
- Co-chaired by Chief of Cowichan Tribes and Chair of Regional District
- Focussed on “Getting things done” – in a good way, respectful of our shared history in the Cowichan Valley...



Figure 6

Major groups to be represented on the Cowichan Basin Water Advisory Council



Cowichan Tribes

Authority:

Un-extinguished Rights and Title

Accountable to:

Chief and Council

Advisors

Provincial nominees

CT Appointees

Co-Chairs

CVRD Appointees

Cowichan Watershed Board

Operates under the Cowichan Watershed Society

Governance Manual

CBWMP Plan

"At Large" Appointees
(Jointly appointed by and accountable to CWB)

Federal appointees

CVRD

Authority:

Delegated by Province, Local Government Act

Accountable to:

CVRD Board of Directors

Principles (Sec. 2.3):

- Partnership
- Representation
- Watershed Emphasis
- Transparency
- Nutsamat kws yaay'us tth qa'

Executive Director

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

Co-Chairs: E.D. + Cowichan Tribes appointee
Members: Up to 3 appointed from each Working Group.

Targets & Working Groups:

Targets set by Board, derived from CBWMP, implemented by Working Groups with support from TAC.



What we aren't....

- A “stakeholder table” representing varied “Interests”
- A table of technical experts
- An ENGO
- A model that exists anywhere else in BC – or Canada...
- Something that fits easily into a “Regional District Template”



What we are....

A table of leaders

A “place based” organization with a focus on water/shed Sustainability in the Cowichan/Koksilah watershed

A dating service (?!) – focused on long term meaningful relationships of course!

Able to effectively engage in processes, programs and projects directed towards a healthier watershed (and a healthier community!)

Experts at leveraging resources and capacity

A nimble and respectful watershed advocate to senior governments and elected officials

An organization that has effectively and respectfully made space for indigenous voices and leadership to go beyond the narrow scope of colonial governance framework and focus on whole of watershed thinking reflective of indigenous laws passed down through generations that will stand us all in better stead for the future.

A different, unique and effective way for First Nations and Local government to work together to ensure a more positive future.....

What we do...

- CWB Priorities, objectives and outcomes captured in our Annual Report and Business Plan Documents...
- Important for CWB activities and engagement to reflect the aspirations and vision of our foundational partners – Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD
- All CWB work is focused on supporting water/shed health reflecting the teaching of *Mukw' stem 'o' shilhukw'tul* - everything is interconnected.... and engaging as partners through the lens of reconciliation...



2022 – Overall Reflections...



Significant Accomplishments in the face of real challenges

Our annual report provides some highlights from 2022 and speaks not only what we have achieved but, perhaps most importantly, how we have achieved it – by engaging respectfully, building bridges and supporting the aspirations of our partners and collaborators as we work together to ensure a more positive water future for our children and grandchildren.

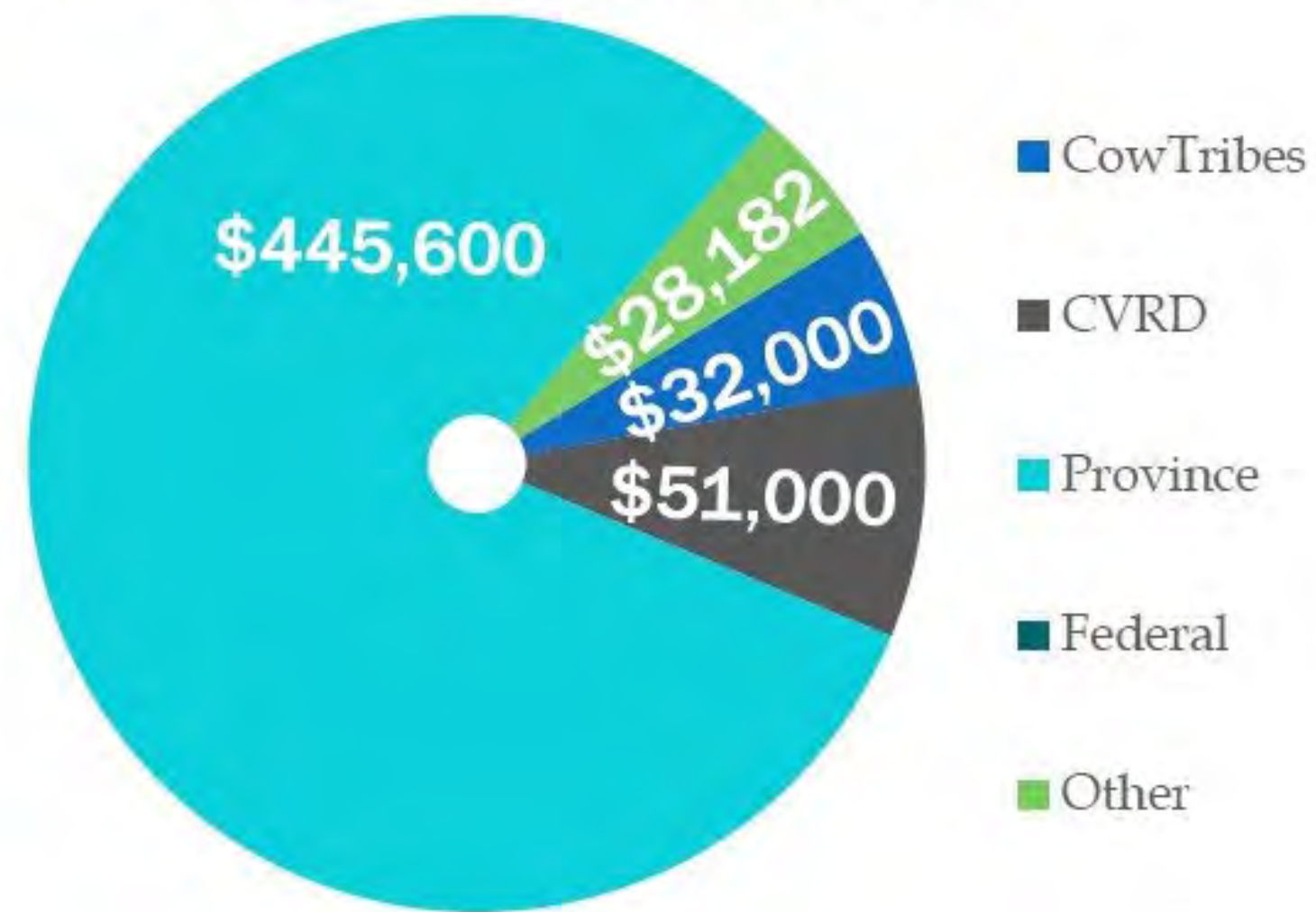
2022 – Key Areas of Impact

CWB prioritizes collaborative governance in all its work and helps create the space for Cowichan Tribes to exercise authority over water/shed issues that benefit the community – now and into the future including...

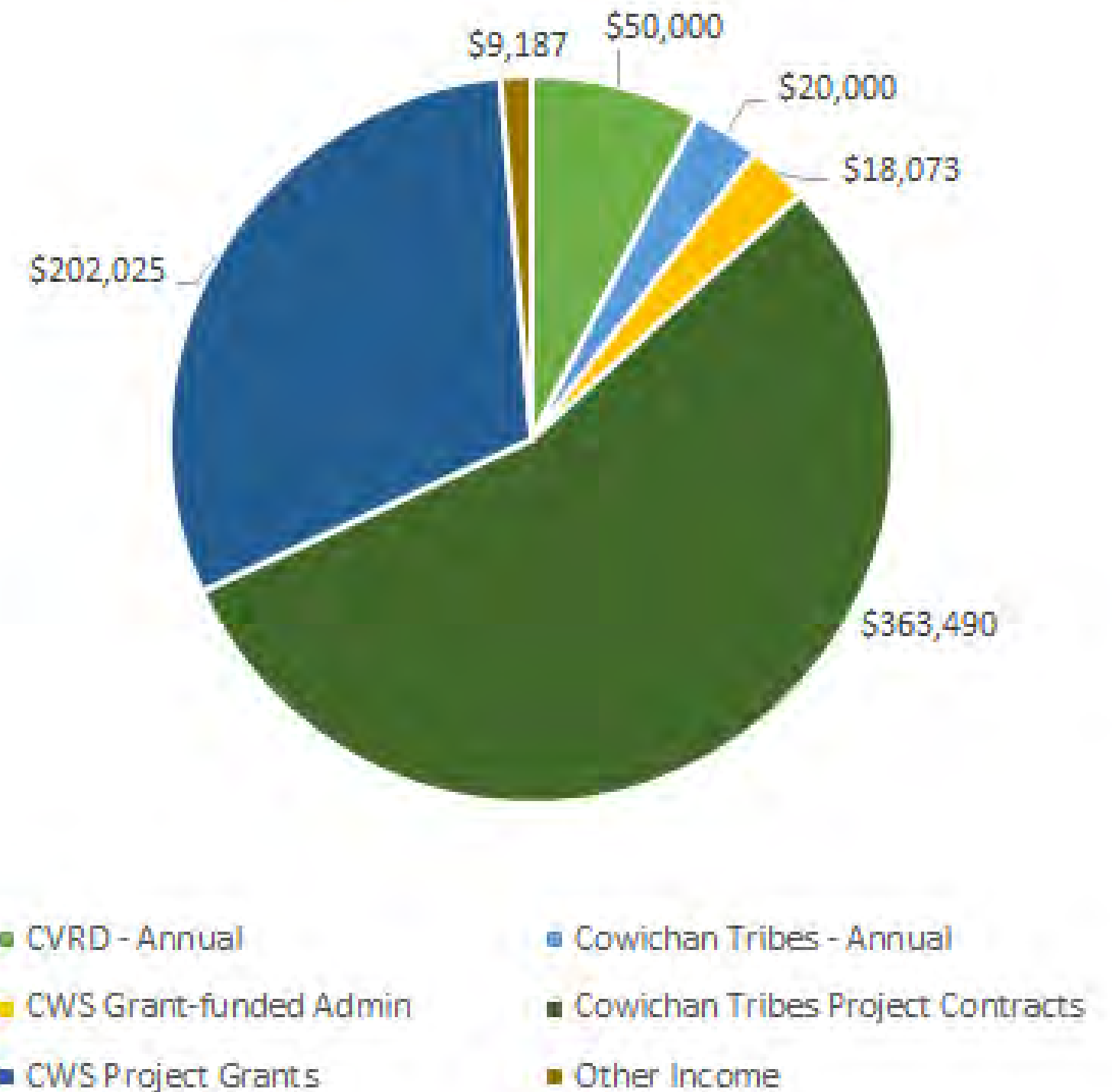
- **Cowichan Weir - Mitigating the impacts of climate change and ensuring adequate water supply for our river, our salmon and our community...**
- **Xwulqw'selu Water Sustainability Planning - Precedent setting collaborative water management**
- **A suite of on the ground projects that are making a difference...**
 - Water Quality Sampling; River Clean up; Twinned Watershed field research; Outreach and Education; Stth'aqwi; Why fish need trees; Speaker Series, etc....



2021 Financial Contributions



Income Sources 2022



2023 Business Plan

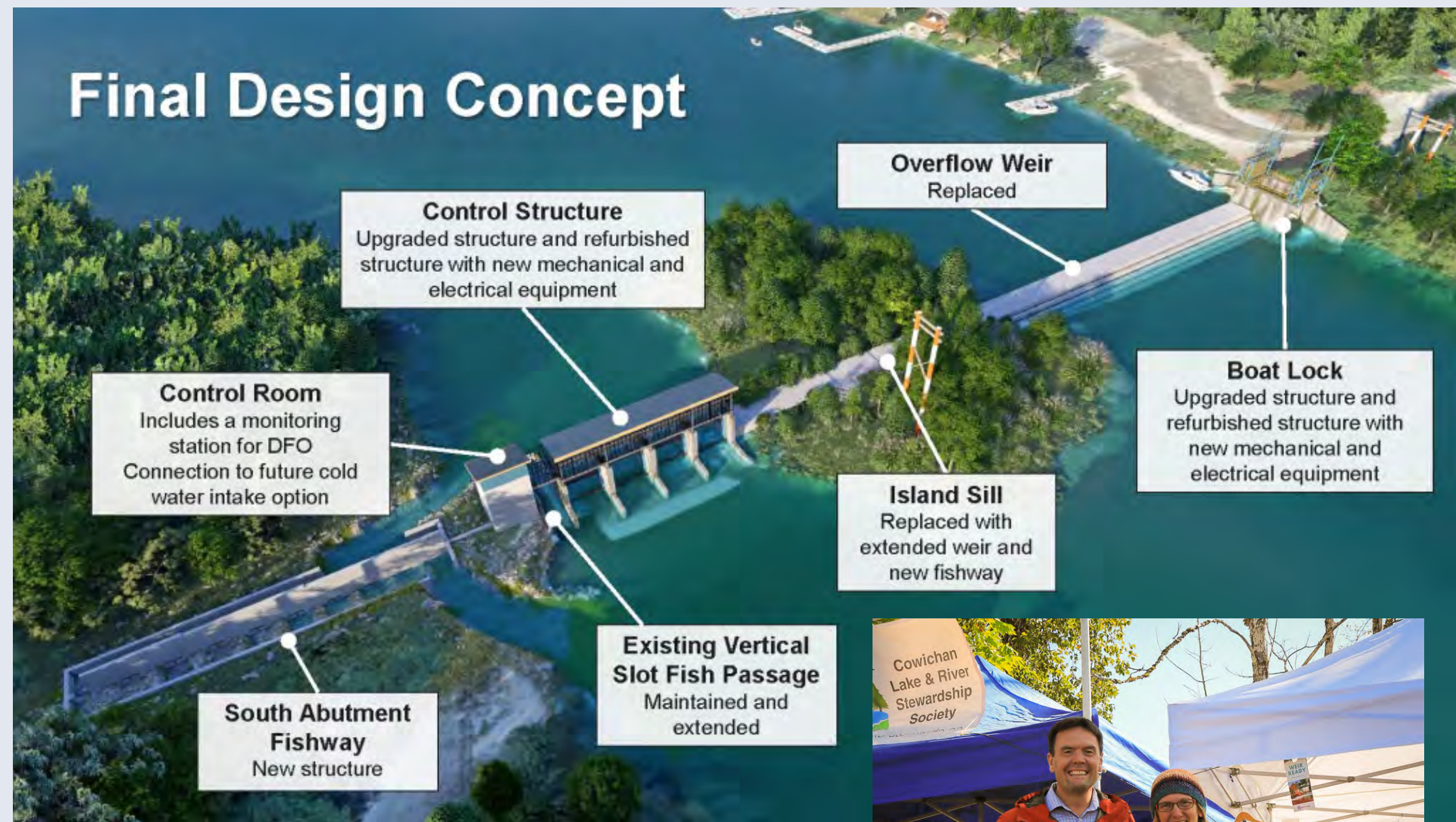
- **Sense of urgency and a sense of purpose**
- **4 key areas of work - no big surprises here**
 - Ensuring adequate flows in our River
 - Working to achieve our watershed targets
 - Building and Strengthening Partnerships
 - Watershed Knowledge and Understanding



Adequate Flows

Cowichan Weir

- Support Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD to raise capital funds
- Support development of Joint Works Agreement and provincial responsibilities
- Secure a conservation water license
- Support public engagement and communicate the need for this project
- Play an active role in ongoing in season water management decisions



Adequate Flows

Xwulqw'selu Watershed Sustainability Plan

Provide advisory and local communications support to the WSP process.

Participate in working groups, and ongoing science studies (e.g. Xwulqw'selu Connections).

Provide collaborative in-season drought management as needed.

Provide administrative support to Cowichan Tribes in their role as Responsible Person for the WSP, as defined by the BC Water Sustainability Act.



Achieving our Targets...

- Over 30 organizations and agencies working together through 4 target working groups bringing Indigenous and settler perspectives together.
- Updating and revising targets to ensure relevancy
- Establish Indigenous Co-Chairs of each Working Group.
- Create a whole of the Watershed Target.



Building Partnerships

NUTSAMAT KWS YAA'Y'US TTH QA'

- We come together as a whole to work together to be stronger as partners for the watershed.

This important work is never over...

- Continue to build strength and resilience into our foundational partnership
- Support and empower others who are working to protect and restore our watershed
- Continue to work towards building relationships of trust with Sr. Governments that lead to effective, constructive and respectful work on the ground



Watershed Knowledge and Understanding

-Watershed Knowledge, Information and Data (WIKD)

- This initiative initiated by Cowichan Tribes
- Access to existing information is needed to support good decisions in the watershed while respecting cultural sensitivities.

-Core Communications

- build public understanding of, and connection with, the watershed
- foster links and partnerships between the many organizations actively working to restore its health and resilience.

-Engaging Community in Watershed Sustainability

- CWB's priority projects, including the ongoing transition to indigenous collaborative governance, are supported with clear and engaging communications.
- Open community dialogue is facilitated, including embracing local knowledge, energy and dedication through face-to-face community activities and events.



It's the work we do – but also how we do it...

- *Mukw' stem 'o' shilhukw'tul*
- *We are in the partnerships business...*



TARGET WORKING GROUP MEMBER ORGANISATIONS, DELEGATES Fish & Flows CWB (Tim Kulchyski, Tom Rutherford), Cowichan Tribes (Tim), CVRD (Kate Miller), BC Min. Forests (Mike McCulloch), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Kevin Pellett), Friends of Cowichan River (Joe Saysell), Catalyst Mill (Brian Houle), Mosaic (Dave Belezny), BC Conservation Foundation (Jeramy Damborg), Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (Parker Jefferson), Koksilah Working Group (Sarah Davies-Long), Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (Paul Gowland), Other (Cheri Ayers). Water Quality and Estuarine Health CWB (Tim Kulchyski), Cowichan Tribes (Tim), CVRD (Kate Miller, Vanessa Thomson), BC Min. Environment (Rosie Barlak), Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre (Pamela Williams), BC Conservation Fdn (Thea Rodgers), Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Assoc. (Bill Heath), Koksilah Working Group (Rodger Hunter), Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (Gina Hoar), Municipality of North Cowichan (Dave Preikshot), Nature Trust of BC (Tom Reid), Other (Cheri Ayers). Riparian Habitats CWB (Alison Nicholson), Cowichan Tribes (Tracy Fleming) CVRD (Tanya Soroka), BC Parks (Katy Fulton), Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable (Genevieve Singleton), Mosaic (David Vey), Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre (Jane Kiltnei), BC Conservation Foundation (Jeramy Damborg), Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (Jean Atkinson), Koksilah Working Group (Alison Nicholson), Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (Paul Gowland), Municipality of North Cowichan (Dave Preikshot), Stewardship Center BC – Green Shores (Kelly Loch), Coastal Invasive Species Committee (Jessica Bayley). Watershed Connections CWB (Stuart Pagaduan, Jill Thompson), Cowichan Tribes (Hilda Paige, Cheyenne Williams), CVRD (Tanya Soroka), BC Parks (Katy Fulton), Cowichan Valley Naturalists (Bruce Coates), Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre (Jane Kiltnei), Cowichan Community Land Trust (Stephanie Cottell), VI Recreational Paddling Assoc. (Rick Bryan), Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (Judy Brayden), Koksilah Working Group (Scott Noble), Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (Barry Hetschko), Xwulqw'selu Connections (Jennifer Shepherd), Wildsafe BC (Todd Carnahan)

Bottom Line – Why should you care...?



- Water and watershed sustainability is everybody's business
- The CWB is a nationally recognized vehicle that allows the CVRD to pursue your broader Reconciliation goals while supporting an innovative collaborative model that provides real benefits to your constituents and real value for taxpayer's dollars
- Together, Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD are pushing the envelope in terms of demonstrating what an effective and committed partnership between local government and First Nations looks like, one that recognizes and accommodates the authority, strengths and weaknesses of both partners – and the collective benefits of working together.

My participation on the Cowichan Watershed Board is one of the greatest joys of my life – and one of my greatest responsibilities...

Dr. Shannon Waters
Cowichan Valley Medical Health Officer
CWB Speaker series 17.04.23

