



Jill Thompson <jill@cowichanwatershedboard.ca>

Letter of Concern About the Cowichan Watershed

Roger Wiles <wilesaway@icloud.com>

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To: Jill Thompson <jill@cowichanwatershedboard.ca>

Cowichan Watershed Board:

I am a long-time admirer and supporter of the Cowichan Watershed Board. I approach you because I understand that the work of this Board is fundamental to the restoration of watershed health in our region. You are to my mind the "go-to" organization for all issues impinging on watershed and you have accomplished this to date with inspiring indigenous collaboration.

In February I became aware of a continuous train of dump trucks hauling fill and dumping it on a property just off 1725 Tzouhalem Road. Over subsequent weeks my concern has grown because the dumping of this fill from an unknown source is encroaching into the complex wetlands associated with Tzouhalem Creek - a waterway which feeds into fish-bearing Cowichan estuary waters. The site is very close to the Nature Conservancy of Canada's (NCC) Chase Woods Nature Preserve. You may be aware that in recent years that organization has invested a good deal of expense and effort in wetland restoration. (<https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/where-we-work/british-columbia/stories/reclaiming-a-lost-wetland.html>)

In March after alerting NCC to the situation, I was assured by their stewardship coordinator, Sarein Basi-Primeau that they had shared their concerns with the Municipality of North Cowichan and Cowichan Tribes. There was no explanation offered for the dumping and no indication that any environmental assessment had been conducted.

Hearing no more, I contacted biologist Tracy Flemming by email in April to ask if she was aware of the situation and whether she knew if an environmental assessment had been conducted and how this dumping might be affecting these precious wetlands. I have received no reply though I suspect capacity issues may have hampered her ability to respond.

Having still had no response to my inquiries, I emailed Councillor Debra Toporowski in early June but again there has been no acknowledgement.

I ask the Cowichan Watershed Board to please investigate and shed some light on what appears to be a very murky, problematic situation. (I attach three images that illustrate my concern.)

Thank you for your leadership.

Roger Wiles
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The first view is a google satellite screen shot of the location prior to dumping. The second aerial oblique view was taken about February 12th. (The visible water is part of an NCC wetland remediation effort on Chase Woods lands.) The third view was taken June 2nd and shows expanding encroachment.





