

Cowichan Watershed Board Staff Report November 2023

This is a monthly snapshot of staff's completed activities and future plans. We ask Board members to please review the table before the Board meeting. There will be time for questions to staff. Also please note decisions required (right column).

Area of Work	Activities (What?)	Comments / Analysis (So What?)	Outcome or Next Steps (Now What?)	Board Support Needed
Just Add Water (addressing low flows)	<p>“Weir Getting There!” Speaker Night, October 30, with CoChairs and Tom R.</p> <p>CLRSS “Weir Writing Letters” campaign and newsletter.</p>	<p>Smaller turnout (35) due to communications glitch. The Discourse attended. The excellent presentations by Co-Chairs and Tom were captured on video. See youtube channel. Q&A included key weir resource people (Larry, Brian, Leroy, Cheri...)</p> <p>See CLRSS Nov. newsletter here.</p>	<p>Next steps are to find additional funding and look at hiring a Program Manager for the Weir (at the direction of the Weir Planning Team)</p>	
	<p>Tom and Danni met with WLRS & MoF Planners retreat. Spoke about weir project & role of provincial government.</p>	<p>Opportunity to influence front line and executive level provincial staff.</p>		
	<p>Tom met with CVRD comms staff. Danni met with paddling representative. Kristine attended a Chamber of Commerce presentation about recreation at the lake.</p>	<p>Increased comms effort by CVRD to get word out on the need/progress of the weir project.</p> <p>Ongoing interest expressed by Rick Bryan in wave feature at the weir.</p>	<p>CWB staff to support/review CVRD weir comms developed.</p>	
	<p>Tom and CT staff met with Infrastructure Canada staff regarding DMAF grant</p>	<p>clarification on requirement to clearly identify lower and mid river works prior to release of federal weir funding</p>	<p>Meeting with Lulumexun Director Larry George to discuss next steps in lower/mid river flood works project development</p>	

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	Tom attended WLRs executive level staff meeting re weir	Clarify non-monetary requests of province on weir file (backstop liability/compensation and recognition of Cowichan Tribes role in decision making)	Follow up with political level correspondence	CoChairs to review/sign letters to MIRR; Finance and WLRs; and Premier's staff
	<p>Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st Xwulqw'selu Collaborative Community Advisory Table (CCAT) Meeting • 1st Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning newsletter out. 	<p>CCAT: 18 attendees plus support team. A positive and constructive milestone in the process. Parallel Cowichan Community Guidance Group under development.</p> <p>Distribution in CT Newsletter, at Speaker Night and Collaborative Gathering so far. Print run and email versions next week.</p>	<p>XWP website updates will include CCAT and Cowichan Guidance Group photos and bios.</p> <p>Print run and email versions next week.</p>	Please read the Xwulqw'selu newsletter.
Achieving our Targets	The Estuarine Health team met to work on indicators for measuring the condition of the estuary.	More work is required and the goal to provide a draft for CWB review is early 2023.	Preliminary ideas for indicators are to be fine-tuned and reviewed.	
	Fish target revision reflecting indigenous rights and title under development	Chief recommends bringing this discussion directly to Chief and Council.	Danni to arrange time on CT Chief and Council agenda.	
	2022 water quality results were presented to the Fisheries Committee and Cowichan Tribes.	In addition to sharing this information, feedback was received that will be useful guiding future monitoring programs and for prioritizing next steps.		

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	Meetings with MoF Fisheries technical staff regarding fish kill response and readiness planning moving forward	Provincial staff working to access increased monitoring funding & supportive if CWB coordinating role	Ideas will be incorporated into the 2024 sampling program and into the “Fish Kill” workshop series.	
	Phaedra Douglass has joined the team as an intern supporting the Targets program until the end of May	An important piece of her work will be locating, summarizing in a spreadsheet, and mapping water quality sampling locations and links to results.	Staff will continue to support Phaedra to ensure her work begins to fill a recognized void in data sharing between partners.	
	New targets/indicators added to the website.	Work required to update target webpages and WG webpages.	Jill and Heather to work on this in December.	
Building Partnerships	BC Watersheds Collaborative Gathering held in Cowichan Bay (Nov 22&23). Attended by staff, David, Shannon and Chief Hwitsum (thank you!)	A good opportunity to connect with potential funders and folks working on provincial policy.	Follow up with potential funders and other collaborative partners.	
	PSF Board retreat held in Cowichan Bay profiles Cowichan Weir climate adaptation-supported by CWB member & staff		Follow up with a fish kill workshop application.	
	Interview with POLIS on 20 year anniversary	Providing input and feedback on role of POLIS in supporting organizations like CWB	POLIS to provide draft of CWB input for comment prior to publication	

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Watershed Knowledge and Understanding	Finished and reported on the RBC Tech4Nature grant alongside Cowichan Tribes	Wrap up of 2022 WQ sampling and WIKD work. Staff discussing recommendations and possible next steps with relevant groups (Living Lakes, AquaHackers, CT, CVRD, etc).	Connect with CT and CVRD staff to discuss next steps with fulfilling the recommendations of the WIKD report.	May need Board expertise at a follow-up meeting (ie. Chair Stone)
	Speaker Series: "Everything's connected: groundwater, streams, climate and you!" Nov 20 with Tom Gleeson, Xwulqw'selu Connections. MCd by Alison.	Well attended (70) with many new faces and lots of great questions - video to be uploaded.	Gord Baird, Dec 18th. David Slade MC Staff to seek continued partnership with VIU in 2024. Topic suggestions: photographer as watershed 'witness' (Tim/Barry) ; elk; algae; - Somenos Marsh; Story with art class (Stuart)	Come out on Dec 18th! Board MCs needed for 2024, restarting in February. 3rd Monday 6:30pm
Administrative and Other	Application submitted for a UVic Intern to "tell the story of WQ sampling through the years	This would both tell the story as well as inform upcoming WQ sampling	Hire an intern if/when we receive approval of our application.	
	Application submitted to PSF for Fish Kill Workshops	This would allow us to pursue these workshops for the next 2-4 years (funding dependent)	Once funding is secured, begin planning processes and hire a project lead.	
	\$20K funding approved for 2024 WQ samping by MoE	Proceed with planning. Potentially expand to include parameters per Fish Kill workshop recommendations.	Need to secure additional funds to supplement and meet with the project team to plan.	