

## Staff Report - May 2024

This is a monthly snapshot of staff's completed and current 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 Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$14 million contributed by the province (March).</li> <li>• CWB staff providing secretariat role to Technical Working Group (BC, CT, CVRD, PE) struck to resolve outstanding issues.</li> <li>• Separate CT/BC bilateral conversations initiated to provide forum for G2G discussions.</li> </ul>	<p>Aiming for a deadline of July 15 to resolve the key outstanding issues of ownership, liability and compensation as well as backup operations/maintenance.</p>	<p>CWB staff working with CT Sr. staff to refine CWB role in weir project moving forward. Key elements are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim secretariat role;</li> <li>• Hiring a Process Manager</li> <li>• Communications (short/long term): see third activity below for details.</li> <li>• Providing compensation pkg of information to CTs and BC.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Weir - concurrent/contingent Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) - projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinated and onboarded consultant for the project.</li> <li>• CVRD contributes BCSRIF funds to lower/mid river project selection process.</li> </ul>	<p>Reminder: Cowichan Tribes needs to identify all lower and mid river DMAF funding projects in order to negotiate Contribution Agreement to free up federal resources for Cowichan weir (as well as beneficial mid and lower river projects).</p>	<p>Northwest Hydraulics Consultants retained to model potential projects and provide report to CT technical selection committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CT technical selection committee recommending 3 mid river and 3 lower river projects to committee of Council</li> <li>• Contribution agreement must be negotiated with Infrastructure Canada to free up federal funding for weir and inriver projects</li> </ul>	

Area of Work	Activities (What?)	Comments / Analysis (So What?)	Outcome or Next Steps (Now What?)	Board Support Needed
	<p>Weir Communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CWB to contract Leroy Van Wieren to draft short term “community update” pieces for Weir Tech team approval.</li> <li>- CWB to draft. Seek Tara/Clayton input before Larry’s review, then tech team communications point people from each partner.</li> </ul>	<p>There have been media articles RE updates on weir progress/funding but no direct outreach to the community for over a year.</p> <p>Need a general update to keep people informed and comfortable with the ongoing process.</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Letter mailed to all lakeshore property owners.</li> <li>● Op.Ed. local papers, Valley Voice article.</li> <li>● Key messages for leaders</li> <li>● Invite all to weir tours on July 20 “Weir All Connected” event.</li> <li>● Leroy’s Corner and/or CWB website updates.</li> </ul>	
	<p>Xwulqw’selu Watershed Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finalizing contract with CTs</li> <li>● Continuing to scope a potential workstream that includes CVRD and Cowichan Tribes regarding: community planning, local jurisdiction, decision-making and bylaws around the watershed (watershed-responsible development).</li> </ul>	<p>Key areas we are offering support to XWP process in 2024:</p> <p>Advising re: communications; technical projects; supporting financial administration of funds; and scoping out a possible workstream for healthy community planning/responsible watershed dev’t.</p>	<p>Initial and further scoping meetings with Cowichan Tribes and CVRD to be held in June.</p>	
<p>Achieving our Targets</p>	<p>Fish Sustainability and Flows -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funding secured (\$100k from PSF)</li> <li>● CWB hosted 2 workshops in spring to develop 2024 monitoring and response plans to address pressures resulting in 2023 mortality event</li> </ul>	<p>Engagement of Sr. Govt, Cowichan Tribes, Local Govt, ENGO’s, academics &amp; subject matter experts is ongoing in bi-weekly meetings to review monitoring data (early warning) and act on response actions to address</p>	<p>Continued conversations with Pacific Salmon Foundation regarding work underway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Robust WQ Monitoring program</li> <li>● Response plan components are being implemented</li> </ul>	

Area of Work	Activities (What?)	Comments / Analysis (So What?)	Outcome or Next Steps (Now What?)	Board Support Needed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff is undergoing planning to establish a project to map cold water refugia for fish and identify legal tools to ensure their protection</li> </ul>	potentially adverse conditions in Cowichan River 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cold water refugia work is being planned</li> </ul>	
	<p>Water Quality target -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UVic Scholar has started work on synthesizing nearly 30 years of water quality sampling to tell the story of changing water quality</li> </ul>	This work will help inform the board, staff and our partners on water quality trends and help us identify and act on new projects to improve water quality	Staff are working with intern to develop report outline and scope out project.	
	<p>Water Quality Target -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final details around sample site selection and parameters is underway for Cowichan Lake and main tributaries for 2024 water quality attainment work.</li> </ul>	It is very time consuming to collect water samples from the lake and perimeter tributaries, therefore careful planning is required to ensure important information to inform decision-making is collected in an efficient and cost effective manner.	Once sites are confirmed, work can begin to organize volunteers for the '5 in 30' sampling set to begin in August.	
	<p>Water Quality target -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive map is nearly complete that illustrates who has collected what information where in the Cowichan/Koksilah watershed</li> </ul>	An overwhelming amount of water quality data exists, some more useful than others. This tool provides a quick snapshot that leads its user to the more complete database.	The map will be posted on the CWB website by early June.	
	<p>Water Wise Target - see supporting Koksilah Low Flow Working Group below under Partnerships.</p>			

Area of Work	Activities (What?)	Comments / Analysis (So What?)	Outcome or Next Steps (Now What?)	Board Support Needed
Building Partnerships	Organize BBQ and river tour for Cowichan Tribes and CVRD councils, at the request of Chief Daniels.	Opportunity to learn together and build relationships. Shared meal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salmon BBQ hosted by Cowichan Tribes (TBD)</li> <li>- River tour including 4-5 stops by bus.</li> <li>- Good participation of councilors from both partners.</li> </ul>	<b>CoChairs to set date with their councils.</b>
	Supporting Koksilah Low Flow Working Group communications - public meeting on April 29th, sign project.	Projections of drought this summer combined with Provincial implementation of groundwater licensing is grounds for stress in the agriculture community and beyond. More attention needed. KLFWG members sought collective communications funding support to handle summer drought communications better, but nothing yet. CWB is helping to fill in from core funding.	Summary notes from KLFWG Public Meeting completed and circulated.  Roadside Signs purchased, thanks to CVRD grant in aid. CWB is developing a network of sign stewards (adopt a sign) to place water conservation sandwich board signs in high-vis roadside areas and keep an eye on them. Province will trigger at Koksilah Drought Level 2.	<b>Thanks to Alison for support!</b>
	Letter of support provided for Somenos Marsh Society for their GreenStreams S'amunu Watershed Streamside Stewardship Partners Project.	Support for partners doing good work in the watershed.	Share information / learn from one another's work.	
Watershed Knowledge and Understanding	Summer events: 1. Cowichan Lake and River Stewards annual Celebrating Water Festival — Weir all Connected: July 20	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support partners, educate/communicate/engage on the Weir.</li> <li>2. Annual CWB signature event</li> </ol>	Outcomes 1. Many more people understand the weir, and the benefits of its replacement. Priority is	<b>Attend as many as possible.</b>  1. <b>Chief Daniels to</b>

Area of Work	Activities (What?)	Comments / Analysis (So What?)	Outcome or Next Steps (Now What?)	Board Support Needed
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Cowichan Watershed Board's annual River Clean Up: Aug ()</li> <li>3. Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable's Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Skweyul: Sept 22</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Support partners, engage with community</li> </ol>	<p>Cowichan Tribes community members and lakeshore residents.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. 100+ volunteers participate in partnership with Cowichan Tribes. Engage youth interns.</li> <li>3. participate in this great intercultural learning celebration.</li> </ol>	<p><b>open the July 20 event.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <b>CoChairs to open River Cleanup.</b></li> </ol>
Administrative and Other	<p>Fundraising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Watershed Sustainability Fund is now open and will be applied for in June.</li> </ul> <p>Letters sent/signed this past month on behalf of the CWB:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Watershed Security Fund letter signed by Co-Chairs</li> <li>2. Nature Estuary support letter signed by Co-Chairs</li> </ol> <p>Discussions RE BC and Federal Board seats.</p> <p>Completion of 2023 Annual Report.</p>	<p>Focus on new funding would be to support core work vs. new projects.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. BC needs to enhance commitment to fulfil mandate for the fund.</li> <li>2. Discussed and agreed by the Board at the April meeting.</li> </ol> <p>Preparing to present AR, Governance Manual and Impact Plan to partner councils.</p>	<p>Building capacity for the team to support the work of the Board over the coming years.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Await response</li> <li>2. No action needed</li> </ol>	<p><b>WSF application requires letters of support.</b></p>