

CWB Draft 2025-2027 Impact Plan Outline

Mission Statement: We come together, with one heart and mind, to work for the health of the Cowichan-Koksilah watershed and the peoples who live here.

Principles:

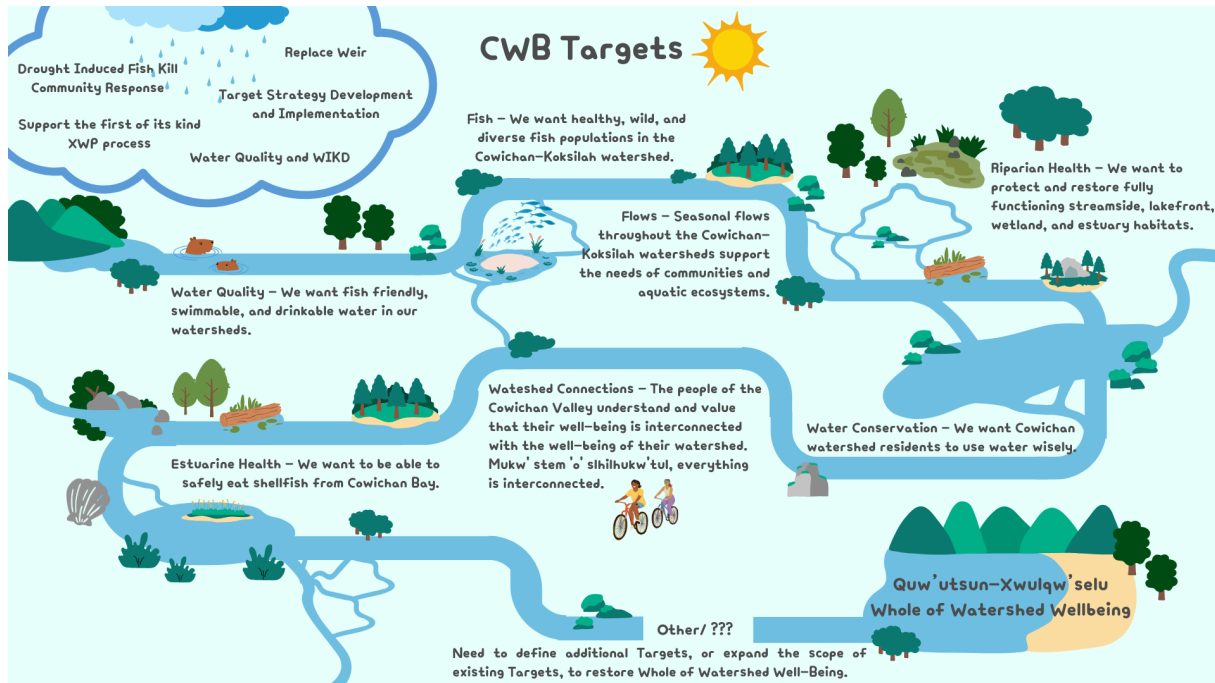
1. **Nutsamat kws yaay’us tth qa’:** We come together as a whole to work together to be stronger as partners for the watershed. This is an ancient Cowichan Tribes principle. Orientation in the application of the principle will be provided by the Co-Chairs. (“Nutsamat”)
2. **Partnership:** The Board is built on a collaborative partnership among Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD (the partners) and seeks to engage and bridge the interests of governments, regulatory agencies, local water stakeholders and citizens.
3. **Representation:** The Board members are appointed to serve the best interests of Cowichan Basin citizens and the region as a whole in a manner that is consistent with federal and provincial interests that support sound watershed management. Members selected are, to the greatest extent possible, local community leaders and/or known water management champions-related experts.
4. **Watershed Emphasis:** The CWB’s priorities and activities are guided by a vision for the watershed as a whole that is based on ecological sustainability and “whole of watershed” thinking.
5. **Transparency:** To the greatest extent possible, the actions and decisions of the CWB will be transparent and open.

Targets:

Fish	<p>We want healthy, wild, and diverse fish populations in the Cowichan-Koksilah watershed.</p> <p>[Revisions Pending: Indigenous Target under development in consultation with Cowichan Tribes.]</p>
Flows	<p>Seasonal flows throughout the Cowichan-Koksilah watersheds support the needs of communities and aquatic ecosystems.</p>
Riparian	<p>We want to protect and restore fully functioning streamside, lakefront, wetland, and estuary habitats.</p>
Estuarine	<p>We want to be able to safely eat shellfish from Cowichan Bay.</p> <p>[Revisions Pending: This Working Group is working to broaden this target and indicators to a ‘whole of estuary’ goal that also captures habitat restoration for other species. 2023]</p>

<p>Water Quality</p>	<p>We want fish friendly, swimmable, and drinkable water in our watersheds.</p> <p>[Last updated 2023- Further Revisions Anticipated: Work is underway outside the CWB to develop water quality indicators that reflect indigenous ways of knowing. This target will be reviewed when that work is complete.]</p>
<p>Watershed Connections</p>	<p>The people of the Cowichan Valley understand and value that their well-being is interconnected with the well-being of their watershed. Mukw' stem 'o' slilhukw'tul, everything is interconnected.</p>
<p>Water Conservation</p>	<p>We want Cowichan watershed residents to use water wisely.</p>
<p>OTHER/GAPS</p>	<p>In 2025, we will begin a process to define additional Targets, or expand the scope of existing Targets, so that in combination, and over the long-term, reaching these aspirational Targets would restore Whole of Watershed Well-Being.</p>

All actions and projects taken on by the Cowichan Watershed Board will be nestled under the umbrella of our Targets that are (will be) designed to achieve whole of watershed well-being.



We currently have identified the following priority projects (*raindrops in the infographic*):

1. Developing/Implementing a new Target Strategy

Reimagining and structuring our Targets work to achieve a more Whole of Watershed Vision. Maintain what remains important, and let go of what has evolved into other ways that the CWB is supported with technical advice and work.

- a. Roles: Provide leadership for collaborative, long-term commitment to achieving Targets.
- b. Outcomes: See the presentation about the evolution of how Targets might be pursued in 2025, including outcomes.

2. Replace the Weir

- a. Roles: Secretariat to Government to Government (G2G) and Technical Working Group (TWG) processes; contract management and administration support to Cowichan Tribes; government relations, tackling permitting issues; communications & engagement planning and delivery
- b. Outcomes: license application and joint works agreement; additional funding confirmed; ongoing operations, maintenance and insurance funding agreement; recommended compensation plan completed & attached to the license application

3. Support the first-of-its kind XWP process

- a. Roles: act as advisors, support event/meeting coordination, workstreams as requested (ie. Forestry, community planning, etc.); budget/admin to Cowichan Tribes.
 - b. Outcomes: progress towards completion of WSP and Watershed plan for Xwulqw'selu watershed resulting in increased water security and ecological health; engaged community with meaningful input to authority holders/process; productive dialogue on tough issues in the watershed.
- 4. Drought Induced Fish Kill Community Response**
- a. Roles: continued coordination of collaborative monitoring and response plan; communications and outreach
 - b. Outcomes: process report that documents accomplishments, lessons learned and transferable elements of Cowichan approach; building off success for 2024 a less intensive monitoring and response plan will be implemented until the Weir is built.
- 5. Water Quality and Watershed Information, Knowledge and Data Project**
- a. Roles: analysis of water quality data and engagement with community and professional experts to determine recommended next steps to the Board.
 - b. Outcomes: recommendations to improve water quality in the Cowichan; a resource to support watershed information, knowledge and data-sharing between partners and the wider community.

Our Ways of Working:

As important as what we do, is how we do it.

Key elements of how we action our work now and into the future, include:

1. To build our relationship as a Board and exercise our strength; examples/options below:
 - a. *Possible Board retreat*
 - b. *Watershed tours*
2. Staff to continue strong relationships with partner staff
 - a. *Work on shared projects*
 - b. *Fill in needed support gaps*
 - c. *Bring staff from both teams together share knowledge and capacity*
 - d. *Consult staff from founding organizations on Impact Plans and look for areas of collaboration*
3. Support and be supported by the wider stewardship community who are working toward the targets in their own way.
 - a. *Attend and support the Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable (regularly) and other organizations as requested/needed*
 - b. *Where possible, directly support or partner with watershed organizations undertaking projects that advance progress toward CWB targets.*
4. Respectfully engage Elders to support and guide our work
 - a. *Hire an Elder in Residence*
 - b. *Attend Elder lunches*

5. Mentor youth to build our team (board and staff)
 - a. *Connect with UVic Environmental Law/Indigenous Law/Scholars programs; possibly in conjunction with Quw'ustun Cultural Connections Society*
 - b. *Identify roles in which to hire youth to mentor under current project leads*
6. Build community knowledge and connection
 - a. *Speakers nights*
 - b. *Annual events (ie. River Clean Up, Rivers Day support, booths/tables)*
 - c. *Revamp website, logo, branding*
7. Important ongoing work
 - a. *Continue to meet monthly*
 - b. *CoChairs regular meetings*
 - c. *Cowichan Watershed Society regular meetings*