

Staff Report - February 2025

This is a monthly snapshot of staff's completed and current activities, and future plans as it relates to our approved [Impact Plan](#) (updated Plan to come to the Board in February). 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>COWICHAN WEIR</p> <p>Licensing and Ownership</p> <p>-2 Planning tables continue to meet regularly to move licensing/ownership process forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● G2G table - bi-monthly ● TWG Table - bi-weekly <p><u>Recent Progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Briefing materials and organization of weir tour for new WLRS Minister (Feb. 5 date postponed due to weather - expecting a new date early this spring) ● Operations, Maintenance and insurance costing for new weir complete ● Permitting workshop with agency staff/subject matter experts held; permitting plan being developed; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CWB asked to serve in secretariat role for the weir G2G table, which continues to move forward on important conversations on Rights and Title, licensing, compensation and operations and maintenance. ● New Minister actively engaged and informed about this project ● Progress on 2 “process hurdles” (DMAF contribution agreement and permitting) brings us closer to submitting license application ● Construction budget in 2026 \$ indicates funding gap. Partners currently engaged in procuring additional funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once license application is submitted, a detailed Joint Works Agreement and Decision making protocols will need to be developed ● License application processing by BC WLRS expected to take a full year 	<p>Where possible, help promote knowledge and understanding of the Cowichan Weir project within your communities and support your staff's work on this important initiative.</p>

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	<p>Second focused workshop being scheduled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DMAF contribution agreement (24M\$ federal money) in final stages - expected signing in March ● License application completion target for project is spring, 2025 ● Project Manager Position posted by Cowichan Tribes <p>Comms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● See website updates here ● Working on FAQ section ● Working on update letter to lakeshore landowners. (Difficult to reach them any other way.) ● TrailCams recording daily lakeshore levels as a visual, thanks to CLRSS volunteers. ● Lake youth 'champions' photographed. ● Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ March 17 Speaker Night with Elder Jedson August - Sta'lo' Stories ○ March 22 (World Water Day) Walk the Weir tours 10am-1:30pm - Saywell 			

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	Park.			
	<p>Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CWB staff team asked to provide additional technical and advisory support to Ecological Flows, Land use and Storage workstreams ● CWB staff continue to participate in and support process Planning Team and G2G table, including budget administration for the process on behalf of Cowichan Tribes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CWB will start to expand its support within areas already identified (i.e. events) ● Also increasing engagement and support in specific areas of work (i.e. different workstreams). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CWB staff support to this process will continue to evolve with strategic engagement that maximizes impacts/benefits to process ● CWB will support the planning of an Open House (est. Spring 2025) 	<p>Where possible, help promote knowledge and understanding of the Xwulqw'selu WSP process within your communities and support your staff's work on this important initiative.</p> <p>https://koksilahwater.ca/</p>
Achieving our Targets	Draft Target Strategy review integrated into Impact Plan.	Staff considering best ways to keep pursuing our Targets in the next decade, acknowledging that much change and growth in project activity means that TAC and Working Groups are no longer meeting.	TBD - will be looking for discussion / guidance soon.	
	Fish Sustainability and Flows - [See above - Weir and XWP are both major strategies for this target.]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work underway is to document the valuable lessons learned in 2024 that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final report to funder (PSF) ● Planning for further cold water refugia work 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final reporting on fish kill response and 2025 strategies is underway. ● CWB staff hosted a Somenos Lake fish kill workshop resulting in clear understanding of event and components of a monitoring/management plan moving forward. ● Data collection and reporting is completed to map cold water refugia for fish in Cowichan River. ● CWB staff invited to present on Fish mortality response at Provincial Indigenous WQ monitoring workshop in Nanaimo Feb. 26 	<p>are transferable to future years and other communities/watersheds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Robust plans and partnerships in place to improve program next season ● Sharing information with other communities and watersheds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CWB to host March meeting of monitoring partners to initiate 2025 program ● Opportunity to report out/network at provincially scoped workshop 	
	<p>Watershed Connections target -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resumed Speaker Series in partnership with VIU-Cowichan. ● Examining ways to support local ENGOs who do education / immersion programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attending CSRT regularly and working with partners on events, Speaker Night, and calendar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.naturecowichan.net/wp/event-calendar/ 	<p>Board members encouraged to attend Speaker Nights if you wish. Details here and in your calendar invitation.</p>
	<p><u>No new updates on:</u> Riparian Health target Water Quality target Water Wise Target</p>	<p>Things continue to move along with all of these targets but no specific news for February.</p>	<p>Updates to be shared in March</p>	

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Building Partnerships	Watershed Board hosted First Nations Fisheries Council Water Table at January meeting.	Opportunity to network and build relationships with important water stewardship organization with provincial scope and authority	CWB members and staff to continue to strengthen relationships with FNFC Water Caucus	Gifts were presented for the Board Members present (see Danni for yours!)
	Staff continue to attend Koksilah Low Flow Working Group; Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable; Xwulqw'selu Connections; Cowichan Lake and River Stewards, and other watershed-based meetings on behalf of the Board.	<p>Important to know what else is happening within the watershed (concerns, projects, plans) to support collaborations, and share CWB news.</p> <p>Expecting a Koksilah Community Info session in May, Celebrating Water Festival in July, River Cleanup in August, Sta'lo' Skweyul in September.</p>	<p>Continue to attend and report back as needed.</p> <p>There is an identified need for KLFWG to have more coordination capacity, potentially from CWB, to support short-term actions and community cohesion during long-term XWP.</p>	Share Estuary Nature Center manager posting https://www.cowichanestuary.ca/job-postings/
	Working alongside the CVRD and Qwustenuxun Consulting, CWB submitted a proposal to the REFBC for a video series project entitled Syuth tu tumuhw (Stories from the land): Indigenous Voices in Civil Projects	By listening to the stories of the land from Indigenous voices before starting any capital-building projects, we can set a powerful example and pave the way for a new approach to doing business in the Cowichan Valley.	Wait to hear if the project funding is successful.	
Watershed Knowledge and Understanding	Restoration and Research Lead (Heather P) and E.D. (Danni) attended a professional development opportunity: Watersheds, Wildfire and Changing Forest Landscapes in Cumberland to see how their community is dealing with difficult watershed issues.	<p>Key takeaways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Importance of response planning for emergencies (build resilience in advance) - rebuild in new ways - individual and collective action (both powerful) 	Bringing that knowledge to XWP process, Watershed Assessment work, etc.	

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	<p>Visited Francis Kelsey Grade 12 Environmental Studies Class to share about CWB's work.</p>	<p>Reaching youth</p>	<p>Stay connected; no action at this time.</p>	<p>Thank you to CoChair, Kate Segall for leading this!</p>
	<p>Invitation to present at the BCAFN conference: Breakout Description Collaborative governance over First Nations' lands and waters is at the heart of implementing the UN Declaration through shared decision-making frameworks based on respectand free, prior, and informed consent. Water management, in particular, requires multilateral cooperation to effectively steward our shared waters. This breakout session will explore shared water governance models that are underway in BC as a blueprint for First Nations and other jurisdictions across the province.</p>	<p>Great opportunity to learn from, and share with, other Nations</p>	<p>March 3 & 4 in Richmond</p>	<p>Calvin Swustus Chris Alphonse Shannon Waters</p> <p>Will be presenting on behalf of the Board with staff support provided by Danni</p>
<p>Administrative and Other</p>	<p>Completed a Draft 3 year Impact Plan</p> <p>Planning a 15 year Celebration!</p> <p>CoChair Segall (with approval from CoChair, Chief Daniels) signed on to a letter alongside other local governments and Nations calling on the Provincial Gov't to</p>	<p>To agree on our shared direction and vision and the activities needed to get there.</p> <p>Celebrate our work, together!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft Impact Plan will be presented at the February 2025 Board Meeting ● Draft Annual Report will be presented at the March 2025 meeting. ● Presentations to respective Councils to be booked for May/June. 	<p>Dig into the Impact Plan on Feb 24;</p> <p>Bring ideas forward for a 15 year celebration!</p>

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	make commitments to watersheds and fund collaborative governance bodies (see pkg)			