

# *ANNUAL REPORT 2021*



*Cowichan*  
WATERSHED BOARD

# Contents

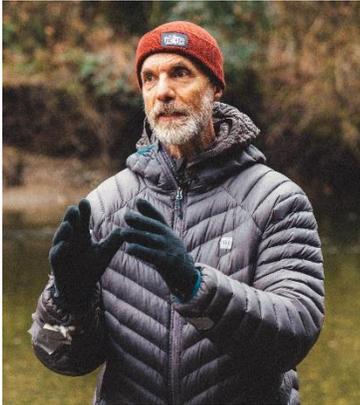
- Reflections from the Executive Director ..... 3
- Background ..... 4
- Milestones ..... 5
- Progress on Priorities ..... 6
- Financial Summary ..... 11
- Appendix A: People and Partners ..... 13
- Appendix B: Core Principles ..... 19
- Appendix C: Current Targets and Indicators (Original) ..... 20

**Cover image: "The Journey of Humility" by Stuart Pagaduan.**



*“This design was inspired by the determination and survival of our salmon despite decades of obstacles and stresses. Year after year we anticipate the coming of Fall weather and the miracle we know as the salmon run. Many Indigenous Peoples of the coast have salmon in their Creation stories. Furthermore, we see them as not just food but relations- brothers and sisters. It is this perspective I would like to bring forward to our community and children. Only then may we understand and value all things in nature are sacred and they should be honored like Family. I chose 2 Salmon because we have balance in our Cultural ceremonies and we have balance in nature. The waves represent the struggles of the Salmon but maybe the struggles we face here in Cowichan. The salmon have Salish shapes and they continue to move in a circle which also represents the sacred cycles of life. Let’s do our part.”*

## Reflections from the Executive Director



The Cowichan Watershed Board represents a community that is defined by our rivers, lakes, estuary and forests. Our Federally and Provincially designated heritage river and the salmon populations it supports have provided the Quw'utsun people with sustenance and cultural and spiritual wellness for millennia - and continues to do so today. Our watershed, and the groundwater aquifers beneath it, support all of us - farmers, mill workers, service and tourism providers - we all benefit from, and depend on, our rivers, lakes and aquifers. We all share this common bond. We are all river people.

By all measures, 2021 was not an easy year. Our watershed experienced both extreme drought and extreme flooding, resulting in significant hardships for many Cowichan Valley Residents. Our ability to work together on the ground (and in the water) and spend time with each other in the watershed we call home was challenged by the CoVid 19 pandemic. Yet, despite all this, the Cowichan Watershed board and our partners were able to take significant steps towards “whole of watershed” health for the Cowichan-Koksilah watershed in 2021, demonstrating a renewed commitment to collaboration and reconciliation in doing so.

This annual report provides some highlights from 2021 and speaks not only what we have achieved but, perhaps most importantly, how we have achieved it - by engaging respectfully, building bridges and supporting the aspirations of our partners and collaborators as we work together to ensure a more positive water future for our children and grandchildren.

Our foundational partnership between Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Valley Regional District continues to provide the CWB with a unique and successful model for implementing positive watershed change in our community. It is a model that provides strength and resilience, and that has been widely recognized throughout British Columbia and Canada. We very much look forward to working internally and with our partners to live up to the Quw'utsun teaching that has been shared with us - and adopted as one of our Principles:

*Nutsamat kws yaay'us tth qa'*

*We come together as a whole to work together  
to be stronger as partners for the watershed.*

Respectfully,

Tom Rutherford, Executive Director  
Cowichan Watershed Board

## Background

In 2007, prompted by years of declines in the Cowichan River's iconic salmon runs, and increasingly frequent low-flows in summer, the [Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan](#) was created. It benefitted from the participation of many local people and organizations working with provincial and federal agencies. Eighty-nine clear objectives were identified, and leadership for each was assigned to a variety of agencies and parties. However, no specific funding was allocated to accomplish the work, no governing body existed to coordinate between the parties, which often had overlapping jurisdictions, and indigenous leadership participation was lacking.

**Governance:** In 2010, sitting Cowichan Tribes Chief Lydia Hwitsum and Cowichan Valley Regional District Chair Gerry Giles brought their councils together to create the Cowichan Watershed Board. The governance structure was anchored by an equal partnership of the two governments, co-chaired by the leaders of each, and by [core Principles](#). In 2018, through a two-year co-governance dialogue series engaging senior staff of the partners with CWB members, the [Governance Manual](#) was updated to better reflect the indigenous authority, knowledge and collaborative leadership that underlies the Board's success.

**Targets:** In 2011 the Board's Technical Advisory Committee established '[targets](#)' with the help of Cowichan Tribes, many local stewardship groups and relevant government agencies that had contributed to the Water Management Plan. The targets were intended to fill the gap between the ambitious Management Plan, and the reality of insufficient resources and authority to achieve its objectives. The targets honoured the direction and intent of the Management Plan while guiding and inspiring collaborative, locally-relevant, and achievable progress towards its goals. The current targets are listed in [Appendix B](#), but a target review is currently underway to update the language and indicators, including inclusion of the Koksilah watershed as part of the larger Cowichan basin.

Over the ensuing decade, five working groups have emerged as the collaborative bodies to focus on each of the targets. Through hundreds of meetings (most recently online), millions of dollars of field work and countless hours on email and phone calls, the Board's members, staff, partners and volunteers have steadily removed barriers to what's good for the Quw'utsun-Xwulqw'selu Sta'lo' watershed. We are guided throughout by the Quw'utsun teaching *Mukw' stem 'o' slhilhukw'tul* which translates roughly to "everything is interconnected" as well as the belief that if we take care of the watershed, the watershed will take care of us.



Salmon catching air near Greendale Trestle. Photo by J. Ingram.

## Milestones

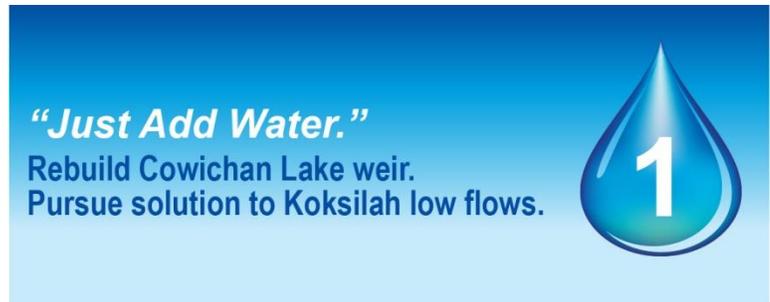
- The Cowichan Lake weir replacement project is underway. Engineering for the new weir is complete and aligned with the consensus recommendations of the Water Use Planning process. The project is shovel ready pending licensing and funding. See <https://cowichanlakeweir.ca/>
- A Koksilah Watershed Sustainability Plan is underway to address low flows and critical fish habitat, but also a whole of watershed solution to better water stewardship for the future. This process is co-chaired through Government-to-Government agreements between Cowichan Tribes and the BC Government. See <koksilahwater.ca>
- The Board attracted and successfully managed its largest grant to date. A \$500,000 Conservation Economic Stimulus Initiative grant enable the Board to employ xx local people to study the impact of low water flows and riparian forest conditions on fish habitat in the Koksilah and Chemainus Rivers. Co-lead by Cowichan Tribes and Halalt First Nation, this project provided key data to guide long term planning for these “Twinned Watersheds”, two of the most drought-affected rivers in the province. <https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/twinned-watershed/>
- The CWB introduced its new Coast-Salish designed chinook mascot as a tool to express and embody our hope for the watershed. The “Big Dancing Fish” helps to animate watershed friends and audiences, and shares some of their stories on Social Media. [Facebook](#) [YouTube](#) [Instagram](#)
- Cooperative approaches were maintained throughout 2021 in both the Cowichan and Koksilah to peacefully negotiate how to manage extreme low river flows during dry seasons.
- The thriving Cowichan arts community embraced the watershed in 2021 with a dedicated [Watersheds Show](#), hosting webinars to engage local artists in learning about the Board’s seven targets from CWB Working Group members, awakening interest and care from new audiences.
- At a provincial level, the Board advocated for a Watershed Security Fund, providing a model for how successful indigenous co-management of water can efficiently support Provincial water mandates if properly resourced.
- Multiple other projects are in progress to improve understanding of fish and their habitats, river morphology, and watershed hydrology, in both the Cowichan and Koksilah Rivers. Millions of dollars are at work in our local watersheds, employing and training local people, under the leadership of Cowichan Tribes, CVRD, Cowichan Watershed Board and other organizations. Riparian restoration and other ecological protection projects continue throughout the watershed lead by a very active and knowledgeable stewardship community, from Lake Cowichan to Cowichan Bay, and in the Koksilah, Somenos, and Quamichan sub-basins. Activities are coordinated through both the [CWB Working Groups](#) and the Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable. A quick review of the [Roundtable’s minutes](#) provides a reflection of the dedication, skill and contributions of the local stewardship community at work every year.

## Progress on Priorities

### Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Cowichan River

Replacing the Cowichan Lake weir to mitigate the growing impacts of climate change and land use issues remains the Board's top priority.

- CWB staff supported the CVRD, and its partners, Cowichan Tribes and Catalyst Paper to complete engineering plans based on the Water Use Plan of 2018. The CWB's role was primarily to help the CVRD share information with the Board members and the public, answer questions from concerned lakeshore property owners and other interested people and provide fish habitat expertise to the design.
- Cowichan Tribes is leading a concurrent multi-party process to address the governance and management of the new weir and its associated water conservation license. The CWB supports and participates in this process.
- The CWB also invited students and their supervising lawyer, Deborah Curran, from University of Victoria's Environmental Law Clinic to provide legal research about co-governed water licensing options. Deborah and her students provided thorough analysis about possible options for future water conservation license arrangements to the partners.
- Throughout the dry season, CWB staff and Board also advocated for interim fish habitat protection in the face of drought and increasing pressures on salmon survival. Unfortunately, 2021 marked the second year that the Cowichan River flows nearly needed to be sustained by electric pumps provided by Catalyst Paper due to the extreme low water levels in August. The rains returned just in time, but not before the work to re-install the pumps was complete.



Cowichan Tribes and Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable bring a celebration to the riverbank for Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Skweyul Cowichan River Day 2021. Photo by C. Mitchell.

More information at <https://cowichanlakeweir.ca/> and <https://www.catalystpaper.com/page/cowichan-water-management-information>

## Xwulqw'selu Sta'lo' Koksilah River

Developing a long-term co-governed Watershed Sustainability Plan for the Koksilah watershed is our second priority. The CWB is actively supporting a government-to-government process between Cowichan Tribes and the Province to identify better water and land management practices and policies to minimize the impacts of critically low flows and extreme flooding in this ecosystem.

- This year the CWB managed a \$500,000 provincial Conservation Economic Stimulus Initiative grant, with thanks to the Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, to put local people to work answering important questions about the river's morphology and riparian zones, and how specific reaches of fish habitat are impacted by low water flows. This project was undertaken in partnership with Halalt First Nation and Cowichan Tribes as the first step in a "Twinned Watersheds" project to study both the Koksilah and Chemainus Rivers, which are among the most drought impacted rivers in BC.
- The CWB was also instrumental in supporting an informal bi-weekly discussion with stakeholders affected by low Koksilah water levels, including developing a communications framework, holding a large online public information session, and coordinating riparian zone restorations on three Koksilah area farms.
- The Board also helped to bring an exciting new University of Victoria citizen science project to the area. "Koksilah Connections" is engaging local people and partners in studies to understand the connections between groundwater and surface streams.

More information at [koksilahwater.ca](http://koksilahwater.ca)



Volunteers sample water to learn about how surface and groundwater are related through University of Victoria's Koksilah Connections project. Photo by B. Hetschko.

# Progress on Priorities

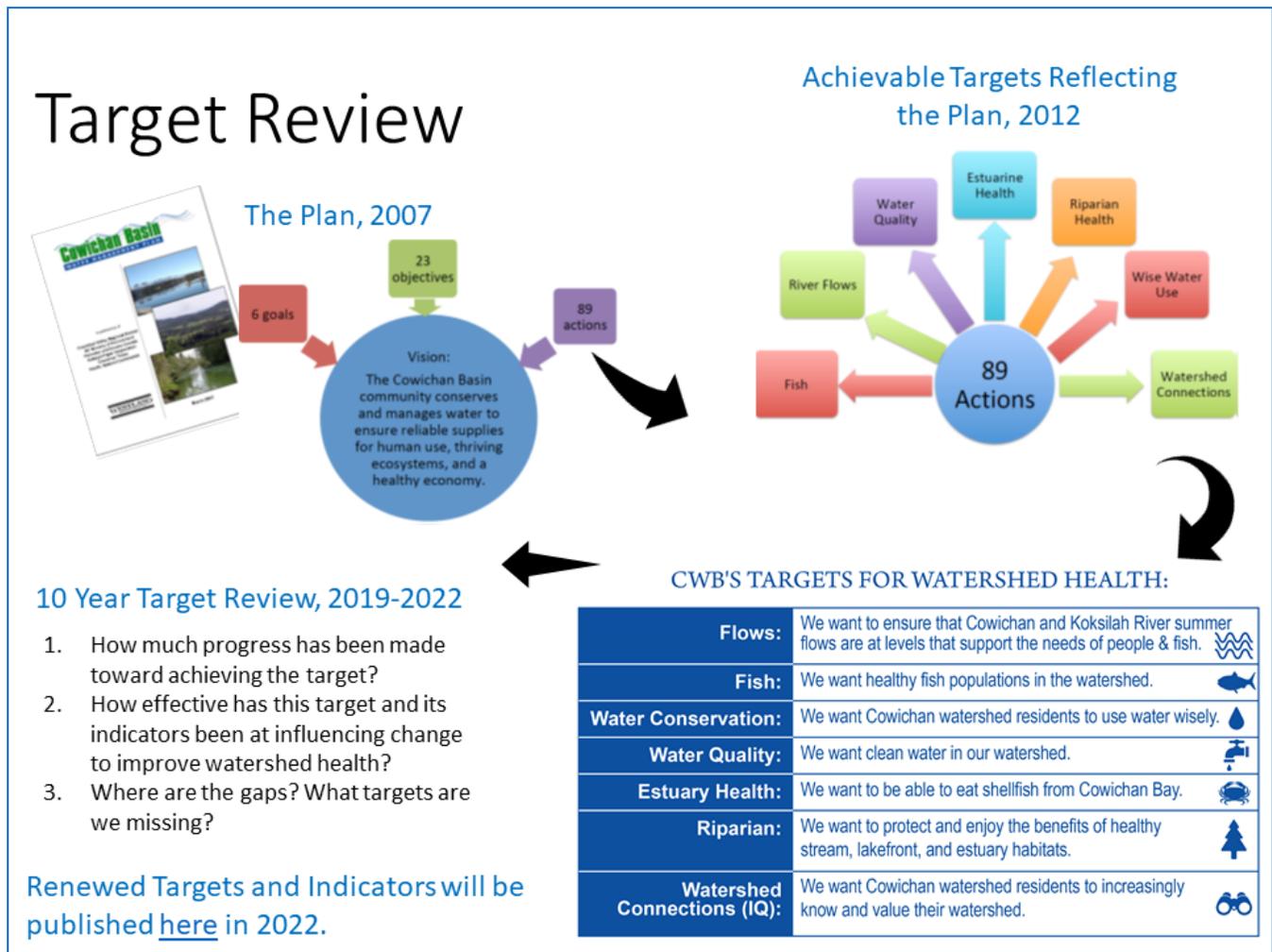
## The Target Working Groups

did not meet in 2021 while we focused on the Twinned Watersheds field work, and due to CoVid 19 pressures. However, work progressed on the ground and in the water throughout the watershed, some of which is described on the next page.

**“Achieving our Targets.”**  
 Facilitate collaborative working groups to achieve watershed targets.  
 Implement legal tools to support targets where possible.



The CWB’s focus for the Targets this year was to complete a review of the original 7 targets, with Working Group recommendations on updated targets with measurable indicators presented for discussion at CWB meetings between November 2021 and March 2022. The Board sends gratitude for the thorough, thoughtful and deeply knowledgeable review by the [Working Group members](#). See [Appendix B](#) for details about the seven targets and the indicators of success for each.



## Highlights on Advancing the Targets in 2021

Fish and Flows	Significant progress and investments were made towards restoring sustainable flows for fish in both the Cowichan and Koksilah Rivers (see pages 6-7), Work was also advanced to embed an in-season decision making framework to help protect fish habitats from the impacts of low flows. Funding was secured and work began to fill data gaps in salmon stock assessments and fish habitat studies. A Fish Protection Order was used for the second time in the Koksilah watershed when flows dropped below critical fish habitat levels. Stewardship organizations worked in multiple ways to protect fish habitats throughout the watershed. An extensive five-year groundwater study was initiated by UVic in partnership with Cowichan Tribes, the CWB and the Koksilah Working Group.
Water Quality and Estuarine Health	The Water Quality working group made progress on collaborating on desired WQ testing methods in the estuary. Presentations from Pollution Tracker helped inform future plans for WQ fundraising. A joint WQ monitoring grant application was developed with Cowichan Tribes for 2022 sampling.
Riparian Health	The Riparian Habitat Working Group explored how to pursue a more holistic approach to this target, including ‘creeklets’ and small streams throughout the watershed. The CWB led a riparian assessment of the lower Koksilah watershed through the Twinned Watershed project. Projects throughout the watershed advanced riparian restoration and invasive plant removal.
Watershed Connections (formerly IQ)	CoVid19 limited “connections” throughout 2021, however our 12 <sup>th</sup> Lower River Cleanup was the largest ever with over 100 volunteers, the Cowichan Valley Arts Council engaged many organizations and artists in learning about the targets “through the lens of art” and the Roving River Reporters brought us interviews with watershed friends via social media. A big dancing fish helped to lighten the mood because nothing connects us better than laughter. The Watershed Society also provided support to the Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable’s excellent Quw’utsun Sta’lo’ Skweyul on the Cowichan River.
Water Conservation	CWB assisted the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre and Koksilah Working Group to help residents of the Koksilah watershed reduce their outdoor summer water use.

## Progress on Priorities

### Nutsamat kws yaay'us tth qa'

Like a connected web of life, a connected watershed stewardship community builds resilience and results.

*We come together as a whole to work together to be stronger as partners for the watershed.*

The CWB works to ensure recognition of the inherent authority of indigenous people to steward their territories while drawing on the strengths and capacities of both partners. We work to foster healthy governance relations with provincial and federal representatives, as well as industry and community organizations.

A significant step was made this year towards implementing legal tools under the *BC Water Sustainability Act* through a partnership of Cowichan Tribes and the Province. A Government to Government process has been initiated to create a Water Sustainability Plan (WSP) for the Koksilah watershed. Planning is expected to begin in 2022.

In support of the WSP, and to improve understanding of the ecological condition and needs in the Koksilah and Chemainus watersheds, the CWB initiated and managed the first year of an extensive Twinned Watersheds study, co-lead by Cowichan Tribes and Halalt First Nation. This project prioritized local employment and training, building capacity for indigenous community members, women and youth. It also created collaborations with farmers and indigenous-owned businesses. More information is here. <https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/twinned-watershed/>

**“Building Partnerships.”**  
Support indigenous co-leadership, cross jurisdictional collaboration and public engagement for watershed health.



Indigenous leaders and community members were key to the learning, collaborations, and technical success of the Twinned Watersheds Project. CWB photos.

## Financial Summary: 2021 Budget to Actuals Comparison

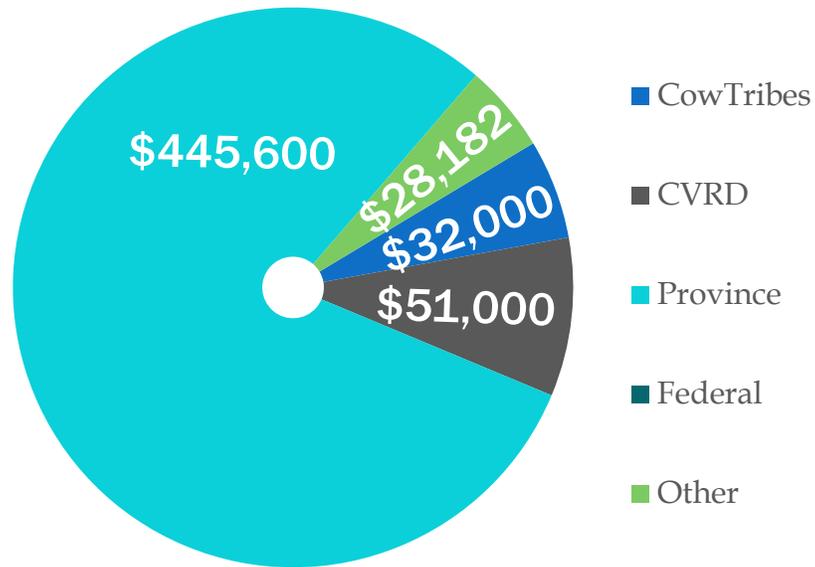
CWS 2021 BUDGET TO ACTUALS COMPARISON					
Jan1 - Dec 31 2021		Budget (7-04-21)		Actual	
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>Core Annual Revenue</b>				
	CVRD		50,000		50,000
	Cowichan Tribes		20,000		20,000
	Sponsors / other income		3,000		2,015
	Interest Income		150		54
	<b>SubTotal - Core Income</b>		<b>73,150</b>		<b>72,069</b>
	<b>Project Grant Revenue</b>				
	BC Government _ CESI		400,000		400,000
	Cowichan Tribes - WSP		30,000		12,000
	Cowichan Tribes - BCSRIF		9,600		0
	BC Government - other		15,000		36,600
	Farmland Advantage		0		26,012
	PSF - educational materials		1,500		0
	Heritage River Day Sponsors		0		10,100
<b>SubTotal - Grant Income</b>		<b>456,100</b>		<b>484,712</b>	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>529,250</b>		<b>556,782</b>	
					<b>~Total +</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>Core Staffing Expenses</b>	<b>Budget (tax incl)</b>	<b>Actual (GST excl)</b>	<b>~ GST</b>	<b>taxes</b>
	Executive Director	30,000	29,825	1,500	31,325
	Program Coordination	23,000	23,456	1,200	24,656
	Book-keeping	6,000	5,299	250	5,549
	Other	3,000	2,994	150	3,144
	<b>Core Administrative Expenses</b>				0
	General - Fees, Banking, Insurance	2,500	2,994	0	2,994
	Meeting Expenses, supplies	2,500	942	50	992
	Communications, websites, email	4,000	3,973	170	4,143
	<b>Core Program Expenses</b>				0
	Community Engagement, events	2,150	4,539	150	4,689
	<b>Total Core Expenses</b>	<b>\$73,150</b>	<b>\$74,021</b>		74,021
	<b>Grant funded PROJECTS</b>				0
	Twinned Watersheds - CESI	500,000	384,984	19,000	403,984
	Twinned Watersheds - BCSRIF	9,600	1,050	50	1,100
	Cowichan weir -no grant	0	5,962	300	6,262
	Koksilah WSP - Cowichan Tribes	45,000	17,907	900	18,807
	Koksilah other - BC, Farmland Adv	0	69,569	3,000	72,569
	Engagement - sponsors	1,500	10,342	260	10,602
	<b>Total Grant-funded Expenses</b>	<b>\$556,100</b>	<b>\$489,815</b>		
<b>Non claimable GST (50%)</b>				<b>\$12,779</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 629,250</b>	<b>\$ 576,615</b>			
<b>NET</b>	<b>\$ (100,000.00)</b>	<b>\$ (19,833.77)</b>			

Total GST paid (below) is approximate. As a non-profit, CWS is eligible for variable GST rebates.

## Financial Support

Financial support for CWB activities was received by the Cowichan Watershed Society from: Province of BC (including a Conservation Economic Stimulus Initiative grant via Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, BC Parks, and Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource and Rural Development), Cowichan Valley Regional District, Cowichan Tribes First Nation, Farmland Advantage, and various local business sponsors for our annual River Cleanup, led by Paper Excellence (Crofton Mill).

### 2021 Financial Contributions



## APPENDIX A: People and Partners

Huy tseep q'u (Thank you all)!

### 2021 Cowichan Watershed Board Members, and Cowichan Watershed Society Directors

Board Members	Society Members
Chief William Seymour/ Squxulenuhw (Co-Chair), Cowichan Tribes First Nation*	
Chair Aaron Stone (Co-Chair), Cowichan Valley Regional District*	
Councillor Debra Toporowski /Qwulti' stunaat, Cowichan Tribes First Nation	💧
Councillor Stuart Pagaduan / Qwiyahwult-hw, Cowichan Tribes First Nation	
Director Allison Nicholson, Cowichan Valley Regional District	
Director Lori Iannidinardo, Cowichan Valley Regional District	
Linda Higgins, South Coast Area Director, Federal Govt. Appointee, Fisheries and Oceans Canada	
Dr. David Froese, Provincial Govt. Nominee, Biologist, Family doctor	💧
David Slade, Provincial Govt. Nominee, Groundwater specialist	💧
Honourable David Anderson, Member at Large, Former Fed. Fisheries Minister & Env Minister	💧
Tim Kulchyski / Q'utxulenuhw, Member at Large, Biologist, Cowichan Tribes community member	💧
Dr. Shannon Waters, Member at Large, VIHA -Cowichan Valley Medical Health Officer	💧
Councillor Kristine Sandhu, Member at Large, Lake Cowichan Town Council	💧

\*Acting Chief Cindy Daniels served as co-Chair during a medical leave for Chief Seymour. Lori Iannidinardo was elected to the CVRD Chair position in November 2021.



Twinned Watersheds Project Field Demo Day for the CWB members. Koksilah River. Photo by B. Hetschko.

## 2020-21 Working Group / Target Review Members

Organization	Representative	Fish & Flows	Watershed Connections	Water Quality & Estuarine Health	Riparian Health	Wise Water Use*
Cowichan Watershed Board	David Slade				💧	💧
CWB	Tom Rutherford	💧		💧	💧	
CWB	Jill Thompson		💧			💧
CWB	Heather Pritchard				💧	
Cowichan Tribes/CWB	Tim Kulchyski	💧		💧	💧	
Cowichan Tribes/DFO	Cheri Ayers	💧				
CVRD	Kate Miller	💧		💧		
CVRD	Lori Iannidinaro		💧	💧		
CVRD	Elizabeth Aiken		💧		💧	
CVRD	Graham Gidden			💧		
CVRD	Keith Lawrence			💧		
BC Gov't – FLNRO	Mike McCulloch	💧				
BC Gov't - FLNRO	Jen Sibbald	💧				
BC Gov't - FLNRO	Jaro Szczot	💧				
BC Gov't - FLNRO	Jamieson Atkinson	💧				
BC Gov't - ENV	Rosie Barlak			💧		
Fisheries Oceans Can (DFO)	Kevin Pellet	💧				
DFO	Christy Wilson		💧			
DFO	Melissa Nottingham		💧			
Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable	Genevieve Singleton		💧	💧	💧	
Roundtable	Parker Jefferson	💧			💧	
Cowichan Valley Naturalists	Dave Polster				💧	
Friends of Cowichan River	Joe Saysell	💧				
Friends of Cowichan River	Chris Morely	💧			💧	
Catalyst	Brian Houle	💧				
Mosaic	David Belleznay	💧				
Mosaic	Molly Hudson				💧	
Mosaic	Chelsea Toth				💧	
Cowichan Estuary Nature Center	Jane Kilthei		💧	💧		💧
Nature Center	Elodie Roger		💧	💧		
Nature Center	Alicia Taylor		💧			
Nature Center	Pamela Williams		💧			
Cowichan Land Trust	Stephanie Cottell		💧		💧	
VI Recreational Paddling Assn	Rick Bryan				💧	

BC Conservation Fdn	Thea Rodgers			💧		
Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society/CLRSS	Ken Traynor	💧			💧	
CLRSS	Leroy Van Wieren	💧				
CLRSS	Jean Atkinson				💧	
CLRSS	Christine Brophy				💧	
Cowichan Lake Enhancement	Bob Crandall		💧			
CERCA	Geoff Strong			💧		
CERCA	Goetz Schuerholz			💧		
CERCA	Bill Heath			💧		
Koksilah Working Group	Rodger Hunter			💧		
Sh-hwuykwselu Streamkeepers	Jill Heard		💧			
Quamichan Lake Assn	Jim Cosh			💧		
Somenos Marsh Society	?			💧		
Mun. North Cowichan	Dave Preikshot			💧	💧	
	Carol Hartwig	💧				
	Chris Steeger				💧	
	Sheila Harvey			💧		
	Kenzie Cuthbert	💧				
	Jeremy Damborg				💧	

\*The Wise Water Use Working Group is in transition while CVRD determines its Water Conservation plans under the new Regional Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service.

Below: One of 18 transects on the Koksilah River set up to help determine “EFlows” Photo by C. Mitchell.



## Participating Organizations

The Watershed Board only succeeds through the work, knowledge and collaboration of all levels of government, stewardship organizations, and others. It is impossible to list all the organizations who contribute to watershed health every year but in 2021, we thank the following organizations for their participation in the Board, its Working Groups, projects or other efforts: Cowichan Tribes First Nation, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC Government -

Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources and Operations, Ministry of Environment, BC Parks, Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable, Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society, Koksilah Watershed Working Group, Cowichan Estuary Nature Center, Cowichan Land Trust, Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, Vancouver Island Recreational Paddling Association, Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Association, Cowichan Valley Naturalists, Friends of Cowichan River, Mosaic, Catalyst / Paper Excellence, Vancouver Island Health Authority - Cowichan Region, Halalt First Nation, UVic POLIS Project, UVic Environmental Law Clinic, UVic Koksilah Connections, Cowichan Green Community, Social Planning Cowichan, MLA Sonia Furstenau and MP Alistair MacGregor.



Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre offered Koksilah residents help to convert to micro-drip irrigation to conserve groundwater.  
Photo by S. Stacey

## Valiant Volunteers!

Many irreplaceable individuals pitched in throughout 2021. For example: over 100 people helped with River Cleanup (right) including several who put in long hours on the organizing team; generous volunteer photographers contributed their images; residents in the Koksilah and Chemainus watersheds helped with local knowledge and access to riverbanks; kayakers taught us to paddle; provincial policy experts and the UVic Environmental Law Clinic provided research and advice; guest speakers educated the Board members through presentations; technical wizards helped with the website, and more! Thank you!



Stth'aqwi' high-fives Barry Hetschko, volunteer photographer, citizen scientist, River Cleanup organizer, and more! Photo by C Mitchell

## 2021 Staff Support

### Core Services Project Team



**Tom Rutherford, Executive Director, Lead for Salmon, Science and Partnership Projects:** Tom worked with Fisheries and Oceans Canada for 35 years. He brings a strong technical background in salmon habitat inventory and restoration, stock assessment, stock enhancement and public outreach/citizen science. Tom has experience planning and implementing technical processes and partnerships with First Nations, providing scientific direction and guidance for program delivery activities, supervision of staff, and successful development of strategies to meet Sr. Government resource management objectives.

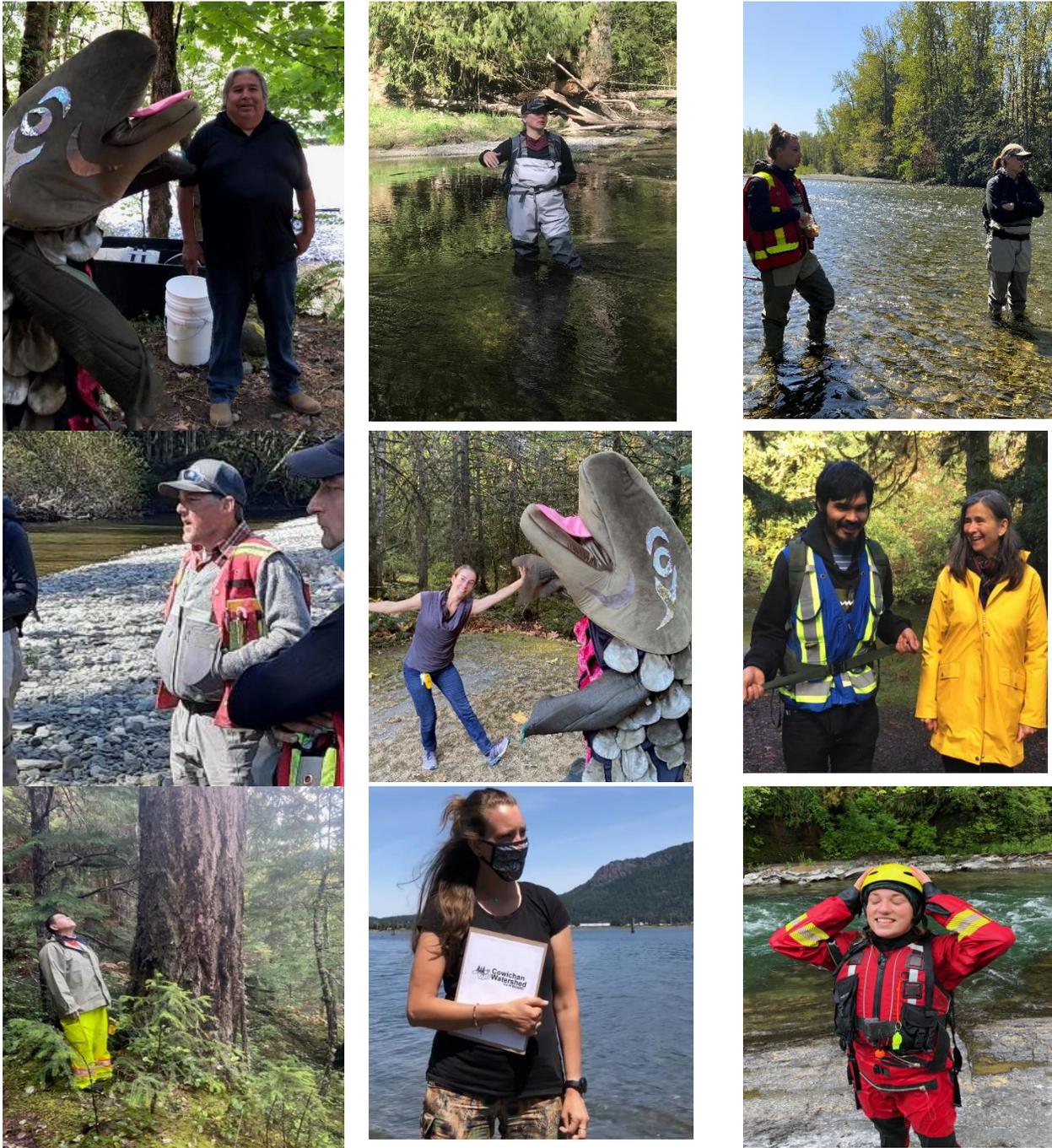
**Jill Thompson, Project Coordinator and Administrative Assistant, Lead for Communications and Engagement Projects:** Jill holds a Bachelors of Environmental Studies and has more than 25 years' experience in environmental education and non-profit program leadership and fundraising. Jill is an experienced community builder who seeks out people who feel intrigued, motivated, and nourished by working together for a bright future, while having a bit of fun. She found the Watershed Board teeming with them!

**Heather Pritchard, Forest Ecologist, Lead for Targets Review:** Heather is a Registered Professional Forester with 30 years' experience in natural resource management. She brings expertise in applying ecosystem-based management principles in forest and land management with focus on protecting community and domestic water sources and fish habitat.



**Ruby Walmsley, Book-keeper and Financial Systems Support:** Ruby has 35 years of accounting experience. She has a Financial Management Certificate obtained through studies with both the Certified Management Accounting Program (CMA) and the Certified General Accountancy Program (CGA). Ruby has worked for both profit and not-for-profit organizations as a financial bookkeeper and later as a management consultant and accounting manager.

Twinned Watersheds Project Team (Some of them – over 40 people contributed!)



Pictured clockwise from top left: Chief Thomas, Halalt FN, Twinned Watershed Steering Committee Co-Chair; Cheri Ayers, biologist; Melissa Evans and Jade Steel, biologists; Heather Pritchard, forester and Adam Nicholas, riparian plant crew; Chloe Mitchell, videographer and Nora Livingstone, interviewer, Roving River Reporters; Percy Campbell, riparian plant crew; Jeff Anderson, Geomorphologic Consulting and Jaro Szczot, BC gov. biologist. Centre: Elodie Roger, biologist, with the [Big Dancing Fish](#) Stth'aqwi' (chinook salmon), the o-fish-al mascot of the Cowichan Watershed Board! Various photographers. Huy tseep q'u /Thank you!

## Appendix B: Core Principles

### Recognition of Cowichan Tribes' Statement on Inherent Rights

Quw'utsun mustmuhw, ni 'o' ni' tthusht'esulhkws 'itst 'u tun'atumuhw, 'i 'o' hwunst'e. Nilh 'o' thu-'it syuw'entst, tun ni' 'u kwthuhwun'amustimuhw 'iwutl'uts' 'i 'u tun'atumuhwtst. Ni' yuxtse'tumtthu Quw'utsun 'u tthu-itumuhw, qa', kw'atl'kwatthuni' spupin' 'u tthutumuhw, ttho' mukw' stem ni' hakwni' 'u tthust'ulnuptst. Kwuthushtun-ni' 'iwststni' yuxtse'tum 'u ttho' mukw' stem ni' ha'kwkwsstthuthi'skwshuli-s. O' nihtthu Quw'utsun mustmuhw, nilemuxutunstum 'u tthuni' snuwuntewut 'u tthushtunaalhtun, tst. Uwutumtem-us 'i' ni' tsttmem't 'aanlhkwskwun-etewut, hwayumtun'as'aalhtl'ulnup. Quw'utsun Mustimuhw, ha'kwushtst kw' stutul'na'mutxetsul's kw' shtuhimstthustl'ulnuptst. Mukw' stem 'o' shilukw'tul 'i' nilhni' shkw'akw'umstthusulsuli'tst.

Cowichan Peoples have existing inherent rights. Cowichan as the original Peoples of this territory within which the Cowichan Watershed is included continue the right and responsibility to make informed decisions to manage and organize based on our history and continued connections. As told through time by our ancestors; the lands, waters, seas, minerals, air and all elements interconnected within the territories provided for and can provide a good sustainable life for Cowichan Peoples. Cowichan has never given away this right and continues to govern and make decisions to support the well-being and sustainability of our Peoples and territories.

Source: Cowichan Watershed Board Governance Manual, 2018

The CWB is committed to these Core Principles:

- *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.
- *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.
- *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. "
- *Transparency*: To the greatest extent possible, the actions and decisions of the CWB will be transparent and open.
- *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")

To learn more about the purpose and practices of the Board, please read the [Governance Manual](#) (ed 2018) and/or the [Pathways and Partnerships](#) Framework report.

## Appendix C: CWB Targets for Watershed Health

The following are the original targets and indicators, which are in the process of being updated by the CWB's 5 Target Working Groups. See page 8 for a progress update. For more information about our Targets and how they were derived from the Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan, please visit <https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/cowichan-watershed-board-targets/>.

Water Quality: We want clean water in our watershed. We want to be able to swim safely in Cowichan Lake, Cowichan River, and Cowichan Bay.

- Turbidity levels should meet accepted water quality guidelines.
- E. Coli levels should be below guidelines for swimming and recreation.

Estuary Health: We want to be able to eat shellfish from Cowichan Bay.

- Shellfish from designated areas of Cowichan Bay will be harvested for human consumption by 2020.



Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable and Cowichan Tribes build watershed connections at the 2021 Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Skweyul. Photo by B. Hetschko

Fish Health: We want healthy fish populations in the watershed.

- Salmon and Steelhead juvenile abundance should meet or exceed target densities.

Flows: We want to ensure that Cowichan River summer flows are maintained at levels that support the needs of people and fish.

- Manage water reserves in Cowichan Lake such that the rate of flow in the Cowichan River never falls below 7 cubic meters per second.

Riparian habitats: We want to protect and enjoy the benefits of healthy stream, lakefront, and estuary habitats.

- 50% of intact riparian habitats protected by 2021.
- 10% of impacted riparian habitats restored by 2021.

Wise Water Use: We want Cowichan watershed residents to use water wisely.

- Reduce annual residential consumption to less than 263 litres per person per day by 2018.

Watershed IQ /Connections: We want Cowichan watershed residents to increasingly know and value their watershed. You can't fully value what you don't understand.

- Provide hands-on watershed experiences for all grade 4/5 students in the Cowichan Valley.



Cowichan Watershed Board  
Mailing address: 4335 Riverside Rd, Duncan BC V9L6M8  
Phone: 250-709-0492  
Web: [cowichanwatershedboard.ca](http://cowichanwatershedboard.ca)  
Facebook: [CowichanWatershedBoard](https://www.facebook.com/CowichanWatershedBoard)