

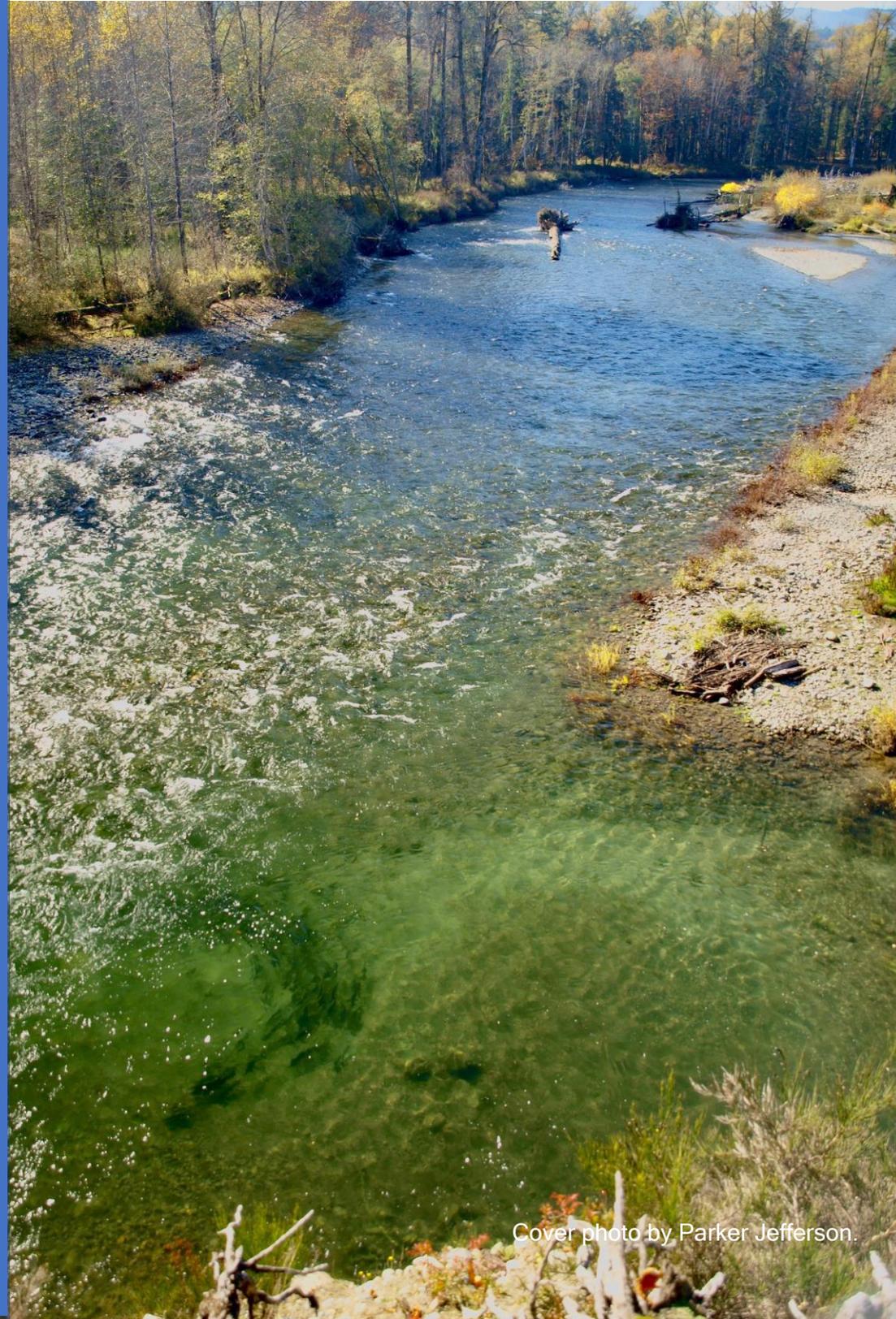
# FIVE YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

—  
2020-2024

COWICHAN WATERSHED BOARD



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Cover photo by Parker Jefferson.



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## Executive Summary

This annually updated plan is intended to provide direction and guidance to the Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB)'s members and staff, and to inform our partners. It identifies goals and milestones for the next five years, includes a budget forecast, and lays out the key areas of focus and specific activities of the work plan for the coming year

The Board's priorities fall into in four broad areas of work in the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds: water supply; water quality; impacts to habitats and ecosystems and ensuring organizational health.

Of these, water supply issues have become the Board's top priority in recent years due to climate change impacts on our watershed. With the Cowichan River needing to rely on electric pumps for the first time to maintain flows in August 2019, rebuilding the Cowichan Lake weir to maintain adequate environmental flows in spring, summer and fall remains the CWB's priority over the next five years. Similarly, flows in the Koksilah River fell below critical levels in 2019, resulting in significant ecological impacts and the withdrawal of irrigation rights to farmers in the watershed. Pursuing new tools under the *Water Sustainability Act* to restore health to the Koksilah has emerged as another priority for the coming years.

The Board and its many partners have formed five working groups to pursue a set of measurable "targets" for watershed health. The targets were derived from the Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan (2007) but are more broadly-based aspirational goals intended to inspire collaborative progress on: environmental flows, water quality, estuarine and riparian health, sustainable fish stocks, water conservation, and increased community watershed knowledge. Five-year goals, with milestones, are described for each target starting on page 10. These targets are under review currently and will be updated in 2020.

Our five year budget forecast clearly indicates the need for new and sustainable funding sources to enable local co-governance as a viable and effective contributor to local water/shed management as outlined in the *Water Sustainability Act* Work towards adequate and stable funding is critical to the CWB fulfilling any of the roles for local watershed governance envisioned in the BC Water Sustainability Act.

The report also provides insights into recent achievements, highlighting significant progress in 2019, including helping to secure the political commitment and funding to begin the engineering phase of replacing the weir at Cowichan Lake, scoping a Water Sustainability Plan for the Koksilah watershed, partnering with lake residents to provide better information to citizens through a "Weir Ready" communications campaign, and being officially consulted by a municipal government for the first time on rezoning issue with potential watershed implications.

With the Federal and BC Government's recent commitments to the recommendations of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, this is an important time to make progress on elevating the CWB's model of indigenous co-leadership for watershed health, as expressed in this CWB Core Principle.

*Nutsamat kws yaay'us tth qa': We come together as a whole to work together to be stronger as partners for the watershed.*

An interest and commitment to water sustainability has provided the catalyst to support this foundational partnership, and an opportunity to learn from each other while working towards improving the health of our watersheds. The Board has an enviable track record of leading collaborative technical teams, creating a positive culture of water conservation, promoting science-based advocacy, and implementing respectful community-based solutions. This Business Plan provides a blueprint for continuing and enhancing these successes in the years to come.



Cowichan Watershed Board member Tim Kulchyski and Executive Director Tom Rutherford dive in to provide a fish demonstration at the Quw'utsun Heritage River Day, September 2019. Photo by Barry Hetschko.

## Background

The Cowichan Watershed Board is a local governance entity created in 2010 to promote water and watershed sustainability in the Cowichan/Koksilah watersheds, ancestral home of the Quw'utsun First Nation.

Co-chaired by Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the CWB represents a unique partnership between First Nations and local government. Through this model, Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD work together to advance whole-of-watershed health, demonstrating a commitment to moving down the path of reconciliation.

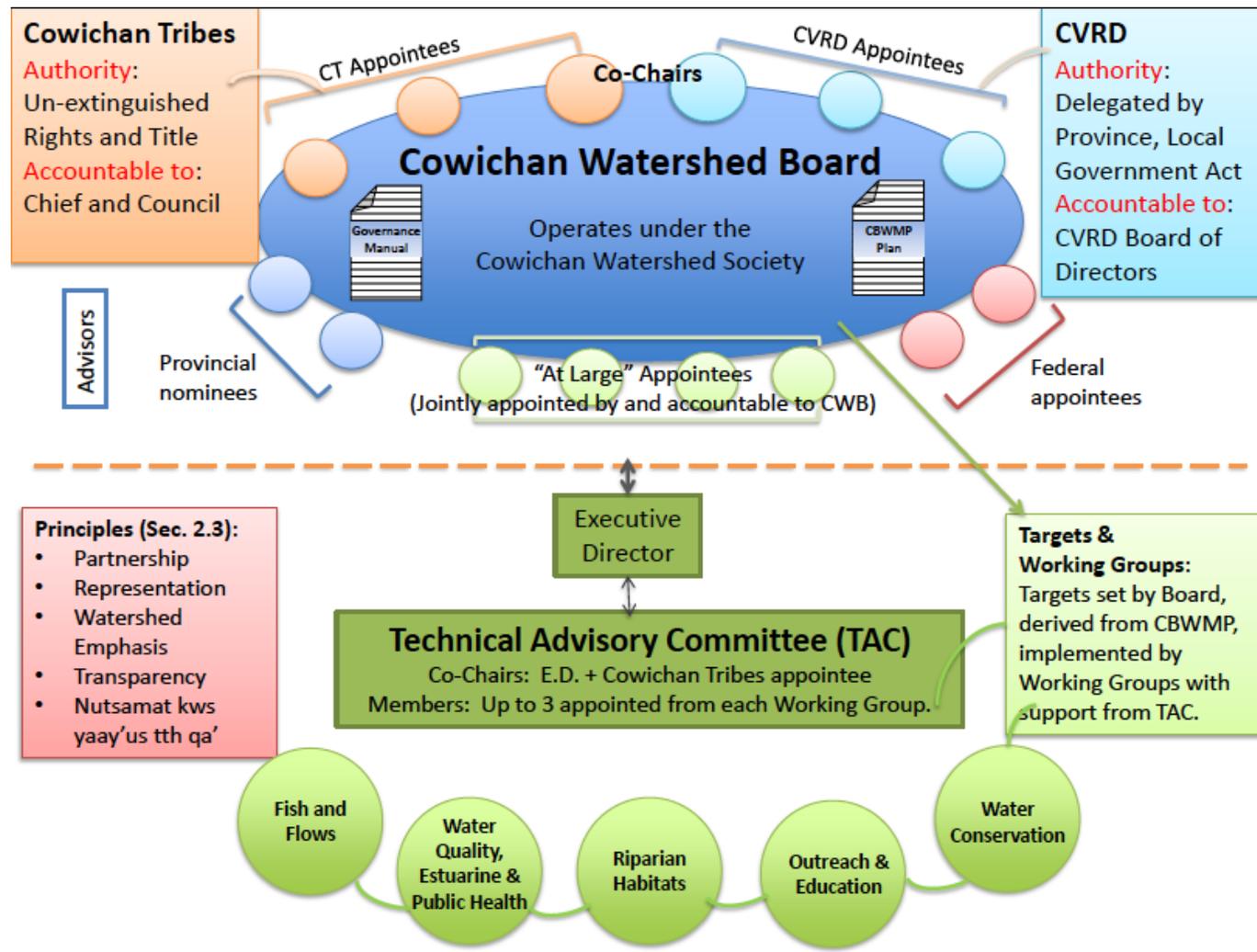
Since its inception, the CWB has played a critical and collaborative leadership role in watershed sustainability in the region.

In today's context—with increasingly urgent water challenges at hand, and a growing recognition of the role of Indigenous authority and stewardship in sustainable watershed governance, the CWB's leadership is more important than ever.



Collaborative Leadership in Action: Chief William Seymour, MLA Sonia Furstenau, MLA Doug Routley, CVRD Chair Ian Morrison, Cowichan Watershed Board Executive Director Tom Rutherford and CVRD Chief Administrative Officer Brian Carruthers wait in the BC Legislature to meet with Provincial Government Ministers and staff to discuss replacing the weir at Cowichan Lake to address low water supply.

Fig.1: CWB Organizational Structure.



# Strategic Focus 2020-2024

Like most non-profit organizations, the CWB has a mandate that far exceeds its annual resources, making strategic prioritization of those resources essential to keep moving down the path to success. The CWB's key priorities at this time are highlighted in the graphic above. In order to meet those priorities, the focus of CWB activities for the coming year is as follows:



## Key Activities in 2020

- Addressing seasonal low water flows in the Cowichan River by increasing positive storage in Cowichan Lake.
- Maintaining Environmental Flows in the adjacent Koksilah watershed, potentially through new tools in the BC Water Sustainability Act.
- Facilitating collaborative implementation of the CWB's "Targets" for watershed health.
- Promoting indigenous co-leadership. Building and maintaining partnerships, cross jurisdictional collaboration, and public engagement.
- Establishing adequate and stable funding for local watershed governance and health.

goals and anticipated milestones over the next five years, again with an emphasis on achieving the priorities. Mitigating the impacts of climate change has become central to most of this work.

The tables on the following pages outline the Board's broader

## PRIORITIES for WATERSHED HEALTH In the COWICHAN and KOKSILAH WATERSHEDS

1

### “Just Add Water.”

- **Rebuild Cowichan Lake weir.**
- **Pursue solution to Koksilah low flows.**

- Support and facilitate partners and stakeholders to prioritize and contribute towards: a) completing engineering and impact studies to replace the Cowichan weir; b) identifying a conservation water license holder and securing a water license; c) replacing the weir.
- Facilitate government relations in support of this project, working closely with local MLAS and MP and relevant provincial and federal ministry staff.
- Facilitate and support the research, scoping, and creation of a Water Sustainability Plan and/or other strategies to protect environmental flows in the Koksilah River.
- Maintain public support and understanding of the regional and provincial benefits of these projects, and the risks of not doing them.

2

### “Achieving our Targets.”

- **Facilitate collaborative working groups to achieve watershed targets.**
- **Implement legal tools to support targets where possible.**

- Conduct Target Review and update targets as needed.
- Create work plans for each Target and coordinate with CVRD and Cowichan Tribes priorities.
- Support Technical Advisory Committee and Working Groups to pursue targets.
- Work with partners to complete State of the Watershed reports for Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds.
- Work with BC Government to pursue legally binding protections under the Water Sustainability Act relating to the targets for Cowichan and Koksilah Watershed.

3

### “Building Partnerships.”

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

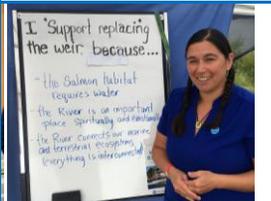
- Honour and promote the principal of Nutsamat kws yaay’us tth qa’ and respect for indigenous authority in the watersheds.
- Actively involve the best knowledge and resources available to support the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds, guided by the targets.
- Engage local communities in understanding their watershed ecosystems, and inspiring sustainability through positive, participation-oriented public outreach projects.
- Establish funding paths for sustainable partnerships and projects.

# Goals and Milestones

## 1. Water Supply

**WE WANT TO ENSURE THAT COWICHAN AND KOKSILAH RIVER SUMMER FLOWS ARE AT LEVELS THAT SUPPORT THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE & FISH.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cowichan – Construction of new Weir at Lake Cowichan underway	<p>Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG.</p> <p>Feasibility / design /survey work underway guided in partnership.</p> <p>Min. 12 presentations to residents, councils, and relevant citizen groups to provide information and help keep them informed of progress on the initiative.</p> <p>Work with partners to identify conservation water license holder for additional storage in Cowichan Lake</p> <p>Science based “decision making framework” to assist in making tough in-season water management decisions in the face of low river flows is in place.</p>	<p>Feasibility and design work complete Capital fundraising for weir construction</p> <p>Liability issues resolved.</p> <p>Conservation license holder determined.</p> <p>License application process begun.</p> <p>Min. 12 presentations to residents, councils, and relevant citizen groups to provide information and help keep them informed of progress on the initiative.</p>	<p>Capital funds secured.</p> <p>Governance agreements / structures in place.</p> <p>License application process complete</p> <p>Min. 12 presentations to residents, councils, and relevant citizen groups to provide information and help keep them informed of progress on the initiative.</p>	<p>Water licenses secured.</p> <p>All permits secured</p> <p>Construction begins</p> <p>Min. 12 presentations to residents, councils, and relevant citizen groups to provide information and help keep them informed of progress on the initiative.</p>	<p>Construction ongoing.</p> <p>Min. 12 presentations to residents, councils, and relevant citizen groups to provide information and help keep them informed of progress on the initiative.</p>
<p>Koksilah – Critical summer flows maintained.</p> <p>Enhanced water monitoring</p>	<p>Coordinate and support FLRORD, Cowichan Tribes, CSAA, POLIS, local government, stakeholders and other partners in Koksilah flows solution process (including WSP options)</p>	<p>Support and engage in Koksilah WSP process.</p> <p>State of Watershed report is completed</p> <p>Agricultural water conservation projects</p>	<p>Completion of draft Koksilah WSP</p> <p>Support and participate in community and stakeholder outreach to solicit input, provide factual information and</p>	<p>Adoption/ Implementation of Koksilah WSP.</p> <p>Critical summer flows are maintained in Koksilah river</p>	<p>Implementing Koksilah WSP.</p> <p>Critical summer flows are maintained in Koksilah river.</p>

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	<p>Support and participate in data gap analysis and State of the Watershed reporting</p> <p>Support and participate in community and stakeholder outreach as part of Koksilah WSP scoping</p> <p>Support Agricultural water conservation projects funded through EFP or other sources</p> <p>Inclusion of Koksilah Ag. Rep on Fish Flows working group</p>	<p>funded through EFP or other sources</p> <p>Support and participate in community and stakeholder outreach to solicit input, provide factual information and keep community informed of progress on WSP process</p>	<p>keep community informed of progress on WSP process</p>	<p>Agricultural, forestry communities supported in transition.</p> <p>Support and participate in community and stakeholder outreach to provide factual information about WSP implementation.</p>	
					
	Photos: B. Hetschko			Photo: Edmond Duggan	Photo: Jeremy Koreski

**WE WANT HEALTHY FISH POPULATIONS IN THE WATERSHED.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Steelhead pre-smolt abundance in the Cowichan watershed meets or exceeds target population densities set by FLNRORD	Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG.	Resources and strategies in place to assess Fish Target(s)	Resources and strategies in place to assess Fish Target(s)	Resources and strategies in place to assess Fish Target(s)	Resources and strategies in place to assess Fish Target(s)
Chinook salmon target has been created and met	FNLROD – BCCF carry out steelhead juvenile density surveys revealing target population densities	Fish/Flows working group engages in Process to create target for Koksilah Watershed	Koksilah Target created	Resources and strategies in place to assess Koksilah Target	Koksilah target assessed
Koksilah Target has been created and assessed	Fish/Flows working group reviews current target and engages in process to create “SMART” fish Targets for Cowichan River that include chinook				



Photo by Parker Jefferson

**WE WANT COWICHAN WATERSHED RESIDENTS TO USE WATER WISELY.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Industrial, agricultural and/or Domestic users have reduced water use from 2019 by measurable amount	Water conservation target working group develops new Target and 5-year goal	TBD by Target WG			



## 2. Water Quality

### WE WANT CLEAN WATER IN OUR WATERSHED.

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<p>E. coli levels meet or beat recreational standards in all Cowichan Watercourses</p> <p>Reductions in P levels from 2019 levels in all our watercourses</p>	<p>Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG.</p> <p>Explore and support coordination of water quality data management and programming through CVRD water/watershed protection service</p> <p>Coordination with partners towards implementing water quality monitoring in Quamichan and Somenos watersheds</p> <p>Incorporation of water quality &amp; nutrient management issues in Koksilah WSP scoping.</p>	<p>Outreach campaign on limiting Phosphorus introduction to watershed</p> <p>Partnership projects with identified e. coli sources to address issues</p>	<p>Repeat 2017-2018 attainment sampling in Lower Cowichan, Koksilah and Cowichan Bay</p>	<p>Repeat 2017-2018 attainment sampling in Cowichan Lake and tributaries and Cowichan mainstem</p>	<p>Create targeted outreach/intervention program to address critical water quality issues identified in 2022/23 attainment sampling.</p>



**WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO EAT SHELLFISH FROM COWICHAN BAY.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Sewage outfall removed from Lower Cowichan River	Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG.	Clam garden project approved by Cowichan Tribes.	Repeat 2017-2018 water sampling in Lower Cowichan, Koksilah and Cowichan Bay	Augment current bivalve tissue sampling program	Clam garden project implementation with partners
Areas suitable for depuration harvest identified	VORR buoys installed in Cowichan Bay	Clam garden feasibility/ scoping funding obtained	Clam garden feasibility study completed, including long-term garden maintenance plan.	Funding and initial work for clam garden project.	Sewage outfall moved
Traditional clam garden created	Resources and partnerships sought to enable Cowichan Tribes' clam garden project.  Resources/support obtained to investigate suspected E.coli point sources in Cowichan Bay.	Host Cowichan Bay shellfish workshop with responsible agencies & Cowichan Tribes re current status of bivalves & aspirations to create depuration opportunity for FSC harvest	JUB partners begin sewage outfall re- location	JUB sewage outfall relocation project	Identification of FSC depuration harvest opportunity



River Cleanup 2018.  
  
Photo by Genevieve Singleton

### 3. Impacts to Habitats and Ecosystems

**WE WANT TO PROTECT AND ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF HEALTHY STREAM, LAKEFRONT, AND ESTUARY HABITATS.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
10,000 sq. M of Cowichan River and Cowichan Lake riparian habitat restored between 2019 and 2024	2,000 M sq. riparian habitat restored	2,000 M sq. riparian habitat restored	2,000 M sq. riparian habitat restored	2,000 M sq. riparian habitat restored	2,000 M sq. riparian habitat restored
Riparian Habitats protected and restored throughout the Cowichan and Koksilah Watersheds	Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG.	TBD by Target WG as per outcome of target review	TBD by Target WG as per outcome of target review	TBD by Target WG as per outcome of target review	TBD by Target WG as per outcome of target review



Koksilah headwater wetland. Photo by Emily Doyle Yamaguchi

**WE WANT COWICHAN WATERSHED RESIDENTS TO INCREASINGLY KNOW AND VALUE THEIR WATERSHED.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
All Grade 2/3 & 8/9 students are offered a hands-on watershed experience.	<p>Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG.</p> <p>WG members coordinate watershed education experiences for grades 2/3 and 8/9, including DFO, CVRD and SD79 educational resources and goals.</p> <p>Develop year-end teacher survey to monitor progress on target.</p>	<p>Ongoing Watershed Connection work with grades 2/3 and 8/9</p> <p>Annual monitoring of success to address gaps.</p>	<p>Ongoing Watershed Connection work with grades 2/3 and 8/9</p> <p>Annual monitoring of success to address gaps</p>	<p>Surveys show that grades 2/3 and 8/9 students in Cowichan Watershed consistently get hands-on watershed experiences.</p>	<p>Review Target and Work plan</p> <p>Implement new Work plan</p>
Cowichan residents of all ages increasingly know and value their watershed.	See Communications plan.	See Communications plan.	See Communications plan.	See Communications plan.	See Communications plan.



Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre. Photo by Eric Marshall

## 4. Organizational Health

**WE WANT STRONG PARTNERSHIPS THAT ENABLE COLLABORATIVE WATERSHED GOVERNANCE AND BETTER LOCAL INFLUENCE OVER DECISIONS THAT AFFECT OUR WATERSHED.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Continued strong and effective working relationship between Cowichan Tribes and CVRD as foundation of CWB	<p>Support creation of water license partnership (see Water Supply)</p> <p>Host Joint CVRD/ Cowichan Tribes Watershed Tour</p> <p>Provide orientation for new CVRD and Cowichan Tribes CWB members</p> <p>TAC completes Target Review.</p>	<p>Full day CWB relationship building retreat.</p> <p>Provide orientation for new CVRD and Cowichan Tribes CWB members</p>	<p>Host Joint CVRD/ Cowichan Tribes Watershed Tour</p> <p>Provide orientation for new CVRD and Cowichan Tribes CWB members</p>	<p>1 day CWB relationship building retreat.</p> <p>Provide orientation for new CVRD and Cowichan Tribes CWB members</p>	<p>Host Joint CVRD/ Cowichan Tribes Watershed Tour</p> <p>Provide orientation for new CVRD and Cowichan Tribes CWB members</p>
Partnership with Province of BC enabling implementation of 1 or more WSA tools in Cowichan Watershed	<p>Quarterly meetings with FLNRORD staff</p> <p>Coordinate and support FLNRORD, Cowichan Tribes, CSAA, POLIS, local government, stakeholders and other partners in Koksilah flows solution process -including WSP options and State of the Watershed Report (see water supply target)</p> <p>CWB staff meet with FLNRORD ADM</p> <p>CWB co-chairs meet with Minister Donaldson</p> <p>Exchange of perspectives and ideas on local water/shed governance with Nicola Chiefs</p> <p>Government engagement strategy development</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with FLNRORD staff</p> <p>Work with Partners to implement Water sustainability planning process in the Koksilah Watershed</p> <p>State of the watershed report provides baseline for assessing changes in watershed (governance) moving forward</p> <p>Government engagement strategy implementation</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with FLNRORD/MOE staff</p> <p>Cowichan Tribes, CWB &amp; Province working with local partners to implement WSA tool(s) - e.g. Water Sustainability Plan, Advisory Body, Environmental Flows.</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with FLNRORD/MOE staff</p> <p>WSA tool(s) implemented in Cowichan Valley</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings with FLNRORD/MOE staff</p> <p>WSA tools implemented and monitored in Cowichan Valley</p>



Learning Exchange between the five Nicola Nations and Cowichan Tribes in April 2019, with participation from BC Government staff and POLIS Project academic advisors. These groups are at the forefront of watershed co-governance in BC. Huy ch q'u to the BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative for supporting peer learning. Photo by Barry Hetschko.

**WE NEED SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT AND STABLE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THIS WORK.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
CWB has stable and assured “core funding to enable operations moving forward.	<p>Stable partnership funding mechanism for CWB operations has been established by CVRD Board.</p> <p>Interim funding from Province of BC to support Koksilah WSP process is provided to Cowichan Tribes and CWB</p>	<p>Multi-year core funding agreements with Cowichan Tribes and CVRD totalling \$70,000 - \$100,000 annually.</p> <p>Watershed governance funding is being provided by the Province to Cowichan Tribes and CWB by agreement.</p>	<p>Annual watershed governance funding is being provided by the Province to CWB under new Watershed Security Fund (or similar mechanism) to support local co-governance responsibilities.</p> <p>CWB has stable and assured “core funding” to enable operations moving forward, including consideration of any change in governance authority and cost increases due to inflation.</p>	See 2022	See 2022
Project specific funding is secured as needed to support annual priorities.	Secure grant funding as required for initiatives described above.	Secure grant funding as required for initiatives described above.	Secure grant funding as required for initiatives described above.	Secure grant funding as required for initiatives described above.	Secure grant funding as required for initiatives described above.

**WE WANT TO BE A KNOWN, RELIABLE, AND TRUSTED VOICE ON MATTERS OF COWICHAN AND KOKSILAH WATERSHED HEALTH. WE WANT LOCAL CITIZENS TO FEEL INFORMED ABOUT AND ENGAGED IN INITIATIVES TO PROTECT THE WATERSHEDS THEY CALL HOME.**

5 Year Goal	Annual Milestones				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
CWB is known and supported throughout Cowichan Region and Cowichan Tribes for its leadership on issues relevant to quality of life for residents.	See communications plan.				



CWB Member and Cowichan Tribes Resource Consultant Tim Kulchyski speaks with guests from the Nicola First Nations and BC Government at Skutz.

# 2020 Work Plan

The following chart details the work plan for the 2020 fiscal year in the 4 major areas of focus of the Cowichan Watershed Board: Water Supply, Water Quality, Impacts to Habitats and Ecosystems and Organizational Health. These are followed by a fifth section dealing with General Operations. The First three areas of focus are subdivided by our 7 aspirational “Targets”. It should be noted that the CWB’s capacity to deliver on its work plan is dictated by available resources and this work plan may be adjusted with any unanticipated funding increases or decreases.

<b>Colour Key</b>		Key to Funding Sources			
Green = highest immediate priority; funding secured or pending		OPS – core operational funding			
Orange = medium priority or funding not secured		REFBC – Real Estate Foundation of BC			
		Eco – Environment Canada - EcoAction			
		BCFLI – BC Freshwater Legacy Initiative			
		SFWGI – Sustainable Funding for Watershed Governance Initiative			
	Target	Activities	Lead	Timeframe (2020)	Funding Sources
<b>1) Water Supply</b>					
<b>FLOW TARGET</b>					
1	Cowichan and Koksilah River summer flows are at levels that support the needs of people & fish. Cowichan	Work with Partners to identify conservation water license applicant for additional storage in Cowichan Lake Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG. Feasibility / design /survey work underway guided in partnership. Presentations to residents, councils, and relevant citizen groups to provide factual information and help keep them informed of progress on the initiative. Continue to improve in-season water management decision making process in the face of low Cowichan river flows	Tom, Jill, Partners	Jan. - Dec.	OPS/ Pending
1	Cowichan and Koksilah River summer flows are at levels that support the needs of people & fish.	Coordinate and support FLRORD, Cowichan Tribes, CSAA, POLIS, local government, stakeholders and other partners in Koksilah flows solution process (including WSP options) Support and participate in data gap analysis and State of the Watershed reporting Support and participate in community and stakeholder outreach as part of Koksilah WSP scoping Inclusion of Koksilah Ag. Rep on Fish Flows working group	Tom, Partners	Jan. -Dec.	BCFLI, Pending
2		Support Agricultural water conservation projects funded through EFP or other sources.			Unfunded
<b>Fish Sustainability Target</b>					
1	Steelhead pre-smolt abundance in the Cowichan watershed meets or exceeds target population densities	Fish/Flows working group reviews current target and engages in process to create “SMART” fish indicators for Cowichan River that include chinook FNLRORD – BCCF carry out steelhead juvenile density surveys revealing target population densities Participate in Cowichan CRF steering committee	Fish/ Flows WG, FLNRO, BCCF	Jan. – Oct.  Jan.-Dec.	OPS, FLNRORD

	set by FLNRORD	Support Cowichan CRF OPS	Tom		
1		Support projects of Coastal Restoration Fund grant	Tom	Jan. – Dec.	OPS
<b>Conservation Target</b>					
1	We want Cowichan watershed residents to use water wisely.	Water conservation target working group develops new Target and 5-year goal	Jill, Heather, David Slade, CVRD	Jan. - June	OPS
<b>2) Water Quality</b>					
<b>Water Quality Target</b>					
2	We want clean water in our watershed.	Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG. Explore and support coordination of water quality data management and programming through CVRD water/watershed protection service Incorporation of water quality & nutrient management issues in Koksilah WSP scoping.	Tom, WQ WG, External Partners	January –Dec.	OPS/ Pending
2		Coordination with partners towards implementing water quality monitoring in Quamichan and Somenos watersheds	SMWS	Jan.-Dec.	Unfunded
<b>Shellfish Target</b>					
1	We want to be able to eat shellfish from Cowichan Bay.	Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG. VORR buoys installed/maintained in Cowichan Bay Resources/support obtained to investigate suspected E. coli point sources in Cowichan Bay.	Tom, WQ/ Estuarine Health WG	Jan. – Dec.	OPS / Pending
2		Resources and partnerships sought to enable Cowichan Tribes' clam garden project.	Tom, CT staff		Pending
<b>3) Impacts to Habitats and Ecosystems</b>					
<b>Riparian Target</b>					
1	We want to protect and enjoy the benefits of healthy stream, lakefront, and estuary habitats.	2,000 M sq. riparian habitat restored	BCCF, CLRSS		CRF
1		Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG.	Tom, Heather		OPS
<b>Watershed Knowledge Target</b>					
1	We want Cowichan watershed residents to increasingly know and value their watershed.	Target Review completed. Key supporting activities identified by WG. WG members coordinate watershed education experiences for grades 2/3 and 8/9, including DFO, CVRD and SD79 educational resources and goals. Develop year-end teacher survey to monitor progress on target.	Jill, Heather, Watershed Connection WG	Jan- Dec	OPS, Pending
		See Communications Plan page 26.	Jill	Jan-Dec	OPS (pending)
<b>4) Organizational Health</b>					
<b>Local Governance</b>					
1	We want strong partnerships that enable collaborative	Continued strong and effective working relationship between Cowichan Tribes and CVRD as foundation of CWB.	Tom, Jill	Ongoing	BCFLI

	watershed governance and better local influence over decisions that affect our watershed.	Support creation of water license partnership (see Water Supply) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Joint CVRD/ Cowichan Tribes elected officials Watershed Tour</li> <li>• Provide orientation for new CVRD and Cowichan Tribes CWB members</li> <li>• TAC completes Target Review.</li> </ul>			
		Partnership with Province of BC enabling implementation of 1 or more WSA tools in Cowichan Watershed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly meetings with FLNRORD staff</li> <li>• Coordinate and support FLNRORD, Cowichan Tribes, CSAA, POLIS, local government, stakeholders and other partners in Koksilah flows solution process -including WSP options and State of the Watershed Report (see water supply target)</li> <li>• CWB staff meet with FLNRORD ADM</li> <li>• CWB co-chairs meet with Minister Donaldson</li> <li>• Exchange of perspectives and ideas on local water/shed governance with Nicola Chiefs</li> <li>• Government engagement strategy development</li> </ul>	Tom, Jill	Ongoing	BCFLI, BC (Pending)
	We need systems in place to ensure sufficient and stable financial resources to support this work.	Stable partnership funding mechanism for CWB operations has been established by CVRD Board. Interim funding from Province of BC to support Koksilah WSP process is provided to Cowichan Tribes and CWB. Secure grant funding as required for initiatives described above.	Tom, Jill	Jan. – Oct.	SFWGI (Pending)/ OPS
	We want to be a known, reliable, and trusted voice on matters of Cowichan and Koksilah watershed health.  We want local citizens to feel informed about and engaged in initiatives to protect the watersheds they call home.	See 2020 Communications Plan	Tom, Jill	Ongoing	OPS/ Funding Required
<b>5) GENERAL OPERATIONS</b>					
1	Board Coordination and Support	Organize and/or serve as a resource for Board/Society/Technical Advisory Committee, selected Working Groups and related meetings	Tom, Jill	Ongoing	OPS
		Liaise with Board/TAC members, Special Advisors/Government staff/ and stakeholders in the interests of the CWB.			
		Review policy documents relevant to the watershed and prepare briefings materials, position papers, letters of support, speaking notes etc.			
		Support Co-chairs/Ministers Meetings			
1	Strategic Planning	Update CWB Business Plan			

		Develop Work plans, hire and supervise contract/student support as needed			
1	Financial Mgmt.	Monitor/manage budget			
		Pursue funding for ops and projects			
1	TAC and Working Group Coordination	Retain funding for TAC/WG coordinator Continue 5-year review of targets			
1	Build and Support Partnerships	Maintain relationships with stakeholders – particularly stewardship groups within the watershed.			
2		Attend Agricultural Commission, Stewardship Roundtable, and Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship (etc.) meetings as time permits.			

## 2020 Communications Plan



### 1. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- a) Build public and political support for replacing the weir at Lake Cowichan, consistent with the Cowichan Water Use Planning final report and the guidance of the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund Steering Committee (Cowichan Tribes, CVRD, Catalyst and CWB). Build public and political understanding of the urgency for the weir replacement initiative due to increasing severity and frequency of drought, and the impacts on our salmon driven ecosystem, culture, and economy.
- b) Build understanding around Koksilah low water flow issues and support for a whole of watershed shared stewardship approach to protecting environmentally safe flows.
- c) Support community partners in their public engagement efforts relating to achieving the seven targets via the Target Working Groups.
- d) Build confidence and trust in CWB leadership. Continue to be known as a leading source of information, knowledge and expertise regarding the Cowichan watershed. Communicate more frequently with the full CVRD and Cowichan Tribes councils and committees, and with other local organizations. Represent the partners and working group members well in meetings with Senior Government, academia, and through media and speaking engagements across the country.
- e) Promote a culture of wise water use. Engage residents in embracing a proud and positive culture of conservation. Use fun encouraging outreach methods to help people notice and take action on water waste at home, work and play.
- f) Foster watershed understanding and connections. Undertake specific projects and communications to improve public knowledge about and care for the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds.

## 2. PLANNED COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Activity	Description	Resources
Develop Key Messages	Convene a communications planning meeting for interested CWB members to identify target audiences and key messages for 2020 based on the approved Plan.	- Staff and CWB member time.
Periodic articles, E-Newsletter, radio interviews	Minimum 10 published articles about the CWB priorities, including professional journals, Cowichan Tribes newsletter, and local news. Pursue more opportunities for radio interviews with Co-Chairs, ED Circulate ENewsletters and emails to distribute agendas and event notices monthly as needed.	-Media spokespeople (co-Chairs, E.D., Board members on some topics) -Staff time -Good media relations. -Mailchimp account. (free)
Maintain accurate, updated websites	Continue to improve the new website. Clean up misfiled documents so they are searchable; tag documents to Targets; add labels and captions to photos so they can appear as a gallery; redo Speaker Series page and tie new events to Calendar blog. Post news articles and media releases to CWB and Weir Ready websites as they arise. Update other pages as needed. Update meetings page of CWB website with all agendas, minutes, and meeting materials.	- Staff time. - Occasional IT/design support
Social Media	Share news from CWB and our partners on Facebook. Promote all events on Facebook. Link Facebook feed to website. Explore other options to reach youth and media better.	-Photos, text. -Staff time
River Clean-up	Lead the organization of Lower River Clean Up with Cowichan Tribes Support the promotion of Upper River Cleanup with CLRSS.	-Food, supplies, insurance -Venue – Cowichan Tribes -Media/ advertising. -Staff time -Volunteers, trucks, photographers
Speakers Series	Free monthly public lecture in partnership with VIU Cowichan. Criteria: Engaging/entertaining speakers on topics of interest to the public, by people with strong expertise on the topic, and relevant to the Cowichan watershed.	-VIU lecture hall -Staff time -Quality guest speakers -Gifts for speakers
Public Outreach	Support respectful, engaging, educational outreach to residents most affected by changes in the watersheds to ensure they have good information and to promote the key priorities identified by the CWB (e.g. lakeshore residents; Koksilah water license holders) Build a salmon mascot to share with other partners to attract attention; serve as a positive reminder about why we do this.	-Staff time / contractors/ volunteers - Costumes and hand-outs - Maps / graphics
Educational Tools and Videos	Produce “Fish Talks with Tom” video vignette series explaining how different fish need different habitats at different times of year. Build a watershed model that helps people understand the weir / lake / river connection.	- Video editing - Cowichan watershed model. - Staff time
Increase support for Working Groups.	Use the new website to improve public awareness and understanding of the Targets and the work of the Working Groups. Dedicate adequate staff/contractor time to this need.	-Staff time
Thanking / Recognition	Use newspaper ads, thank you cards, social media, and email to acknowledge and celebrate engagement in watershed priorities. Maintain a culture of respectful and positive partnerships for shared goals.	
Ad Hoc Public Inquiries	Respond to all public / partner inquiries or requests for information (phone, email, Facebook) within 1 week. Direct relevant correspondence to monthly Board meetings for consideration or circulate to Co-Chairs and/ or Board members by email.	-Staff time



http://www.cowichanvalleyillen.com

Cowichan Valley Citizen

A22 Friday, December 8, 2017

**COLUMN**

## What's up in the Cowichan watershed?

BY JILL THOMPSON

Water can be a surprisingly dry topic, but rarely is that the case at the monthly meetings of the Cowichan Watershed Board where elected representatives of Cowichan Tribes and Cowichan Valley Regional District, together with other board members, seek collaborative solutions to water issues.

The Nov. 27 meeting was chaired by Cowichan Tribes Chief William Seymour. Here are some of the highlights.

Low summer flows in the Cowichan River are a top priority for the Watershed Board. Kate Miller, CVRD manager



Water quality sampling can tell us a lot about our waterways. WATERSHED BOARD

plained the current Cowichan took questions from the board decades of study and debate about

new report, *Collaborative Consent and British Columbia's Fresh Water, Towards Watershed Co-Governance*, published with the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources. This is a new approach to address overlapping legal authority for re-sources (like water). It is defined as "an ongoing process of committed engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments to secure mutual consent on proposed pathways forward."

For communities like ours, the model shows how unresolved views of title and authority do not have to be barriers to collaboration on watershed stewardship. The Cowichan Watershed Board was referenced in the report as an organization that

## Progress to Date

Stewardship of the Cowichan River is one of the success stories in British Columbia, with a well-documented history of community-based collaboration. From its creation in 2010, the Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB) has been a co-governed entity, co-Chaired by Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Valley Regional District, committed to working with partners to support a thriving Cowichan watershed now and into the future.



The Board currently consists of [thirteen members](#), representing a range of locally elected representatives, Sr. government appointees, and topic experts appointed by the partners. Monthly Board meetings bring these members together to respectfully discuss and learn from each other and from guest speakers.

In addition, through five active Working Groups and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Board engages over fifty other volunteers and/or organizations in pursuit of a range of projects and programs that help move the watershed in the direction envisioned in the Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan. Specifically, these groups collaborate on seven aspirational targets derived from that plan and developed by TAC members. The CWB is a unique and leading example of local watershed governance in B.C.

These resources published by the CWB help to describe the overall progress of the organization since 2010:

- [Pathways and Partnerships: A Framework for Collaboration and Reconciliation in the Cowichan Watershed](#)
- [On Target: A Guide to the Cowichan Watershed Board's Aspirational Targets for Watershed Health](#)
- [Its Hip to Fix a Drip: Final Report of the Cowichan Water Conservation Challenge](#)
- [WeirReady.ca](#)

In 2019 the Board was able to make significant progress in priority areas, leveraging resources and support from many watershed partners to achieve shared success. See Appendix 2 for highlights, and our 2019 Annual Report for more details.

## Summary

The Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds continue to face a number of challenges to water sustainability, including threats to water quality, water supply and cumulative impacts to habitat, all exacerbated by climate change. However, 2019 saw significant progress on water supply priorities in both the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds, thanks in part to a decade of building collaborative and respectful relationship with decision makers across all jurisdictions that impact watershed health. Solutions to declining water supply are now foreseeable for both watersheds within the next five years. The CWB will also continue its work to address other challenges through its holistic watershed targets and promoting reconciliation through watershed partnerships. By utilizing a “whole of watershed” approach, in recognition that *Mukw’ stem ‘o’ shilhukw’tul* – (everything is inter-connected), the Board works towards watershed health in the Cowichan Valley.

## APPENDIX 1: Five Year Budget:

		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	Note
<b>INCOME</b>	CVRD	60,000	60,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	Annual contribution
<b>Core Annual Revenue</b>	Cowichan Tribes	25,000	25,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	Annual contribution
	Other Govt partnerships	50,000	50,000	50,000			Watershed Security Fund (proposed)
	Sponsors / other income	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	Local business sponsors
	<b>SubTotal - Core Income</b>	<b>\$ 138,000</b>	<b>\$ 138,000</b>	<b>\$ 123,000</b>	<b>\$ 73,000</b>	<b>\$ 73,000</b>	
<b>Project Grant Revenue</b>	BC Freshwater Legacy Fund					18,000	confirmed - Koksilah WSP; collaborative governance
	BC Water Funders (other)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	32,000	implementing WSA; collaborative governance
	RBC Environment grant					10,000	confirmed - outreach tools, reporting
	BC Government				25,000	20,000	Koksilah WSP contracts
	EcoAction grant	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	climate mitigation projects
	PSF - educational materials	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	e.g. watershed model
	Other Grants - water quality					10,000	WQ testing with DWWP, tubing education,
	Other Grants - TBD	15,000	15,000	15,000		10,000	
	<b>SubTotal - Project Grant Income</b>	<b>\$ 96,500</b>	<b>\$ 96,500</b>	<b>\$ 96,500</b>	<b>\$ 116,500</b>	<b>\$ 130,500</b>	
<b>Cash Total</b>		<b>\$ 234,500</b>	<b>\$ 234,500</b>	<b>\$ 219,500</b>	<b>\$ 189,500</b>	<b>\$ 203,500</b>	
<b>IN KIND</b>		<b>\$ 60,000</b>					
<b>EXPENSES</b>	Executive Director	35,000	35,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	
<b>Core Staffing Expenses</b>	Program Coordinator	35,000	35,000	30,000	23,000	23,000	
	Administrative Coordinator	25,000	25,000	23,000			
	Book-keeper	7,000	7,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	
	Other	10,000	10,000	10,000	3,000	3,000	website support, events, note-taking, etc
	<b>SubTotal - Core Staffing</b>	<b>\$ 112,000</b>	<b>\$ 112,000</b>	<b>\$ 98,000</b>	<b>\$ 61,000</b>	<b>\$ 61,000</b>	
<b>Core Administrative Expenses</b>	General - Fees, Supplies	3,000	3,000	2,500	2,500	2,000	Legal, Insurance, Supplies, Travel, Phone, Banking
	Meeting Expenses	3,000	3,000	2,500	2,500	2,000	Board, Working Group - venues, refreshments
	Communications	10,000	10,000	10,000	4,000	5,000	Website fees, advertising, special projects
	Office Space						
	<b>SubTotal - Core Staffing</b>	<b>\$ 16,000</b>	<b>\$ 16,000</b>	<b>\$ 15,000</b>	<b>\$ 9,000</b>	<b>\$ 9,000</b>	
<b>Core Project Expenses</b>	Speaker Series - gifts, advertising	500	500	500	500	500	
	Volunteer appreciation	500	500	500	500	500	
	Working Group budgets	7,000	7,000	7,000		0	
	River Cleanup	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	supplemented by donations in kind
	<b>SubTotal - Core Projects</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>	
	<b>Total Core Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 138,000</b>	<b>\$ 138,000</b>	<b>\$ 123,000</b>	<b>\$ 73,000</b>	<b>\$ 73,000</b>	
<b>Grant funded PROJECTS</b>	Fish / Flows - Cowichan				20,000	30,000	address low flows
	Fish / Flows - Koksilah				45,000	40,000	address low flows
	Organizational Dev't / Partnerships				10,000	10,000	workshops, field trips, cultural teaching
	Water Conservation / Climate	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	public engagement projects
	Water Quality - testing, education				10,000	9,000	
	Engagement / Outreach Tools	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	11,500	
	Other projects - TBD	65,000	65,000	65,000			to align with annual priorities
	<b>Sub-Total Grant Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 96,500</b>	<b>\$ 96,500</b>	<b>\$ 96,500</b>	<b>\$ 116,500</b>	<b>\$ 130,500</b>	
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 234,500</b>	<b>\$ 234,500</b>	<b>\$ 219,500</b>	<b>\$ 189,500</b>	<b>\$ 203,500</b>	
	<b>IN KIND</b>	<b>\$ 60,000</b>					
	<b>NET</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

## APPENDIX 2: Top 10 Achievements of the Previous Year

# TOP 10

## Achievements of 2019



- 1 Weir funding:** Working in partnership, CVRD, Cowichan Tribes, Catalyst, and the CWB secured a funding contribution from the Federal and Provincial governments of over \$4million to conduct engineering and impact studies into replacing the weir at Cowichan Lake. The CWB played an important role in building the political support to make this an attractive project, and the largest contribution announced to date in the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund.
- 2 Fish Protection from Koksilah Low Flows:** From August to September, the BC Government implemented section 88 of the Water Sustainability Act (WSA), issuing a Fish Protection Order to curtail forage crop irrigation to protect Koksilah fish from critically low flows. The measure impacted farmers, and is not sustainable in the long term, but was deemed necessary this summer until better solutions can be implemented. CWB played a role in bringing the low flow levels to the attention of the BC Government, and in supporting transparent, science-based, whole of watershed approaches.
- 3 Co-governed Water Sustainability Plan initiated for Koksilah:** CWB actively supported Cowichan Tribes and the Province to develop a collaborative plan for scoping a long-term, whole of watershed solution to the Koksilah water supply problems under the WSA.
- 4 Weir Ready!** CWB partnered with the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society to improve awareness and address sources of confusion regarding the proposed replacement of the weir, particularly for lakeshore property owners at Cowichan Lake. Our new WeirReady.ca website and associated public engagement activities and materials helped build understanding and support for the weir replacement during the first year that Cowichan River flows needed to be maintained using electric pumps.
- 5 Nicola Nations Peer Learning Exchanges:** CWB provided organizational support for two events that brought elected chiefs from the Nicola Nations and Cowichan Tribes together with government and academic advisors to explore questions and share approaches to indigenous watershed governance. Two day workshops were hosted in both Cowichan and Nicola Nation territories.
- 6 BC Watershed Security Fund:** The CWB Co-Chairs have worked to support this provincial initiative to secure annual BC budget allotments to fund indigenous co-lead entities like the Watershed Board for their role in water management and protection.
- 7 Local Government officially seeks CWB expertise on decision:** The Cowichan Watershed Board received our first 'referral' from a local government seeking our guidance and opinion on potential water and watershed impacts of a land use decision under consideration.
- 8 Target Review** – The Cowichan Watershed Board has initiated a review of its 7 inspirational targets. These were endorsed by the board in 2011 as mechanisms for implementing the Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan and led to the formation of "Target Working Groups" to coordinate community watershed sustainability efforts. This review will result in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of our targets moving forward.
- 9 Completed 5 year Water Conservation Challenge** (see report)
- 10 Improved Reporting:** Following up on requests arising from the 2017-2018 Watershed co-Governance Conversation workshops, CWB developed new annual reporting practices. This Five Year Business Plan and an Annual Report are now published and presented to the CVRD and Cowichan Tribes councils every March to enhance the understanding and engagement of the councils in the work of the CWB.