



Cowichan Lake & River
Stewardship Society

June 2024 Newsletter

CLRSS acknowledges that our virtual newsletter is being shared on the unceded territories of the Quw'utsun, Malahat, Pauquachin, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, Lyackson, Ditidaht & Pacheedaht Peoples who have stewarded this land since time immemorial.

CLRSS will be emailing member newsletters every six weeks. Contributions from members: Judy Brayden (editor), Jean Atkinson, Jim Deck, Dave De Pape, Diana Gunderson, Parker Jefferson, Cam McCauley, Heather Pritchard, Maureen Quested, Joe Saysell Genevieve Singleton, Jacqueline Sherk, Ken Traynor, Leroy Van Wieren, and many others. Any questions, comments or feedback please see [Home | Cowichan Lake & River Stewardship Society British Columbia \(cowichan-lake-stewards.ca\)](http://Home_Cowichan_Lake_River_Stewardship_Society_British_Columbia_(cowichan-lake-stewards.ca))

Only \$10.00 = 4 cups of coffee



You can support CLRSS programs by purchasing Thrifty Smile Cards – order Smile Cards in any amount up to \$1000. 6% of the card value is donated to CLRSS.





Also remember code **484** will allow you to donate your bottle and can return money to CLRSS at the Duncan Island Return It. With thanks!

Our next regular Board meeting is Monday, July 8, 2024 at 6:30 – Country Grocer meeting room. Everyone welcome!

Our Strategic Planning session is Friday, August 23, 2024, at the home of Cam McCauley in Woodland Shores, Lake Cowichan – 10:00 – 3:00 with 45-minute potluck lunch break.

Watch for notices!

In this Edition:

- Meet the 2024/25 Board
- PowerPoint presentation of the CLRSS reports for 2023/24 – see link
- CELEBRATING WATER FESTIVAL – *Weir All Connected* July 20, 2024
- Project 84,000 update
- AGM Presentation on the 2023 Cowichan River Quw'utsun Sta'lo' fish kill by guest speaker, Tom Rutherford – see link
- Wonderful news about open-net pen aquaculture in B.C.'s coastal waters!

IMPORTANT:

CLRSS is still looking for volunteers to take water samples this summer and fall!

Project Scope: The project will conduct a water quality study in the Cowichan watershed to complement and continue sampling which has previously been conducted in the watershed. Water quality sampling will include streams, and tributaries to Cowichan Lake, stations in Cowichan Lake, and stations in the upper and lower Cowichan River.

This water quality monitoring work will be a continuation of the 2022 Water Quality Attainment Study for the Lower Cowichan and Koksilah Watershed conducted by the Cowichan Watershed Board under the leadership of Cowichan Tribes. It will also complement water quality monitoring work which was previously supported by CLRSS when members of the Society provided volunteer assistance to collect samples in the upper river, lake and its tributaries.

The goal of this monitoring work is to provide local and provincial researchers, managers and the public with objective water quality data. This data will enable transparent and objective discussions on the progress of management efforts and help identify areas of concern and new areas of research to inform the public and aid management decisions.

Under the current scope of work proposed, water quality sampling will take place between July 1 and December 15, 2024. Additional work to develop a Provincial Water Quality Attainment Study is contemplated for completion by Spring 2025, should additional funding be available.

This water quality monitoring program will adhere to the provincial '5 in 30' sampling standard, where at each site samples are taken once a week for five consecutive weeks over a 30-day span (Epps and Phippen 2011). Sampling in the summer will be conducted at the period of lowest flow and again in the fall following the first significant rain events to capture input from overland flow via tributaries to Lake Cowichan during winter conditions approaching Full Supply Level.

If you are interested in being part of this program, please contact, CLRSS President, Judy Brayden Res: (250) 701-0570

Meet the 2024/25 Board of Directors of the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (2012-)



Judy Brayden, President 2024/25 has a background in holistic, global education, art and community leadership and she has worked for Cowichan Valley communities as a volunteer in many capacities since moving here in 2007. She is taking on this role out of respect for CLRSS and for the community-wide, stewardship network of which CLRSS is part. Stewardship through the lens of art, interpersonal communications, capacity building and collaboration are her personal passions, and she looks forward to working with this Board and the CLRSS members in what she knows will be will an exciting year.

Cam McCauley, Vice President, and his family now call the shores of beautiful Cowichan Lake their home, having built in Woodland Shores a couple of years ago. He is now retired from 33 plus years with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources during which time he fulfilled roles as a deputy conservation officer, biologist and stewardship coordinator. Cam has extensive experience working with lake partners such as CLRSS to plan, assess, monitor and enhance watershed ecosystems. Cam has a passion for fishing and hopes to harness this passion and past experience to work with CLRSS and other like-minded community partners to assess, monitor and enhance the Cowichan Lake watershed so that future generations might continue to enjoy this phenomenal fishery. Cam has a *get 'er done* attitude and measures success by



accomplishing well planned initiatives that produce results.



Dianne Flood, Secretary recently moved to Lake Cowichan full-time. Her professional background is in law, with a focus on access to justice, local government and regulatory issues. She was formerly very active on the executive of her neighbourhood residents' association and continues to volunteer at Victoria General Hospital. Dianne loves the outdoors and is concerned about the long-term health and capacity of Cowichan Lake and River. She looks forward to contributing to the work of the CLRSS in addressing the needs of the lake, river and our wider community.



Maureen Quested, Treasurer had a professional background in education at the elementary level where protecting native plants and water studies were an important part of her enrichment programs. When she retired from District #62, she began volunteering in the community and in schools and tutored both children and adults. For over twenty years, she volunteered at Swan Lake Nature Center, C-FAX Santas Anonymous and the McAdams Foundation, a children's charity. Purchasing lakefront property in Honeymoon Bay and caring about water quality brought about her long-time association with CLRSS.

Jean Atkinson, Member-at-Large was a science/mathematics teacher in secondary, teacher education, and adult education. She taught at Lake Cowichan Secondary School, secondary schools in Trinidad and Zimbabwe, a teachers' college in Zimbabwe, and at the University of the Fraser Valley. Problems with erosion on her property on Sa-seen-os in Youbou was the impetus for her involvement with CLRSS. She was a founding member in 2010. Her major interest has been riparian education. Being on the Board and part of the wider stewardship community in the Cowichan watershed is an ongoing, multi-faceted learning experience for her.



Dave DePape, Member-at-Large, grew up in the Fraser Valley and remembers fishing as a boy, catching cutthroat trout on a handline with a single hook and worms in small streams near his home in Abbotsford. Over the years his interest in fishing grew and he eventually graduated from university as a fisheries biologist. Now retired after four decades of managing fisheries resources throughout the Pacific Northwest, he is delighted to be able to continue to support efforts to maintain healthy, sustainable fish populations in the Cowichan Valley.



Di Gunderson, Member-at-Large is a long time Lake Cowichan resident, retired teacher, and CLRSS member forever. Di supports all society projects and works with and helps wherever and whenever she can.



Rodger Hunter, Member-at-Large and his wife Alison Nicholson have a small farm situated on the Koksilah River upstream from Cowichan Station. Rodger has worked with CLRSS since its inception. His areas of specialty include strategic and business planning, governance, project management, and sustainable watershed management. After moving permanently to the Cowichan Valley in the early 2000s Rodger worked as a management consultant with Vis-a-Vis Management Resources Inc. Prior to that he worked in a variety of positions with the B.C. provincial government, including: Coastal and Wetland Specialist; Manager of the Habitat Conservation Fund; Manager of Economic Development Policy at Treasury Board Staff; Treaty Negotiator; Executive Director of Environmental

Protection; and, as an Assistant Deputy Minister. In

2009 Rodger was contracted to lead the development a governance body to implement

the *Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan* and to manage that body, the Cowichan Watershed Board, until it became well established. He served as the CWB's manager until 2016. Rodger has an M.Sc. in biological sciences from Brock University and an MPA from the University of Victoria. In addition, he is a certified executive coach (Royal Roads). His primary stewardship related interests are environmental education and habitat protection.



Jacqueline Sherk, Member-at-Large has a background in municipal recreation administration and was a fitness leader for 25 years. A second career in landscape followed, completing a 2-year diploma program in horticulture at Kwantlen Polytechnic in Langley. Jacqueline also holds two certifications with the International Society of Arboriculture.

Christoph Steeger, Member-at-Large has been working as a wildlife and habitat biologist for over 30 years in BC. His primary experience is on forest and riparian habitats, especially conservation of wildlife trees and species at risk. Locally over the past decade, Chris has gained experience on wildlife/habitat conservation issues and some understanding of key cultural needs of the Qwu'utsun Mustimuhw (Cowichan People). He sees his role on the CLRSS Board primarily as a terrestrial habitat biologist, species at risk advisor, and forestry and First Nations liaison. As a resident within the Qwu'utsun Sta'lo' riparian zone, Chris is deeply connected to the natural environment of the valley.



Jay White, Member-at-Large is a Registered Professional Biologist and owner of Aquality Environmental Consulting Ltd. and Scientific Advisor to eDNA Metagenomics Inc (EMI). Jay's career spans limnology, water testing technology, environmental regulations, water policy and law, consultation, project management and consensus decision making. As a newer resident with a young family, he is very interested in Cowichan Lake and protecting all of the waters of Vancouver Island.

CELEBRATING WATER FESTIVAL – Weir All Connected
by Festival Chair, Maureen Qusted

**Kid's Crafts!
Rub a fish!**

www.clrss.ca

CLRSS

**Saturday
July 20**
Saywell Park
Lake Cowichan

CELEBRATING WATER FESTIVAL

**Bubble
Zone**

Weir Walk

Oxford The Otter

Quw'utsun Teachings

The Big Dancing Fish

Fun Family Day
10:00 - 2:00

The Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS) is pleased to announce the return of the annual *Celebrating the Water Festival*, a community-driven event dedicated to promoting water conservation, environmental stewardship, and the appreciation of the Cowichan Lake and River watershed. In celebration of the progress that has been made towards building a new weir on Lake Cowichan, our theme this year is *Weir All Connected!* Scheduled to take place on **July 20th, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Saywell Park in downtown Lake Cowichan**, this year's festival promises to be an immersive and engaging experience for attendees of all ages. With a focus on education, entertainment, and riparian awareness, the festival will feature a diverse range of activities, and interactive exhibits designed to celebrate the vital role of water in our lives and ecosystems.

The "Celebrating the Water Festival" serves as a cornerstone event for CLRSS, an organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the environmental health of Cowichan Lake and River. Through this festival, CLRSS aims to foster a deeper connection between community members and their local watershed, empowering individuals to become stewards of the environment.

Attendees can look forward to a variety of engaging activities throughout the day, including:

- **Walk the Weir Tours:** Gain insights from specialists regarding the significance of a newly proposed weir, enhancing the river's value for all stakeholders, including both human and non-human entities. Learn from experts about water conservation, watershed management, and the importance of preserving aquatic habitats.
- **Interactive Exhibits:** Explore interactive displays showcasing local wildlife, aquatic ecosystems, and sustainable water management practices.
- **Guided Nature Walks:** Come join experts in an exploration of the CLRSS's native species garden, delving into the flora that will enrich your riparian zone knowledge. Enter the draw for riparian plants!
- **Quw'utsun Teachings:** Hear stories that trace the history of the Quw'utsun Peoples, highlighting their relationship with the river for sustenance, transportation, and culture. Carleen August (Stimaat) and her father Jedson August (Tsusqun), both members of the Quw'utsun Nation, will be on hand with a traditional dugout canoe. Hul'qumi'num language teachings will also be shared.
- **Project 84,000:** Participate in a community-wide art installation, creating some of the 84,000 fish rubbings - a tribute to the approximate number of juvenile steelhead lost in the Cowichan River Quw'utsun Sta'lo' during the summer of 2023 as a result of an unprecedented climate event.
- **Mascot Mugshot Contest:** Take your selfie with water mascot, Oxford and The Great Dancing Fish. Post it on your social media and get a chance to win a

fabulous prize.

- **S-hwuhwa'us Thi'lut Kw'atl'kwa (Thunderbird Protecting the Ocean):** Meet the Lulumexun Marine Team and hear about their stewardship of Cowichan Tribe's Marine Territory and all the living beings within it.
- **Kids Activities:** crafts, games and the *Bubble Zone*
- **Cake Cutting:** join us for some free cake at 10 AM

"We are thrilled to invite the community to join us for another year of *Celebrating the Water Festival*," said Judy Brayden President of CLRSS. "This event is a testament to the importance of water in our lives and the critical need to protect and preserve our local watershed. Through education, engagement, and celebration, we hope to inspire a deeper appreciation for the natural world and empower individuals to take action in safeguarding our precious water resources."

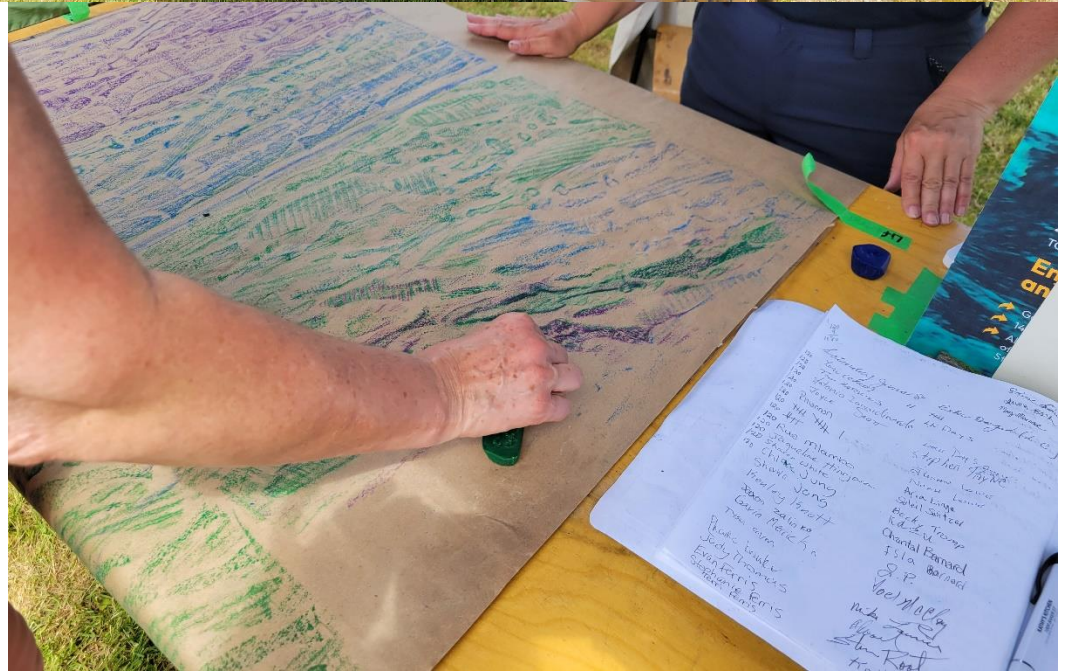
Admission to the festival is free, with donations welcomed to support CLRSS's ongoing conservation efforts. Whether you're a long-time resident or a first-time visitor to Cowichan Valley, the *Celebrating the Water Festival* offers something for everyone to enjoy while promoting environmental stewardship and community engagement.

For more information about the festival, including sponsorship opportunities and volunteer registration, please visit www.clrсс.ca or contact Maureen Qusted at mquested@shaw.ca

Join us on July 20th as we come together to celebrate the beauty and importance of water in our lives and ecosystem. Together, let's make a splash for a brighter, water-conscious future!



PROJECT 84,000*



This *stewardship through the lens of art* initiative has met with resounding success. To date 691 community members (children and adults) have created 47,400 images of juvenile steelhead!

How to get your group or society involved:

For more information or to request a Project 84,000 activity kit, contact: Jennifer Shepherd, Community Researcher, Xwulqw'selu Connections at (236) 800-9011 jshepherd@uvic.ca or Judy Brayden, Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society, judybrayden@shaw.ca



With thanks to the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society, Xwulqw'selu Connections, the Town of Lake Cowichan, and the Cowichan Lake Arts and Culture Society.

Join us at these events:

July 1	Central; Park, Lake Cowichan
July 16	Stoltz Pool Provincial Park, Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable meeting
July 20	Celebrating the Water Festival, Saywell Park, Lake Cowichan
July (date TBD)	39 Days of July, Duncan
August 24	Lower River Clean-up, Duncan
September 22	Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Skweyul (River Day) with thanks to Chief and Council, Quw'utsun Tribes

**Please call this number
directly when you see**

**Concerned about an
environmental issue?**

REPORT ALL POACHERS & POLLUTERS

Provincial Government RAPP line

1 877 952 RAPP

THIS BEGINS A REVIEW PROCESS.

***THE APPROPRIATE
JURISDICTION AND LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT
WILL BE
INFORMED OF THE ISSUE***

**Remember the more people who report an
issue, the greater the response.
Ask for a call back to let you know if and
how the issue was
resolved.**



anything that concerns you!

Witnessing the Water
 - an authentic relationship
 A coffee table book about our
 Heritage Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Cowichan River

purchase @
 Kaatza Station Museum
 or
 Cowichan Lake District
 Chamber of Commerce

Visit Website for Online Purchase
www.cowichan-lake-stewards.ca

\$30.00

56 page full-colour photographs
 by local potographer,
 Cim MacDonald

**Enjoy with guests
 and friends**

- Google map included
- 14 Witnessing locations
- All proceeds support the work of the Cowichan Lake & River Stewardship Society

**Witnessing the Water
 – an authentic relationship**

Find your copy at Kaatza Station Museum, Cowichan Lake District Chamber of Commerce, Volume One Books and Ten Old Books in Duncan and online at [W the W | Cowichan Lake & River \(cowichan-lake-stewards.ca\)](http://W the W | Cowichan Lake & River (cowichan-lake-stewards.ca))

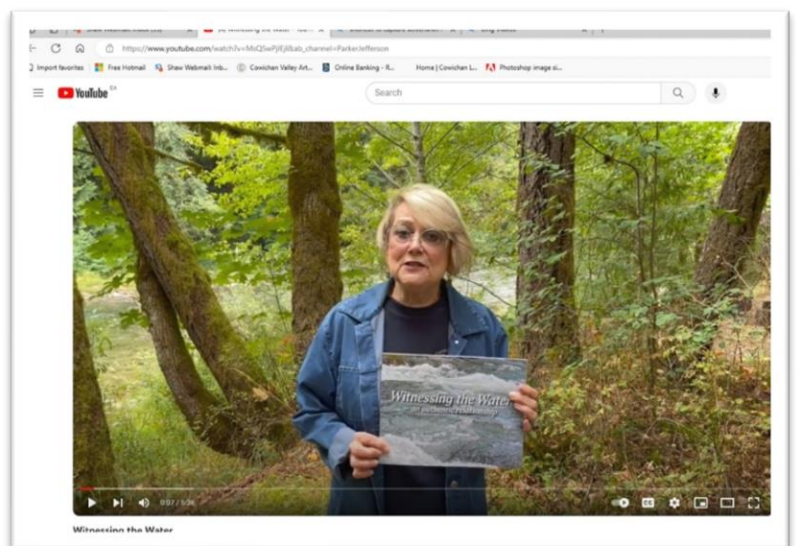
What readers are saying about the book:

"I just want to tell you this is a magnificent book about our river...it's such a beautiful tribute to this ancient life-giving, sacred water.

Check this out!

**Witnessing the Water
 YouTube video thanks to
 Parker Jefferson**

https://youtu.be/MsQ5wPjIEjI?si=CyNo_n-17lwpVWuM





PACIFIC SALMON FOUNDATION

June 19, 2024, the Government of Canada has made an important decision to end open-net pen aquaculture in B.C.'s coastal waters within the next five years, following through on a promise made by the Prime Minister in 2019.

This decision is a win for Pacific salmon and their future.



Our team at the Pacific Salmon Foundation has published high-impact, independent, peer-reviewed research with collaborators that clearly link open-net pen salmon farms in B.C. to risks for wild Pacific salmon.

Arriving at this decision, which puts the health and interests of wild salmon first, has been a long journey. For PSF, we began researching whether or not open-net pen salmon farms posed a risk to wild Pacific salmon in 2013. Over the course of more than a decade and 60-plus publications, our current evidence-based position became obvious. We believe that ending open-net pen salmon farming in B.C. is a critical decision to support the conservation of wild Pacific salmon.

Given the challenged state of many Pacific salmon species, we would have preferred a shorter timeline than the five-year license renewals announced today.

Yet, we must acknowledge the need for a thoughtful and well-supported transition for First Nations and coastal communities impacted by this decision. The risks to salmon are clear, but we know this decision is complex and that resilient communities are just as important as resilient salmon.

We encourage the federal and provincial governments to commit to the necessary support for First Nations and coastal communities, and to provide incentives to get open-net pen farms out of the ocean as soon as possible.

With more than half of all wild Pacific salmon in a state of decline, this decisive measure to remove open-net pen salmon farms in B.C. is a prudent step towards recovery and resilience of salmon.

We commend the federal government's decision and the clear path to end this risk to Pacific salmon in B.C. Given the many risks facing Pacific salmon, removing one of the barriers to recovery that is directly under human control is a key step.

We all depend on salmon. On behalf of the Pacific Salmon Foundation and the hundreds of species and communities in B.C. that rely on salmon ecosystems, we thank the Government of Canada and the Hon. Diane Lebovillier, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and Canadian Coast Guard for prioritizing the precautionary principle and the future of wild Pacific salmon.

Sincerely,



Michael Meneer
President & CEO
Pacific Salmon Foundation