

Xwulqw'selu/Koksilah Watershed Planning NEWSLETTER

June 2024



Photo by Lulumexun



Progress Update!



What Have We Been Up To?

- Community Advisory Tables have met and begun providing input on the planning process.
- The Planning Team launched the work to explore options around licensed water management to improve the way that water is used and shared during times of scarcity.
- With new provincial funding coming available for water security, CVRD is assisting the G2G partners in securing resources to move forward with phase two analysis on Koksilah water storage options.
- Our new website is up and running! Check it out to see who's involved, explore our resources library, and learn more about what you can do to help. (www.koksilahwater.ca)

First time
here?

WELCOME!

Head over to
www.koksilahwater.ca
to learn about the
watershed,
the people, the work
and more!



Community Input!



Over the last few months, we've been delighted to convene initial meetings of our two community advisory tables—the Cowichan Tribes Xwulqw'selu Community Guidance Table (XCGT) and the Collaborative Community Advisory Table (CCAT). Advisory table members bring a diversity of values and experiences, alongside a broad range of knowledge directly to the planning process.

Connecting with an advisory table member is a great way to stay informed and be a part of the process. Head over to our **updated website** to see who's involved!
www.koksilahwater.ca



The CCAT at their first meeting in November 2023. Photo by J Thompson

Koksilah River by Cheyenne Berghenhenegouwen.

CCAT members have offered their vision(s) for a desired future state for the Koksilah and provided insight into the challenges and concerns many are facing because of a struggling Watershed. They offered preliminary ideas around water storage options and provided insight into potential ways of improving current curtailment methods used to address critical summer low flows.



Grant lake by Barry Hetschko.



Cowichan Tribes Guidance Table members have also spent time articulating their vision for a healthy Watershed, emphasizing the links between healthy forests and healthy waters and the Quw'utsun People's deep connection to the watershed like it is family. Members also highlighted Cowichan practices and governance systems and their responsibility to care for the land as Cowichan people.

G2G Decision Makers

The **Government-to-Government** table appreciates the input from both advisory tables around vision and values for a healthy Watershed as well as the clear articulation of the many challenges that all who live in and rely on the Koksilah are facing. There are many things, and many different kinds of things that people would like to see done in response.

The G2G members **are representatives** who report to their **leadership and communities**



The G2G Table and Planning Team members gather at the Koksilah River, June 2023. Photo by J Thompson

As a **leadership table**, the G2G is working to prioritize and sequence elements of the work in a strategic way that makes efficient use of planning resources and will lead to meaningful recommendations and change for the Watershed. Given the short term and acute pressures related to drought, we are focusing our current efforts on licensed water use and water storage and supply, which will be key elements within a broader, long-term whole-of-watershed approach.

Check out www.koksilahwater.ca to see who's on the G2G table, planning team, and more!

We Are Making Progress!



CCAT members consider how to improve current water curtailment methods (photo by J Thompson)

- We are actively starting analysis of options! The Planning Team is working closely with provincial staff to begin detailed analysis of options around water use and license management.
- This preparatory work will lead to deliberation with advisory table members, knowledge holders, subject matter experts, and others in the community: we are looking forward to rigorous and transparent analysis and structured deliberation of key trade-offs.

Get involved and learn with us!

- **As a starting point** for understanding water use in the Koksilah, check out the report pictured below by [Barroso and Wainwright](#). This report outlines how the province currently makes decisions during times of drought and the information this is based upon. This planning process is working to go beyond these curtailment methods and create something more closely tailored to local Koksilah community conditions, values, goals and impacts, incorporating input from water users and detailed technical analyses.
- **Head over** to the resources page on our website to find this report and many others!

Water Use and Management in the Koksilah River Watershed

Sylvia Barroso and Megan Wainwright



December 2020

- **The CVRD** has stepped up to the plate to support a phase 2 storage assessment – they are playing a key role as a partner, helping to secure funding, and contribute their own resources to move this work forward. We are thankful and excited to have their expertise on board.

Stay involved!

- **Check out** our updated website featuring helpful info about what you can do as a resident, producer, recreationist or anyone with an interest. The new site also features the key people involved in the process. **Get to know the team!**
- **In addition**, we are planning for an open house/community event, most likely in the fall! We are working to figure out the timing, recognizing that it needs to be timed with consideration of the provincial election (public engagement needs to be limited around election times). **Hope to see you there!**



Planning Team Members engage with the public, June 2023. See you at our next event! (photo by J Thompson)

- **We are also working** with the CVRD to secure resources for a phase 2 analysis of water storage options for the Koksilah. To read about the preliminary analysis already done on storage options check on Phase 1 here: [Koksilah Water Supply and Options Feasibility Project](#)