

# EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY REPORT



## THE CONTEXT

In February 2020, Cowichan Tribes and the Province of BC's Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) entered into a Government-to-Government agreement to work in partnership to scope a **LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN THE KOKSILAH RIVER**, Xwulqw'selu Sto'lo, Watershed (the Watershed).

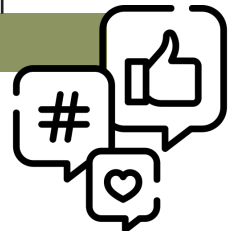
The Partners are currently implementing three initiatives with the goal of determining a pathway to collaborative watershed management:

- a hydrological assessment of the Watershed,
- engagement with Cowichan Tribes members, and
- engagement with external community members and interest holders.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of engaging with external community members and interest holders were to:

- understand the **VARIED INTERESTS** and uses in the Watershed,
- surface the most **URGENT ISSUES** facing the Watershed; and
- understand how the interest holders in the Watershed might **WORK TOGETHER** towards a **SHARED VISION**.



## WHAT DID WE DO?

To meet these engagement objectives, the project team (MODUS Planning, Design and Engagement in collaboration with the Outreach Working Group) conducted:

- 13 interviews between September 8 -25, 2020; and
- A public online questionnaire, open from October 13 - November 3, 2020

## WHAT DID WE HEAR?

### INTERESTS in the watershed



Livelihood

Domestic Use



Recreational Activities

Cultural Activities

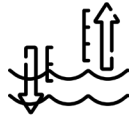


Main source of income

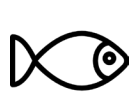


Emotional + Spiritual Connection

### ISSUES + CONCERNS



Fluctuations in water surface levels and weather



Loss of mature trees and fish abundance



Excessive water extraction

### VISIONS for the Watershed



Adequate, Long-term water supply



Healthy ecosystems balanced with human needs



### COLLABORATION Principles



Inclusive of all perspectives



Trust + Transparency in process



Data-Driven



## IMPACTS DUE TO CONCERNS

I will lose an important emotional + spiritual connection to the Koksilah



I will be unable to partake in recreational activities

I lose my main source of income



I will not have water for use in my residence

## RECOMMENDATIONS



### FOCUS ON THE WHOLE:

People care about the Watershed beyond just flow rates and water levels. Giving attention to the “whole system” through the development and implementation stages will be instrumental to addressing people’s core concerns.



### ENCOURAGE LISTENING AND LEARNING ACROSS DIFFERENCES:

Different groups hold different values towards the Watershed and misinformation can exacerbate scapegoating and alienation if not carefully managed. Any future process must be sensitive to these differences to ensure openness and two-way dialogue is nurtured.



### BE DATA-DRIVEN:

Data will be key to dispel misinformation or address incomplete information and build trust between interest groups and with the process.



### EXPLORE THE APPLICATION OF VALUES:

If a process is to be inclusive of all interest holders and their values, there needs to be a greater understanding of what these different values mean in practice. Any future process will need to grapple with how differing values may conflict when decisions need to be made and explore what compromises are available.



### BE TRANSPARENT AND INSTILL ACCOUNTABILITY:

Past inaction and perceived influence of industry in decision-making has eroded trust in government. Clear and consistent communications, openness in process and data, fair and equitable opportunities to participate, defining and committing to measurable outcomes, and responsive leadership are ways to ensure transparency and accountability in the process.