



**Cowichan
Watershed
BOARD**



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Water Use Plan Development Underway for the Cowichan Watershed

Duncan, BC – Changes in the demand for water, including environmental flow needs, as well as changing climate and land use changes in the watershed over the past 50 years are challenging the security and availability of water to meet the community's needs. This has been increasingly evident over past years where there has been scarcity of water in the Cowichan River system over the summer months. To help address these issues, work has begun to create a Water Use Plan.

Development of the Water Use Plan for the Cowichan watershed will involve a Public Advisory Group (PAG) made up of representatives from First Nations, key stakeholder groups, and area residents who will participate through a structured planning process led by an experienced consulting team. The PAG will seek input from the broader community at strategic times and be supported through a number of technical subcommittees.

"Keeping the river running is critically important to protect a range of social, cultural, economic and environmental interests that rely on sustained flows in the Cowichan River," states CVRD Chair Jon Lefebure. "This plan will provide a roadmap for the future defined by community residents and businesses with a vested interest in maintaining the health and vitality of the Cowichan Watershed."

The community planning process towards developing a Water Use Plan will explore water use needs and opportunities to better ensure sustainable water resources into the future. The scope of the planning will include assessing a range of future river flow targets and lake storage options.

The Water Use Plan process will kick off with a public information meeting:

- Monday, October 23
- 5:30-8:30 p.m. Presentation at 7 p.m.
- Youbou Hall, 8550 Hemlock St, Youbou

The Water Use Plan project is being jointly administered by Cowichan Tribes, Cowichan Valley Regional District, Catalyst Paper and Cowichan Watershed Board. The Water Use Plan is expected to be completed in Spring 2018.

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