

Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society

Re-Visioning 2019

Survey

Report prepared by Trish McAdie, November 2019

The Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS) has embarked on a revisioning process. As part of this, an online survey was conducted to enable a wider level of input from members and past members, eliciting opinions and experience on past and possible future activities.

In October 2019, a link to an on-line survey was sent to 105 current members and 127 past members (whose membership had lapsed since the 2014-15 membership year). The survey consisted of 18 questions¹ and took on average 9 minutes to complete. Seventy-three responses were returned, for an overall response rate of 31 percent. Not surprisingly, current members were more likely to complete the survey. Forty-seven current members completed the survey, a response rate of 45 percent. Nineteen² surveys were completed by lapsed members, a response rate of 15 percent. It should be noted that this is still a respectable response rate, especially considering these people do not have an ongoing relationship with the CLRSS.

For the most part, the analysis focuses on the overall responses. Differences between current and lapsed members are noted where they may be of particular interest.

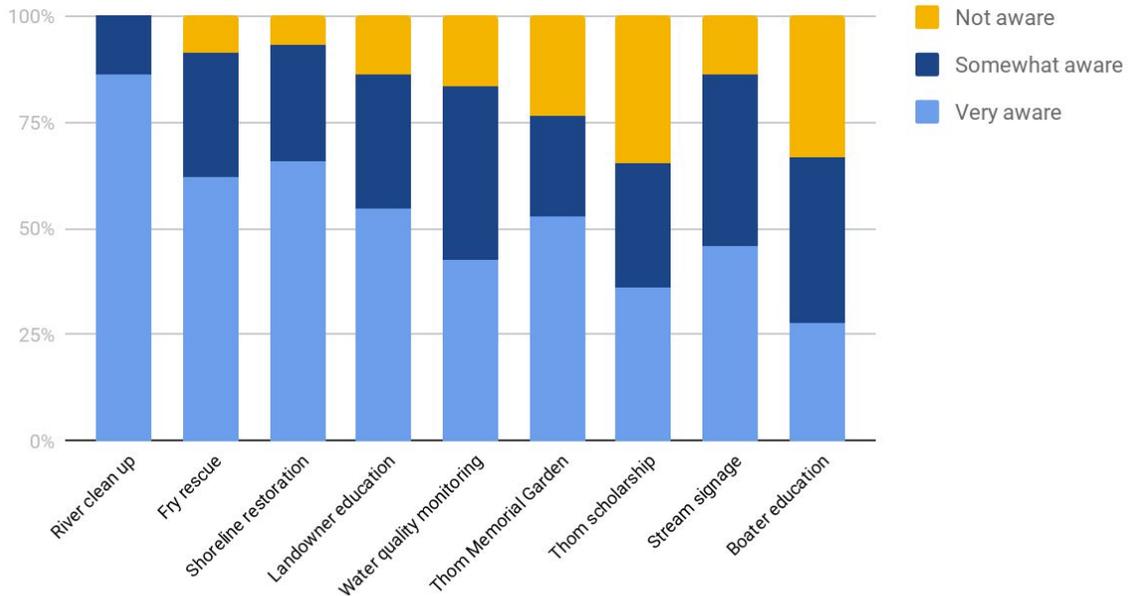
Awareness of Programs and Activities

Respondents were asked how aware they are of nine major activities and programs of the CLRSS. Everyone was aware of the river clean-up, and over 85 percent said they are **very** aware of this program. In addition, 83 percent are aware that students are involved in the shoreline restoration project.

¹ The full list of questions is contained in Appendix 1.

² Note that the numbers do not always add up to the total response number. There was no requirement for anyone to answer each question. Some may have simply skipped any given question, for a variety of reasons. Others may have not completed the total survey.

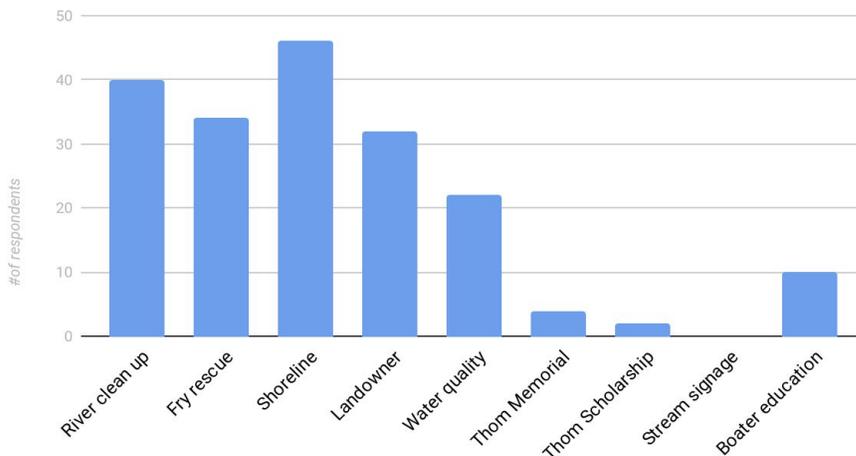
Awareness of Activities of the CLRSS



The lowest level of awareness of programs is for the Gerald Thom Scholarship (35% not aware), boater education (33% not aware), and the Gerald Thom Memorial Garden (24% not aware).

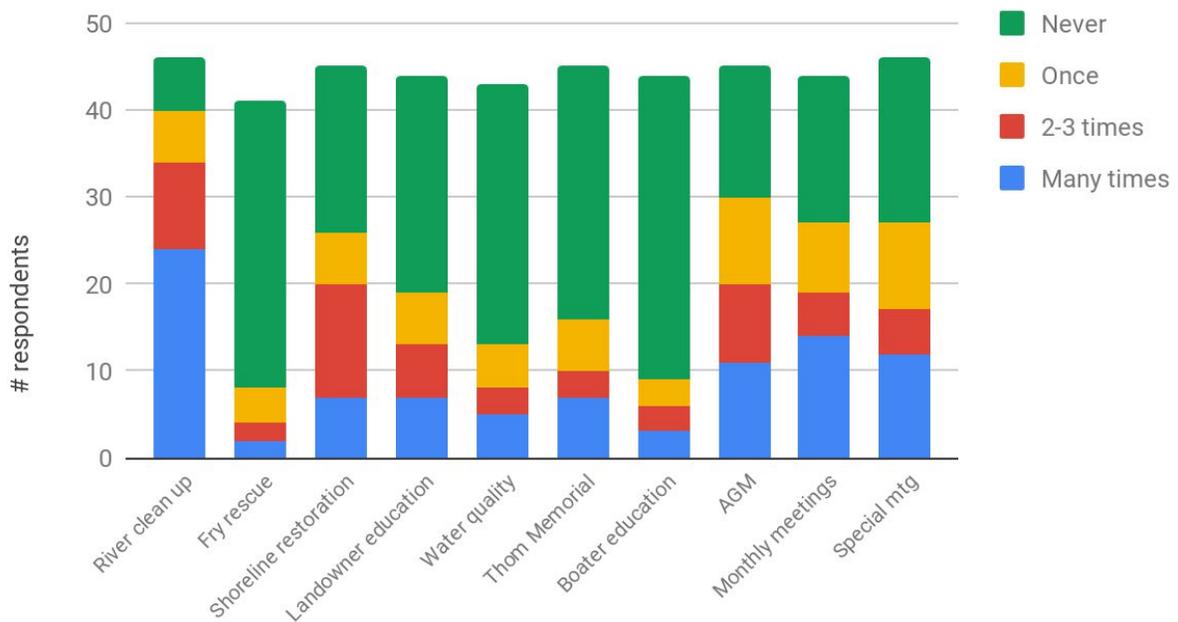
Respondents were asked what their top three priorities were for activities, of the nine current main programs. Shoreline restoration and invasive plant removal was included as a priority by 70 percent of respondents. Next river clean-up was listed by 61 percent. Fry rescue was included as a priority by 52 percent; landowner/riparian education by 48 percent.

Program Priorities



Survey respondents were asked in which activities they have participated. Not surprisingly, current members reported more activity than lapsed members. Overall, the river clean-up sees the most level of participation, with less than 15 percent of current and lapsed members saying they have never participated in this activity. Note that while the lowest level of participation is in the fry rescue program (20%), it is the third most important priority.

Participation by Current Members

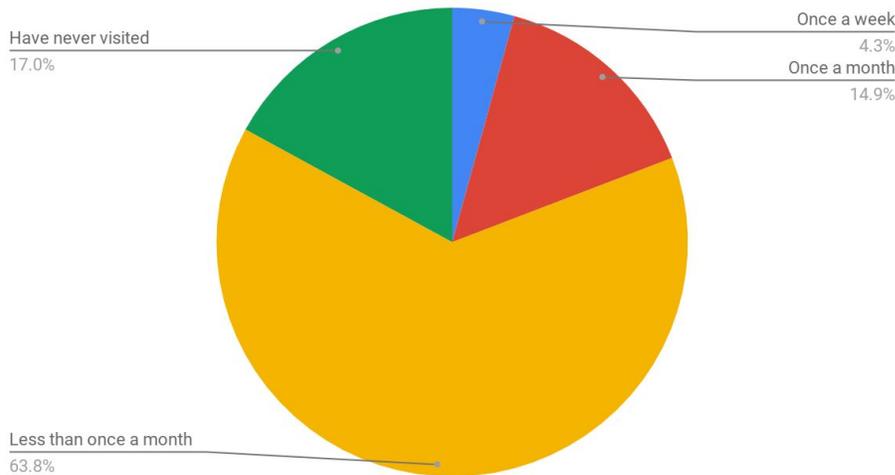


The final question in this section asked if there are other areas of activity that the CLRSS should be participating in. Various education initiatives were mentioned by six people. The weir was mentioned by five. Various fish activities and initiatives were mentioned by four. (See Appendix 2 for a full list of these comments.)

Access to Information

Survey respondents were asked about their frequency of use of the CLRSS website. Not surprisingly, current members accessed the website more than lapsed members. Seventeen percent of current members have never visited the website compared with 37 percent of lapsed members. However, neither group were frequent users.

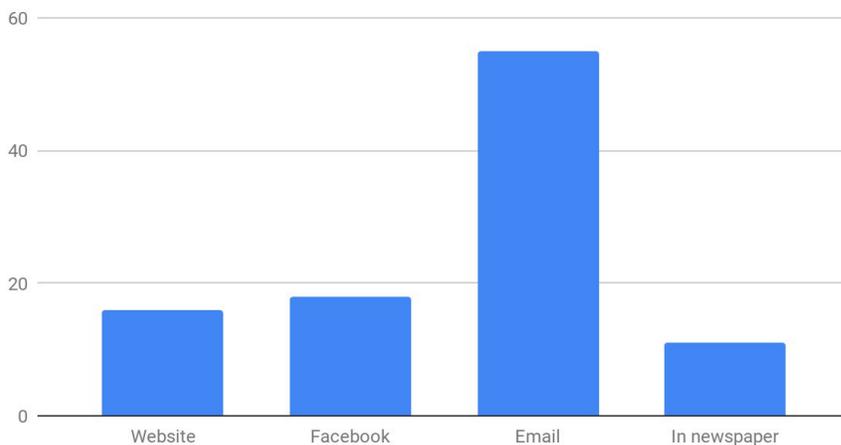
Website Usage - Current Members



Respondents were also asked whether they followed the CLRSS on Facebook. Current members were somewhat more likely to say yes to this question, 27 percent compared to 16 percent for lapsed members. Again, neither group are very likely to follow CLRSS on Facebook.

The survey asked respondents how they would like to receive information about the activities and opportunities of the CLRSS. Over 80 percent said they would prefer to receive information by email. (Please note that respondents could choose more than one answer to this question.)

Preferred source of information



The survey asked about the area of activity of the CLRSS that respondents would like to see more information. Four people noted information about the weir, three want more information about water monitoring, and three noted they would like more information about fry rescue. (See Appendix 3 for a complete list of the responses to this question.)

Opportunities

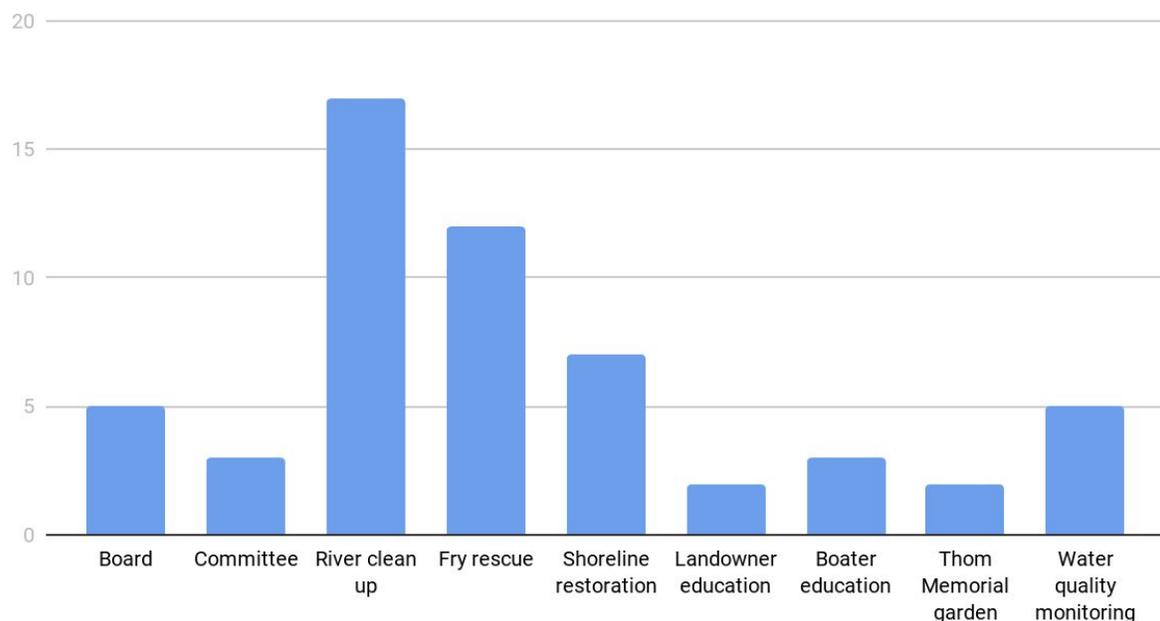
The survey asked if there was one key activity that is vital to the CLRSS. Forty-six responses were provided to this open-ended question. More than half of these responses mentioned various education initiatives, including:

- Shoreline property owner education
- Riparian education and restoration
- Landowner and community education about issues of water sustainability
- Educating folks to know how to live in the watershed in a way that is respectful to each other

The river clean up was mentioned by six respondents. Issues around the weir were mentioned by five. Another five noted issues involving local community, volunteer, and capacity building. (See Appendix 4 for a full list of the responses to this question.)

Next, the survey asked which activities members would consider volunteering for. The river clean up and fry rescue were the most likely activities for potential member participation, both current and lapsed.

Consider volunteering - All Respondents



Of the 51 members who answered this question, only five indicated they would consider volunteering for the board, and only 3 indicated they would consider volunteering for a specific

committee. While there is considerable interest in volunteering for many of the specific activities, there may be more effort needed to solicit members to help run the organization.

The survey asked what activity should be undertaken in the next couple of years that is not currently being done by the CLRSS. Twenty-six responses were provided to this question. Four focussed on forestry and logging issues, four talked of more boater education, and three mentioned activity to promote the construction of a new weir. (See Appendix 5 for the full list of responses.)

Finally in this section, the survey asked about watershed challenges we face as a community in the next five years and how the CLRSS can help with these challenges. Forty-four people provided a response to this question. Almost half of these responses are related to the weir in one way or another. Most of the issues raised were about various aspects of climate change and addressing logging practices. (See Appendix 6 for the full list of these responses.)

Membership

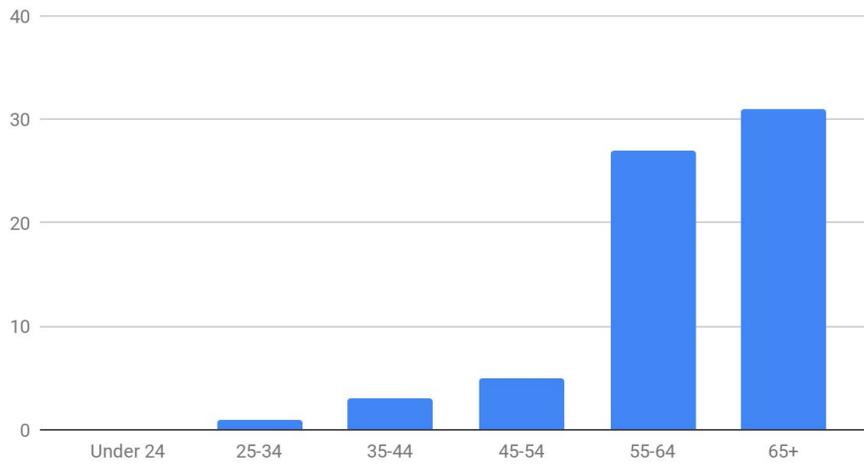
As noted previously, of the 66 respondents who answered the question about membership, 47 indicated they are current members, and 19 indicated their membership has lapsed.

Those whose membership had lapsed were asked why they had not renewed. The most common answer was that did not receive notification that it was time to renew their membership (7 or 33%). Another five (24%) said they simply forgot. It should be noted that no-one said it was too difficult to renew their membership.

Survey Respondents

Sixty-seven respondents completed the question about their age. Over 85 percent are 55 years or older.

Age of Survey Respondents



Over three-quarters of the survey respondents indicated that they are full-time Cowichan Valley residents. Twenty-one percent own lakefront property; 25 percent own riverfront property; 48 percent own property not on the lake or riverfront. Less than six percent do not own property.

Appendix 1

Survey Questions

Awareness of Programs and Activities

1. How aware are you of the following activities of the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society?

Very Aware, Somewhat Aware, Not Aware

1. River clean up
 2. Fry rescue
 3. Shoreline restoration and invasive plant removal
 4. Landowner riparian education
 5. Water quality monitoring
 6. Gerald Thom Memorial Garden
 7. Gerald Thom Scholarship
 8. Stream signage
 9. Boater education
2. Did you know that local students are involved in the shoreline restoration project?
3. From the list above, what are your top three priorities for activities of the CLRSS?

4. What activities or programs have you participated in?

Many times, 2 or 3 times, once, never

- River clean up
 - Fry rescue
 - Shoreline restoration and invasive plant removal
 - Landowner riparian education
 - Water quality monitoring
 - Gerald Thom Memorial Garden
 - Boater education
 - Annual General Meeting
 - Monthly meetings
 - Special information meeting or session
 - Other (please specify)
5. Are there other areas of activity that you think the CLRSS should be participating in?

Access to Information

6. Do you visit the CLRSS website?

Once a week, Once a month, Less than once a month, Have never visited the website

7. Do you follow the CLRSS on Facebook?

8. What area(s) of activity of the CLRSS do you wish you had more information about?

9. How would you like to receive information about the activities and opportunities of the CLRSS?

Website, Facebook, Email, Information in local newspaper, Other

Opportunities

10. Is there one key activity that is vital to the CLRSS?

11. Would you consider volunteering with the CLRSS?

On the Board, On a specific committee, River clean up, Fry rescue, Shoreline restoration and invasive plant removal, Boater education, Gerald Thom Memorial Garden, Water quality monitoring, Other (please specify)

12. What activity or action should the CLRSS undertake in the next year or two that is not currently being done?

13. What watershed challenges do we face as a community in the next five years? How can the CLRSS help with these challenges?

Membership

14. I am a current member of the CLRSS? (yes, no)

15. I have not renewed my membership in the CLRSS because:

A bit about you

16. How old are you?

17. Where do you live?

Full time Cowichan Valley resident, Part time Cowichan Valley resident.

18. I own property

On the Lakefront, on the Riverfront, Other, I don't own property

Appendix 2

Question 5. Are there other areas of activity that you think the CLRSS should be participating in?

- CLRSS seems to be plugged in to the roundtable, which is a good thing. I'm not sure about how much the CLRSS is involved in the lamprey issues, but that is also a public education piece, where one on one discussions with locals is important
- Instream fish habitat enhancement, such as rearing and spawning enhancement, under the direction of a fisheries biologist.
- People need to give fishing a break.
- The newest threat is the degradation of flotation for docks. The beach is covered in white styrofoam balls. I'm afraid that wildlife will mistake it for food and ultimately die as a result. Is there a project identified to help dock owners remove exposed styrofoam and replace it with enclosed flotation? That may be a good use of the society.
- I think CLRSS is awesome as is, but I'm no expert.
- Clean up projects around the whole lake, not just the river.
- Working with the Cowichan Watershed Board on the redevelopment of the Weir and the related education, etc.
- I think the organization does great work in our region and community.
- River safety - promotion and delivery (instruction).
- Water control and drought.
- Lobbying or public education re. changes to private landowner forest practices. Lobbying or public education re. improved enforcement of water-related violations.
- Possible partnership with Nature Conservancy to purchase waterfront as it comes available from forestry companies for preservation rather than development.
- Boat and watercraft speed monitoring in river
- Getting the word out about the toxins in commercial sun screen and advocating the use of those sunscreens which are deemed "river/lake friendly"
- Community education - water sustainability issues
- Ensure that the raising of the weir is a priority
- Info on water quality, fall salmon counts, lake levels, river flow rates, updated progress wrt to weir construction.
- Continuing in promoting the increase of the water storage capacity of the lake. Approved signage by the RCMP at the boat launches- NO boating & alcohol
- Membership building
- Political candidate support
- Future development and stress on water levels
- Somehow Timberwest must start respecting the Lake Cowichan water shed. Is it possible that the Society could some how communicate with the company?
- Really I don't know. I support the CLRSS in membership only as I am involved in so many other volunteer activities.
- We were the "recipients" of landowner riparian education and this has helped us to become more involved (water quality testing) and active (nurturing our own riparian zone). Can't think of new frontiers
- Guiding the development of the Lake & River so that people usage does not overwhelm the quiet, natural beauty of the place and that development achieves good ecologic standards.

- I know you are at various community events , call it stewardship education or public PR . I think this is a good program by the group.
- Watersheds
- Sponsor forums for facts on climate change. Also, interaction with lakeshore owners, various levels of government and logging companies for water, land and air environmental concerns affecting the Cowichan watershed.
- Promoting the Society as a progressive model of large lake and river stewardship in BC. CLRSS is a leader in this movement now, on a provincial-scale.
- Help local residents understand Weir Ready
- More river monitoring
- River safety - promotion and education.
- Combine arts and river education by creating innovative projects. For example, organize events for sculpturing, painting, carving, etc of river images; coordinate getting 3 perspectives of the river for artists that they turn into art pieces via snorkeling, boating and flying over the river. Science and arts can be combined in innovative ways for conveying important messages about the river.

Appendix 3

Question 8: What area(s) of activity of the CLRSS do you wish you had more information about?

- The raising of the weir
- I wish I had the time to be more involved. Hopefully I will retire soon and be able to get more involved.
- Opportunities to volunteer should be broadcast regularly on social media
- Fish fry, ongoing garbage cleanup
- Water monitoring
- I wish that I had more info about the hands-on work done by those in the background, who do not necessarily attend the monthly Board meetings
- What is being done to ensure the weir is raised? IE fundraising to contribute to this??
- Is the water quality data of the lake on your website?
- Capacity building
- Guess I should get a newsletter - is there one?
- Development
- Fry salvage
- Results of some of these efforts
- Pictures and the quantity of crap that's pulled from the lake each year
- I'm OK if you want to "push" more info out to the membership
- The progress of the weir ready program
- I think CLRSS does a good job of providing info on the website and facebook
- Education programs
- Fry rescue

- Status of proposed changes to the Cowichan Lake weir
- Shoreline owner outreach and education
- Water monitoring
- Wildlife (includes all organisms)

Appendix 4

Q. 10 Is there one key activity that is vital to the CLRSS?

- Shoreline property owner education
- Education
- Landowner education
- Fry rescue
- The raising of the weir ! More engagement with your principle resident monied owners IE Creekside & Swordfern along with the huge development on the old Scout land ! Build relationships with this group! As a monied seasonal homeowner with a terminally ill husband I cannot be as helpful as I'd like to be at this time !
- Riparian education and restoration
- Getting the weir raised
- No - environmental advocacy and education
- education/awareness
- Water availability
- Shoreline restoration, public information
- Waterfront landowner education
- River clean up
- Garbage and shoreline wellbeing
- Involving the local community and others who use the river and lake in advocacy to protect these bodies of water.
- Engaging volunteers
- education of lakefront and riverfront owners, tourists and citizens of Lake Cowichan and Valley regarding care and protection of Lake Cowichan and River
- River clean up is pretty high up
- Water quality
- Landowner and community education about issues of water sustainability
- Education
- Tackling the weir issue
- River clean up
- Weir construction
- In general- Community minded projects that individuals can participate in to help the longevity of the lake & surrounding lands.
- River clean up, riparian education and clean up
- Education

- Capacity building
- Clean water, thriving ecosystem
- Education
- Shoreline restoration
- To report activities going on or proposed which are detrimental to the lake and river
- Our water
- River and lake clean up
- Sorry that I won't volunteer for this, but I think the "landowner/riparian zone education program" might be more impactful than you aware
- Shoreline restoration
- Monitoring the weir upgrade
- Educating folks to know how to live in the watershed in a way that is respectful to each other (eg. no loud noisy boats, no drunken tubing parties) and to the environment.
- Education of shoreline owners on riparian health, maintenance and restoration
- Education and enforcement
- Riparian education
- Source of information for environmental issues affecting the Cowichan watershed
- Shoreline owner outreach and education
- Educating property owners about the lake and river
- Public education and promotion
- Educating folks to know how to live in the watershed in a way that is respectful to each other (eg. no loud noisy boats, no drunken tubing parties) and to the environment.

Appendix 5

Q. 12 What activity or action should the CLRSS undertake in the next year or two that is not currently being done?

- Instream fish habitat enhancement
- Focus on the clean-up and removal of styrofoam. Along the same lines, cigarette butts. Maybe when people are putting their boats into the lake at summer when the CLRSS does boater education a small "butt disposal container" or small metal bucket with CLRSS branding could be offered to people who smoke.
- The raising of the weir
- Focus on stewardship of the whole lake. Stay out of politics.
- Boater education
- All members are already very busy and committed to current projects
- Lobbying against current forest practices code
- Work to advocate against current forest practices that allow private companies to harvest trees after only 40 years.
- Boat speed and power education

- Bringing attention to the current and historical overlogging of the watershed
- Noise pollution on the lake (unmuffled boats along with ghetto-blasters)
- Liaise with other environmental, watershed and stewardships
- Effects of climate change on the watershed
- Ensure better understanding of why and provide info to all to why the weir must be raised
- Keep promoting public awareness on existing campaigns. Is there readily available information for river tubers/boaters/house-boaters to be respectful of river front homeowners and the plant and animal life that exists along the shoreline? I am personally concerned about boaters racing down the lake; I am a kayaker and paddle boarder & have been nervous about my safety.
- More involvement in LCS. More educational “town hall” type meetings for Lake Cowichan and Youbou.
- Student leadership
- Focussing work on raising the weir and to reduce water usage to deal with on-going droughts.
- get whoever is responsible for signs at swimming areas saying to "slop on sunscreen" to remove that sentence
- Sewage versus water?
- I'm quite impressed with Ken and the board, including Communications. Your approach of refreshing and focusing the strategy is excellent. As you know, getting a few things done well is better than talking about doing lots of things (which never get done).
- Press politicians to create sustainable logging and habitat protection in the Cowichan valley.ie more parks
- Have another look at the issue of tubing on the River and its impact on the River and on the life of the owners of riverfront property.
- Provide workshops for interested property owners on riparian health maintenance and restoration; both river and lakeshore. Discuss indigenous plants and where to purchase them.
- More self-promotion and media engagement beyond the Cowichan Valley.
- Include river art projects/initiatives - combine science and art (see Lamprey booklet in pictures and verse).

Appendix 6

Q. 13. What watershed challenges do we face as a community in the next five years? How can the CLRSS help with these challenges?

- Make sure you have the Area Director's ear
- Weir education, lake levels/river levels education

- The removal of trees around the lake which help to contain water in the shed. The poor management of the weir.
- Start some serious fundraising
- Over logging on private and public land
- Clean water, fisheries
- Lake water level and pollution
- It's all about river temperature, flow and the weir
- Water storage, more face to face work with residents (awareness)
- Water availability during drought. Educate people.
- Climate change related water-level issues. Public education around new weir and water control regulations
- Global warming changes to the water balance in the area - less snowfall in the winter and drier spring and summers
- Wasted water because the weir is not adequate. Advocate for a weir replacement/upgrade.
- Weir education. Shoreline degradation. Outreach and public shaming.
- we face climate change. dropping river and lake waters. Getting the weir replaced. Stopping current logging practices (does not mean stopping logging) and removal of knotweed by mechanical methods, not herbicides
- Raising the weir. Staying abreast of what is happening in this arena and supplying support wherever possible
- Ongoing climate change issues affecting lakes, rivers, watersheds
- Climate change and issues of water levels in the lake and river; by being pro-active, collaborative and including community education about these issues in their plans.
- Water levels, weir changes
- Tackle the weir issue - this isn't a popularity contest
- Lake water level, summer river flow
- Water quality & water volume of the lake. Logging malpractices and erosion of the natural habitat.
- Development pressures with lack of riparian respect or understanding. Lack of enforcement. Continued education.
- Logging behind Youbou
- Efficient water use- metered supplies with greater financial penalty for those ignoring rules . Petition municipalities
- Climate change - raising the weir, educating the public to reduce water usage, working with local governments to address water usage.
- help to insure logging companies include water retention as part of their forest practices . Forest cover is Mother Nature's "weir"
- Over development, low levels of rain versus water demand, clean boating practices.
- Raise the weir
- Logging
- Making sure there is enough water in our creeks, lake, and river.

- Water level management. ... I am a big supporter of the weir strategy ... sustaining higher levels longer.
- Climate change, high road density, clearing of riparian areas. CLRSS could secure funding to have assessments done for: i) mapping of sensitive sites associated with riparian/aquatic protection; ii) assessment of road density in watershed and within 100m of water - and other aquatic ecosystem indicators (following provincial aquatic ecosystems cumulative effects protocol) for the purposes of informing/education landowners of risks, identifying restoration projects, monitoring impacts of climate change on water quality and timing of flow - etc.
- Be very visible and vocal regarding the protection of ecosystems in our watershed
- Impact of increasing development. Impact of climate change. The CLRSS needs to up its educational efforts to explain to folks what this means to life here both in terms of changes to their community and changes to plant and aquatic life in the river/lake.
- Our lake reservoir is probably top priority. Work with all agencies to better control lake levels until a new weir can be built. This past summer was an example of inadequate storage and management.
- Weir
- Climate change, development and logging all affect the watersheds. Although I know CLRSS is not political, it can make a contribution in educating residents.
- Adverse logging practises in sensitive watershed areas
- Climate change and continuing urbanization of the Lake Cowichan and river shoreline. Seasonal water scarcity is a growing threat to environmental resources.
- Continuing low water availability, and need for new weir
- Water quality and constructing the weir
- Current issues (eg. climate change) are symptoms of increasing population. We must campaign against greed and entitlement in consumption of resources.
- Water shortage -- collaborate with CWB and SVRD initiatives to conserve water.