

The Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship Project: Progress Report (2014)

Preface

The purpose of this background report is to provide an overview of the progress made to date in protecting and restoring the shoreline of Cowichan Lake. A desired outcome is that readers will understand how we are taking action today, to sustain the lake's ecosystems for tomorrow.

This report details efforts by our Society to date:

- **Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship Project, Annual Report 2014. (Volume I)** by the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society. Cowichan Lake, B.C.

Find this report and other lake assessment reports at:
<http://www.cowichan-lake-stewards.ca/>



Riparian Planting in the Summer of 2014.

Context

The Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS) is dedicated to the protection and health of the Cowichan watershed. In 2014, we were successful in receiving funding from a number of sources to implement the Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship Project. This annual report will help establish benchmarks to monitor whether we are successful in our efforts to restore natural shoreline conditions. It is our wish that results from this field project will guide landowners in understanding how their "piece-of-the-shoreline" contributes to valuable habitats and related biophysical processes that influence the health of Cowichan Lake.

The Report is Structured in Three Parts

The report is intended to meet the information needs of the residents of Cowichan Lake, from long time property owners to recent arrivals who have just purchased a waterfront lot. We also hope this report will be used to monitor change in the condition of the lake shoreline and attitudes of landowners towards shoreline preservation in the future.

Part 1 Landowner Education:

➡ Illustrates the results of an opinion survey of lakeshore residents' "knowledge and preferences" concerning the lake's shoreline development.

Part 2 Shoreline Restoration Projects:

➡ Highlights the efforts of volunteers (and our student work crew) in restoring native riparian plants on seven (7) shoreline sites in 2014.

Part 3 Community Engagement:

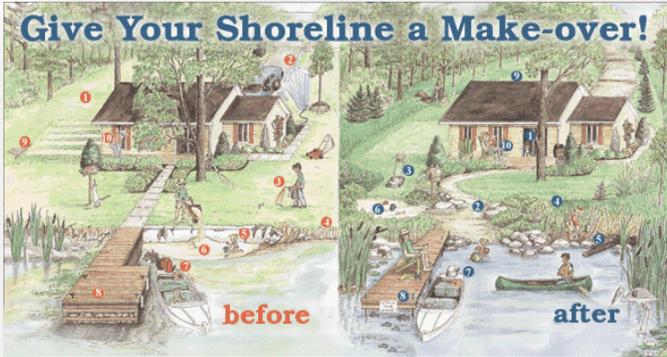
➡ Tells the story of how the CLRSS is engaging local youth and residents in education and awareness of the lake's unique environmental features.

Key Findings:

- In 2014, CLRSS volunteers knocked on almost 300 doors of lakeshore residences to talk about the health of the lake.
- An opinion survey of 90 residents interviewed last summer, revealed that a majority "preferred" a shoreline property with 50%

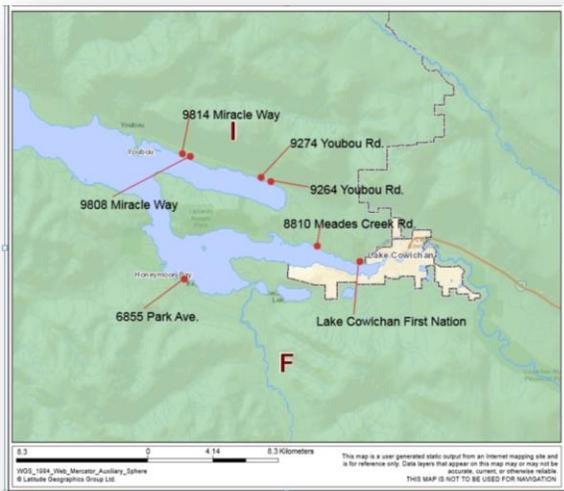
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clearing of riparian vegetation, along with some minor beach and dock enhancements.



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- The survey also identified that over 75% of residents are concerned about future health (water quality, fish, recreation) of the lake.
- Seven shoreline properties were subject to invasive plant removal followed by restoration planting of over 2,500 native riparian plants.



Lake Cowichan First Nation) we succeeded in restoring over 3,700 m² of the lake's shoreline.

- Common invasive plants removed include: Himalayan Blackberry, Scotch Broom, English Ivy, Common Periwinkle, Daphne, St. John's Wort.
- Of the native plants used to restore degraded shorelines, 82% are considered to be "wet species", and can be temporarily flooded by the lake during the winter months.
- Native plants were purchased from a local nursery (for <\$10.00/ea.) including: Swordfern, Nootka Rose, Hardhack, Red Osier Dogwood.
- The warm and dry summer of 2014 required extra attention being paid to plant watering and protection from hungry deer.
- Community engagement in 2014 was focused on educating and employing students from Lake Cowichan School in all our programs, as they will inherit this special place.



Shoreline Restoration Sites Completed in 2014.

- With over 700 hours of effort from local volunteers, students and residents (including

Interested in Helping Out in 2015?

Contact us:  /cowichan stewards

www.cowichan-lake-stewards.ca