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Membership drive happening now!

From July 1 to Sept. 1, our annual membership fee is only \$12!

By purchasing a membership you are not only helping CLRSS do more great things here in the Cowichan watershed, but you are also gifting yourself through regular updates about the ongoing initiatives of the society, and the health and welfare of the Cowichan Watershed.

It also means that you will be kept informed about volunteer opportunities. And it means that you will receive our quarterly newsletter, right to your inbox.

Stay engaged with our community and become a member, today! Email m_patrick@telus.net.

It's our 8th Annual River Clean Up!

Join us on August 19th for our eighth annual River Clean-Up!

Last year saw 280 kilograms of garbage hauled out of the river, by 100 volunteers. Because individuals like you take the time to help out, we have seen a reduction in the amount of waste pulled from the river each year.

And we hope you will join us again this year! Meet us in Central Park for a full day of community cooperation and lots of fun. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the Clean Up begins at 10 a.m.

Refreshments will be provided at around 1 p.m. for all the hard working volunteers.

As you can see, we are looking forward to another fun filled day with newcomers and long-time participants alike. Without your help we never would have found some interesting items.

Did you know that in 2015 volunteers found the axle and wheels of a small rail car? These artifacts were pulled out of "Big Pool" and were donated to the Kaatza Museum, where

they help to educate visitors about the area's past.

Interesting facts aside, the CLRSS does much more than just the River Clean Up. Some of our projects include boater education, the Stream Signage Project, regular water quality monitoring, and generally working to protect and preserve ecologically sensitive areas in and around Cowichan Lake and Cowichan River.

Bottles and cans collected during the Clean Up provide revenue to help fund these and many more projects. So, as with previous years, we are asking you to save your returnables and donate them on the day of the Clean Up.

We hope to reach or surpass the \$400 raised last year, so mark your calendars and break out the boats, floaters, and wet suits! The river is calling!

For more information on the Clean Up, or any of the other projects the society is undertaking, visit cowichan-lake-stewards.ca.

Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship Project completes first phase



Lake Cowichan School student, Tanner, wrestles with blackberries while helping to restore the riparian area of a lakefront property in 2016.

The Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship Project (CSSP) is a CLRSS project that has four components: riparian restoration, landowner education, community engagement, and riparian protection.

In 2016, the CSSP completed its first three-year phase in which project managers and volunteers worked to engage the community and change attitudes regarding the

value of riparian areas.

“This was accomplished by involving shoreline owners who wished to return their riparian zones to a healthy state,” says one of the project managers, Diana Gunderson.

Over this time, thanks to funding from grants and donations by property owners, volunteers were able to restore 8,167 metres of habitat by planting 4,570 plants on 22 properties. Each driveway now has a “Shoreline Steward” driveway sign that calls attention to their participation in the program.

Moving forward, the restoration component of the project will be taken over by the BC Conservation Foundation, but CSSP volunteers will still play a vital role.

Participants were identified in the first phase of the project through a landowner education component, or Riparian Visits. During these visits, volunteer

interview teams knocked on doors to talk to individual owners about the benefits of natural vegetation on their foreshores.

To date, 282 Riparian Visits and 227 surveys have been completed. These surveys measure owners’ knowledge of riparian protection bylaws and their personal preferences for balancing their recreational needs with the ecological value of retaining shoreline vegetation on their properties.

This summer CSSP volunteers hope to connect with, and educate, at least 70 lakefront homeowners.

So if we happen to visit your property this year, we hope you welcome us in for an educational and fun discussion about shoreline health!

For more information, visit our website: cowichan-lake-stewards.com.

This year the annual general meeting was held on May 14 at the Cowichan Lake Sports Arena. Roughly 30 members attended, and after enjoying refreshments and listening to committee reports, members were treated to a Power Point presentation by Parker Jefferson and Bob Crandall about the Environmental Significance of the Shaw Creek Estuary.

The mouth of Shaw Creek, at the west end of Cowichan Lake, is the site of a rezoning application that could potentially threaten this ecologically sensitive land. Shaw Creek is a critical habitat that supports five species of salmon, dolly varden, and the Vancouver lamprey which is considered threatened under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA).

The meeting was also a time to acknowledge the wonderful work of five CLRSS members who decided to step away from the board: Briony Argue, Lois Atchison, Sandy Cumming, and Rose and Gord Davidson. CLRSS would like to thank these individuals for their years of service to the society, and for all the good work that they have done.

Though we lost a few members, we gained a few, too. Heather Pritchard has joined the society as the new vice president. Ken Trainer is now treasurer, and

2017 AGM Notes



2017 board members, from left to right. FR: Rosemary Danaher, Jean Atkinson, Parker Jefferson, Maureen Qusted, Tamu Miles, Judy Brayden, Diana Gunderson. BR: Leroy Van Wieren, Mike Patrick, Ken Traynor.

Tamu Miles is now communications director. Leroy Van Wieren has once again taken on the task of acting as the Society’s president.

Remember, the public is welcome to attend our meetings! Join us the first monday of every month in the Country Grocer meeting room at 6:30 p.m.

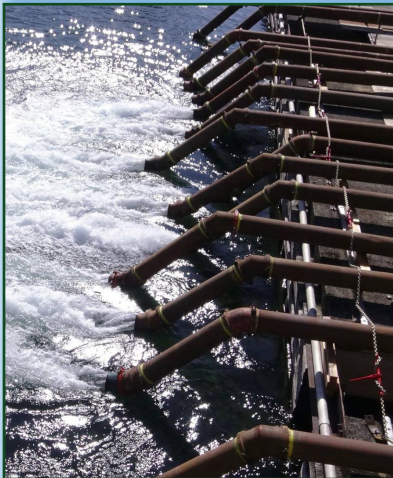
Healthy snow-pack means weir waterflow best in years!

Thanks to a cold, precipitation rich winter, the mountains that surround the Cowichan Watershed were blanketed in a healthy snowpack this winter.

You may recall that by August last year, due to drought conditions and fears of low river flows due to lack of storage in Cowichan Lake, Catalyst Paper resorted to installing 20 pumps at the weir at a cost of \$500,000. Luckily these pumps were not needed as fall rains returned early and restored water flow in the river.

This year is much different. Catalyst is not expecting to have to utilize pumps as river flow is expected to hold at 7 cm for at least the next month.

"It is highly unlikely that pumps will be needed in 2017 in order to sustain a river flow through to arrival of fall rains," says Brian Houle, environment manager at Catalyst.



The weir at Cowichan Lake

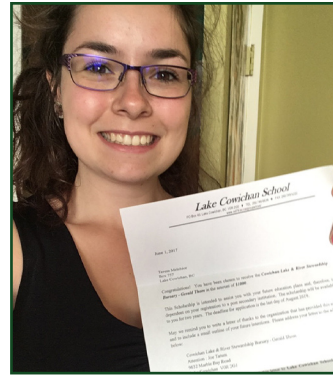
"The infrastructure is in place to allow pumping if needed, but the combination of weather this spring and snow pack from this past winter has resulted in a very different year this year."

The health and flow of the Cowichan River is vital to salmon fry and other wildlife.

Luckily there has only been one salmon fry rescue effort so far this summer, with approximately 800 fry being moved from drying pools at Stoltz Park.

"Fry rescue has not been a big issue this year but there are some places to attend to as the weir goes on control," says Parker Jefferson, president of One Cowichan.

For updates on lake levels and river flow, visit cowichanwatershedboard.ca.



Teresa Melchior, recipient of the 2017 Gerald Thom Environmental Bursary.

Teresa Melchior is the 2017 recipient of the Gerald Thom Environmental Bursary. Congratulations Teresa! Melchior plans to become a chemistry and biology teacher, and will be attending Vancouver Island University in the fall.

"I am interested in environmental studies because this is the only planet we have; we need

to protect it," says Melchior.

"I had no idea I was receiving it," Melchior says of the bursary. "And it takes a little stress off of the new school year."

The bursary is sponsored by CLRSS. Each year, an outstanding student at Lake Cowichan School is awarded \$1,000 to help them pursue environmental studies.

The bursary is made possible by the generous donations of Cowichan residents. For information on how to donate, contact Maureen Quedsted at mquested@shaw.ca. Donations are tax deductible.

Stream Signage Project wraps up!



Over the last five years, Stream Signage Project members have erected 49 waterway road crossing signs around Lake Cowichan. This intent of this project was to increase public awareness of riparian zones and the need to protect them.

Major funding for this project was provided by the Pacific Salmon Foundation,

with additional support provided by Timber West.

Over the five year span of the project our dedicated volunteers donated over 1,400 hours of time, drove over 4,000 KMs, dug 51 holes, mixed 700 bags of concrete, and identified GPS locations of 49 watercourse road crossings.



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