

The Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS) is pleased to announce the return of the annual *Celebrating the Water Festival*, a community-driven event dedicated to promoting water conservation, environmental stewardship, and the appreciation of the Cowichan Lake and River watershed. In celebration of the progress that has been made towards building a new weir on Lake Cowichan, our theme this year is *Weir All Connected!*

Scheduled to take place on July 20th, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Saywell Park in downtown Lake Cowichan, this year's festival promises to be an immersive and engaging experience for attendees of all ages. With a focus on education, entertainment, and riparian awareness, the festival will feature a diverse range of activities, and interactive exhibits designed to celebrate the vital role of water in our lives and ecosystems.

The "Celebrating the Water Festival" serves as a cornerstone event for CLRSS, an organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the environmental health of Cowichan Lake and River. Through this festival, CLRSS aims to foster a deeper connection between community members and their local watershed, empowering individuals to become stewards of the environment.

Attendees can look forward to a variety of engaging activities throughout the day, including:

- **Walk the Weir Tours:** Gain insights from specialists regarding the significance of a newly proposed weir, enhancing the river's value for all stakeholders, including both human and non-human entities. Learn from experts about water conservation, watershed management, and the importance of preserving aquatic habitats.
- **Interactive Exhibits:** Explore interactive displays showcasing local wildlife, aquatic ecosystems, and sustainable water management practices.
- **Guided Nature Walks:** Come join experts in an exploration of the CLRSS's native species garden, delving into the flora that will enrich your riparian zone knowledge. Enter the draw for riparian Plants!
- **Quw'utsun Teachings:** Carleen August (Stimaat) and her father Jedson August (Tsusqun), both members of the Quw'utsun Nation, will be on hand with a traditional dugout canoe. They will share stories that trace the history of the Quw'utsun Peoples, highlighting their relationship with the river for sustenance, transportation, and culture. Hul'qumi'num language teachings will also be shared.
- **Rub a Fish:** *Project 84,000* will be actively engaged in crafting 84,000 fish rubbings, a tribute to the approximate number of juvenile fish lost in the Cowichan River during July 2023 as a result of environmental pressures.
- **Mascot Mugshot Contest:** take a selfie with your favorite water mascot, post it on your social media and win a fabulous prize. *Oxford the Otter* and *The Giant Dancing Fish* will be in attendance.
- **Meet the Lulumexun Marine Team:** S-hwuhwa'us Thi'lut Kw'atl'kwa (Thunderbird Protecting the Ocean), will be present to talk about their stewardship of Cowichan Tribe's Marine Territory and all the living beings within it.

- **Kids Activities:** crafts, games and the *Bubble Zone*
- **Cake Cutting:** join us for some free cake at 10 AM

"We are thrilled to invite the community to join us for another year of *Celebrating the Water Festival*," said Judy Brayden President of CLRSS. "This event is a testament to the importance of water in our lives and the critical need to protect and preserve our local watershed. Through education, engagement, and celebration, we hope to inspire a deeper appreciation for the natural world and empower individuals to take action in safeguarding our precious water resources."

Admission to the festival is free, with donations welcomed to support CLRSS's ongoing conservation efforts. Whether you're a long-time resident or a first-time visitor to Cowichan Valley, the *Celebrating the Water Festival* offers something for everyone to enjoy while promoting environmental stewardship and community engagement.

For more information about the festival, including sponsorship opportunities and volunteer registration, please visit www.clrсс.ca or contact Maureen Quested at mquested@shaw.ca

Join us on July 20th as we come together to celebrate the beauty and importance of water in our lives and ecosystem. Together, let's make a splash for a brighter, water-conscious future!

About CLRSS:

The Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the environmental health of Cowichan Lake and the upper Cowichan River. Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, CLRSS works to promote sustainable water management practices and preserve the natural beauty of the Cowichan Valley watershed. You can find us at www.clrсс.ca or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cowichanstewards.