

MEDIA RELEASE

14 March 2022 - For Immediate Release

New Chair of Shuswap Watershed Council will continue work on water quality and aquatic invasive species

Jay Simpson has succeeded Paul Demenok as the Chair of the Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC). Simpson, the Area Director for the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Area 'F' - North Shuswap, was acclaimed as Chair of the SWC for 2022 at their regular meeting on March 9th. Demenok chose to step down from the Chair position, having chaired the SWC since its inception in 2014. He will remain a member of the SWC and serve as Vice Chair.

Simpson remarked to the SWC members in the meeting that he looks forward to working with local First Nations, local and provincial governments in the year ahead. He will continue the SWC's work on water quality, focussing on strategic initiatives to monitor, protect, and report on water quality in the region.

"I believe it's very important to continue building momentum on our water quality monitoring and protection initiatives," said Simpson. "In particular, I remain concerned about the possibility of a Zebra or Quagga Mussel invasion in the Shuswap, and we will do everything we can as a regional collaborative to prevent that from occurring," Simpson remarked, referring to the invasive species that are not currently known to occur in the Shuswap but that have invaded lakes in Manitoba and Ontario.

Demenok reflected on the past eight years as Chair of the Shuswap Watershed Council, citing some of the Council's achievements in that time.

"I'm very pleased that we were able to complete a research project with a team from UBC-Okanagan," Demenok said, referring to a study on water quality in the Shuswap River and Salmon River. "That was an important piece of science we needed to inform next steps in protecting our water quality, and it subsequently led to the development of our Water Quality Grant Program."

The SWC currently has 16 members, in addition to the Chair and Vice Chair, that represent various organizations with a role and responsibility for water quality in the Shuswap. The membership list can be found on their website, www.shuswapwater.ca.



About: The Shuswap Watershed Council is a watershed-based partnership organization that works on water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap.

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