

MEDIA RELEASE

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Thompson Rivers University researching glaciers in the Adams River basin, has support from Shuswap Watershed Council

A research team from Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in Kamloops is studying glaciers in the headwaters of the Adams River.

The Adams River – a large tributary to Shuswap Lake – is important for fish habitat, domestic water security, and to the water quality of Shuswap Lake. Glaciated mountains in the upper reaches of the river supply source water to the Adams River system; however, the glaciers are not well understood and they may be under stress due to climate change.

“By studying the glaciers in the headwaters of the Adams River, we hope to understand the influence that glacial melt is having on the overall hydrology of the river system,” says Tay Powrie, a Masters student at TRU working on the project. “There could be impacts to salmon habitat, domestic water use, and water quality.”

Previous studies have shown there has been an increased rate of glacier area loss and fragmentation in Western Canada since the early 2000’s. “It’s important to understand how these shifts might impact the hydrology in local watersheds,” Powrie says.

It is a two-year research project that will wrap up in late 2024. The team will use ice-penetrating radar as part of their methodology to validate glacier coverage in the Adams River basin. The research will also quantify historical glacier change and model future glacial run-off based on climate projections.

The research is supported by funding from NSERC (the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, a federal agency that provides funding for university-based research and student training) and the Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC). NSERC is providing \$39,000 over two years and the SWC is providing \$8000 over the same time period.

Research outcomes will ultimately shed some light on whether new water management regimes may be needed for the Adams River, as climate change and glacial melt affect the river’s hydrological cycle.



“This research is the first of its kind in the Shuswap watershed,” says Jay Simpson, Chair of the Shuswap Watershed Council. “We’re pleased to be supporting this research, and we look forward to hearing the results.”

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Attached Photo: ‘Adams River.jpg’. Photo credit Kim Kaiser.

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

Contact: For more information, please contact Erin Vieira or Alex de Chantal c/o the Fraser Basin Council in Kamloops at 250 314-9660 and visit www.shuswapwater.ca.