SHUSWAP watershed council

Council meeting highlights

DECEMBER 13TH 2023

Report from Chair

Chair Jay Simpson reported that the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) has re-scheduled their referendum to February 3rd. The referendum is to determine if the CSRD will continue being a funder of the Shuswap Watershed Council. The referendum is for residents of the CSRD Areas C, D, E, F and G and the District of Sicamous.

Report from Program Managers

Erin Vieira and Alex de Chantal provided an update on program operations since the last SWC meeting:

- Staff facilitated a bi-annual meeting of the Shuswap Water Monitoring Group to review the 2023 field monitoring season
- Five watershed restoration projects are underway on four farms and a tree nursery with funding from the SWC via the Water Quality Grant Program
- The Water Quality Grant Program is open for applications from December 1st 2023 – January 31st 2024. A grant program guide is available online for prospective applicants and staff will facilitate a webinar on January 10th about the grant program.
- The Wetland Strategy is progressing; a GIS analysis and inventory of water and wetland features for the study area is now complete. Staff have applied for funding from Environment Canada for next steps, including prioritizing and classifying wetland data to identify area for restoration and conservation.
- Educational campaigns for preventing the spread of invasive mussels have mostly concluded for the winter; with the recent discovery of Quagga mussels in Idaho, staff will keep this program running at lower capacity this winter to help ensure Shuswap residents are aware of this critical threat
- The field program for monitoring invasive mussels in the Shuswap has concluded for 2023, no invasive mussels were detected in any samples
- Staff worked with the Chair to send letters to Provincial and Federal ministers urging them to enact new measures to prevent the spread of invasive mussels to BC
- Staff have applied to Transport Canada for a $24,000 grant to support safe boating and swimming campaigns next summer.

Expenses to the end of the first quarter (April 1st – September 30th 2023) were $161,113 against an operating budget of $338,864.

Grant program budget increased

SWC members approved an increase to the Water Quality Grant Program budget, as recommended by staff. The grant program budget for 2023-24 is now $65,000 (an increase of $10,000). The grant program is accepting applications until January 31st 2024. Projects will be approved in March, with funding distributed to successful proponents as early as April 2024.

SWC MEMBERS:

Jay Simpson – Chair
CSRD Area 'F'

Natalya Melnychuk – Vice Chair
CSRD Area 'G'

Marty Gibbons
CSRD Area 'C'

Dean Trumbley
CSRD Area 'D'

Rhona Martin
CSRD Area 'E'

David Lepsoe
TNRD, Village of Chase

Reid Hamer-Jackson
TNRD, City of Kamloops

Debbie Cannon
City of Salmon Arm

Pam Beech
District of Sicamous

Howard Nordquist
Secwepemc Nation, Adams Lake Indian Band

Robyn Laubman
Splatsin te Secwepemc

Jim Johnson
RDNO Area 'E'

Allysa Hopkins
RDNO Area 'F'

Kym Keogh
BC Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy

Lindsay Benbow
BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food

Kelly Chiatto
BC Ministry of Forests

Erik Kok
Community Representative

Kimm Magill-Hofmann
Community Representative

Phil Owen
Community Representative

Dennis Einarson
Senior Scientific Advisor

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Guest presentation by Patrick Frank

Mr. Patrick Frank, resident and volunteer with the White Lake Residents' Association, presented to the SWC about the water monitoring programs that have taken place at White Lake since 2018 by a team of volunteers. He thanked the SWC for the funding support of up to $4200 for their Level 3 water monitoring program in 2023.

Guest presentation by Margot Webster

Ms. Margot Webster, a Masters candidate studying with Royal Roads University, provided a summary of a research project she is embarking on this summer and requested funding support from the SWC for the research ($5620 in 2024). Ms. Webster is building and installling three 'Floating Treatment Wetlands' (FTWs) on the Salmon River. FTWs mimic the function of real wetlands in mitigating the effects of excessive nutrient-loading to water bodies, and can potentially reduce the frequency and severity of algal blooms caused by phosphorus. Part of her research methodology will involve monitoring water quality upstream and downstream of the FTWs to determine their efficacy at taking up nutrients from the water.

A full meeting summary is available on the SWC website.