



Shawnigan  
Basin Society

**The Shawnigan Basin Society  
Financial Report for the CVRD  
2018 Expenses and 2019 Projected Budget  
Note: Business Plan and Budget for 2019 Submitted Dec. 11, 2018  
Website: [shawniganbasinsociety.org](http://shawniganbasinsociety.org)**

### **Basic Elements of the Business Plan**

The Shawnigan Basin Society, a registered non-profit with a Board of Directors made up of local residents, is working to protect and secure the long-term health and safety of the Shawnigan Lake Community Watershed and the drinking water it provides. We promote a holistic approach toward environmental solutions, community engagement, and local stewardship. Our underlying philosophy is that the watershed should be managed on “ecological governance” principles and the effort should be fully collaborative with the Malahat First Nation as well as private landowners, the CVRD, senior government agencies, and interested academic research organizations. Watershed management in the Shawnigan Basin is particularly complex because of the fragmented nature of resource management, settlement jurisdictions, and the intensively privatized landscape provided by the history of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway land grant. There is no single agency that is charged with, or capable of, dealing with the cumulative impacts of all the various development interventions in the basin. Thus, our broadly-based, yet locally-focused organization could act as the necessary catalyst for integration of all the various interests such that ecological sustainability, and subsequent social and economic imperatives, can be achieved in perpetuity.

### **Budget Strategy**

The core funding provided by the tax base of \$50,000 per year is intended to give the Shawnigan Basin Society the administrative capability to raise and manage project funds. Administrative support is very rarely supported by grant programs, which results in NGO’s scrambling to support basic office and staff functions that provide management continuity, support for volunteers, grant writing capacity, financial management, and project reporting. The core funding provided from the Area B tax base thus ensures basic society management capability and creates the necessary and significant leverage from local contributions required by virtually all grant programs.

### **Functional Core Capabilities of the SBS**

- Development of a Watershed Master Plan based on ecological, physiographic and socioeconomic information that is assembled and catalogued from a variety of governments, research programs, and private sector sources.

- Systematic engagement and integration of local watershed management efforts with private sector land owners, the CVRD, agencies of senior governments, and similar civic watershed initiatives arising elsewhere.
- Preparation of grant requests to foundations and government infrastructure and environmental improvement programs for projects intended to improve the ecological status and function of the Shawnigan Watershed.

### **Core Administrative Functions of the Society**

- Provisions of a watershed planning office in Shawnigan Village, cost-shared with other public and private sector partners, where the Society can keep records, display maps and models, meet with interested parties, hold public planning sessions, and provide access to Basin Society members and staff.
- Provision of a core staff of Executive Director to organize the day-to-day work of the Society in public communication and involvement, engagement and support of volunteers, research assembly, planning, fund raising, record keeping, and project reporting.
- It is important to note that the fiscal year end date matches that of the CVRD and runs from January 1 to December 31 to match the year-end reporting cycle of the CVRD.

### **2018 – Another Successful Year!**

### **Reintroducing this Community Supported NGO**

Now that the fight against the contaminated soil facility, formerly supported by the Liberal Ministry of Mines and Ministry of Environment, is over and the community has had time to recharge its batteries after a serious depletion of financial and energetic resources, the Shawnigan Basin Society focused on reintroducing our important work to residents. Once placed in the negative and reactive position, we can now – after an historical win! – reframe to a positive and proactive one and make meaningful progress, namely in moving toward full-scale environmental sustainability.

The Shawnigan Basin Society remains committed to working to protect and secure the long-term health and safety of the Shawnigan Lake Community Watershed and the drinking water it provides. By promoting a holistic approach toward environmental solutions, community engagement, and local stewardship, our aim is to lead in actualizing the potential of local power. Collaboration is key in achieving success and where traditional models rely on top-down decisions made between siloed levels of government and sectors, we recognize the need for a bottom-up approach, which begins in community. In fact, only by assuming local control of the health and well-being of the ecological systems necessary to provide the community with clean and abundant drinking water as the march of climate change continues, development pressures grow, and environmental degradation increases, can on-the-ground initiatives work to combat and offset the problems of fragmented jurisdictions. In short, those most vested in the place they love, work, and play, also carry the body of local environmental knowledge necessary to determine, encourage, and implement change where it is needed most.

This is the frame the Basin Society has worked in 2018. Reintroducing the notion of public power and the necessity and success of relationship building and collaboration seeking, over time, has been a strategy and effort for which we take pride!

### **Formalizing Partnerships**

The Shawnigan Basin Society now has an eight-year relationship with TimberWest (recently affiliated with Island Timberlands and holding several MOU's with First Nations), the largest private land owner on Vancouver Island. The significance of our relationship cannot be overstated. In fact, after meeting with the ADM of the Ministry of Environment two year ago, it was reiterated that with TimberWest's support, the Basin Society would create the opportunity for a listening ear from the Ministry and subsequent action toward our direct request for watershed and land-use planning. After the provincial state of emergency due to forest fires last summer; MoE's reduced designation of Shawnigan Lake to an "at risk" lake, the CVRD's level 4 water restrictions, and scientific projections to 2050 and 2080 being recognized as more accelerated than expected, the Shawnigan Basin Society initiated an invitation to TimberWest of a more focused consideration in their 50-year planning. We asked them to consider a partnership and collaboration in going to the province to seek support for a Water Sustainability Plan (under the provisions of *Water Sustainability Act*) for the entire east coast of Vancouver Island. In early September, they agreed.

A second important movement of collaboration was made in 2018. The result of a meeting with Tom Rutherford of the Cowichan Watershed Board (intended to discuss opportunities to promote the success of this year's Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Referendum on the October ballot), was the creation of a Cowichan Watershed Coalition. Since then, several meetings have occurred between the following stewardship groups: Shawnigan Basin Society, Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society, One Cowichan, Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable, Cowichan Valley Naturalists, Cowichan Watershed Board, Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, Green Blue (Ladysmith), and Quamichan Watershed Stewardship Society. Ultimately, the referendum was successful, which has now been fully adopted and formalized by the CVRD.

Finally, a third significant relationship occurred with the integration of Dave Munday from the Shawnigan Research Group, to the Basin Society during our May 1, 2018 AGM. Dave has not only brought a wealth of professional expertise to the Basin Society as a registered professional biologist, he has acted to overlap the gap between these two local organizations and taken on the role of Treasurer. Additionally, the Basin Society acquired Paul Doherty, an environmental consultant specializing in contaminated land reclamation, at that same meeting.

### **A Second Observational Survey of Eurasian Water-Milfoil and a New Method of Control!**

On Oct.12 and Oct. 22, 2018 a five and half hour presence/absence observational survey was made to update our understanding of milfoil in Shawnigan Lake. Thank you to Bill Savage and Shirley Astleford for their time and respective donations toward this effort! Unsurprisingly, it was quickly determined that milfoil has both spread and densified along the foreshore in depths up to 3 to 4 meters. Exceptions of presence were few and were namely where the lake bottom was rocky and/or heavily covered with silt or sediment and where there were human grooming efforts. The Basin Society has determined that the threats attached to Eurasian Milfoil are sufficient to substantiate a full-scale effort to seek solutions, which will need organization and collaboration from all lake users.

Networking brings possibilities and collaboration supports a collection of efforts focused on achieving a win-win result for all involved. This concept is being realized by the Basin Society, which began with a suggestion from our very own Bill Savage about a company called GAIA Water Ltd, founders of a particular nano oxygen technology used throughout the world. A presentation at our November Board Meeting lifted the spirits of everyone as the opportunity became clear that this technology may effectively address Shawnigan's milfoil issue. Since meeting, the Shawnigan Basin Society has invited Tom Richardson and Les Bryan of GAIA to participate in a science-based pilot project to test its effectiveness of killing milfoil in Shawnigan Lake. To date, they have yet to attempt a project of this scale nor to specifically target milfoil. With two case studies achieved on "pond-sized lakes" Ida Anne in Langford and Spiker Lake just north of Qualicum in their effort to address algae, it was noted that an unexpected consequence of the nano oxygen system was that milfoil died. Stay tuned for results of this effort in this exciting Basin Society lead initiative in the coming year!

### **Reaching the Community with a Communications Plan**

The Basin Society, accepting its challenges in reaching the broader community and our professional limitations in communication strategies, hired a master's degree graduate – Valerie Williams - of communications. Doing so, meant embracing the great number of communication opportunities being missed. Valerie recognized our two greatest assets: our website and our village office. However, a long list of suggestions of how to engage the community were offered and a final communications plan written and presented. The Shawnigan Basin Society is committed to engaging the entirety of our community as best we can. We are grateful for Ms. Williams' knowledge and her willingness to share and will work hard to achieve our communication goals in 2019.

### **CVRD Delegation, September 6, 2018**

At this delegation, the Shawnigan Basin Society recommends twelve active practical measures (to be presented in a power point presentation) for keeping Shawnigan Lake in good condition for drinking water and recreation. To do so, the SBS believes the need to:

- 1) adopt a Water Sustainability Plan - create a science-based, legally binding and enforceable WSP under the auspices of the Provincial *Water Sustainability Act*;
- 2) form effective partnerships - between watershed groups, land owners, the provincial government, and the Regional District; and
- 3) combine the approaches of the CVRD Environmentally Sensitive Area Initiative and a Water Sustainability Plan - priorities, timing, and resource requirements need to be made explicit in the proposed CVRD regional water function.

The SBS support for the Regional Water Function referendum in October of 2018 goes hand in hand with timely development of a Water Sustainability Plan that explicitly enables action to begin on the twelve practical measures. A successful passage of the referendum could empower the Regional District to lead this initiative but the strength of the planning process will depend on strong local support and careful monitoring of actual results in the lake. An overarching commitment to such a comprehensive process needs to precede the October referendum so that people have a better idea of the "grand plan" and the value for property tax money implied. The SBS is seeking support - via a resolution from the CVRD Board of Directors - to move forward with this recommendation.

## **CVRD Delegation, November 14, 2018**

Dr. Bruce Fraser, President of the Shawnigan Basin Society, presented this collaboratively written document on behalf of the Cowichan Watershed Coalition (list above):

Ten Watershed Stewardship Groups have formed a working coalition to establish an effective regional water stewardship function. Our first initiative was to provide collective support for the regional water referendum, embodied in an Op-ed in the Citizen, a variety of supporting articles, public information sessions and door to door campaigns. We feel strongly that the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Service is important for responsible and sustainable management of local drinking water resources and water-dependent ecosystems.

Coalition members have a long collective history of active engagement in watershed stewardship. We have developed bodies of local knowledge, engaged many scientific and professional community members and conducted stewardship, water quality monitoring, fishery support and ecological restoration programs. Coalition members represent hundreds of willing volunteers that can support a regional function while at the same time adapting regional efforts to the unique characteristics and people of each community watershed.

Organizations within the coalition will be able to help identify priority management concerns both across the Cowichan Valley and within its watersheds. More specifically there exists a body of knowledge regarding which issues are tractable and the human and capital resources that will be necessary to realize these policy choices. Most of our members have also identified management actions to address Valley-wide and regional issues. Most of the watershed scale organizations have already begun to implement research and monitoring programs that will be needed to measure the effectiveness of water quality management policies.

With the successful passage of the referendum the CVRD has secured a mandate to enable a water by-law along with subsequent planning and program design that will provide the working details of the function and how watershed groups can be engaged. The coalition members are unanimous in their willingness to contribute to the regional program and would like to be involved in it from the very beginning.

We ask that the Coalition be formally engaged as a partner with the CVRD as soon as work begins. We request that the CVRD Board and Staff members assigned to develop the program hold a meeting with the Coalition as soon as is practicable to explore the nature and extent of our participation.

As notably pioneered by the Cowichan Watershed Board, the coalition of groups would like to see representatives of each of the regionally present First Nations also be included directly in the development work of the regional function and adaptation to their traditional areas of interest.

The Coalition sees the development of the water function as an important opportunity for government, First Nations and community collaboration for the benefit of all residents of the CVRD. The Coalition member groups offer a proven track record for sound scientific monitoring, ecological restoration, fisheries support, public education and engagement, and perhaps most importantly continuity.

## **Technological Upgrades and Contributions**

The Shawnigan Basin Society's website ([www.shawniganbasinsociety.org](http://www.shawniganbasinsociety.org)) was updated with the help of Ester Strijbos, Valerie Williams, and Kelly Musselwhite to ensure current information is available to the public. This endeavor required many hours as there was unfortunate residue from multiple former websites created prior to the current Shawnigan Basin Society Board. Additionally, the many Facebook pages and groups affiliated with the Basin Society were amalgamated into one [shawniganbasinsociety.org](http://shawniganbasinsociety.org) page, which can now be more easily be managed while reducing confusion in a search that previously brought a collage of results.

## **Koksilah Watershed Society, A Second Watershed Group in Area B**

The Koksilah Watershed Society, in large part due to budget contributions from the Shawnigan Basin Society, has now finished their efforts on the acquisition of an ecosystems-based conservation plan. On November 25, 2018, they held a public meeting at the Cowichan Station Area Association's HUB and reported out their findings and intentions for implementation. This work is similar to that accomplished by the Shawnigan Basin Society and its initiative to understand what lands ought not be used versus what lands ought not be used and are intended to protect, conserve, and restore ecologically sustainable futures for both the Shawnigan and Koksilah watersheds within Area B.

## **CVRD Staff Contributions**

Finally, yet very significantly, much recognition is owed to the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board of Directors and Staff for their remarkable contributions to the successful achievements of the Shawnigan Basin Society. Their expertise and professionalism are formally acknowledged with infinite appreciation!

Respectfully submitted by the Shawnigan Basin Society Board of Directors;  
Dr. Bruce Fraser, President; and  
Kelly Musselwhite, Executive Director  
January 11, 2019