Summary of the Available Information on Shawnigan Lake, with an Emphasis on Water Quality

Prepared for the Shawnigan Basin Society

by

Linda Gregory, PhD

Executive summary / What have we learned?

This report condenses and simplifies the results of studies on different aspects of Shawnigan Lake. The studies deal primarily with the water quality because Shawnigan Lake is an import drinking water source and recreational area. However, to understand or interpret possible or measured changes in water quality, it is important to recognize what factors influence the water quality. In the Shawnigan Lake watershed, agriculture (livestock and organic and inorganic fertilizers), forestry (logging) and urban development (septic fields) are possible sources of nutrients and contaminants. No data are available - except for possible contamination from septic systems - so possible changes from published literature are identified. In the lake, there is one native salmonid (kokanee), two stocked species (rainbow and cutthroat trout), and the three introduced species (yellow perch, pumpkinseed and smallmouth bass). The brown bullhead was introduced as well, but is now quite scarce. The introductions were unauthorized and the dates are unknown, but these species can significantly affect the aquatic community structure due to inter-related aspects of their life histories. There are no data on the fish populations of the lake and thus only possible changes in the lake ecology due to the introduced species are discussed.

Shawnigan Lake is 7.2 km long oriented south to north. It is 1.4 km across at the widest point and 150 m wide at the narrowest point in the west arm - a shallow arm somewhat isolated from the main body of the lake - which has one main deep basin to 50m in the northern half and several smaller basins to 28 m in the southern half. The main tributaries to the lake are Shawnigan Creek from the south, McGee Creek on the west side and the west arm inflow in the northwest corner. The outlet is at the north end. The lake water stratifies in early summer as the surface waters warm and it mixes in the fall. The residency time of the lake water is about one year and thus nutrients and possible contaminants from the main body of the lake are flushed yearly.

Different sampling sites have been used in different studies, although the main sites in the north and south basins and the west arm are consistent. One site in the north end of the lake near the CVRD drinking water intake is considered separately. The sites used in the more detailed studies are shown and in cases where different sites are used, the data are summarized by general location: mid-lake sites in the different basins, perimeter sites based on the end or side of the lake, inflows creeks and outflow creek.

Phosphorus is the limiting nutrient and thus increases in phosphorus can increase productivity due to increased algal growth making the water aesthetically displeasing as a drinking water source and for recreational use. Also, algae can also contribute to taste and make treatment of the water for drinking more difficult and certain cyanobacteria (blue green algae) produce heptatoxins and neurotaoxins, with serious health consequences. Chlorophyll *a* is the measure of primary productivity because it is contained in all plant material and is thus a consistent measure of phytoplankton levels. The number of phytoplankton cells is not a good measure of primary productivity because the cells are of different sizes. Zooplankton consume phytoplankton as do some fish such as the native kokanee. Juvenile fish – native, stocked and introduced - consume zooplankton and adult fish add aquatic insects, crayfish and other fish to their diet.

Assessment of the water quality data is based three inter-related criteria: those developed and characteristic of oligotrophic lakes (clear with low productivity); those recommended for drinking water supplies; or more stringent levels based on present conditions. The water quality data – limnological characteristics, water chemistry, chlorophyll *a*, phytoplankton and zooplankton – indicate that, in general Shawnigan Lake is oligotrophic (clear with low productivity) and the measured variables are within the drinking water guidelines and the water quality objectives. However, there are some exceptions and unknowns, which warrant mention.

The mean total phosphorus concentrations in the west arm and in the inlet to the west arm exceeded the water quality objective (8 µg/L at spring turnover), but not the drinking water guideline (≤ 10 µg/L) in the periods 1977-79 and 2003-04. The mean concentrations in the main basins, perimeter sites and inflow and outflow creeks were all < 8µg/L. Levels at the north end of the lake - near the CVRD drinking water intake - sampled between September 2010 and January 2012 had a mean of 6 ± 1.96 µg/L with four of sixty-six values > 8 µg/L. The drinking water criterion is to limit algal growth, not because the phosphorus itself is harmful, except in very high concentrations.

The mean (± 95% CL) chlorophyll *a* levels in the north and south basins, west arm and north end of the lake in 2003-04 were less than 3 µg/L, which is the threshold for oligotrophic lakes, but exceeded the criterion in the 1977-79 sampling period. The pronounced decrease between 1977-79 and 2003-04 did not correspond to a change in phosphorus suggesting that the decrease was due to increased grazing by zooplankton on the phytoplankton. Corresponding to this change in the lake water was a decrease in algal biomass in the sediments, which showed a peak beginning in the early 1970s and ending in the 1990s. Chlorophyll *a* levels near the CVRD drinking water intake reached 8.61 µg/L in the period between September 2010 and January 2012, but the mean level is not known. The high values were related to turbidity and thus some of the phosphorus may have been adsorbed to particulates, perhaps due to runoff into the lake.

The zooplankton species present were smaller in size than is typical of an oligotrophic lake, probably because the larger individuals were consumed by the juvenile fish. The total numbers, however, were high.

During chlorination, there is potential for the formation of chlorine disinfection by-products (DBP), particularly trihalomethanes (THM), which are a health hazard. Total organic carbon (TOC) concentration is used as a measure of the potential for the formation of THM. The mean levels of TOC at the four lake sites (north and south basins, west arm and north end of the lake) in the 2003-04 sampling period were within the objective of 4mg/L. However, samples collected between September 2010 and January 2012 near the CVRD drinking water intake had values that ranged from 2.6 to 6 mg/L, with at least one spike (11.02mg/L) in June 2011. During this period, the values of THM and other possible DBPs within the CVRD North Water distribution system exceeded the regulatory guideline level of 0.100mg/L, probably associated with the high TOC in the intake water.

Microbiological indicators are used to test drinking water supplies and recreational waters for possible fecal contamination from endotherms (warm blooded animals). Possible human mediated sources of fecal material to Shawnigan Lake are runoff from agricultural land (livestock and manure as fertilizer) and improperly maintained or located septic systems. Fecal material from water fowl and mammals living in the watershed can also enter the lake. The various criteria for different microbial indicators for the different water uses are tabulated. In addition, the fecal coliform and *E. coli* data from four main studies are summarized based on whether or not they met the criterion for a raw drinking water source with disinfection. Most of the licensed water intakes met the criteria in 2003/04 as did the sites in the north and south basins, but some samples collected between 2010 and 2012 exceeded the criteria. (Note: the authors of the study of the water at the CVRD intake indicated that their results cannot be related to data from other sources.) The fecal coliform (or *E. coli*) levels in the perimeter sites, and the inflow and outflow creeks did not for the most part meet the criteria. In fact, levels in Shawnigan Creek inflow in 2003-04 were over 80 times the criterion.

It is possible to identify the percent of the DNA in *E. coli* collected in Shawnigan Lake samples that came from different animals. In 2012, samples from near the CVRD North Water System intake had the greatest contamination from bears (20%), horses (18.6%), humans (14.3%), dogs (10.0%) and gulls (10.0%). An unknown source, which may be water fowl accounted for 12.5%. The relative importance of septic input, recreational input and runoff is not known, although studies using N^{15}/N^{14} suggest that septic input is important.

Recommendations

There are on-going studies in Shawnigan Lake, primarily on the water quality. If it is not in included in these studies, more information of the cyanobacteria present should be addressed. Also, the relative importance of *E. coli* from septic systems, recreational input and runoff should be investigated. However, there are two additional aspects of the lake ecology that should be addressed – fisheries and macrophyte biology. There is no information on the fish populations and how the introduced species – particularly the smallmouth bass – has modified the lake ecology. Three possible consequences are discussed in the report: effects of diet on the prey species; competition with native species; and changes in the littoral areas due to spawning locations and behaviour. One expected change is a decrease in crayfish, which is an important food for adult smallmouth bass and an associated increase in periphyton (attached alage), the main food of the crayfish. Anecdotal comments by residents suggest this may be occurring, but it has not been quantified. The increase in periphyton would not be due to an increase in nutrient levels, but because of the introduced smallmouth bass. Also, zooplankton is a major food for juvenile fish and the introduced fish can affect the zooplankton populations, which was observed in 2003-04. The zooplankton graze on phytoplankton and the decreased productivity between 1997-79 and 2003-04 was attributed to increased grazing by zooplankton. However, if the fish numbers increase they may further decrease the zooplankton numbers and sizes which could reduce the control of the zooplankton on the phytoplankton.

There are anecdotal reports of increased macrophytes. When these are removed by hand, pieces can fall off and produce new plants. Also, the wakes from motorboats can disturb the sediment and possibly change the distribution of macrophytes. The introduced species spawn in the littoral areas and this may affect the macrophytes.

Given the importance of Shawnigan Lake as a drinking water source, a study on the effects of the introduced fish species is highly recommended given the potential for changes in the lake ecology and the possible consequences to the phytoplankton, zooplankton and periphyton populations and the numbers of the native kokanee. Information on the macrophytes numbers and species and how they are affected by wakes from boats, spawning fish and general disruption of the littoral areas as well as how they can be controlled should be considered as well.

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1. Introduction

"Shawnigan is the most obvious place on the lower island where there is a conflict between natural beauty and people." It means we must preserve these lakes "or bid good-bye to them forever." Since these words by Health Minister Ralph Loffmark were recorded by John Driscoll in the July 5, 1969 edition of the Victoria Daily Times, numerous studies and surveys have been completed on various aspects of Shawnigan Lake and its watershed. These studies fall in several – in some cases overlapping – categories: lake morphology and hydrology, land and water uses, water quality, sediment history, and fisheries habitat suitability (Nordin and McKean, 1984; Talbot, 1985; Holmes, 1996; Webber, 1996; Best et al., 2000; Reiberger et al., 2004; Rieberger, 2007; Worley Parsons, 2009; Mazumder, 2010, 2011, and 2012; Hutchinson, 2011). This list is not exclusive as information from earlier reports (Stonehouse, 1969; Black et al., 1977; McKinnel, 1978; Lucey and Jackson, 1983) is included in Nordin and McKean (1984), and various thesis from the University of Victoria (Furey, 2003; Nowlin, 2003; Davies, 2004) are referenced in Reiberger et al. (2004). Also, information on the geology and soils of the watershed (Wiens and Nagpal, 1984) are available and not considered in detail in this report. However, given the data available and the various recommendations for future studies and actions, the public still had significant concerns about the water quality and quantity and the leadership in moving forward (Judith Cullington and Associates with Moyer Creative Communications Inc., 2012). But since 2012, and under the initial vision of CVRD area B Director Bruce Fraser, several positive developments have and are occurring beginning with the formation of the non-profit Shawnigan Basin Society (SBS). The SBS has raised significant monies through tax allocation and donations and with the support of the Ecological Design Panel and input from the community has retained the services of Silva Ecosystems Consulting Ltd to prepare an Ecosystem-Based Conservation Plan for Shawnigan Lake Watershed. In addition, using tax allocation monies, the SBS initiated the discussions to define and develop a Shawnigan Basin Authority (SBA) to give the community an organized voice in watershed governance. But most of the initiatives deal with future studies and planning and thus the SBS discussed the merit of having the background and existing information on the lake summarized and made available to the public. This report is the results of these discussions. It is a non-critical summary of the available information on the given topics, including an overview as to why results are important to the long term survival of the Shawnigan Lake ecosystem and the resultant uses of the lake and its water. Emphasis is on the lake and its tributaries, although some data on the characteristics of the watershed (geology and soils) are included.

2. Watershed Description and Lake Hydrology

Shawnigan Lake Watershed covers 69.4 km^2 and is contained within the Shawnigan Lake Community Watershed, which is 110 km^2 and also includes the land draining to Shawnigan Creek, the outlet from the north end of lake that empties into Saanich Inlet at Mill Bay. The watershed has a maximum elevation of 610m GSC (Geodetic Survey of Canada) and a minimum elevation of approximately 116 m GSC at the lake level (Bryden and Barr, 2002, from Reiberger, 2007).

The lake, which is aligned from south to north, is approximately 7.2 km long and 1.4 km across at its widest point. The narrowest point is approximately 150 m wide in the West Arm; this part of the lake is quite distinct in that it is a long, narrow, shallow arm isolated from the main body of the lake. The main body of the lake has one main deep basin to 50m in the northern half and several smaller basins to 28 m in the southern half. There are three main tributaries: Shawnigan Creek at the south end of the lake, which originates from Deveraux Lake; McGee Creek on the west shore; and the West Arm inflow in the northwest corner of the lake (Reiberger et al., 2004). Other inflows include Roundhouse Creek and Unnamed Creek to the north basin on the west side, two Landfill Creeks and Village Creek from the northeast to the north basin, and East Shawnigan Creek to the south basin (Nordin and McKean, 1984). The lake water residency time is approximately one year (Nordin and McKean, 1984).

The outflow from Shawnigan Lake to Shawnigan Creek at the north end of the Lake is partially regulated by a dam or weir (Best et al., 2000; Hutchinson, 2011). The first dam, which consisted of flashboards and stop-logs was installed in 1964 about 450 m downstream from the lake outlet to store water and prevent flooding. It was replaced in 2008 by a new weir with metal gates and a fish ladder. During the summer, the water levels are gradually reduced using the “curve rule”, which dictates the rate of change in water levels from 116.3m to 115.75m. The winter flows are mediated as possible. These controls do not affect the summer stratification of the lake waters or the flushing and residency time of the lake water.

3. Land Use in the Shawnigan Lake Watershed

There are three main land-uses in the watershed: agriculture, urban development and forestry.

3.1 Agriculture

Approximately 9.5% of the land base is under the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), including the land along 1 km of the southern shoreline (Reiberger et al., 2004). The use of the agricultural land is not known but nutrients from fertilizers and manure can enter surface waters directly by runoff or indirectly via groundwater (Sharpley and Moyer, 2000; Turner and Haygarth, 2000; Bohlke, 2002; Burkart and Stoner, 2008) and coliform bacteria from manure can be flushed into the surface waters. Fertilizers are also used on urban lawns and animals (e.g. horses) are not restricted to agricultural land.

3.2 Urban Development

The Village of Shawnigan Lake has grown over the past 25 years from a rural community with mostly seasonal residences to a permanent community with year round residents, many of whom commute to Victoria. And the growth continues. The South Cowichan Official Community Plan (SCOCP) from 2014 notes there are over 7500 people living the Electoral Area B, with 3600 in the Village Area. The Village Area includes the village core with commercial and mixed commercial/residential land uses and the residential settlements that straddle the area across the north end of the lake and extend east and west from the lake. There are also many residences occur along the periphery of the lake.

There were five waste management discharge permits to ground in 2004 and numerous septic fields (Reiberger et al., 2004). The discharge permits are at least 400 m from the lake (400 to 4100m) with a total discharge of approximately 800 m^3/d (Reiberger et al., 2004), but the depths to groundwater are not known nor are any requirements for groundwater monitoring.

In a properly constructed and maintained septic field, the solids settle in the tank and the effluent moves to the tile field and out to the unsaturated soil and saturated soil (groundwater) where microbiological and chemical reactions occur. The septic effluent contains high levels of the dissolved organic carbon (DOC), nitrogen, particularly ammonia, phosphorus, and ions such as sodium, calcium and chloride (Wilhelm et al., 1994) and bacteria. The bacteria are supposed to be integrated into the soil. The DOC is oxidized primarily to carbon dioxide and the ammonia is oxidized to nitrate, which is soluble in water and found in levels that exceed the British Columbia drinking water guideline of 10mg nitrate-N/L (Nordin and Pommen, 2001)) in the effluent plume (Wilhelm et al., 1994). Phosphorus advances slowly (Wilhelm et al., 1994) as some is adsorbed to soil particles, but Robertson et al. (1998) found increased levels – above the objective for Shawnigan Lake (see Section 5) –10 m from a septic field in sandy soils. In fact, two to four years after this septic tank was decommissioned, sodium, calcium, chloride, and nitrate returned to background levels, but ortho-phosphate levels remained high (Robertson and Harman, 1999). Given that some of the old septic fields around Shawnigan Lake are most probably less than 10 m from the lake and from the groundwater level at the lake's edge, the septic plumes may enter groundwater and the lake. Saturated and perhaps anoxic conditions can occur near the lake during high water which could compromise proper functioning of the tile field.

3.3 Forestry

Forestry has been a mainstay industry in British Columbia since the initial settlement by immigrants. It was the main activity in the Shawnigan Lake Watershed from the 1860s to the mid 1990s and is still the major land use. The potential effects of forestry and milling on the watershed, particularly the lake, were not a priority in the initial days, but the consequences of forestry practices are now recognised and mediation approaches are attempted or enforced where possible. At present no level of government has jurisdiction on privately owned land. The following is divided into three parts: the historical forestry activities from the 1860s to the mid 1990s and some of the consequences on the lake; general effects of logging on the watershed, particularly the lake; and the on-going and expected logging activities in the watershed.

3.3.1 The 1860s to the mid 1990s

Logging, sawmills, log booms, log storage, fires and the railway built to move the forestry products are an important part of the history of the Shawnigan Lake Watershed (G. Treloar, pers. comm.; www.shawniganlakemuseum.com) and have influenced the lake quality, particularly the long-term effects on the sediments (Nordin and Mclean, 1994; Best et al., 2000). Logging began in the 1880s on the islands and in the 1890s on the east side of the lake; by 1910 all of the immediate lakeshore around the lake had been logged, to some extent. Logs were stored and moved on the water in log booms and stored on land on the west side, at the present location of the West Shawnigan Lake Provincial Park. Debris from the log booms settled on the lake bottom and debris from the log storage area was probably flushed into the lake. The E&N railway moved on the east side of the lake and by the 1920s, railways lines and spurs, which moved the forest products, were common, particularly on the west side. The railways included three railway bridges across Shawnigan Creek near the lake outflow, which may have contributed to the sediment accumulation at the outflow (Best et al., 2000). The first of several sawmills was built at now Old Mill Park on the east side of Shawnigan Lake in 1890. The waste sawdust was dumped onto the lake and the area around the mill is still covered in chips. In addition, there are two boats from the mill on the bottom of the lake near the old mill site. Runoff and debris from the fires at the mill in 1918, 1934 and 1945 probably entered the lake. The mill closed after the last fire. Fires were not restricted to the mills as there was a severe forest fire on in 1860s that burnt to the west shore of the lake. But there were prosperous times in Shawnigan Lake and visitors came from Victoria and Nanaimo by the E&N railway to stay at Morton House and, after it burned in 1902, Shawnigan Lake Hotel.

3.3.2 Logging – points to consider

The forest ecosystem is a complex interaction of plants, animals and soils, which work together to maintain a healthy environment with sustained benefits to society. Loss of large forested areas is an environmental and social loss to a rural community and should be addressed in land-use planning decisions. This does not mean that all logging is bad, but controlled removal of trees is necessary for a healthy and sustainable forest community. The forest ecosystem is not static nor is it isolated and changes in the forests affect adjacent areas such as lakes, in this case Shawnigan Lake. The purpose of this summary is not to describe the complexities of the forest ecosystem, but to outline the contribution of trees to water movement and mineral (nutrient) cycles within the ecosystem and thus outline how the removal of large numbers of trees will affect these cycles and the possible/probable consequences to the land and the adjacent lake.

Trees play an important role in the water movement in forests. Evapotranspiration removes water from the soil via the roots and up the trunk to the leaves and the atmosphere. The foliage intercepts precipitation and mediates its rate of input to the soil. The trees themselves store water and the roots help maintain the soil structure and stability. All of these functions help regulate the soil water content and reduce the chance of extensive and rapid overland flow of water and suspended materials (erosion) – including soil nutrients and bacteria – to creeks and the lake.

The trees store large amounts of carbon, which they fix from carbon dioxide during photosynthesis, and other nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which they acquire from the soil water. The nutrients are passed from the vegetation to herbivores that consume plants, omnivores that consume plants and animals and carnivores that consume other animals, in a hierarchical, but non-linear sequence. The cycles continue as trees shed their leaves, animals produce wastes, and trees and animals die and thus provide food for decomposers such as bacteria and fungi, which gradually release the nutrients from the dead material for use by other organisms, including more trees. These cycles are dynamic, although gradual and the nutrients are retained within the different components of the forest ecosystem. Removing the trees removes the nutrients, particularly the carbon stored in the trees and causes an abrupt change in the food (and habitat) available for the animals, which leads to a decrease in biodiversity. In addition, logging leaves a pool of nutrients in the soil that can be leached with soil material to adjacent surface waters or to groundwater before being used by new growth in the large deforested area. If the land is not left to re-generate, the loss of nutrients to the surface waters and groundwater is enhanced. If the land is used solely to grow more trees of one species, the nutrient cycles continue, but some fertilization may be required and the complexity of the system and the associated buffers to ecosystem disruptions are reduced.

3.3.3 Recent logging activities

Barry Gates (pers. comm.), provided a summary of the logging activities in the Shawnigan Lake Watershed. Approximately 65% of the watershed is in the Rural Resource Zone designated for forestry and agricultural operations. Of this, 30% is crown land allocated mainly to woodlot operations available for clear-cut logging with reserves, including lands allocated to the Malahat Band and 27% is owned by private companies (TimberWest (15%) , Island Timberlands (11%) and several small holdings). Only about 6% of the Shawnigan Lake Watershed – Elkington Forest - has good second growth structure and is permanently protected. Most of the lands allocated to the Malahat Band have not been logged recently.

Excessive runoff and erosion of soils due to logging enters the lake primarily via the tributary streams and each of the three main tributary sub-basins has been harvested. Shawnigan Creek contains the protected Elkington Forest and the Malahat Band lands in the upper reaches, but otherwise, most of this sub-basin has been logged. Almost all of the McGee Creek sub-basin has been logged and about 60% of the West Arm inlet has been harvested. Areas around the smaller tributaries on both the east and west side are being harvested.

4. Water Use

Shawnigan Lake is a popular recreation area – boating and swimming - but the lake also supports native, stocked and introduced species of fish, and the water is used for drinking. Because groundwater is also an important drinking water source and because there is a close connection between ground water and surface water a summary of information on the aquifers and wells is included as well.

4.1 Boating and Swimming

The parks on Shawnigan Lake are maintained by Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) (www.cvrd.bc.ca/index.aspx?NID=271&PREVIEW=Yes) and BC Parks www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/w_shawn/. The CVRD Electoral Area B has five parks with beach access for swimming: three lake shore parks - Mason's Beach, Old Mill Park and Shawnigan Wharf Park - on the north and east side of the lake; one island park – Memory Island Park - in the south basin; and one river park – Williams River Park - on the Shawnigan Creek outflow from the lake. There is a boat ramp at the Shawnigan Wharf Park and also at Recreation Road on the west side of the lake. The web site gives the other facilities that are available at these parks. West Shawnigan Lake Provincial Park has beach access and various facilities that are identified on the web site; there is no boat ramp, but one located nearby that can be used. In addition to the official parks there are numerous private swimming areas and boat docks.

The main water quality variable measured on swimming beaches is Coliform levels (see section 5.3 Microbiological Indicators), but esthetics (e.g. algal and aquatic plants) is important as well. The effects of boating on Shawnigan Lake are not documented, but one general result of motor boats is from the wakes they create - particularly large ones near to shore – which damage some of the littoral areas as the motors stir up the sediment. In 1982, the CVRD (CVRD, 1982) prepared an overview for the management of Shawnigan Lake. It contained the boating regulations and rules, including the maximum speeds for motorized vessels and the need to prevent excessive wakes, particularly near shore. It is not known if these regulations and rules are enforced, although there is some patrolling of the lake in the summer.

4.2 Fisheries

Kokanee is the only native salmonid in Shawnigan Lake (Best, 2000). It is a descendant of sockeye salmon (*Oncrhynchus nerka*) landlocked in the lake after the retreat of the last ice sheets and the resulting changes in the levels of the land and ocean (Best, 2000). Sculpins (probably the prickly sculpin *Cottus asper*) are native as well, but according to long-term residents the numbers are substantially reduced. Cutthroat trout (*O. clarki*) and rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*) have been stocked since the early1900s in numbers up to 50 000 for cutthroat trout and 1000 000 for rainbow trout (Figure 1) for a total of 478 363 for cutthroat trout and 1 708 696 or rainbow trout, but no cutthroat trout have been added since 2004 and only 4300 rainbow trout were added in 2014 (www.gofishbc.com/fish-stocking-reports/archive-reports.aspx).

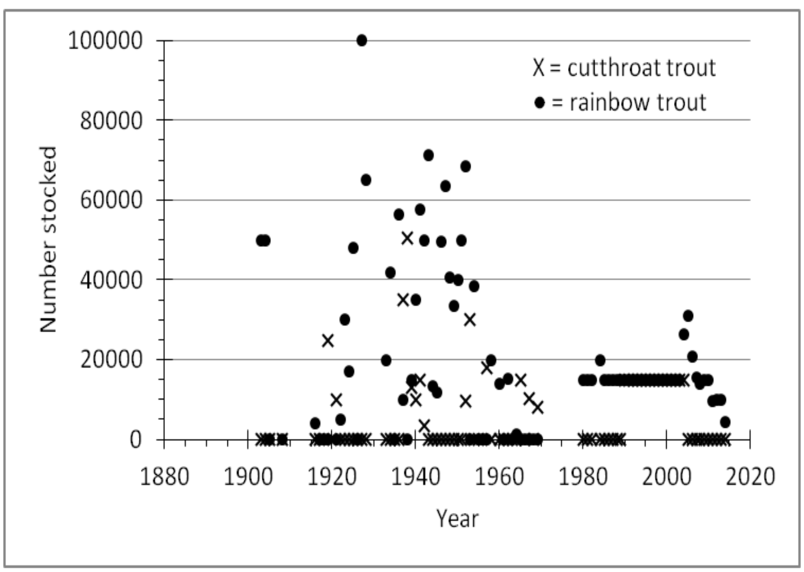

Figure 1. The number of cutthroat trout and rainbow trout stocked in Shawnigan Lake each year from 1903 to present.

Other introduced species of fish include smallmouth bass (*Micropteus dolomieu*), yellow perch (*Perca flavascens*), pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) and brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*, previously *Ictaluris nebulosus*) (see Clifford and Guiguet, 1958; Runciman and Leaf, 2009; and references therein for more details). There are no accounts of authorized stocking of these species in Shawnigan Lake, but Spider, Langford and Florence lakes were stocked with general "bass/sunfish" between 1901 and 1923 (Runciman and Leaf, 2009). The brown bullhead numbers have decreased dramatically, although there are some sightings, including one caught in 2013 in the north end by a junior resident, Brock Musselwhite (B. Musselwhite, pers. comm.).

Biological synopses are available that summarize the information on the remaining introduced species (e.g. smallmouth bass, Brown et al., 2009a; pumpkinseed, Jordan et al., 2009; yellow perch, Brown et al., 2009b) and there are general textbooks that include information on the ecology of these fish (e.g. Wootton, 1998). There are no studies on the fisheries of Shawnigan Lake, but the introduced species can significantly modify the lake ecology due to important and inter-related aspects of the life histories.

Spawning locations and behaviour: Kokanee and the introduced cutthroat trout and rainbow trout spawn in streams whereas yellow perch, pumpkinseed and smallmouth bass spawn primarily in the littoral areas of the lake. The pumpkinseed and smallmouth bass build redds (nests) for spawning and guard the eggs and to some extent the young, whereas the yellow perch do not build redds or guard the young. In these littoral areas, success of reproduction can be high, particularly for the smallmouth bass (Brown et al., 2009). In addition, the use of the littoral areas by these introduced species can affect the physical structure of these areas, simply due to redd construction and residency during reproductive periods.

Diet and competition: The introduced species (yellow perch, pumpkinseed and smallmouth bass) and the native kokanee all consume zooplankton and aquatic insects and perhaps some phytoplankton (e.g. kokanee) when they are small (juveniles) and some species (e.g. kokanee and pumpkinseed) continue feeding largely on these foods as adults suggesting potential for competition among the young of these species in Shawnigan Lake, which can affect the native kokanee. Pumpkinseed, yellow perch and salmonids are important food for adult - and somewhat larger - smallmouth bass and once established in a new ecosystem the smallmouth bass rapidly dominate (Brown et al., 2009a), which will reduce the native and introduced salmonid stocks.

Effect of smallmouth bass on prey species: Young (small) smallmouth bass consume zooplankton as do the other unauthorized introduced species. Zooplankton feed on phytoplankton and thus a significant increase in the number of smallmouth bass may affect the zooplankton numbers and thus the phytoplankton populations. This may affect the algal component of the water and sediments (see Section 6. Biological Analyses).

Juvenile and adult smallmouth bass consume fish, but also crayfish, which may reduce crayfish numbers (see Brown et al., 2009a). Crayfish graze on attached algae (periphyton) and aquatic plants (macrophytes) and eat aquatic insects and thus a reduction in numbers of crayfish can increase the abundance of these food items, particularly the periphyton and macrophytes. Long-term residents suggest there is a decrease in crayfish numbers and an increase in periphyton, but there are no data available. If the increase in numbers of smallmouth bass has occurred and the numbers of crayfish has decreased, the probable resulting increase in attached periphyton is not due to changes in nutrients, but due to alteration of the aquatic ecosystem by the introduced smallmouth bass.

4.3 Drinking Water

There are two licensed drinking water intakes from Shawnigan Lake: the CVRD North Water System, which supplies water to Shawnigan Beach Estates, a condominium and an elementary school (www.cvrd.bc.ca/index.aspx?NID=380) and the Lidstech Holdings Ltd. dba: Shawnigan Village Waterworks, which supplies water to the village of Shawnigan Lake. The CVRD North Water System withdraws water through two pipes from the west side of the northern most inlet (end of Decca Road) of the lake where chlorination occurs (Decca Road Treatment Building [DRTB]). The water then moves to the distribution system in response to water levels in the two water storage reservoirs. The total volume removed per diem or per month is not known, but the total capacity of the two reservoirs is 265 000 gal. As a secondary water source, the CVRD North system has a groundwater well on Ingot Drive. Water from the well is pumped to the DRTB. Lidstech Holdings Ltd. removes water from Shawnigan Lake on the east side of the northern most inlet (end of Shawnigan-Mill Bay Road). In 2008, they provided a base water supply of 804 000 gal.

In addition to the formal water removal from Shawnigan Lake, there are numerous lakeside residents that use the lake for drinking water. The residents away from the lake rely on groundwater.

4.4 Groundwater aquifers and wells

There are eight aquifers (Figure 2) within the Shawnigan Lake watershed, including the outlet (BC Water Resources Atlas [www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/data_searches/wrbc/index.html]). Each aquifer is classified (Aquifer Classification Database [http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/wells/public/common/aquifer_report.jsp])) according to the BC Aquifer Classification System (Bernardinucci and Ronneseth, 2002). One important objective of the classification system is to provide a standard base of information that can be used in management, protection and remediation of the aquifers (Bernardinucci and Ronneseth, 2002). Numerous factors are considered, but there are two main components: classification and ranking value. The classification component characterizes the aquifer with respect to the level of development (water supply relative to demand) and the vulnerability to contamination, based on existing development. The ranking value assigns a number indicative of its relative importance based on seven criteria: productivity, vulnerability to surface contamination, area, water demand, water use, and quality and quantity concerns. The classification components for the eight aquifers within the Shawnigan lake watershed are shown in Figure 2. The Roman numerals are for development. There are three levels: I is heavy, II is moderate, and III is light development. The letters are for vulnerability. Again there are three levels: A is for high, B is for medium and C is for light vulnerability. Aquifers 203 surrounding Shawnigan Lake and 206 in Mill Bay have a classification of IIA (Figure 2) indicating that they are moderately developed and highly vulnerable. Aquifers with this classification usually require particular care and attention with respect to land use activities that could affect water quality (Bernardinucci and Ronneseth, 2002). Aquifers 202, 204 and 207 are IIB (moderate development and vulnerability) and aquifers 197, 201 and 205 are IIC (moderate development and low vulnerability (Figure 2). Aquifers in these classifications may be able to support additional withdrawal; however, until site specific studies are conducted, these areas require care and attention for land-use activities that might affect water quality or quantity (Bernardinucci and Ronneseth, 2002).

The aquifers are either bedrock or unconsolidated sand and gravel as indicated – although not precisely – by the information from well records (Figure 3). Within the Shawnigan Lake watershed there are over 1000 wells, but in the area shown in Figure 3 there are about 3000 (Drillwell Enterprises Ltd., Duncan, pers. comm) indicating the extensive use of groundwater in the south Cowichan valley.