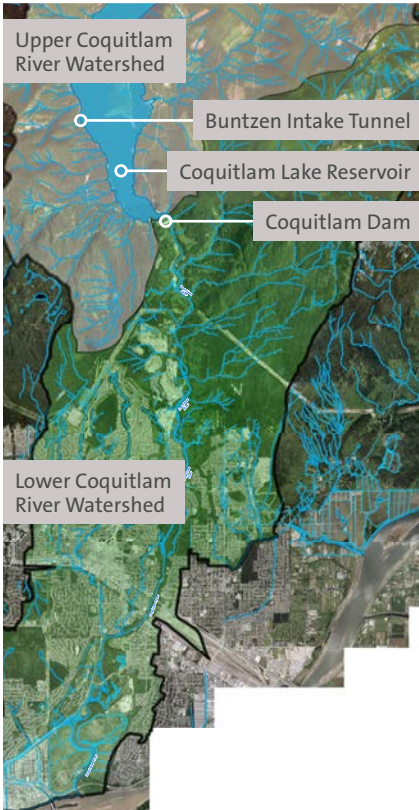




Lower Coquitlam River Watershed Action Plan

July 2012 – April 2015

Progress Report # 1



Watershed Action Plan

Between 2012 and 2015, over 60 partners in the municipal, provincial, regional, federal and First Nations governments, aggregate industry, arts and culture, education, outdoor recreation, real estate development sectors and stewardship groups worked together to create a watershed action plan for the Coquitlam River watershed. The Coquitlam River is one of the largest and most significant rivers in the Metro Vancouver Region and forms part of the traditional territory of the Kwikwetlem First Nation. Urban development in the lower watershed spans 75% of lands within the cities of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam, where an

estimated 156,700 residents now live. Yet, until now, the lower Coquitlam River watershed has lacked its own watershed plan. Development of the Lower Coquitlam River Watershed Plan follows the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation, an adaptive and unique management approach that considers ecological and human well-being components – the things we care about – and presents strategies for action that will provide for a healthy watershed and a healthy community.

The final Action Plan will be available in a summary report form during spring 2015.

Strategies for Action

This progress report highlights the steps the CRWR has made over three years' effort, to develop a plan that responds to key pressures that affect watershed health, and some first strategies developed to address them. Detailed action plans have been drafted for three key watershed pressures: Stormwater, Invasive Species and Development, that will

proceed (as long as implementation support and resources are received), through 2015 and 2016. The goals this spring are to: reconnect with the Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable partners, share the results of the action plans and seek the commitment to work that provides a healthy, liveable community for people in this watershed.

The Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable (CRWR) was founded in 2011 following a four-year community engagement process. The CRWR coordinates and implements activities that promote the health and long-term sustainability of the watershed.

WHAT THINGS DO WE CARE ABOUT?

During a November 2012 Community Roundtable workshop, participants were led through an exercise to identify the things each care about in the lower Coquitlam River watershed. Each was asked to provide suggestions for two ecological and two human well-being components. Participants were asked to consider: What needs to be protected/restored to achieve the

Vision? What do you care about and want to protect/restore? What things are under pressure? Through fall 2012 to spring 2013, a Watershed Task Group formed by the CRWR assembled and reviewed the input. The findings resulted in ten Ecological and Human Well-being components being apparent.

ECOLOGICAL COMPONENTS

Coquitlam River System

Riparian Areas

Salmon

Natural Areas



HUMAN WELL-BEING COMPONENTS

Liveable Communities

Human Health & Safety

Resource Industries

Recreation

Cultural & Spiritual Values

Stewardship

HOW HEALTHY ARE THE THINGS WE CARE ABOUT?

The next step was goal setting to describe the desired future condition for each component (often long-term), and assessing the current status of the components (health assessment or viability analysis). Components were described using several Key

Ecological Attributes that illustrate the size, condition and context. Indicators were used to measure the status of the attribute and provide a means to assess trends and track change over time: POOR, FAIR, GOOD, and VERY GOOD.



Rating Categories for Ecological "Health" Indicators

VERY GOOD

Ecologically desirable status; requires little intervention for maintenance.

GOOD

Indicator within acceptable range of variation; some intervention required for maintenance.

FAIR

Outside acceptable range of variation; requires human intervention.

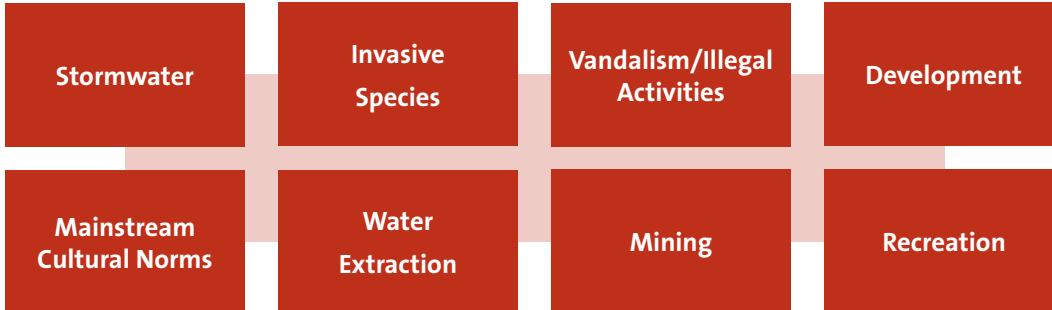
POOR

Restoration increasingly difficult; may result in extirpation.

WHAT PRESSURES ARE AFFECTING WHAT WE CARE ABOUT?

Pressures are those human activities that contribute to the degradation of the things we care about. The data assembled by the CRWR during spring 2013, as part of the health assessment exercise, found fifteen pressures to our Ecological and Human Well-being components: hazardous spills, stormwater, invasive species, development, water extraction, vandalism/illegal activities, roads, railroads/transportation, recreation, mainstream cultural norms, dams and dikes, culverts, urban wildlife, mining, hatcheries, sewage and wastewater spills.

Following a 'Pressures Rating' exercise to assess the Scope, Severity, and Irreversibility for each of the pressures, the results found eight that could be studied further to identify the contributing factors for why these pressures persist. The findings resulted in eight pressures for action planning:



WHAT IS CONTRIBUTING TO ALLOW THESE PRESSURES TO PERSIST?

The Watershed Task Group partnered with key experts for each of the “topic pressure areas” to identify the root causes, drivers and factors that were contributing pressures on the key Ecological and Human Well-being components being affected. The results were presented to the community in May 2014 for review, to help the CRWR with strategy ideas and identify opportunities that could be shaped into an Action Plan. More than 200 ideas were brought forward for consideration. After a review to link up common themes, the many strategies were sorted for each of the eight pressures. Supported again by external experts the Watershed Task Group rated the strategies based on the criteria of APPROPRIATENESS, FEASIBILITY (cost, technical, political) and POTENTIAL IMPACT. Strategy types for action covered plans involving Policy, Planning, Outreach, Research, Education and Programs. Many strategies were found

to address more than one pressure, and many strategies focused on actions across the entire lower watershed, regardless of jurisdiction. The aim of this step was to develop at least one or two strategies for each pressure, (though the entire suite of strategies were archived to provide guidance for future actions). The 'Strategy Rating' exercise resulted in identifying seventeen strategies for action. From the suite of strategies, three involving STORMWATER, INVASIVE SPECIES, and DEVELOPMENT resonated for detailed Action Planning, and implementation through 2015 and 2016. Each plan will be monitored, based on set objectives and tracked through indicators to measure success on reducing impacts to improve watershed health.

See the back page for details on the Action Plans.

Strategies for Action for Improving Watershed Health

Stormwater (High) Homeowner Outreach 2015 - 2016 Monitoring 2017

Focus of Strategy: Develop outreach materials to help single-family homeowners improve stormwater practices in the lower Coquitlam River watershed. Key actions will:

- encourage best practices in rainwater management, water quality and riparian areas;
- provide outreach awareness of stormwater problems caused by every day actions;
- promote voluntary best practices, following technical assistance and an incentives program, and,
- reduce stormwater impacts on the river system, riparian areas, salmon, cultural and spiritual values, human health and safety, and resources industries.

Goal: Assess and address current messaging, implement an outreach pilot within the watershed, and attempt to track what behaviour change has resulted. Supporting Partners: Cities of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam.

Invasive Species (High) Alignment of Efforts 2016 Monitoring 2017

Focus of Strategy: Develop a coordinated approach to invasive species management that can apply for the region. Key actions will:

- align invasive species management efforts through an information-sharing network;
- establish a coordinated approach to all aspects of invasive species activities;
- coordinate activities to develop model bylaws for invasive species management and mapping inventories;
- align policies, identify priority species, resources for oversight and enforcement, targeting priority species using strategic, cost-effective measures; and,
- reduce invasive species impacts on riparian areas, natural areas and recreation.

Goal: Develop regionally effective legislation and policy supported by monitoring, enforcement and education. Supporting Partners: Cities of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam.

Development (High) Incentives Feasibility 2016 Monitoring 2017

Focus of Strategy: Conduct feasibility study on potential incentive tools for the development community. Key actions will:

- involve research and recommendations for green development incentive programs;
- address sensitive ecological priorities in areas that are developable and presently grandfathered;
- address important areas, and those affected by shortcomings in regulations being understood;
- encourage developers to enroll in programs that support green development; and,
- reduce development impacts on natural areas, riparian areas, recreation and livable communities.

Goal: Assess present potential tools that municipalities and others can provide to incentivize environmentally friendly designs for neighbourhoods. Supporting Partners: The development community within the Coquitlam River watershed.



Future Strategies for Action

Additional strategies have been drafted for the pressures above, along with several for Water Extraction, Vandalism/Illegal Activities, Recreation, Mainstream Cultural Norms, and Mining. These will advance as Roundtable capacity grows and resource support from partners to help implement come forward.

For more information: coquitlamriverwatershed.ca

For information on Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation: cmp-openstandards.org

 Follow us on Twitter
@CoqRiverWS

 Like us on Facebook
/CoquitlamRiverWatershed