

**Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan Initial Stakeholders  
Workshop,**

**Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010**

**A Summary of Proceedings**



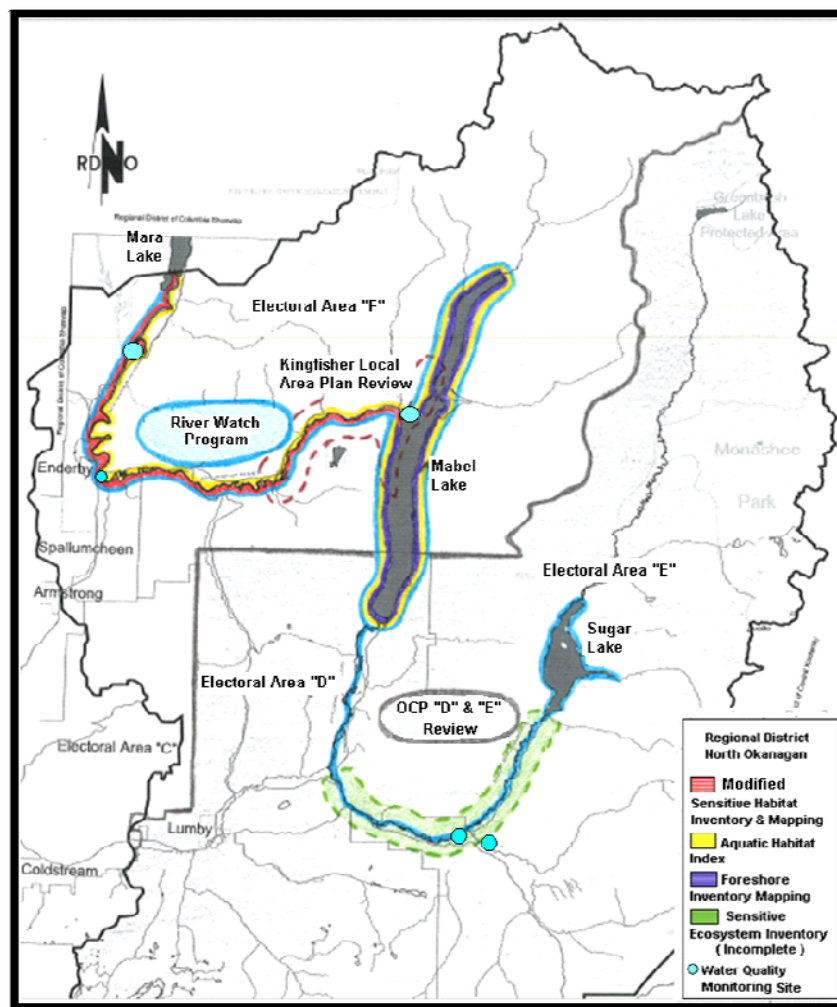
**Regional District North Okanagan**

## Introduction

The objective of the initial stakeholder's workshop was to present the draft terms of reference for the Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan as well as begin to move towards creating a vision statement and identifying areas of importance and concern within the watershed. This initial workshop provided an opportunity for stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed planning process as well as begin to prioritize what issues they feel need to be addressed in the initial stages of the creation of the plan.

The Shuswap River spans a distance of approximately 150 km and is a part of the Shuswap Watershed. The river flows through three of the electoral areas within the Regional District of North Okanagan; Areas "E", "D" and "F". The river has three main sections. The upper portion begins at Joss Pass at the northern end of the Sawtooth Range of the Monashees and empties into Sugar Lake. The next section of the river curves south from Sugar Lake and then runs north before entering Mabel Lake. Below Mabel Lake is the last stretch of the river that runs west towards the town of Enderby and then flows north draining into Mara Lake.

There are a number of Initiatives that are underway within the Shuswap River Watershed which are outlined in **Figure 1. Initiatives within the Shuswap River Watershed** and described below:



### *Mapping Initiatives*

- ❖ The Regional District of North Okanagan has been working in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to continue the Shuswap Watershed and Mapping Project into the Lower Shuswap River and Mabel Lake. Inventory and mapping of the Shuswap Watershed is being conducted following the current three step lake management process being standardized across British Columbia.
- ❖ To date the Modified Sensitive Habitat Inventory and Mapping (SHIM) has been done on the Lower Stretch of the River (Highlighted in Red) on Figure 1, Initiatives within the Shuswap River Watershed. Foreshore Inventory and Mapping (FIM) has been carried out on Mabel Lake (Highlighted in Purple). The SHIM and FIM are protocols that have been used to collect baseline information regarding the current condition of watercourses, shorelines and associated riparian habitats within the project area. The SHIM and FIM uses a mapping based (GIS) approach to describe shorelines. These inventories provide information on shore types, substrates, land use, and habitat modifications. The Aquatic Habitat Index (AHI) mapping is stage two of the process and has been completed for Mabel Lake and is in the initial stages for the Lower Stretch of the River (Highlighted in Yellow). The final step in this process is the creation of Shore Line Management Guidelines that identify shore line vulnerabilities or sensitivities to land use changes. The shoreline vulnerability is based upon a risk based approach to shoreline management, assessing the potential risks of different activities in different shore segments (eg. construction of docks and marinas). These guidelines provide valuable information to stakeholders, proponents and governmental agencies when land use changes or activities are proposed that could alter the shoreline thereby affecting fish or wildlife habitat. DFO is in the process of getting this third step complete for Mabel Lake. Once the AHI is done on the lower Shuswap the last step will be the creation of the shoreline management guidelines

### *Water Quality Monitoring*

- ❖ The Ministry of Environment has carried out monitoring in varying degrees throughout the watershed. The main focus has been on large lake sampling during the spring and fall at Sugar, Mabel and Mara Lakes. Since 2008, Mara Lake is being sampled monthly during the summer. The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) tests raw water for a limited suite of parameters at the water treatment facility at both Grindrod and Mabel Lake. The City of Enderby monitors Shuswap River water quality at the water treatment plant intake and they also monitor the effluent quality. The Cherryridge Management Water Stewards monitor water quality on the Shuswap River at the BC Hydro picnic site as well as on its tributaries of Cherry and Ferry Creek. This information is submitted to the Ministry of Environment, who review and provide an interpretation of the data.

### *Enforcement and Education*

- ❖ The River Watch Program applies to the entire stretch of the river from the lower Shuswap to Sugar Lake. This initiative falls within the Safe Communities Program of the local RCMP. This program works on the basis that if citizens see a reckless boater they can copy down the vessels registration number and report the incident to the RCMP who will follow up on the complaint.

### *Community Initiatives*

- ❖ There are a number of community lead initiatives within the watershed including the Cherry Creek riparian restoration project which has been carried out by the Cherryville Water Stewards.
- ❖ The Kingfisher Interpretive Centre provides excellent educational programs regarding the ecological integrity of the Shuswap River Watershed.
- ❖ The Enderby and District Chamber of Commerce implemented the River Ambassadors Program; educating recreational users on how to be respectful within the waterways.
- ❖ The Lower Shuswap Stewardship Society has been working with the Ministry of Environment on a water quality monitoring program for the lower stretch of the river. This proposal has since been submitted to RDNO for funding from the Community Works Fund.
- ❖ Lastly the RDNO has partnered with the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program in submitting a funding request to carry out ground truthing on the Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory around the Lumby area.

### *Context*

It is important to note that on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2010 the Enderby Chamber of Commerce held a Shuswap River Stakeholders Consultation Meeting. At this meeting a wide range of issues and solutions were discussed primarily focused on river use and associated impacts such as parking, garbage management, toilet facilities and the number of users on the Lower Shuswap River. Various short-term solutions were suggested as well as the need for a long-term, integrated planning process.

In April of 2010 three planning options were brought forward to the Electoral Area Advisory Committee (EAAC) to address the planning issues in the Shuswap River watershed.

The first option was to address specific concerns around recreation uses and foreshore structures through pursuing boating restriction and regulation of structures and uses below the high water mark. This would be the means to have restrictions on speed and horse power imposed on the Shuswap River and zoning of the surface of the water to regulate some uses including buildings and structures such as docks and marinas.

The second option was developing a RDNO Shuswap River Action Strategy. This would entail participating in stakeholder driven initiatives and responding on an ad hoc basis to issues as they arise.

The third option was to develop an Integrated Shuswap River Watershed Plan. This would involve an in-depth planning process with significant public and agency engagement to establish a long-term vision for the watershed and to develop objectives and actions for its future management. The EAAC and the Regional Board decided this was the desirable option and on May 5, 2010 the Board of Directors directed Planning Staff to draft Terms of Reference for the preparation of an integrated watershed plan for the Shuswap River.

## Initial Stakeholders Workshop Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 at the Enderby Legion: Order of Events

Upon arrival participants were asked to sign in and were provided with lunch. The meeting was opened by Herman Halverson, Chair of the RDNO Board of Directors, and Laura Frank, RDNO Interim Sustainability Coordinator, welcoming the participants to the event. Laura Frank proceeded to outline the agenda and then introduced Joan Chess of the Fraser Basin Council who gave a presentation on “Sustainability Thinking” and how integrated community sustainability planning principles could be applied to the Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan.

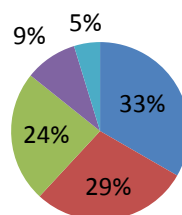
As outlined in her presentation, the smart planning principles are to promote long-term thinking which involves the need to be multi-generational. The plan should be broad in scope and look beyond typical sector boundaries. It should allow for integration which includes providing links between different types of plans and planning activities. The planning process should promote collaboration and engage community members and other partners. When it comes to public engagement and education an effort should be made to enhance public input and sharing of information. It is important that the plan outlines actions for implementation. Lastly, targets need to be set and results tracked in order to celebrate the progress that is being made and re-focus efforts.

### Exercise 1- Moving Towards a Vision Statement

Following the presentation on “Sustainability Thinking” Joan Chess introduced the first exercise which was designed to provide the wording and sentiment for the creation of a vision statement. Participants were asked to identify three words that described the river and watershed in its current state. They were then asked to identify three words to describe the river and watershed in the future. Lastly, participants were asked to write down one hope for the river and watershed’s future. The words identified in each step were compiled and coded into themes. Below are the results of the feedback obtained.

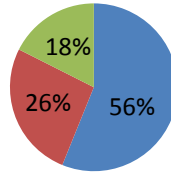
#### Words to Describe the Present Watershed

- Integral, Unique, Essential, Ultra Precious, Vital, Locally Important
- Endangered, Threatened
- Vast, Unmanaged, Challenged, Diverse
- Clean, World Class, Pristine
- Vulnerable, Fragile



## Words to Describe the Future Watershed

- Healthy, Clean, Worshipped, Respected, Un-polluted,
- Regulated, Protected, Managed
- Sustainable, Natural, Restored, Improved



### Participants Hopes for the Future

- ❖ Preserved and intact for all species.
- ❖ Available as safe, clean water for all users in perpetuity.
- ❖ No speed boats, no manure runoff, no more diversions.
- ❖ Ecologically durable.
- ❖ Top priority.
- ❖ The streams, rivers and lakes of the watershed will be maintained for all natural inhabitants.
- ❖ Protected, Clean & Useable for years to come.
- ❖ Respected amongst all river user groups, and ecologically preserved.
- ❖ Managed and respected by all users.
- ❖ Well managed, multiuse watershed where the quantity and quality of water remains at the highest possible level.
- ❖ Sustainability in quality and quantity.
- ❖ Healthy times ten.
- ❖ Shared, valued and protected.
- ❖ Sustainability through cooperative integrated resource management.

### Vision Statement

Based on the feedback obtained in the visioning exercise the following draft vision statement has been crafted:

***“The Shuswap River Watershed contains some of the most pristine waterways within the Regional District of the North Okanagan. There is a strong desire for a healthy, resilient watershed where people, wildlife and habitat thrive. Through the management of existing and future activities within the watershed the objective is to minimize the impacts on water quality & quantity and ensure environmental & community values are sustained”.***

If stakeholders feel that this draft vision statement does not fully capture the shared community sentiments for the river and watershed this statement can be refined through the solicitation of

feedback from stakeholders who were in attendance at this initial workshop as well as through comments obtained during the proposed public open houses in Phase One of the planning process.

### **Overview of the SRWSP Terms of Reference**

Following the first visioning exercise Laura Frank, RDNO Interim Sustainability Coordinator, proceeded to outline the draft terms of reference for the Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan. Two provincial river watershed management plan examples (the Kiskatinaw River Watershed Management Plan and the Kettle River Watershed Management Plan) were presented to outline and identify what has been done to date. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the terms of reference. The following topics were discussed:

- ❖ There was a suggestion that we need to focus on lands that fall outside of crown land.
- ❖ Desire to determine what the number one impact on the watershed is.
- ❖ Discussion about funding and it was mentioned that the Okanagan Basin Water Board might be a potential funding source.
- ❖ Lastly there was a discussion that both the Shuswap Lake Integrated Planning Process and the Okanagan Shuswap Land and Resource Management Plan vision statements be incorporated in the Terms of Reference of the Plan to help focus and identify what needs to be done within the Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan as well as provide context to the geographic scope and influence of other plans in the study area.

### **Exercise 2- Identification of Areas of Importance & Concern and Prioritization**

The Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan will be the first watershed management plan for the North Okanagan. The aim is to ensure meaningful participation from stakeholders to develop a vision, identify issues, goals, objectives and strategies that will help ensure the successful management of the Shuswap River and Watershed.

The second exercise provided an opportunity for stakeholders to break out into five groups, to identify areas of importance and concern within the watershed. Each group was provided with a map of the watershed and was asked to highlight areas of importance in green, areas of concern in red and lastly they were tasked with identifying their top three priority issues. Below is a summary of the feedback obtained.

#### **Areas of Interest/Importance**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ❖ Protection of the sources (all lower sources, tributaries and creeks on the river) | ❖ Fishing                                    |
| ❖ Hunting  | ❖ Quads and Snowmobiles                      |
| ❖ Recreational Opportunities   | ❖ Spawning Areas/Habitat                     |
| ❖ Water for growing food   | ❖ Maintaining good water quality and clarity |

## Areas of Concern

- ❖ Impacts from Pine Beetle (increased land erosion)
- ❖ Development
- ❖ Car bodies in creeks and river
- ❖ Impacts from house boats & speed boats
- ❖ Agricultural practices (pesticide use & manure management and impacts of runoff)
- ❖ Erosion
- ❖ Effluent and nutrient loading
- ❖ Low flows Fortune Creek
- ❖ ATV Damage
- ❖ Failure of Septic Systems
- ❖ Litter, plastics and cans in the waterways
- ❖ Need for fish ladder at Wilsey Dam

## Priority Issues

Table 1:

- 1) Negative Environmental Issues
- 2) Preservation of Recreation Areas
- 3) Sustainability of the Watershed

Table 2:

- 1) Wilsey Dam
- 2) Recreational Use (erosion problems)
- 3) Development on Mabel & Sugar Lake

Table 3:

- 1) Need for Environmental Indicators
- 2) Preserve & Protect Water Quality
- 3) Water for Agriculture

Table 4:

- 1) Identify critical spawning habitat
- 2) Restrictions on use (ATV's power boats)
- 3) Access throughout the Watershed

Table 5:

- 1) Water quantity (surface and ground)
- 2) Riparian Impacts
- 3) Intensification of water based recreation activities (Lower Shuswap River)

## Next Steps

The next steps in the planning process are to hold additional open houses for the public and stakeholders to provide additional feedback in the identification of areas of importance, concern and subsequent prioritization. One of the key goals of Phase One is to determine the current watershed condition and identify what data is needed to reach the desired future vision for the watershed. Based on the analysis of the data collected an issues identification paper will be prepared.

Following the presentation and discussion of the issues identification paper the planning process will move into Phase Two which involves the development of the plan.