



STAFF REPORT TO COMMITTEE

DATE OF REPORT November 14, 2023
MEETING TYPE & DATE Committee of the Whole of December 13, 2023
FROM: Environmental Services Division
Strategic Services Department
SUBJECT: Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Strategic
Partner
FILE: 1850-40

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to re-establish the Shawnigan Basin Society (SBS) as a strategic partner under the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program (DWWP) as per the November 12, 2020, Board approved DWWP Partnership Policy process.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

That it be recommended to the Board:

1. That the Shawnigan Basin Society (SBS) become a Strategic Partner for 2024 under the DWWP Partnership Policy with an annual contribution of \$10,000.
2. That staff review existing CVRD functions that are aligned with and can be better funded through the Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program and bring forward any associated bylaws that could be repealed.

BACKGROUND

The DWWP Partnership Policy approved in November of 2020, allows the CVRD to work collaboratively with community groups to meet the goals of the DWWP 10 year plan and workplan as approved by the Board while meeting the CVRD Purchasing Policy requirements. As the Function is not a granting function for activities outside of the program, the DWWP Strategy also allows in special circumstances the identification of Strategic Partners who will advance the strategy at a high level.

In previous years, the CVRD has partnered with the Shawnigan Basin Society to further the 10 year DWWP workplan objectives. Actions have included characterizations of surface and groundwater quantity and quality, development of water budgets, public education and communication and supporting watershed restoration.

ANALYSIS

Shawnigan Basin Society

Staff recommend that the CVRD support the SBS as a strategic partner in 2024 under the DWWP Partnership Policy for a one year term, with possible future years to be considered by the Board at a future date.

In accordance with the Partnership Policy and the criteria of the DWWP program, the SBS submitted a proposal for consideration in 2023 which included funding to support completing a Watershed Management Plan for Shawnigan Creek Watershed, assisting with water quality monitoring of lakes and streams, conducting ecological surveys for forests, developing a strategy for cold water milfoil removal and encouraging relationship building and reconciliation objectives with Malahat Nation.

The proposed partnership with the SBS furthers the CVRD DWWP program ten-year workplan objectives approved by the Board by:

- Supporting resilient watersheds, aquifers and aquatic ecosystems through the development of watershed planning characterization of surface and groundwater quantity and quality;
- Building strong partnerships working together with Malahat Nation and community stewards to ensure healthy watersheds; and,
- Preparing for climate change effects on the region's water resources through education and communication.

Strategic partnership is possible when entities can further the objectives of the DWWP. As alignment between the work plans of entities and the DWWP objectives may change over time, functions which were established to provide funding to a specific entity at a specific moment in time are not suitable for providing longer term financial support to entities. Conversely, the DWWP function is the appropriate function to provide financial support with the Shawnigan Basin Society because the DWWP Bylaw 4202 establishes the service to "Provide grants and financial support to entities approved by the Board for the purpose of water and watershed protection". Further, the DWWP Bylaw is supported by the Board approved Strategic Partnership Policy which enables the granting of funds in alignment with the program objectives.

Based on the above note relating to previously established functions, it would be recommended that the Board direct Staff to review any existing CVRD functions that have in the past had an alignment to drinking water and watershed, and that Staff investigate possible repeal of associated bylaws. The objective would be to ensure continued alignment CVRD watershed management and protection plans, which is provided through the DWWP service.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funding to support the partnerships would be within the Strategic Partnerships line item of \$150,000 in the proposed 2024 budget for function 532 – Drinking Water and Watershed Protection, with an amount of \$10,000 going to the SBS, for only the 2024 budget year. \$82,000 has already been allocated from this line item including amounts of \$77,000 going to the Cowichan Watershed Society and \$5,000 to the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

The partnerships will be communicated widely by the SBS via multiple means.

STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

This partnership is in line with the DWWP ten-year strategy at a high level as well as the CVRD Strategic Plan area to manage current and future demand for water resources in ways that recognize and respect resource limits and the needs of our natural environment.

Referred to (upon completion):

- Community Services (*Cowichan Community Centre, Cowichan Lake Recreation, South Cowichan Recreation, Arts & Culture, Facilities & Transit*)
- Corporate Services (*Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legislative Services*)
- Operations (*Utilities, Parks & Trails, Recycling & Waste Management*)
- Land Use Services (*Community Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Development Services, Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement*)
- Strategic Services (*Communications & Engagement, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Environmental Services*)

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Reviewed for form and content and approved for submission to the Committee:

Resolution:

Corporate Officer

Financial Considerations:

Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A – CVRD Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Partnership Policy
- Attachment B – Shawnigan Basin Society Proposal and Letter
- Attachment C – CVRD Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Bylaw