

The Shuswap Watershed Project
MEDIA RELEASE
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Groundbreaking Shuswap Watershed Project Launched

A groundbreaking project to raise awareness and improve understanding of the Shuswap watershed was launched today in Salmon Arm, with the release of a large format poster that includes the first map ever made of the entire Shuswap region. “This is a win-win partnership for the watershed - it raises awareness, and it has built collaboration amongst many groups,” said Ron Oszust, Columbia-Shuswap Regional District (CSRD) Chair. “Finally Shuswap citizens can see and understand the full extent of their watershed thanks to the cooperative efforts of so many governmental and non-governmental organizations and local businesses,” explained project leader Jim Cooperman, president of the Shuswap Environmental Action Society (SEAS).

“I am pleased to be able to support this project. The poster and this project will help residents to better understand how we are all inter-connected and the need to commit to collective improvements in managing this vital Shuswap Watershed as recommended by the Shuswap Lake Integrated Planning Process (SLIPP),” said Ted Bacigalupo, CSRD Vice-Chair and Area C Director. “This project will add to the knowledge base of the people. Through knowledge comes empowerment, engagement and respect for each other and the environment they share,” added Oszust.

Three thousand copies of the poster have been printed for free distribution in school classrooms throughout the Shuswap and for sale to the public in local stores. As well, the project includes the production of a Resource Guide that will provide teachers and students with ideas and information that will support their use of the poster. The Resource Guide is being developed by retired educator Kim Fulton who is also the watershed project educational coordinator. As Kim explains, “the overall educational goal is to help protect, preserve and restore the Shuswap watershed and ecosystems.”

With the release of the posters, the Shuswap Watershed Project team also announces plans for “Celebrate the Shuswap” week, April 18-24, 2010. This week of activities will include displays, tree planting, litter cleanup, storm-drain marking, talks, hikes, and two major public events. On Earth Day, April 22nd there will be an evening of visual and musical entertainment at the Salmar Classic. On the following day there will be a Watershed Conference at the Salmon Arm High School that will include presentations, displays, readings of the award winning essays and a free, all-ages dance to Old Man’s Beard. A number of contests kick off today, including the “Song for the Shuswap” song writing contest and the student essay and art-poster contests.

The Shuswap Watershed Project is being launched to improve public understanding of Shuswap geography. Information on the poster and in the manual includes: the size, shape and extent of the watershed; the values present in it; how the watershed functions; and potential human caused impacts and threats. “This project is a step in helping us all understand that our actions influence water, wherever we live in the Shuswap watershed,” said Sarah Weaver of the Living by Water Project. King Campbell, with Ducks Unlimited Canada said, “We understand the importance of connecting the public to local

geography and habitats. The Watershed Project will be valuable for demonstrating the importance of wetlands, waterfowl, wildlife, and water resources to Shuswap communities.”

“The Shuswap Lakes are the life blood of the Secwepemc and have nurtured and nourished our people down through the ages and now they are polluted and the salmon are fast swimming towards extinction,” explained Dr. Ron Ignace, SFU professor and the Lakes Division political coordinator. “Meanwhile the almighty dollar beats on to a misbegotten beat that there is an endless supply of fresh water to support continuous growth. I pray that this collective effort to shine a spot light on Shuswap Lakes is just the beginning,” added Ignace.

Warren Bell, president of Wetland Alliance: The Ecological Response, noted, “Our group has been deeply involved in watershed-related work since its inception. But focusing on the watershed as a whole, which this project will do, is a huge step forward for all of us towards rational management of our precious water resource. It unites all our efforts around a single, critical natural feature.” Bell added, “The beauty and significance of the two-dimensional image of the watershed -- simultaneously abstract, and yet perfectly down-to-earth -- is inspiring in itself.”

The watershed project was made possible through a partnership between SEAS, Okanagan School District #83, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, provincial government ministries, the Columbia-Shuswap and North Okanagan Regional Districts, the Living by Water Project, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Shuswap Trail Alliance, Mediability and Silvatech Consulting Ltd. As well, the project has received funding support from a diversity of local governments, First Nations, conservation groups and businesses (see the complete list below).

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Posters will go on sale to the public on February 25th at the following retail outlets:

Sicamous - True Value V & S

Enderby – Enderby and District Museum

Salmon Arm – Buckingham Palace Bookstore and Wickett Business Services

Sorrento – Beryl’s Books and Beans

Lumby – Lumby Health Foods

Cherryville – Franks Store and the Cherryville Emporium

Scotch Creek – Super-Valu

Chase – People’s Drug Mart

Vernon – Valhalla Pure

Kamloops – Second Glance Books and Valhalla Pure

Shuswap Watershed Poster Project Partners and Supporters

North Okanagan-Shuswap School District #83
Salmon Arm Secondary School
Ministry of Environment
Integrated Land Management Bureau
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Silvatech Consulting Ltd.
Living by Water
Shuswap Trail Alliance
Askews Foods
Columbia Shuswap Regional District
North Okanagan Regional District
Thompson-Nicola Regional District
Shuswap Community Foundation
Mediability Corporate Communications
Shuswap Water Action Team
Fraser Basin Council
Village of Chase
City of Salmon Arm
Kingfisher Interpretive Centre
Mascon Cable Systems
Adams Lake Indian Band
Neskonlith Indian Band
Splots'in First Nation
Ducks Unlimited Canada
Salmon Arm Bay Nature Enhancement Society
Shuswap Naturalists
Wetland Alliance: The Ecological Response (WA:TER)
Shuswap Environmental Action Society