

2024 RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Accomplishments

Detailed Highlights by Theme



Water Awareness and Stewardship

- ✓ Supported **nine community-led watercourse restoration and monitoring** projects via stewardship seedfunding: Little Qualicum Estuary restoration and research, Gabriola Creeks, Grandon Creek hydrometric equipment support, mapping and assessment in Beach, Grandon, and Whiskey Creeks, wetland enhancement and education in Deep Bay, understanding hydrological connectivity in the French Creek estuary lands, stream mapping in French Creek and Sandy Creek, and Community-based Flow Monitoring (multiple sites).
- ✓ Initiated an update to the regional publication “**State of our Aquifers**” **newsletter** with the development of an associated groundwater-focused Get Involved Page for mail-out and launch in early 2025
- ✓ Developed communications material on **Climate-Informed Water Supply and Best Practices** in the region in partnership with the RDN’s Energy and Sustainability department and regional water purveyors (in progress)
- ✓ Offered **workshops and activities** to engage the community in water stewardship education:
 - 5 workshops on topics including rainwater harvesting, stream stewardship and WellSmart for well owners;
 - 12 School Watershed Field trips in partnership with City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville and Mosaic Forest Management;
 - Brought the Team WaterSmart booth and education materials to 22 community events across the region.
 - Visited 6 summer camps and classrooms for hands-on learning experiences
- ✓ Continued the **Youth Ambassadors program** with a focus on water and climate action, with high school students / eco-clubs, in partnership with RDN Energy and Sustainability Dept. and Parks Dept.
- ✓ Completed the installation of the RDN Admin Building **Demonstration Raingarden** project to support innovative rainwater management education and infrastructure and to build capacity within the DWWP to offer support for other raingarden projects across the region.
- ✓ Offered **Residential Irrigation Check-ups** to high water users across the region, providing 18 in-person visits and distributing education material to additional residents who observed high water use on their properties.
- ✓ Initiated the development of RDN specific information to be accessed on the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC’s **Landscape Water Calculator** to support water smart irrigation and planting plans and support future Residential Irrigation Check-Up reporting.
- ✓ Provided **over 100 rebates** to residents including rainwater harvesting, wellhead upgrades, well water testing, irrigation and soil improvements.

- ✓ Continued to host the **Stewardship Network Get Involved Page** and the annual **Community Watershed Monitoring Network Results Session Luncheon** to facilitate networking among water stewardship organizations to build capacity and promote better coordination of watershed protection activities.
- ✓ Supported the delivery of over 85 curriculum-connected **School Freshwater Stewardship lessons** to schools in SD68 & SD69 in partnership with Nanaimo Area Land Trust, for 55 classrooms across the region. This included 5 capstone stewardship projects.



Water Information and Science

- ✓ Completed the 14th year of **surface water quality sampling with the RDN Community Watershed Monitoring Network (CWMN)**; this includes 14 trained stewardship groups in over 27 watersheds.
- ✓ Initiated a **Strategic Planning Process** for the Community Watershed Monitoring Network to refresh program direction and integrate water monitoring across the region that involves the RDN and community partners.
- ✓ Integrated **pH monitoring** in data collection through the CWMN including the purchase of equipment and training stewardship volunteers.
- ✓ Completed the 11th year of **groundwater monitoring** via the RDN Volunteer Observation Well Network with a total of 32 sites in 14 aquifers.
- ✓ Reported on **Regional Groundwater Level Trends Pre-Summer 2024** and shared the analysis with the Board and Water Purveyors.
- ✓ Initiated the **Cedar-Yellowpoint-Cassidy – Phase 3 Water Budget Model** to assess aquifer stress and predict groundwater level change given climate, water demand and land use change scenarios.
- ✓ Supported Vancouver Island University (VIU) / Mt. Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute to continue the multi-year **wetland monitoring** citizen science research project.
- ✓ Supported ongoing **Tire Wear Toxin Monitoring** (multiple sites) through BC Conservation Foundation’s monitoring network.
- ✓ Continued **lake level monitoring** for Holden and Quennell Lakes to support data collection and water budget studies in the Cedar-Yellowpoint region.



Water-centric Planning and Policy Support

- ✓ Completed an update to the **Watering Restrictions Framework** including a RDN Water Conservation Bylaw Amendment and coordination with regional water purveyors.
- ✓ Supported Long Range Planning’s Energy and Sustainability development of the **RDN’s Climate Action Plan 2026-2029**
- ✓ Supported Long Range Planning in the review / update of the **Area F OCP** from a water-centric lens, including draft DPAs for Aquifer Protection and Freshwater and Fish Habitat.

- ✓ Supported **review of 10+ development referrals for Planning** with water related information.
- ✓ Continued the **Ecological Accounting Process Partnership** (year 2 – French Creek) with Vancouver Island University and Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI), advancing work on valuing natural commons.
- ✓ Communicated the results of the **French Creek Water Budget** to the Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship and formally request Provincial leadership in water planning for the areas included in the scope of the report.



Water Collaboration

- ✓ Convened the multi-stakeholder **DWWP Technical Advisory Committee quarterly**, with meeting minutes reported to the Board.
- ✓ Convened monthly check-in meetings with **regional water purveyors** between April – October to communicate about watering restrictions etc.
- ✓ Participated on the **Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable** bi-monthly meetings with multiple stakeholders.
- ✓ Participated on **Mid Island Stewardship Caucus** monthly meetings in collaboration with multiple environmental stewardship groups within the RDN.
- ✓ Participated in the **Integrated Rebuilding Planning for the Nanaimo River Summer Chinook** led by DFO / Snuneymuxw partnership (to continue in 2025/26)