

2025 RDN Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program Accomplishments

Detailed Highlights by Theme



Water Awareness and Stewardship

- Supported **seven community-led watercourse restoration and monitoring** projects via Stewardship Seedfunding: Cottle Creek salmon habitat study, Gabriola creeks education and restoration, stream mapping on five streams: French Creek, Beach Creek, Grandon Creek, Whiskey Creek and Sandy Creek, community-led observation well monitoring pilot, community-based flow monitoring at multiple sites, and a hydrological assessment on the French Creek Nature Preserve.
- Completed and distributed the educational publication “**Groundwater Connections**” mailed out to all groundwater-dependent residents in the region and launched an associated groundwater-focused Get Involved Page.
- Offered **workshops and activities** to engage the community in water stewardship education, including:
 - 5 workshops on topics including rainwater harvesting, WaterSmart gardening and WellSmart for well owners;
 - 13 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 11 community events across the region;
 - Visited 6 summer camps and classrooms for hands-on learning experiences.
- Received the **Irrigation Industry Association of BC 2025 Community Impact Award** and offered rebates for water sustainability-focused training to irrigation professionals in the RDN.
- Shared communications material on the regional **Climate-Informed Water Supply and Best Practices** in partnership with the RDN’s Energy and Sustainability department and regional water purveyors, including the RDN’s Climate-Smart Water Report.
- Provided **technical and education-focused presentations** to various partner organizations, associations, and community groups including: the BC Water and Waste Association Annual Conference, Islands Trust Sustainability Speaker Series, Pacific Salmon Foundation Monitoring Workshop, and VIU Masters of Community Planning Program.
- Continued the **Youth Ambassadors program** with a focus on water and climate action, with high school students / eco-clubs, in partnership with RDN’s Energy and Sustainability and Parks departments, including leading four youth-focused community events.
- Developed and distributed a **WaterSmart Irrigation mail-out** to the top 100 water users in the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, and RDN Water Service areas, for a total of 300 distributed education packages.
- Completed 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 program reporting.

- Provided **over 75 rebates** to residents including rainwater harvesting, wellhead upgrades, well water testing, and irrigation and soil improvements
- Continued to host the **Stewardship Network Get Involved Page** to facilitate networking among water stewardship organizations to build capacity and promote better coordination of watershed protection activities.
- Supported the delivery of over 155 curriculum-connected **School Freshwater Stewardship lessons** to schools in SD68 and SD69 in partnership with Nanaimo and Area Land Trust. This included 27 stewardship project activities and 4 Junior Streamkeeper meetings.



Water Information and Science

- Completed the 15th year of **surface water quality sampling with the RDN Community Watershed Monitoring Network (CWMN)**; this includes 14 trained stewardship groups in over 29 watersheds.
- Continued the **Strategic Planning Process** for the CWMN to refresh program direction and integrate water monitoring across the region that involves the RDN and community partners.
 - Hosted three streamside dialogues with community watershed groups to better understand and integrate perspectives and priorities in strategic planning.
- Partnered with community stewards, BC Conservation Foundation, and the Provincial flow network to install a new hydrometric station for **flow monitoring** on Nanoose Creek.
- Completed the 12th year of **groundwater monitoring** via the RDN Volunteer Observation Well Network with a total of 32 sites in 16 aquifers.
- Reported on **Regional Groundwater Level Trends Pre-Summer 2025** and shared the analysis with the Board, Regional Water Service Providers, and private well owners.
- 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 (for completion in 2026).
- Initiated an analysis of **biological monitoring** using CABIN data from 24 streams across the region.
- 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 with equipment support and outreach events.
- Completed the 8th year of **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

- Supported the initiation of an **Electoral Area Servicing Study** to support RDN Electoral Area Official Community Plan updates by providing context for aquifer protection and rainwater management considerations.
- Supported the development of a **Proof of Water Policy** with RDN Current Planning.
- Presented to the **Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) Climate Leadership Committee** on DWWP "data-to-action" approaches for integrating watershed monitoring into planning and policy.
- Supported integration of Community Watershed Monitoring Network data into **City of Nanaimo Monitoring Strategy** for City Plan implementation.
- Supported **review of 10+ development referrals for Planning** with water related information.
- Continued the **Ecological Accounting Process Partnership** (year 3 – Holden Creek) with Vancouver Island University and Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Region Research Institute (MABRRI), advancing work on valuing natural commons.
- Participated in RDN Wastewater Services-led W3C workshop to initiate development of **Inflow & Infiltration Strategy** that integrates rainwater management considerations.



Water Collaboration

- Convened the multi-stakeholder **DWWP Technical Advisory Committee quarterly**, with meeting minutes reported to the RDN Board.
- Convened monthly check-in meetings with **regional water purveyors** between April and October to communicate and coordinate watering restrictions and communications on water conservation.
- Participated on the **Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable** bi-monthly meetings with multiple stakeholders.
- Participated on the **Mid Island Stewardship Caucus** monthly meetings in collaboration with multiple environmental stewardship groups within the RDN.
- Participated in the **Integrated Rebuilding Plan for the Nanaimo River Summer Chinook** led by DFO / Snuneymuxw First Nation partnership.
- Participated on the interagency **Nanaimo River Flow Committee** led by DFO and Snuneymuxw First Nation.
- Convened a multi-jurisdictional working group including RDN Planning, Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, City of Nanaimo, and others to develop outreach and planning solutions regarding **Aquifer 211 (Benson Foothills)** groundwater levels.
- Participated in the **Cowichan Valley Regional District's** Drinking Water & Watershed Protection Program Technical Advisory Team.