



Founded in 2001, the Bella Coola Watershed Conservation Society info@bellacoolawatershed.com is a non-profit, non-partisan organization devoted to the protection, restoration and enhancement of fish and fish habitat within the watersheds of the Central Coast.

The Society Recognizes that all activities undertaken within the watersheds, both aquatic based and land based, play a significant role in the success of fish stocks and are therefore of interest to the Society and its members.

The Society also recognizes that certain oceanic activities can have a considerable impact on the fish stocks and fish habitat, and for that reason are of importance to the Society and its members.

The Bella Coola Watershed Conservation Society acts as a fundamental center for existing interests and organizations and employs a variety of resources to achieve its primary goals.

- Public awareness and education
- Moral and financial support of related organizations and activities
- Research, data collection and information exchange
- Development and implementation of projects pertaining to fish habitats
- Compilation of watershed historical data into a database so that it is accessible to the public by establishing a resource center

Therefore, with respect to the proposed 'Water Sustainability Act,' BCWCS agree that the following objectives are of paramount importance:

- Protecting stream health and aquatic environments by ensuring environmental flow needs are considered. In the Bella Coola/Atnarko watershed, reassessment and redefinition of baseline environmental flow needs may be necessary, given the effects of headwater deforestation, climate change and floods of the past decade.
- Considering water in land use decisions. A watershed based water allocation plan, wherein water use objectives are defined and a Water Sustainability Plan developed for the Bella Coola/Atnarko watershed is consistent with the objectives of the BCWCS.
- In the Bella Coola/Atnarko watershed and other Central Coast watersheds, groundwater seepage during periods of low flow is vital to the survival of many species of fish and the wellbeing of fish and the wellbeing of the aquatic environment that supports them. Therefore, the use of and protecting groundwater is vitally important now and may become critically important in the future, as glaciers on the Central Coast recede due to

climate change . From time to time this may necessitate temporary water restrictions to maintain adequate environment flows.

With an extensive data base and ability to collect and compile water flow and use data in the Bella Coola/Atnarko and other Central Coast watersheds, the BCWCS is well positioned to contribute to the scientific database required to instruct water use decisions, particularly during periods of water shortage.

- Area based water use and conservation regulations specific to the Central Coast and Bella Coola/Atnarko watersheds will provide an opportunity for local engagement, both in developing and implementing such regulations. With our extensive data base and history of professionalism the BCWCS can be a valuable resource in this process, given that “More support and trust needs to be given to the NGO’s that are implementing water monitoring programs aimed at protecting watersheds and water resources in the long term.”

It is hoped that passage and implementation of the Water Sustainability Act will enable the BCWCS to provide meaningful local input that will lead to better and sustained protection of Central Coast water resources and aquatic ecosystems.

Board of Directors

BCWCS