



Media Release

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For immediate release

RDCK Watershed Governance Initiative Phase 2 – Data Collation and Mapping Pilot

Nelson, BC: The RDCK has completed Phase 2 of the [Watershed Governance Initiative \(WGI\)](#): Data Collation and Mapping and continued relationship building.

From May to August 2021, following months of planning and continued relationship building, the Watershed Governance Initiative team piloted the Data Collation and Mapping project to create a user-friendly map to access existing data related to watersheds. The 16 weeks of work included research, surveys, interviews, and numerous meetings with community groups and watershed stewards.

“The WGI Data Collation and Mapping project sought to provide free, centralized, relatively easy to use, relevant and up to date watershed data,” said Paris Marshall Smith, RDCK Sustainability Planner. “We met with groups from across the region, who provided time, energy, stories, and information about their experiences of protecting their watersheds. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with RDCK residents. We look forward to continued collaboration as we navigate the pressures faced in RDCK watersheds including governance, development, climate crisis, geo-hazards, industrial activity and the unknown and compounded.”

The WGI Data Collation and Mapping project has provided:

1. Increased understanding of the great number and diversity of drinking water systems in the RDCK;
2. Increased understanding of the pressures (governance, development, climate crisis, unknown and compounded, geo-hazard, industrial) facing watersheds;
3. Increased relationships with those who are working to protect their watersheds and understanding of the challenges encountered;
4. The creation of the [Watershed Governance Initiative Web Map](#) to collect and display existing data; and,
5. The creation of the [Watershed Governance Initiative Story Map](#) to demonstrate how the web map data can be used by local community groups.

“The RDCK is a landscape of great beauty, comprised of many creeks and watersheds. As watersheds naturally evolve and are affected by resource extraction and climate change, it is critical to protect the long term health and safety of not only our communities, but also of the land,” said Aimee Watson, RDCK Board Chair. “In addition to the protection of drinking water, watershed concerns such as slope stability, wildfire resiliency and ecosystem health must be included in our planning and decision making. The [RDCK Watershed Governance Initiative](#) is a multi-year initiative aimed at understanding the context of each unique watershed while helping us, as a local government, better understand how to protect and ensure a healthy future for watersheds and the ecosystems within them.”

The success of this pilot will lead to Phase 3 of the Watershed Governance Initiative with a focus on continued relationship building, planning, mapping and monitoring as outlined below:

1. Engage with the First Nations whose traditional lands lie within the Regional District;
2. Continue to support community led watershed mapping;
3. Support a natural asset management pilot project for RDCK water systems;
4. Support regional water monitoring; and,
5. Support community led Nature-Based Planning.

Phase 1 focused on building organizational capacity and determining the scope of project. In the spring of 2020, the [Regional Watershed Governance Initiative Report](#) was produced, providing guidance to the RDCK of its role in watershed governance.

More information can be found at <https://www.rdck.ca/EN/main/services/sustainability-environmental-initiatives/water.html> or by reaching out to **Paris Marshall Smith** pmarshallsmith@rdck.bc.ca.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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