



Following are some highlights of the Fraser Basin Council's work in the Fraser Valley.

Lower Mainland Flood Management Strategy highlights

- FBC LMFMS team is compiling ideas received this summer from flood strategy partners to develop the details and framework for objectives, desired outcomes, recommendations and performance measures for the Flood Strategy. A working group also met over summer to fine-tune the vision, framework and content.
- Regarding a LM flood management governance body, the FBC flood strategy team meet with First Nations members of the LMFMS leadership committee in September, and later with the Provincial government caucus; however due to the election, the flood governance body discussion is suspended for the time being.
- Flooding, flood management and the flood strategy were all part of an exhibit at the Port Coquitlam Heritage Museum and Archives in July 2020.
- The LMFMS team launched the *FloodWise* website at floodwise.ca last month – please have a look! The site is full of resources for the public, educators and local agencies on various aspects of flooding in the Lower Mainland and rising sea levels on the coast, ranging from a Flood 101 link on what causes floods, to impacts of floods, history, toolkits, reports, videos, regional plans, and approaches to flood proofing, prevention and minimizing risk. More will be added as Lower Mainland strategic plan progresses, and as FBC gathers flood strategy details through the Provincial Flood Strategies Initiative it now also oversees.
- The Lower Mainland Flood Risk Assessment final results will be shared with partner organizations after reporting to funders is finished. Plans to support a Mainland Coast Salish Flood Risk Assessment in collaboration with Kwantlen First Nation and the Emergency Planning Secretariat continue to be detailed.
- Through the summer, LMFMS workshops were held with First Nations, including 23 people from 16 First Nations communities and organizations.
- FBC flood team members presented to about 55 people at Understanding Risk BC 2020 to share highlights of strategy development and to seek input on the vision, framework and flood risk profile (Sept 22); and presented to about 20 people at Greater Vancouver Gateway Council two days later on the progress, next steps, and proposed approaches to governance and funding (Sept 24).

Fraser Valley Illegal Dumping Alliance (FVIDA)

- On behalf of the FVIDA group, FBC supports steps by the City of Chilliwack to develop ways to address the burning of pallets on the Fraser River shoreline at Gill Road and other remote wilderness and park areas.
- The FVIDA network was directed to help Cultus and Columbia Valley residents clean up two abandoned homeless camps in the Liumchen Creek area southeast of Cultus Lake.
- With funding from RBC's Tech for Nature fund, FBC weekly updates the Swim Guide app to alert the public on water quality conditions at freshwater beaches in the region, based on sampling data from Fraser Health. The app project is in collaboration with Swim, Drink, Fish Canada, which supports FVIDA through its Fraser Riverkeeper program. While swimming season is over, FVIDA encourages public members to use the Swim Guide app to report on illegal dumping and other updates at popular waterfront destinations.

Fraser River heritage status report

- Fraser Basin Council secured \$21,000 from Parks Canada and BC Parks in September to research and create a 10-year review of the Fraser River's heritage status, first designated as such by Canadian Heritage Rivers System in 1998. FBC wrote the first 10-year Fraser River report for the CHRS program, which designates nominated rivers in Canada for significant recreational, historic and natural values. The next CHRS report will review conditions in the Fraser, its current and future challenges, and human activities taken to ensure continued integrity of the river values. FBC will complete the second decadal report by April 2021.

Cultus Lake Stewards

- **Canada Goose numbers** – Adding Canada goose eggs, the decrease in lake visitors, and information signs and brochures seem to have reduced the numbers of geese around Cultus Lake this year. Under the guidance of

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FVRD Director Taryn Dixon, CLASS members aided the goose committee with adding 51 eggs in 8 or more nests in early spring, a series of goose counts through the year, and distribution of *Do Not Feed the Geese* pamphlets to lake residents and visitors. BC Parks and Cultus Lake Park erected signs advising visitors to not feed the geese; CLASS members report visitors aren't feeding geese as before, which resulted in fewer geese staying in park areas. With GIA funds from FVRD, CLASS will print and distribute more brochures for the next spring season. This work may be a model to follow for goose control in other FVRD area parks.

- **Water clarity testing** – Through the spring and summer, a CLASS volunteer took weekly water clarity readings (Secchi readings) in Cultus Lake. The data is sent to the BC Lake Stewardship Society, which collects data from lakes and stewardships around BC to monitor clarity changes in freshwater – due to algae, silt, invasive plants – as part of its province-wide BC Lake Stewardship and Monitoring Program (BCLSM), in partnership with the Ministry of Environment. For the second year in a row now, CLASS has contributed to this baseline data, which helps monitor changes that will be used in lake health management around the province.
- **Invasive plants** – Starting last year and continuing this spring, CLASS coordinates its volunteers to help the Fraser Valley Invasive Species Society secure mats in Sweltzer Creek to smother yellow flag iris patches, or to dig up plants that are accessible. Cultus Lake Park crews take away the debris. Our volunteers also help remove YFI, butterfly bush, tansy, ivy and blackberry from sites around the lake; they also locate Japanese knotweed for FVISS to treat. Similar work parties continue this fall, at times in conjunction with Cultus Lake Park.
- **Cultus Lake relief map** – Earlier this year, a couple CLASS volunteers took a three-dimensional relief map of Cultus Lake out of storage and spent many hours reviving it with a fresh coat of paint and updated labels. The map, originally a Chilliwack Heritage project, is now on the wall at the Cultus Lake Park Board visitors building for the community to enjoy. If the open sign is on the door, please take a look!
- **Smallmouth Bass** – A BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change team continues its mitigation program to monitor, control and hopefully remove smallmouth bass from Cultus Lake, where the invasive fish pose a significant threat to trout and salmon fry and pygmy sculpin. CLASS and FBC assist with local knowledge, angling and communication.
 - In May the field team identified more than 60 SMB nests at the east end of the lake, and destroyed any eggs and juveniles found.
 - Local anglers caught about 30 bass that were implanted with receiver tags and released. Their movements will help the team locate rock nests in the spring. One challenge that has emerged is that some anglers may be tampering with receivers, or not reporting tagged fish, possibly to undermine the mitigation efforts.
 - The 150 bass caught for dissection show they eat crayfish, sculpin and other small fish; samples are under further analysis at a genomics lab.
 - CLASS/FBC will play a key role in engaging and educating the public to support this program.

Youth participation

The FBC youth program has recruited a new crop of 14 young people from around BC to engage their respective communities in sustainability actions in the coming year. Young adults aged 16 to 30 from the Fraser Valley are invited to join. See the newly launched website, at fbcyouthprogram.ca for more on how FBC supports young people to become sustainability leaders in their communities.

Covid-19 response continues – While some FBC employees continue to work from home, others are returning to Vancouver and regional offices in a modified fashion. This provides flexibility for FBC employees and supports their mental and physical well being as we continue to be impacted by pandemic restrictions. The FBC team continues to use virtual options to keep in touch with partners, directors and colleagues. On October 7 and 8, FBC held its annual fall board meeting on Zoom with more than 50 participants including board members and employees, following a similarly successful virtual June board meeting. Topics included updates on the Mt. Polley and Big Bar events, their impacts on Fraser salmon, and the incredible efforts to repair the Big Bar damage.

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