

Statement as to eligibility to apply for Electoral Area Grant-in-Aid Funds

CLASS is a registered Charity based the FVRD Electoral Area H. Directors and members of CLASS live and volunteer in the Cultus Lake watershed and the charity is in good financial standing. We engage science, traditional knowledge and social/recreational values to discover the nature, heritage and value of Cultus Lake.

Charitable Number BN 77268 9949 RR0001

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Project or purpose for which you require assistance

- CLASS will use the Grant-in-Aid funds to once again supplement unfunded expenses of the Smallmouth Bass (SMB) mitigation work this spring and summer. These expenses for divers to disrupt SMB nests will include travel, diving services, gas (for volunteer boat use) and other sundry items.
- Funds will also go to print our outreach materials (posters, sandwich boards) needed to educate the public about the negative effects of invasive Smallmouth Bass on the lake's at-risk species (Pygmy Sculpin), and threatened fish species (Cultus Lake Sockeye Salmon), and instructions on what people should do with caught SMB specimens. These materials will be used on community bulletin boards and the sandwich boards will be used at community events and at public spaces.
- As CLASS works to increase awareness in the broader community, funds will be used to purchase materials and audio-visual aids for use when speaking to service clubs, other concerned community groups, the school and at Cultus Lake Community Association meetings.
- A portion of the funds will be applied to site rental, refreshments, and printing of materials costs related to a CLASS public information.

Statement as to how these funds will benefit the community or an aspect of the community.

- Cultus Lake is critical habitat for diverse flora and fauna that depend on it; in particular, two native fish species, the endemic Cultus Lake Pygmy Sculpin (SARA, threatened, COSEWIC, endangered), and Cultus Lake sockeye salmon (COSEWIC, endangered). The Cultus Lake pygmy sculpin and sockeye salmon are under threat from changing water and climate conditions, and challenges to their viability are further aggravated by the willful introduction of predatory, prolific invasive species such as the Smallmouth Bass (SMB).
- The mitigation of the illegally introduced smallmouth bass will be on-going as we recognize that they are thriving and it's unlikely they can be eradicated completely from Cultus Lake. CLASS is working closely with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the BC government Department of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship on this project to mitigate the population.

This year volunteers will continue to search for nests, provide data on nest locations, and destroy nests with eggs or catch and destroy fry if they are present.

1. Benefits to the community and the ecosystem:

- Help CLASS volunteers to support the program in the location, eradication and monitoring of SMB nests, track the invasive species' movement, thus increasing the chances of survival of other fish in Cultus Lake.
- Enable CLASS to provide educational material for the public on what to do if they catch SMB, as well as why introducing invasive species can be devastating for local native fish species and ecosystem diversity;
- The resulting research and data will provide additional information about the most effective methods to control the SMB population in Cultus Lake for future mitigation programs.
- The research obtained to date through the Cultus Lake SMB program will assist lake communities elsewhere in the Fraser Valley Regional District, in the Lower Mainland and elsewhere in B.C. who may be dealing with invasive SMB or other fish species;
- CLASS' work on the SMB mitigation project helps fulfill its mandate to be a trusted stewardship partner in the Cultus community, and will enable CLASS to continue its role as a part of a community team that will protect Cultus Lake for future generations.

2. Outreach and engagement of the Cultus community

- CLASS directors are embarking on a series of presentations to review CLASS volunteers' work in the community. These include providing education regarding lake science at the Pikeminnow Derby, Cultus Days, and other community events. CLASS volunteers are also involved in hands-on work, locating and removing invasive plants, counting Canada geese, locating smallmouth bass, and monitoring lake water clarity, and working with Cultus Lake Community School students. This year CLASS Directors will speak to service clubs and to other Cultus Lake community organizations.

CLASS has developed a good relationship with the CLCSA (Cultus Lake School) through the *Fish on the Fence* project, building bird houses, supplying water testing kits, and student involvement in invasive plant species removal. These will continue this year and there are possible areas of expansion offering field trips to identify invasive plants.

- The information programs will seek to inform local residents, engage more participants in CLASS activities, and gain suggestions and ideas for CLASS to pursue in coming years.