

Fraser Salmon & Watersheds Program



Fraser Basin Council



2009/10 FINAL REPORT

FSWP File Number* 07350-35/FSWP 09 LR 75 PG

* Please use the FSWP File Number provided in previous FSWP project correspondence.

1. Project Information

1.1. Project Title

Nicola Water Use Management Plan – Plan Evaluation and Approval

1.2. Proponent's Legal Name

Nicola Watershed Community Round Table Society

1.3. Project Location

Nicola watershed

1.4. Contact for this report

Name: Elizabeth Salomon-de-Friedberg

Phone: 250-378-4087

Email: esalomon@mail.ocis.net

1.5 Funding Amount

Original Approved Grant Amount:	Total FSWP Expenditures:	Final Invoice Amount:	Final Non-FSWP leveraging, including cash and in-kind:
\$33,290.00	\$33,290.00	\$6,658.00	\$11,285.88

2. Project Summary

Please provide a single paragraph describing your project, its objectives, and the results. As this summary may be used in program communications, clearly state the issue(s) that were addressed and avoid overly technical descriptions. Maximum 300 words.

This project consisted of presentations on the draft water use management plan for the Nicola watershed to the community (residents of the watershed), First Nations communities, government and interested parties. There were also informal discussions with members of Merritt City Council, the City's Water Advisory Committee and ranchers when opportunities presented themselves over the course of the year. Three open houses were held, a survey was conducted, and a dedicated web site and Facebook page created for the survey. Comments and feedback at open houses and meetings were recorded; the survey results tabulated and this feedback was used to finalize the Plan. The Nicola WUMP web site was updated to reflect the Plan Evaluation and Approval phase. The final part of the project was to finalize the Plan and to distribute it to all levels of government and other stakeholders. The Plan has also been formally presented to the provincial government for adoption.

OPTIONAL Please give a short statement (up to 100 words) of the most compelling activity or outcome from your project.

The most important outcome of the project was the level of agreement with the recommendations in the draft water use management plan. This meant that in finalizing the Draft Plan, the recommendations did not need to be changed. Furthermore, the work of the previous four years was defensible and the community-at-large had trust in the process and the outcome of that process.

3. Final Project Results and Effectiveness

3.1 Copy EXPECTED OUTCOMES from your detailed proposal and insert into this section. Add additional rows as needed. Then please list the FINAL OUTCOMES (the tangible end products resulting from this work) associated with expected outcome.

If FINAL OUTCOMES differ from the original EXPECTED OUTCOMES please describe why, and the implications for the project.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	FINAL OUTCOMES
1. Prioritized list of final recommendations for implementation	There was no overwhelming support for any one or a group of recommendations so the decision was made to present the recommendations as a complete package. Those who may be charged with implementing the Plan may prioritize the list after considering other factors.
2. A better informed and knowledgeable community (residents of the watershed) about the water resource, water use and the water management regime, current and proposed. (Capacity Building outcome)	More people are now better informed and knowledgeable about water and the water resource. However, more work remains to be done as the number of people who attended the open houses, meetings or read the Draft Plan was relatively low, probably in the neighbourhood of 150 to 200 people.
3. A formalized communication schedule for periodic meetings to discuss the operation of the Nicola Dam with stakeholders and Ministry of Environment dam operators. (Collaborative outcome)	Not much progress made. This was due in large part to the budget constraints of the Ministry of Environment staff which did not allow them to attend meetings. The province is in the process of developing a drought response plan. Nicola WUMP attended one of the workshops where feedback was sought for a drought response plan. It is anticipated that there will be another drought in the Nicola watershed and instream flows will be at or below critical levels.
4. Increased awareness and understanding of the water issues and the community's support of suggested solutions by elected officials at the municipal, regional district and provincial level. (Capacity building outcome)	There is some understanding of the water issues at the municipal level but still a great reluctance to sit down and discuss a watershed-wide plan. The main obstacle is cost and not only for the municipality. All levels of government are under a budget squeeze with costs climbing and revenues not as high as expected or needed to provide ongoing services. The second challenge is a legislative/regulatory one. Municipalities and regional districts do not have water management

	<p>as a mandate except in a very narrow sense. Until they are given more authority, they are not particularly interested in changing the status quo. At the same time, the provincial government is jealously guarding their mandate and 'hiding' behind the Water Act. Perhaps those mandates will change after the BC Water Act is revised</p>
<p>5. A NWUMP Advisory Committee (first step in establishing a local governance authority)</p>	<p>This has not occurred due to the lack of a response from the provincial government. However, the Steering Committee for this project has agreed to continue to meet informally over the next year to promote and advocate for the Nicola water use management plan.</p>

3.2 Please evaluate the EFFECTIVENESS of your project in achieving Project Objectives. Please identify the indicators you have used to measure the effectiveness of your project. Please include any notable successes or challenges.

#1 Objective – 2-3 open houses around the Nicola watershed with a formal presentation followed by a questions and answer period and opportunity to provide feedback.

Open Houses were held in Merritt (October 2009), Logan lake (November 2009), and Lower Nicola (January 2010). There was a presentation at each and was followed by a question and answer period. Copies of the executive summary of the draft water use management plan and of the complete plan document plus the feedback questions were available at these open houses. Information from the draft plan was presented on large display boards as a means of starting a conversation with visitors. Indicators used to measure effectiveness were: number of people attending the open house and participation after the presentation. Other than the open house in Logan Lake, the other two were a success using these two indicators.

#2 Objective – Meetings with municipal councils (City of Merritt and Logan Lake) and Board and Planning staff of Thompson-Nicola Regional District (4 meetings/presentations).

Only one meeting took place and that was a brief presentation and discussion with Merritt City Council. A measure of success would have been the degree of interest expressed and the discussion around the recommendations. This did not occur. Because of the challenges met with the City of Merritt, no attempts were made to meet with the Regional District or Logan Lake. Efforts were concentrated on Merritt and despite a number of attempts to continue the discussion, these were either ignored or a different response was received. The best example was in response to a letter requesting a meeting, one of the councillors drafted a motion for presentation at a Council meeting and then asked for input from the Administrator on the motion via e-mail.

#3 Objective – Meeting with the Indian Bands with a formal presentation followed by a question and answer period and opportunity to provide feedback (12 meetings).

The measure of success was whether these meetings took place.

There were a number of challenges and some measure of success. The challenges included the difficulty in scheduling a meeting, and the last minute changes in meeting dates. A death in the family of the First Nations co-ordinator who was hired to organize the meetings meant that she was unavailable for a scheduled meeting at the last moment and other people had to step in. She then took a leave of absence and therefore did not complete her contractual obligations. The lack of awareness and knowledge of water issues meant that Band members and Band Councils were not willing to give time to WUMP. One Band was embroiled in allegations of the mis-use of \$1 million of band funds by some Council members. This became a court case and continues to be an issue that has not been fully

resolved making it difficult to have a meeting despite a number of attempts. A final challenge was that the Steering Committee and WUMP were not seen as a 'level of government', i.e without any authority, and on this topic, some Bands only wanted to talk to government.

Notwithstanding the challenges, presentations were made to the Shackan, Nooaitch, Coldwater and Upper Nicola Indian Bands. Some were presentations to band councils, one was to a sub-committee on resources, and some were to the band members. The conversation with the Coldwater Indian Band (a committee of the Band Council) was most interesting in that it was forthright from both sides, due in large part to how well the those in attendance knew each other. At the very beginning of this process, it was made clear that these meeting were not formal consultations and were without prejudice to title and rights. They were promoted as an opportunity for a conversation around water.

#4 Objective – Present final Plan to provincial government for adoption.

The measure of success was whether the Plan could be finalized by the end of March 2010 so that it could be submitted to the provincial government. This has been done.

3.3 REQUIRED: attach all DOCUMENTATION of Final Outcomes, and LIST attachments here. These may include technical reports, maps, photos, evidence of communications, lists of meeting participants, etc.

- Nicola Water Use Management Plan – March 2010
- Feedback Survey
- A sampling of advertising and advertising tools used

We have on file the list of people who attended the open houses, the advertising (ads, posters, postcards that were mailed to households, etc.) that was done, the power point presentation that was given, and notes from some of the meetings. If required, we will be happy to put a package together and mail it to the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

3.4 Please describe how the benefits of this project will be sustained and/or be built upon into the future. What are the planned next steps, or recommendations for further work, if applicable?

As the watershed is facing another year of low flows, and more than likely, more water use restrictions, the Nicola WUMP will probably be mentioned from time to time as something to be considered for changes to the water management regime. As noted above, the Steering Committee for this project has agreed to continue to meet informally over the next year to promote and advocate for the Nicola water use management plan. With the BC Water Act modernization initiative underway, there is an opportunity to argue strongly for inclusion into the new act measures to better manage our water resource and ensure healthy fish habitats. Others in the province who are also facing significant water issues will add their voice to ours to make the necessary changes to how water should be managed to benefit all users under changing conditions, notably a growing population, development and climate change.

3.5 What are the top three lessons learned from this project that could be useful to communicate to others doing similar work in the Basin?

1. Where 'consultation' with First Nations is desired, this is a time consuming process and not easily executed for any number of reasons. First Nations communities may be stuck in the 'government-to-government negotiation only' mode. If the group does not have the authority, then some First Nations may be reluctant to sit down and talk.
2. Direct mail is more effective than newspaper or radio advertising for meetings. People already affected by an issue are more likely to respond and come out to a meeting.
3. All levels of government are cash strapped so any proposals for new expenditures are very difficult to even present, no matter how beneficial or cost saving in the long term.

8. Appendices

REQUIRED: attach all DOCUMENTATION of Final Outcomes, listed above in section 3.3. These may include technical reports, maps, photos, evidence of communications, lists of meeting participants, etc.

Nicola Water use Management Plan – March 2010
Feedback Survey

News Release – September 28, 2009

Articles in the Nicola Tribal Association's Newsletter

Artwork for Magnet

'Postcard' mailed to residents in a select area of the watershed

Poster for Lower Nicola Open House

The Droplet – Issue 14

Other documentation is on file and is available upon request