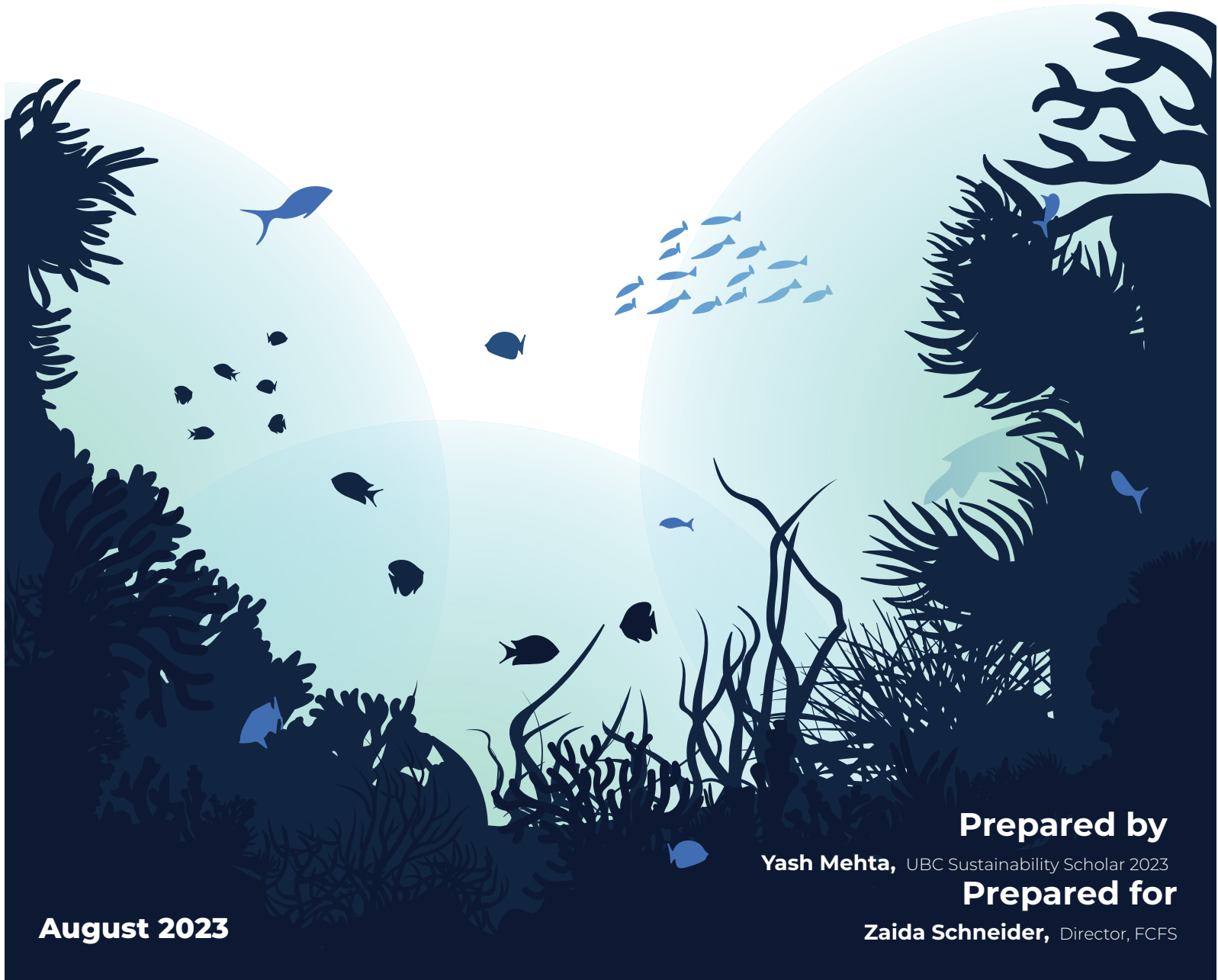


How can we **SAFEGUARD** the marine life of **FALSE CREEK?**

Investigation of Environmental Protection
tools for False Creek, Vancouver

SUMMARY REPORT



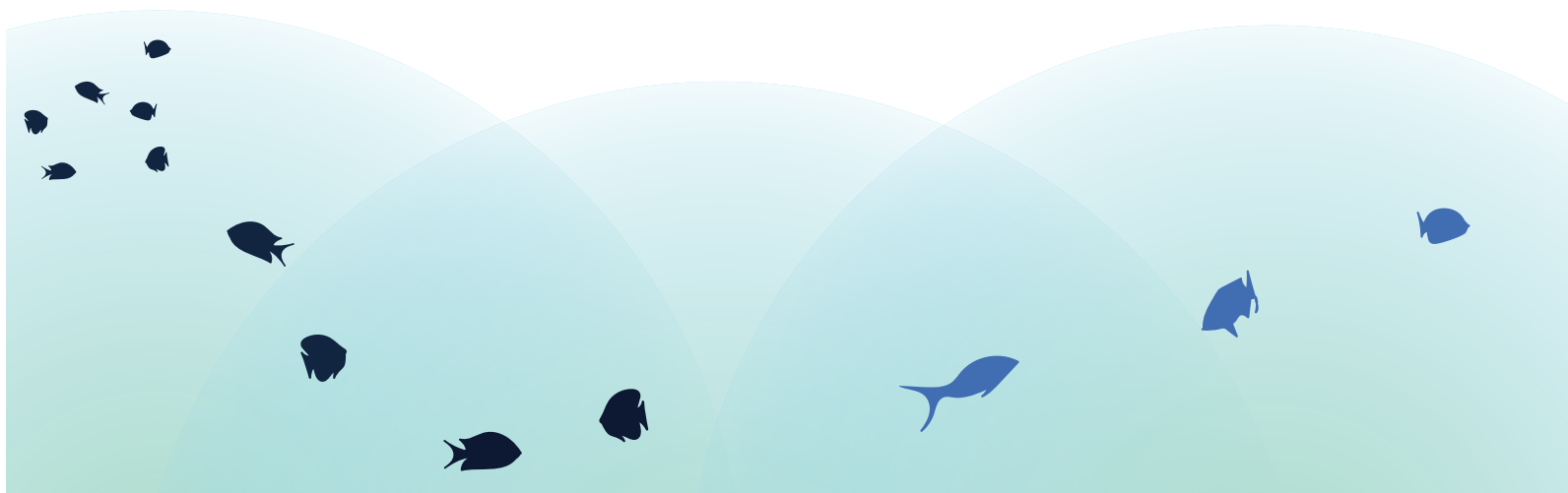
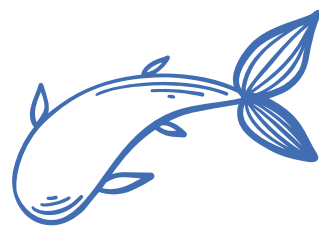
August 2023

Prepared by
Yash Mehta, UBC Sustainability Scholar 2023
Prepared for
Zaida Schneider, Director, FCFS

DISCLAIMER

This report was produced as part of the UBC Sustainability Scholars Program, a partnership between the University of British Columbia and various local governments and organizations in support of providing graduate students with opportunities to do applied research on projects that advance sustainability across the region.

This project was conducted under the mentorship of the False Creek Friends Society staff. The opinions and recommendations in this report and any errors are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of False Creek Friends Society or the University of British Columbia.





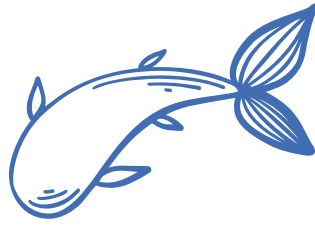
TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before proceeding with this scholarly project, it is essential to acknowledge that the research was conducted on the unceded traditional homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. These First Nations have been stewards of this land for countless generations, and their rich wisdom and practices have been pivotal in its conservation. This research does not just reside on this land; it is inextricably linked to the historical, cultural, and environmental narratives authored by these Nations.

The waters of False Creek that this project studies, the marine life it aims to protect, and the ecological balance it strives to restore, are all under the ancient and ongoing stewardship of these Nations. Their expertise and understanding of this land and its interconnected ecosystems have been not just a resource but a guiding light throughout the duration of this research.

I offer my utmost gratitude and respect to the Elders—past and present—and to all Indigenous people who are part of this community. Your leadership is indispensable, and I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to learn from your wisdom. I look forward to your ongoing guidance as we collaboratively work toward a sustainable future for False Creek.





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The author would like to thank the following individuals for their contribution, feedback, and support throughout this project:

The author extends heartfelt gratitude to Zaida Schneider from False Creek Friends for his unwavering dedication and invaluable support throughout this research project. The success of this work is a direct result of the considerable time, effort, and expertise that Zaida generously invested. His counsel has been instrumental, and the friendship formed over the course of this research is deeply appreciated.

Thank you, Zaida, for your irreplaceable contributions.

Special thanks are also due to the directors of the False Creek Friends Society (FCFS)—Kira Leeb, Jacquie Forbes-Roberts, and Tim Bray—for their strategic guidance and instrumental support. Evan Alderson, who previously served as the president of the FC South Neighborhood Association, and Ian Moore, a law reform-oriented lawyer, have been particularly pivotal in their contributions to the project.

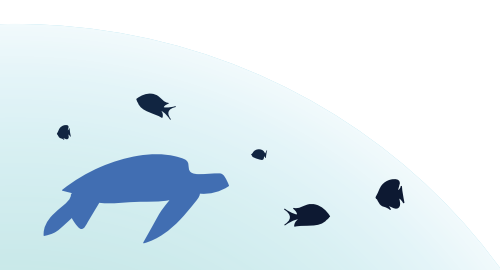
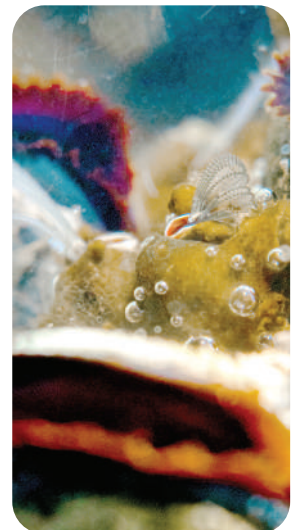
Fernando Lessa, a world-renowned Canadian underwater photographer, deserves special acknowledgment. Some of his visually compelling and insightful pictures have been featured in this report, thereby enriching the research. Further, this research has been enriched by collaborative engagement with numerous organizations, including Raincoast Conservation Foundation, Swim Drink Fish & Fraser Riverkeepers, Squamish Streamkeepers, FC Watershed Society, and FC South Neighbourhood Association. The collective wisdom, resources, and efforts of these entities have significantly elevated the depth and reach of this research.

It is the confluence of these committed individuals and organizations that has made this research not only possible but also meaningful and impactful.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



False Creek, the jewel of Vancouver, is at a critical crossroads that calls for strategic and comprehensive environmental stewardship. This project employed a multi-phase research methodology to explore avenues for transitioning False Creek's marine and urban ecosystems from survival to a state of thriving. Employing a multi-phase research methodology, the focus centred on three key pillars: the adaptability of successful models in similar contexts, the efficacy of current practices, and insights from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, ranging from NGOs and government agencies to local residents.

The research findings make a compelling case for a centralized coordinating body that encompasses varied governance levels and stakeholder interests. The incorporation of Indigenous guardianship is recommended as an essential move to integrate cultural and ecological wisdom, thereby enriching the overall conservation strategy. Formalizing a marine conservation pledge is suggested as a foundational step to consolidate stakeholder commitment and provide a framework for accountability. Further, the project advocates for the creation of a comprehensive, long-term vision for ecosystem management, leveraging learnings from innovative governance models like Environmental Personhood.

Concluding, the project underscores the need for a distinct ecosystem identity, collaborative decision-making, and active citizen participation as key elements for the immediate and future-oriented revitalization of False Creek.



FALSE CREEK

IS ALIVE!



BACKGROUND



False Creek's ecosystem presents a unique governance challenge, given its oversight by multiple tiers of government: federal, provincial, municipal, and upcoming Indigenous projects. The marine and urban environment of False Creek faces multifaceted challenges that have yet to be comprehensively addressed. Existing efforts, though well-intentioned, have proven insufficient in tackling these interconnected issues in a holistic manner.

Historically, False Creek was an industrial hub, witnessing a constant flow of tugs and freight vessels. It's likely that hazardous materials still contaminate its waters. Issues such as sewage pollution and sea-level rise due to climate change further complicate the governance landscape. With an extensive network of sewers crisscrossing the city, the current remediation program's slow progress and limited investment pose a significant concern. Additionally, the presence of derelict boats in False Creek adds another layer of complexity. Although the city has taken steps to remove some of these abandoned vessels in 2023, the legal framework governing anchoring permits in False Creek is in disarray and often disregarded by local residents. This challenge is further compounded by the involvement of multiple legal jurisdictions.

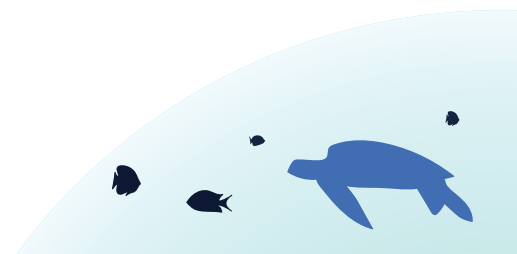
Since 2011, numerous local groups and associations, including the Squamish Stream Keepers, SwimDrinkFish, and the City of Vancouver, among others, have been committed to the ambitious mission of revitalizing False Creek inlet. Moreover, False Creek South's future land use is a matter of ongoing debate and planning. Recent discussions have considered the utilization of 80 acres of City of Vancouver (CoV) land for a long-term vision (Chan, 2021). However, the potential of this land, and how it aligns with the broader objectives of False Creek's marine life preservation, can still be inspired and explored for a more holistic and long-term approach.







ISSUES



INTRODUCTION



For decades, False Creek has been a hub for both local residents and visitors, as well as an area rich in indigenous history. However, increased urbanization, industrial activities, and climate-related impacts have placed considerable strain on its marine ecosystems. Thus, the culmination of this summer scholar project underscores our overarching objective: to gain knowledge, draw inspiration, and chart a path forward by delving into case studies, evaluating the efficacy of existing practices, and tapping into the wisdom of the people involved. It is through this comprehensive exploration that we strive to contribute meaningfully to the preservation and revitalization of False Creek's marine ecosystem, with the broader aspiration of fostering a profound human connection to this precious natural treasure.

Furthermore, the False Creek BioBlitz in 2022 marked a significant milestone in our understanding of the creek's ecosystem. It combined scientific and community-led efforts to comprehensively assess the biodiversity of False Creek. A range of observations and data collection activities, including walking surveys and water and intertidal zone sampling, were conducted from April to September 7, 2022. These combined efforts have illuminated the profound potential of False Creek, challenged preconceived notions and underscored the importance of ongoing endeavors to nurture and protect this vital natural treasure. False Creek is not just alive; its potential for thriving is tremendous.

The summary synthesizes preliminary research on effective management practices, stakeholder involvement, and long-term strategies for sustainable conservation of natural bodies. Utilizing focused case studies, outreach efforts, and key insights, the project aimed to contribute substantively to the discourse on marine conservation in False Creek and beyond.



The methodology employed for this project outlined in four distinct phases, each tailored to address the multiple aspects of environmental protection mechanisms for False Creek. The objective of this multi-phase approach is to systematically examine, consult, and synthesize information that will guide the sustainable revitalization of the area.



Phase 1:

Environmental Scan and Literature Review The first phase involved an exhaustive environmental scan and literature review. Academic articles, policy documents, and case studies were reviewed to provide a conceptual foundation for understanding Environmental Personhood and Collaborative Boards as applied to marine and watershed management.



Phase 2:

Outreach and Consultations This phase centered on consultations with key stakeholders, both local and environmental organizations, to gather primary data. Organizations engaged include Raincoast Conservation Foundation, Swim Drink Fish & Fraser Riverkeepers, Squamish Streamkeepers, FC Watershed Society, legal expert and FC South Neighbourhood Association. These consultations were aimed at understanding the current initiatives and viewpoints that could inform our approach to False Creek's unique challenges.



Phase 3:

Discussion with FCFS Directors Findings from the preceding phases were collated and discussed with the Directors of False Creek Friends (FCFS). Their insights, drawn from longstanding experience and specific expertise, were invaluable in refining the project's focus and potential outcomes.

Phase 4:

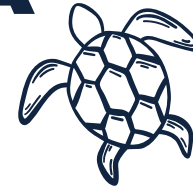
Way Forward and Key Takeaways The final phase involved the creation of a 'Way Forward' document accompanied by key takeaways. These actionable insights aim to inform policy recommendations and strategic plans for False Creek. The findings were subsequently presented to the Council for review and action.

By methodically progressing through these four phases, this report aims to provide a comprehensive, well-rounded, and actionable strategy for the sustainable management and revitalization of False Creek.



CASE STUDY 1

TE AWA TUPUA RIVER





Introduction:

In 2017, New Zealand set a global precedent by enacting the Te Awa Tupua Act, a landmark piece of legislation that recognized the Whanganui River as a legal personality, granting it the status of environmental personhood.

This innovative approach to environmental law marked a significant shift in how we perceive and protect our natural resources. This case study delves into the importance of the Whanganui River to the Whanganui Māori, the core values embedded in the Tupua Kawa, and the profound implications of this act on environmental conservation, drawing insights from the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement, the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill, and other relevant sources.

Historical Context and Settlement:

From the 1880s to 1920s, the Crown undertook works on the river with little or no consultation with the Whanganui iwi. These activities included establishing a steamer service on the river and extracting minerals from its bed, which had adverse effects on the river's ecological quality, eel weirs, fisheries, and its cultural and spiritual significance. The Whanganui iwi began petitioning Parliament for justice in the 1870s, persisting through decades of court battles and engagement with the Waitangi Tribunal.

The Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill, as a response to these historical actions and omissions of the Crown, provided a settlement of \$80 million to redress these grievances. It also formally recognized Te Awa Tupua as an indivisible and living whole, comprising the Whanganui River from the mountains to the sea, and all its physical and metaphysical elements.

Importance of the River to Whanganui Māori: The Whanganui River holds deep historical and cultural significance to the local indigenous Māori tribes, as highlighted in the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement. For centuries, it has been a vital part of their identity, spirituality, and way of life, as well as a critical food source. The river is seen as a living entity, a revered ancestor, deserving of the same respect and protection as any human being.





Figure 1 - Whanganui River (Perry, 2022) and Source: hydrosheds.org



Tupua Kawa - Values:

The Te Awa Tupua Act is rooted in the Tupua Kawa, a set of values, which are affirmed in the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement, that ensure the collective guardianship and stewardship of the river. This system involves the appointment of trustees from tribes with river interests and local authorities, fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

Declaration of Environmental Personhood:

As outlined in the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill, one of the most notable aspects of the Te Awa Tupua Act is the declaration that the Whanganui River is a 'person' with legal rights. This recognition acknowledges the river's intrinsic value and the need to protect its unique ecosystem. By affording the river legal personhood, it establishes a precedent for considering natural entities as legal subjects rather than mere objects.



Supporting the River's Well-being:

In addition to the financial settlement, an extra \$1 million contribution was allocated to establish a legal framework to support the Whanganui River. Furthermore, a \$30 million contestable fund was created to advance the river's health and restoration efforts.

Legislative Process and Final Recognition: Iwi and public submissions on the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill were heard by the Māori Affairs Committee, reflecting a collaborative approach in shaping the legislation. Whanganui iwi members were present in the debating chamber gallery for the bill's third reading on 14 March 2017. The bill received Royal Assent on 20 March, officially passing it into New Zealand law, marking a historic moment in recognizing the Whanganui River as a legal personality.

Conclusion:

The Te Awa Tupua Act stands as a pioneering example of environmental personhood in action, informed by the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement and the Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Bill. It signifies a profound shift in environmental law, where nature is not seen as a commodity but as a living entity deserving of respect and protection. This case study demonstrates the power of recognizing the personhood of natural entities and the positive impact it can have on both environmental conservation and the preservation of indigenous cultures and traditions. New Zealand's innovative approach serves as an inspiration for the world in redefining our relationship with the environment.

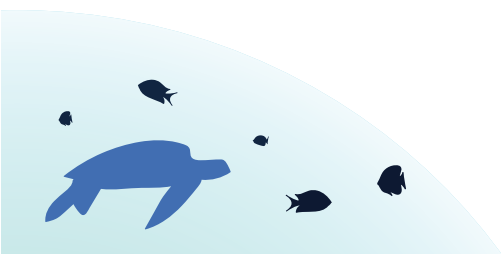
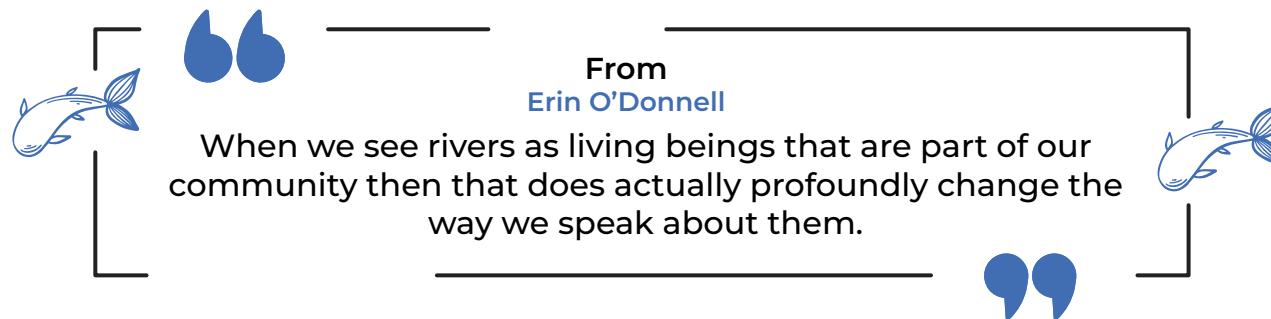
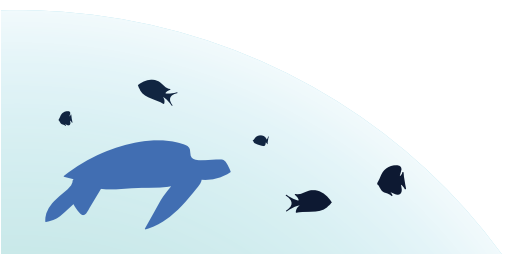
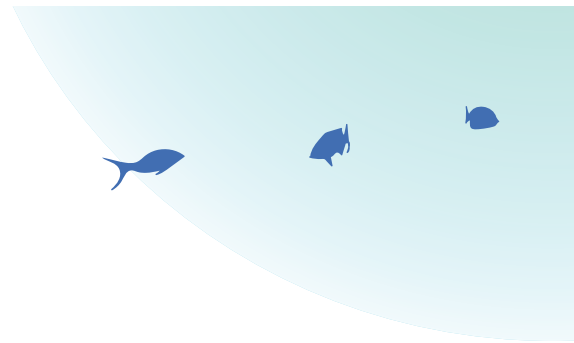
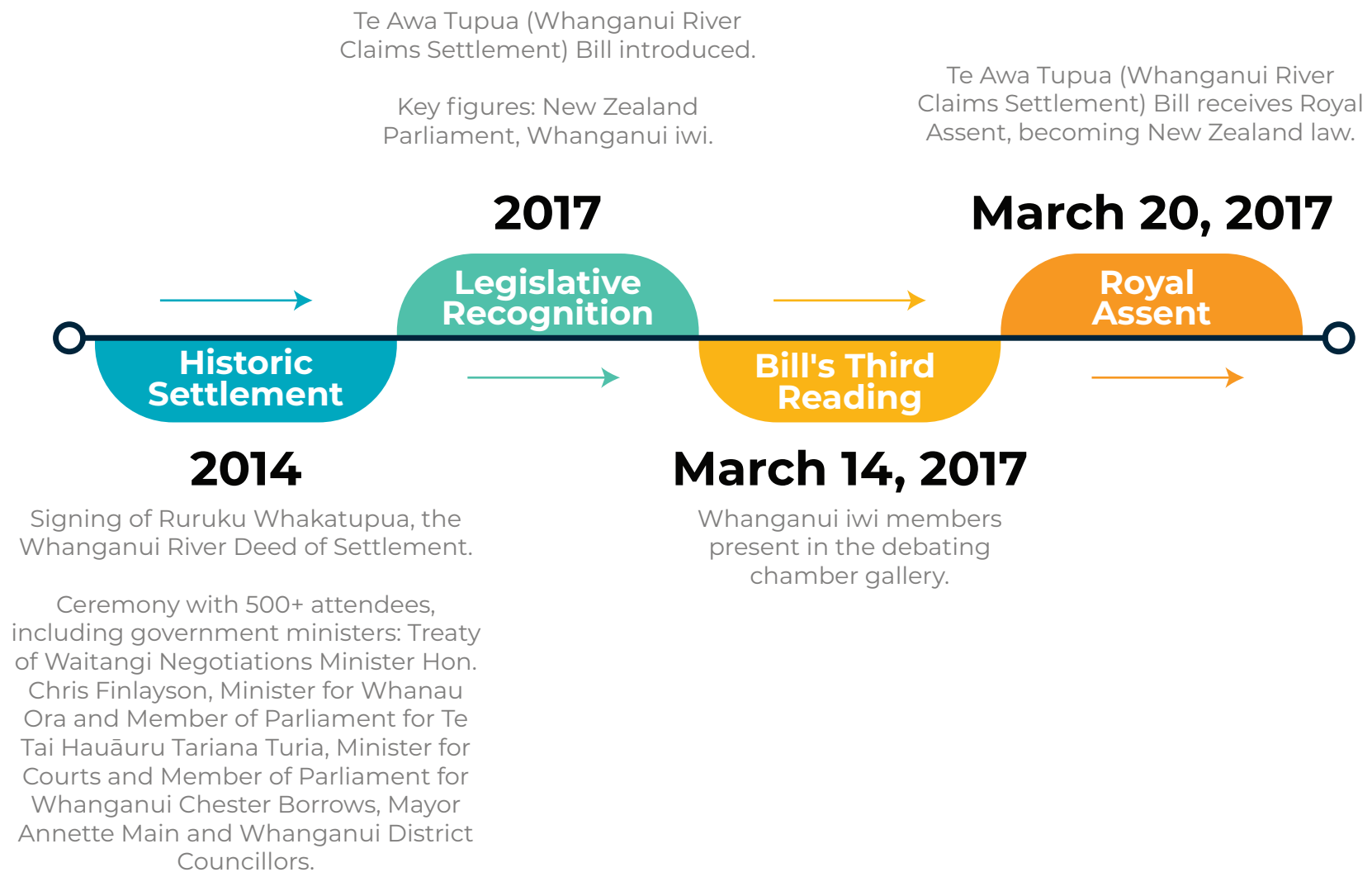
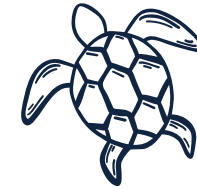


Figure 2 – Timeline of Whanganui River Claims Settlement



CASE STUDY 2

PITTSBURGH'S PIONEERING MOVE IN ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS



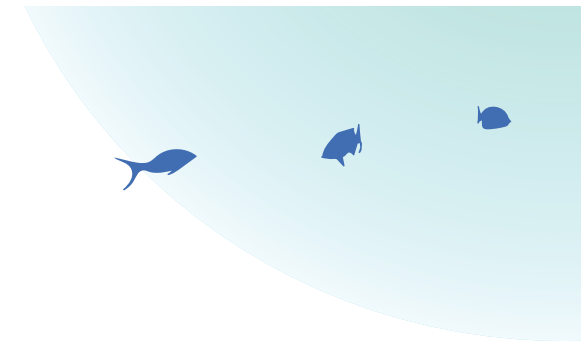
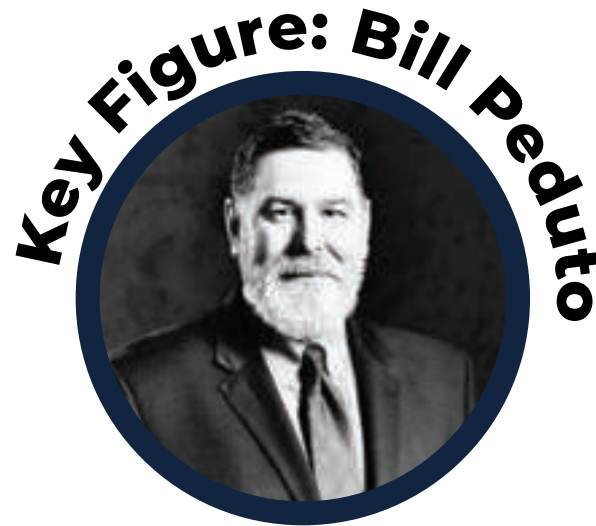
Introduction and Background

Pittsburgh, historically associated with heavy industry, faced environmental challenges due to its steel industry legacy. The city's quest for cleaner and sustainable living served as a backdrop to its adoption of environmental rights.

In 2010, the city of Pittsburgh made a landmark decision by embracing the concept of "rights of nature," an environmental movement that grants legal rights to natural ecosystems. This case study explores Pittsburgh's motivation, the role of key figures, the empowerment of the community, and the broader impact of this pioneering move.

Key Events:

- **The Fracking Concern (2010):** The oil and gas industries were actively acquiring land leases for fracking across Pennsylvania, causing alarm among Pittsburgh's residents. They were particularly worried about the potential toxic effects of fracking on their drinking water, air quality, and the environment
- **Seeking Solutions:** In response to the fracking threat, the Pittsburgh City Council initiated discussions with various stakeholders, including environmental groups, legal experts, and land-use specialists, seeking strategies to safeguard the community's well-being
- **The Council's Dilemma:** The pivotal question raised during these discussions was how Pittsburgh could protect its residents, environment, and water supply from the harmful consequences of industrial gas extraction while facing state laws that prohibited local governments from restricting fracking (Perkins, 2017)
- **CELDF's Innovative Approach:** The Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund (CELDF) offered a unique solution. Instead of merely regulating fracking or trying to limit its impact through zoning laws, CELDF proposed drafting a local civil rights law known as the "Community Bill of Rights"
- **The Community Bill of Rights:** This proposed ordinance aimed to establish enforceable community rights, including the right to clean air, pure water, and the flourishing of natural ecosystems. It also recognized the city's right to self-governance and its duty to protect these rights. Most significantly, it banned any new industrial extraction of natural gas, effectively prohibiting fracking within Pittsburgh (Business Insider, 2017).



Bill Peduto played a pivotal role in the adoption of the Pittsburgh Community Bill of Rights and the subsequent ban on fracking within the city. In 2010, when he was a City Councilman and later became the Mayor of Pittsburgh, Peduto was instrumental in seeking solutions to protect the city's residents and environment from the potential harms of fracking. He initiated discussions with various stakeholders, including environmental groups, legal experts, and land-use specialists, to address the fracking threat.

Peduto's leadership and commitment to safeguarding the rights of Pittsburghers, including their access to clean air and water, were crucial in the unanimous adoption of the Community Bill of Rights. His proactive approach in seeking innovative solutions to protect the community from fracking demonstrated his dedication to the well-being of Pittsburgh's residents and the environment.

As a key figure in this case study, Bill Peduto's efforts underscore the importance of local leadership in addressing complex environmental challenges and championing the rights of both people and nature.



CASE STUDY 3

MAGPIE RIVER - PIONEERING INDIGENOUS CONSERVATION

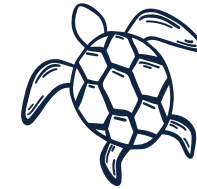


Figure 3 Rita Mestokosho Performing River Healing Chant Photography by: Christian Fleury



Introduction

The Magpie River, nestled in Quebec's pristine Côte-Nord district, stands as a testament to the extraordinary potential of combining environmental conservation with indigenous wisdom. In this case study, we delve into the remarkable journey of the Magpie River, which has achieved legal personhood, a groundbreaking milestone in Canadian conservation efforts. The story unfolds as SNAP Québec (Societe Pour la Nature et les Parcs du Canada), in partnership with various stakeholders, passionately champions the protection of this exceptional natural treasure against looming threats from hydroelectric development led by Hydro-Québec (National Observer, 2017).

The Quest for Legal Personhood

The Magpie River's path to legal recognition was far from straightforward. Facing recurrent resistance from the Quebec government and Hydro-Québec, local communities, spearheaded by Pier-Olivier Boudreault of SNAP Québec and the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), took bold action. In September 2017, a flash mob protested Hydro-Quebec's covert efforts to obstruct Magpie River's protection from damming (National Observer, 2017).



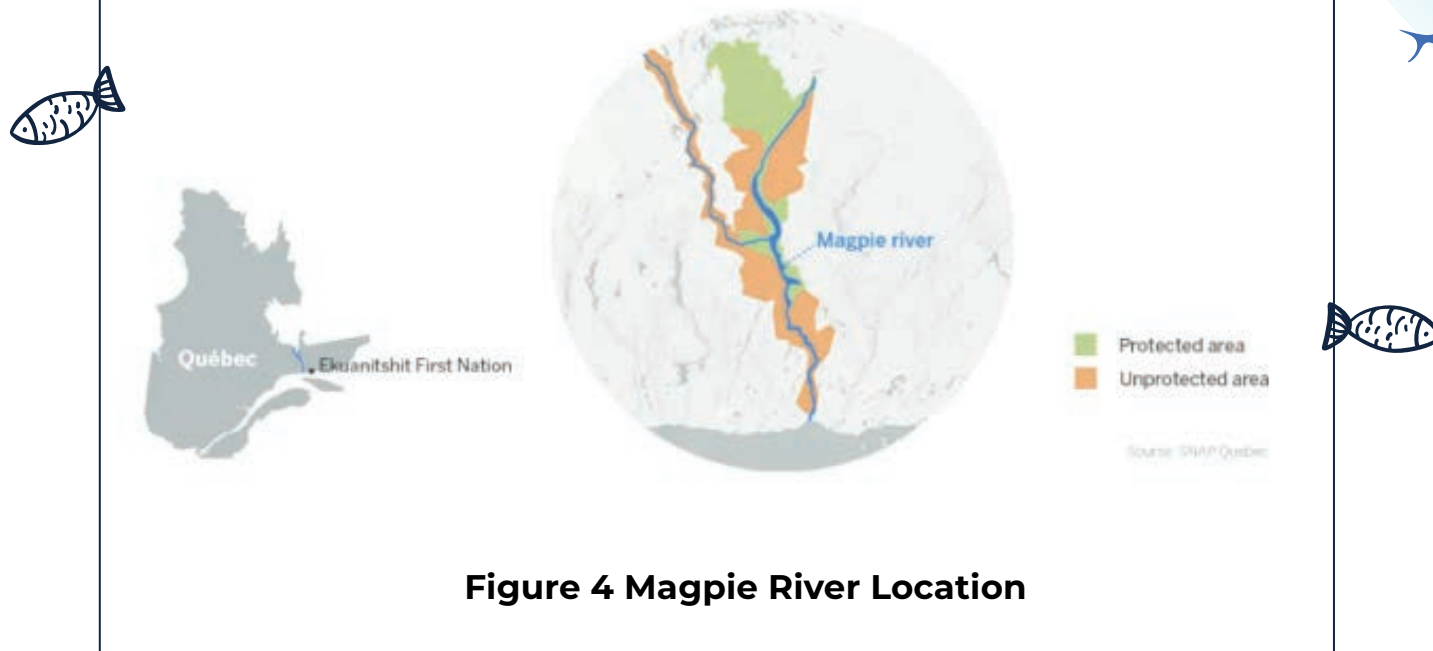


Figure 4 Magpie River Location

Key Elements of the Case:

Magpie River's Unique Status: The Magpie River's newfound legal personhood represents an unprecedented move within Canada's conservation landscape. This remarkable recognition was only made possible through the remarkable collaboration between Indigenous communities, dedicated environmental organizations like SNAP (Société pour la Nature et les Parcs) Québec, and legal experts. The International Observatory on the Rights of Nature (IORN), based in Montreal, Canada, played a crucial role in drafting these resolutions in collaboration with the Alliance, further enhancing the legal foundation for the river's protection.

Guardianship and Rights: Central to this development is the river's legal personhood, which grants it a series of nine fundamental rights. These rights include the river's entitlement to flow freely, the responsibility to uphold biodiversity, and the ability to take legal action when necessary. Guardians, appointed by both the regional municipality and the Innu community, have been entrusted with the vital task of safeguarding these rights. The primary objective of the Muteshekau-shipu Alliance is to safeguard and enhance the Magpie River while acknowledging its rights. This mission draws strength from the river's profound cultural significance to the Innu and local communities, its international renown, and its vast potential for recreation and tourism. The founding members of the Alliance include the Innu Council of Ekuanitshit, the Minganie RCM, CPAWS Quebec, and the Association Eaux-Vives Minganie.

The Magpie River has been granted nine rights:

The right to flow.

The right to respect for its cycles.

The right for its natural evolution to be protected and preserved.

The right to maintain its natural biodiversity.

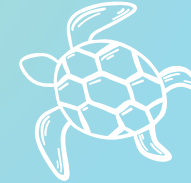
The right to fulfil its essential functions within its ecosystem.

The right to maintain its integrity.

The right to be safe from pollution.

The right to regenerate and be restored.

The right to sue.



Tourism for Conservation: By raising the profile of the Magpie River and its newfound legal status, this case study additionally spotlights the potential for sustainable tourism. It envisions the emergence of an ecotourism-based local economy, one that not only values but ardently protects the environment.

Community Engagement and Advocacy: The active involvement of local communities, particularly the Innu First Nation of Ekuanitshit, played a pivotal role in the success of this case. Their dedication to protecting the Magpie River and their ability to mobilize support were critical factors.

Public Awareness and Support: Generating public awareness and support, both locally and internationally, was vital. The flash mob protest and signature campaign helped mobilize public sentiment in favor of protecting the river.



CASE STUDY 4

COWICHAN VALLEY - FOSTERING COLLABORATIVE WATERSHED GOVERNANCE

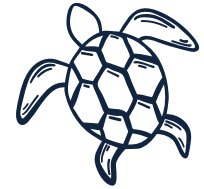


Figure 5 - Cowichan Watershed Board members, staff, partners and advisors Photo B Hetschko

Introduction:

The Cowichan River, renowned for its iconic salmon runs, faced a dire situation in 2007. Salmon populations were dwindling, and increasingly frequent low-flow conditions during summer posed a significant threat. To address these pressing challenges, the Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan emerged. However, the plan encountered a critical gap: specific funding for its initiatives was lacking, and there was no coordinating body among the involved parties. Additionally, indigenous leadership and perspectives were notably absent from the initial planning. This case study delves into how the Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB) was established and how collaborative governance became its cornerstone, bringing together indigenous leadership, knowledge, and a shared vision to address the watershed's pressing issues.



Figure 6 Cowichan Valley

Timeline of Milestones in Cowichan Watershed Governance

● 2007 - 2010: Paving the Way for Collaborative Governance

- **2007:** Concerns about declining salmon runs and low-flow summers prompt the creation of the Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan. It identifies 89 clear objectives, but lacks specific funding and governing coordination.
- **2010:** Cowichan Tribes Chief Lydia Hwitsum and Cowichan Valley Regional District Chair Gerry Giles unite their councils to establish the Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB). This governance structure features an equal partnership between the two governments, co-chaired by their leaders.

● 2011 - 2018: Target Setting and Indigenous Leadership

- **2011:** CWB's Technical Advisory Committee collaborates with Cowichan Tribes, local stewardship groups, and relevant government agencies to establish 'targets.' These targets bridge the gap between the ambitious Water Management Plan and the resources available.
- **2018:** A two-year dialogue series enhances CWB's Governance Manual, emphasizing indigenous authority, knowledge, and collaborative leadership. The Core Principle "Nutsamat kws yaay'us tth qa'" (We come together as a whole to work together to be stronger as partners for the watershed) is added.

● 2018 - 2022: Pursuit of Sustainable Funding

- **2018 to Present:** CWB begins advocating for sustainable funding for watershed governance. Collaborative efforts include engagement with the BC Watershed Security Coalition and key stakeholders.



Working Groups: Pursuing Targets through Collaboration

The Cowichan Watershed Board's (CWB) pursuit of its Targets is greatly facilitated by the presence of four dedicated Working Groups, each consisting of approximately 30 organizations or branches of government. These Working Groups serve as the primary collaborative mechanisms through which the CWB's Targets are diligently pursued. While the CWB serves as the coordinating body, the heart and soul of these Working Groups are the member organizations that actively contribute their knowledge, skills, and resources to advance shared objectives.

1. Coordination and Collaboration



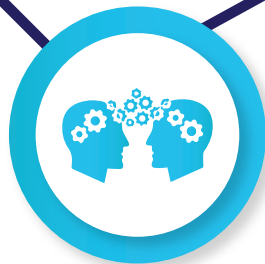
3. Resource Pooling



5. Whole of the Watershed Approach



2. Knowledge Sharing



4. Indigenous Co-Chairs





The CWB's commitment to coordination and collaboration is reflected in the formation of these Working Groups. By bringing together a diverse array of stakeholders, the CWB fosters an environment where Indigenous and settler perspectives harmonize, creating a robust foundation for effective watershed management.



Within each Working Group, knowledge is shared freely, promoting a collective understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within the Cowichan/Koksilah watersheds. This open exchange of information allows for well-informed decision-making and the development of innovative solutions.



Resources, both in terms of funding and expertise, are pooled among member organizations. This collaborative approach ensures that initiatives and projects have the necessary support to thrive, and that financial burdens are shared equitably.



Acknowledging the vital role of Indigenous perspectives in sustainable watershed management, each Working Group has Indigenous Co-Chairs. This representation ensures that the Indigenous voice is not only heard but holds a leadership role in shaping the initiatives and decisions of the Working Groups.

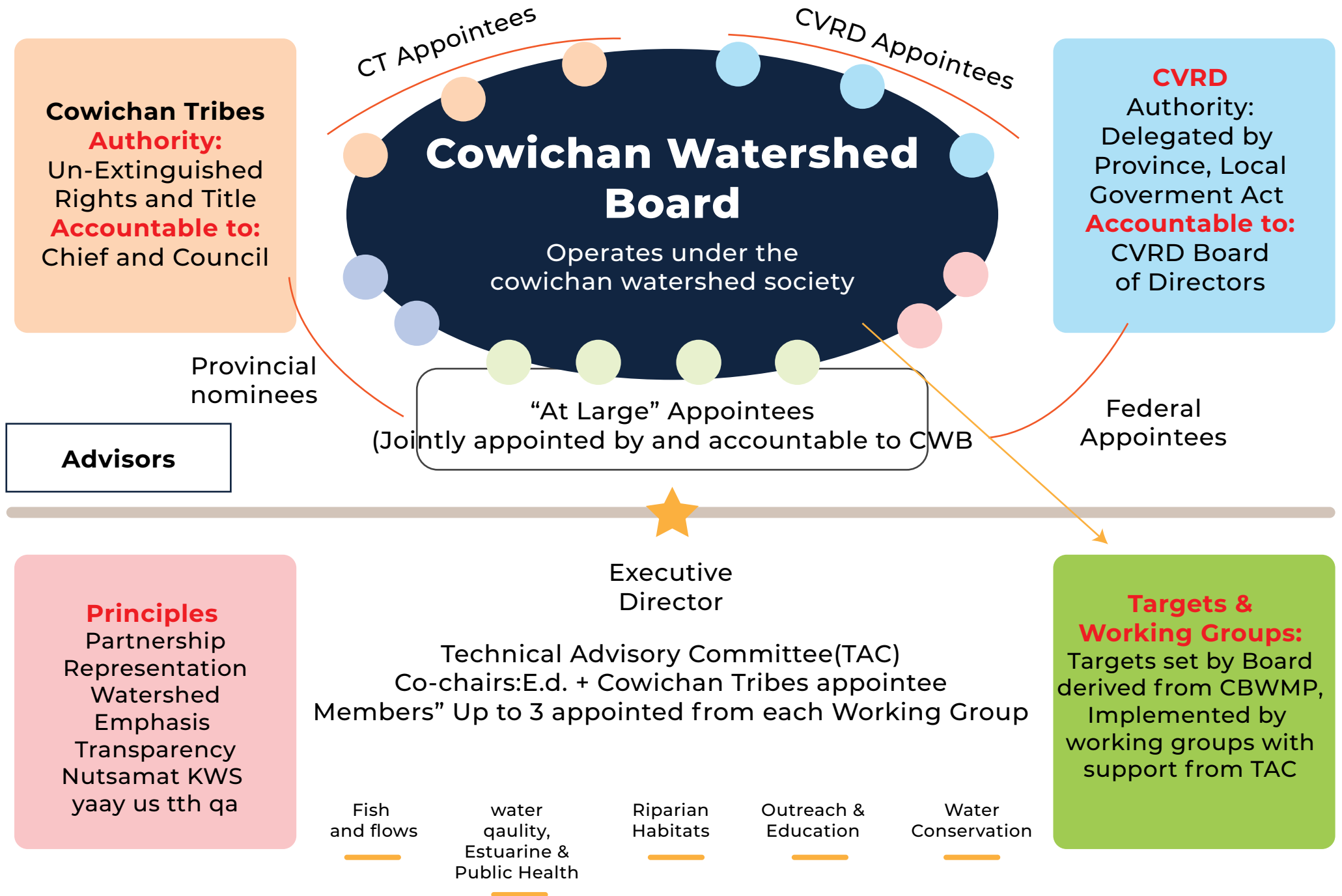


The CWB's dedication to the well-being of the entire watershed is exemplified by the "whole of the watershed" approach. Rather than addressing isolated issues, these Working Groups tackle complex challenges from a holistic perspective, recognizing the interconnectivity of all components of the Cowichan/Koksilah watersheds.

In essence, the Working Groups epitomize the spirit of collaboration and collective action that drives the CWB's mission. They are the dynamic force behind the progress made towards achieving the Targets. The CWB extends its appreciation to the member organizations within these Working Groups for their unwavering dedication and invaluable contributions to the sustainable management and protection of the Cowichan/Koksilah watersheds.



CWB ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE DIAGRAM



SUMMARY – LITERATURE REVIEW

In our exploratory study and analysis, we have delved into various case studies and frameworks, aiming to extract valuable insights that can guide the revitalization of False Creek. Our journey has encompassed a wide spectrum of environmental challenges and innovative strategies, offering a comprehensive perspective on conservation.

We commenced our exploration with an in-depth investigation into the concept of Environmental Personhood (EP), which grants natural entities legal status and protections akin to those of humans. This legal and ethical concept has garnered global recognition, with countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, India, and New Zealand adopting it to constitutionalize the rights of nature (Jones et al., 2018). In New Zealand, the Whanganui River was granted legal personhood, serving as an illustrative example of how EP can be practically implemented to blend indigenous wisdom with modern governance for environmental conservation (Whanganui District Council, n.d.).

Additionally, Pittsburgh's bold move in recognizing the Rights of Nature at the local government level stands as a landmark moment in environmental policy (Sheehan Perkins, 2017). Residents in Pittsburgh were granted legal standing to enforce these rights, reinforcing the notion of collective responsibility for environmental stewardship. What set Pittsburgh apart was the granting of legal standing to residents to enforce these rights, emphasizing the collective responsibility for environmental stewardship. Councilman Bill Peduto, who later became the mayor, played a pivotal role in this development by reaching out to multiple stakeholders, including environmental organizations, legal experts, and



Moreover, we examined the Muteshekau Shipu (Magpie River) case in Quebec. This serves as a pioneering example of indigenous conservation, wherein the Innu Council of Ekuanitshit was recognized as the river's guardians (Nerberg, 2022). These cases are not merely academic exercises but serve as practical roadmaps for implementing EP, thereby contributing to a more sustainable future.

Lastly, the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island presents a case especially pertinent to the False Creek area. It demonstrates how multi-stakeholder collaboration can effectively manage complex environmental challenges such as drought, pollution, and fragmented administrative oversight (Hunter et al., 2014). Its targeted approach engages a wide range of stakeholders, from residents and businesses to indigenous communities, in an effort to create a sustainable and balanced ecosystem.

In summary, these case studies offer instructive insights into how EP and collaborative board frameworks can be adapted to suit the unique challenges and opportunities of the False Creek Revitalization Project. We aim to apply these learnings as we continue to develop an adaptive, inclusive, and effective strategy for environmental conservation and community engagement in False Creek.



SUMMARY - OUTREACH AND CONSULTATION



Our outreach and consultation efforts were aimed at exploring a deeper dialogue with stakeholders, rights-holders, civic officials, and other interested parties in the future of False Creek. We wanted to understand the work undertaken by other NGOs and concerned organizations, as well as hear their feedback on what could benefit False Creek conservation efforts.

Among the consultations with key stakeholders, both local and environmental organizations, we engaged with prominent entities such as Raincoast Conservation Foundation, Swim Drink Fish & Fraser Riverkeepers, Squamish Streamkeepers, FC Watershed Society, and representatives from the FC South Neighbourhood Association. These consultations were aimed at understanding the current initiatives and viewpoints that could inform our approach to False Creek's unique challenges.

These discussions were essential to align our objectives and gain valuable insights from those who share our commitment to the preservation of False Creek. Among the attendees were representatives from Spruce Harbour Marina Co-op, residents of Vancouver, Prof. Joe Valencic, and other dedicated individuals deeply involved in marine conservation.

During these engagements, we shared our common visions for the future of False Creek and discussed the concept of Environmental Personhood. This radical idea, inspired by the concept of the Rights of Nature, has seen rivers in Quebec, New Zealand, and Bolivia, as well as a mountain in Hawaii, being proposed as legal persons with rights. The Fraser River Estuary is also being considered for such recognition. This led us to ponder, why not extend this notion to False Creek?

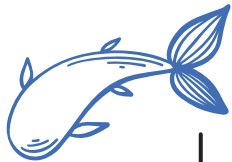




From

Pete Fry, Vancouver City Councillor:

There's exciting momentum and opportunity for working together to enhance and preserve False Creek's unique inner city marine environment. The Creek is a very special place for Vancouverites, and harnessing the collective interest and insight of non-profits, First Nations, government authorities, local residents and businesses we can develop a vision and model to rejuvenate False Creek into a flourishing and resilient ecosystem and urban interface.





From

Aaron Williams Squamish Nation Member & linguist

How do we teach people to regain their connection with the water? How do we get them to respectfully utilize the resources of the water so they respect the water and don't just see it as a dumping ground for their garbage or a pump-out station for their boat?

As Aaron Williams wisely imparts, 'If you teach people how to use the water, utilize the resources in the water, you teach people to respect the water.' Let this be our guiding principle as we navigate the path to a more harmonious relationship with our precious waterways







From

Evan Alderson (Former president, FC South
Neighbourhood Association)

As we contemplate the active issues of the creek, we must also ponder what we owe to this invaluable ecosystem. The question arises: Is there some sort of action that we can take to foster reconciliation with this natural treasure?





In our quest to chart a path forward, let us consider the process with both strategic practicality and profound reverence for False Creek. Can we embrace the concept of reconciliation in an incremental way, recognizing that each step towards its preservation and restoration is a meaningful stride towards a harmonious future? By granting personhood to False Creek, we embark on a substantial journey that brings a collective vision for its well-being and vitality from the bottom up.





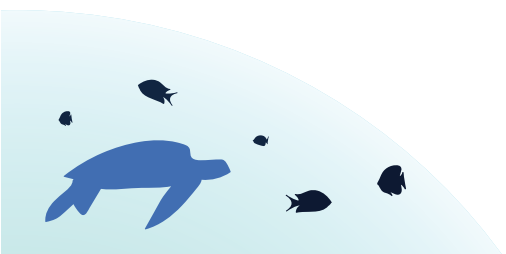


From
From Shawn Chesney, restaurateur and ocean conservation activist :

"Inspired by New York's Billion Oysters Project, we can harness the enthusiasm of local restaurants to contribute their oyster shells (which often go to waste), for constructing oyster reefs and creating natural breakwaters. Coupled with the strategic seeding of indigenous Olympia oysters, not for consumption but for the vital tasks of bio-restoration, water filtration, and enhancing the shoreline's resilience, False Creek can serve as a model of environmental stewardship, ushering in a transformative era of unity and progress"



From
From Peter Meiszner (ABC):

Thank you for your insightful presentation and Q&A with councillors. I appreciate your vision and passion for False Creek and the importance of taking an Indigenous-informed and ecologically-sound approach to this jewel right in the heart of our beautiful city.



One of the central ideas that emerged from these conversations was the need for a "False Creek Conservation Council." This council, inspired by the concept of Environmental Personhood, could play a pivotal role in providing essential information to decision-makers, politicians, government officials, and their advisors, who have long grappled with the absence of a coherent administrative framework for False Creek.

Drawing inspiration from successful models in various jurisdictions, particularly the remarkable example of the Cowichan Valley in 2009, where ordinary citizens came together to form a trusteeship that has since evolved into an effective, publicly-led program for environmental restoration and reconciliation, we believe that a similar transformation can take place in False Creek. It also aligns well with the Cowichan Watershed Board, serving as a potential model for community-led stewardship of False Creek.

However, it's essential to note that the idea is in its formative stages and needs further discussion and refinement. Through these discussions, we aim to harness the collective wisdom and dedication of our community to nurture and safeguard False Creek for generations to come.





OUTREACH AND CONSULTATION



RECOMMENDATIONS

As we direct our attention towards understanding community-led, collaborative, and bottom-up initiatives that have had a meaningful impact on both natural and urban spaces, we've identified several key recommendations that could guide our efforts in the False Creek Revitalization Project.



01

CENTRALIZED COORDINATING BODY:

According to diverse stakeholder literature, the establishment of a False Creek Conservation Council is crucial. This centralized coordinating body should include representatives from Indigenous nations, all levels of government, and community organizations, focusing on a diversified and culturally-sensitive approach to marine conservation.



02

INDIGENOUS GUARDIANSHIP:

Literature and stakeholder consultation concur on the imperative to formally include Indigenous communities as guardians. This action would integrate traditional ecological knowledge into conservation practices and uphold the stewardship tenets of Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.



03

MARINE CONSERVATION PLEDGE:

A formal commitment by all concerned parties is suggested to lay the foundation for aligned and accountable action. This pledge would provide a shared vision and ethical framework, serving as both a catalyst for resource allocation and a mechanism for accountability.



04

KNOWLEDGE-SHARING WORKING GROUPS:

These clusters would operate within the centralized coordinating body and serve as platforms for collective understanding and resource pooling. Robust representation from provincial and federal entities is imperative to ensure equitable and well-informed decision-making.



05

INCREMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION:

Given the complexities of False Creek's challenges, an incremental approach to implementation is advised. Foundational steps should be initiated first, followed by progressive enhancements to realize the area's long-term vision.



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An illustration of an underwater scene. The background is a gradient of light blue and white. In the foreground, there are dark blue silhouettes of various aquatic plants and coral. Several fish are swimming in the water, including a large blue fish on the left, a school of smaller blue fish in the center, and several smaller dark blue fish scattered throughout. The overall style is clean and modern.