

BC Lake Stewardship Society (BCLSS)

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A Day of Monitoring on Bridge Lake

Article contributed by Karl Schmitz, Friends of Bridge Lake

On July 14th, 2010 Ministry of Environment Impact Assessment Biologist Chris Swan, her nine year old son Justin (getting a science lesson during the summer break), and our 12 year water testing veteran Karl Schmitz went out on the lake to do some in-depth evaluation of Bridge Lake's water quality. They anchored their boat for several hours at one of the lake's deepest spots, right in the middle between Grassy Island and Long Island.

On a long cable, a probe was slowly lowered down to the bottom of the lake, recording at every meter various water quality data like pH, temperature, electrical conductivity, oxygen level and turbidity. A provisional look at the data suggested an excellent water quality: the oxygen levels stayed in the 'green zone' right down



Bridge Lake
 Photo credit: Karl Schmitz

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Heffley Lake

Photo credit: Bob Jennejohn

to the bottom of the lake. "The fish must be really happy in this lake", remarked Chris.

While Karl recorded the data, Chris programmed, calibrated and tested a smaller device that 'only' measures temperature and oxygen levels. This device will remain here with Karl and he will go out every week for the rest of the season and repeat these tests, collecting valuable long term data for Bridge Lake. The results of Karl's weekly measurements can be found on the Friends of Bridge Lake website at www.friendsofbridgelake.100mile.com/.

Another contributing factor to the well-being of our stocked fish is the pH of the water. Both kokanee and rainbow trout prefer

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Chris Swan checks the water temperature and oxygen levels at 2 meter intervals from the lake surface down to the lake bottom in over 30 meter depth.

slightly alkaline water, so the measured value of about 8.5 is just what they like!

In the mean time, Justin had readied the funnel like net to collect zooplankton samples. Lowered to the lake bottom and slowly retrieved, the usually not noticeable zooplankton (tiny aquatic animals the size of a pinprick) remained highly concentrated in the collector jar attached to the bottom of the net. This sample (below) shows mainly red copepods and green-brown transparent daphnia (water fleas), both species a major part of the kokanee diet.

Once the final data of this outing are available, we will of course report them right here.

A great day on the lake, Thank you Chris (and Justin)!



Above left: Justin Swan holds the collector jar with the 50 micron screen, retaining all the zooplankton collected in the net. Above right: Justin Swan and Karl Schmitz draw the student point sampler up from the lake, which contains a water from a specific depth.

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OK Falls Volunteers Rise Up to the “Challenge”

Submitted by: Janet Black, Okanagan Falls Parks & Recreation

Okanagan Falls is a small community at the south end of Skaha Lake that boasts two amazing waterfront parks. The lakefront has sandy beaches and shallow water that is loved by the locals and popular with tourists. Between these beaches, however lies a neglected and abandoned piece of property, recently acquired by the Okanagan Falls Recreation Commission. While thrilled to take it over, the Commission quickly realized the huge amount of labour that would be needed to bring it up to park standards, clear out the noxious weeds, littered shoreline and restore the beach. They also noticed a lot of debris under the water, and wondered what other pollutants were on the lake bottom....

The BC Water Clean-Up Challenge looked like a great fit for our goals, and our Recreation Director brought in the OK Falls Youth Leadership crew, who were excited to lend their support. They created a video and slide show



and created a Facebook page to raise awareness of our objective. We were thrilled to hear from Pacific Western Brewing (PWB) that we were successful in our grant application, and started promoting Aug 20th as our Peninsula Clean-Up Day. The momentum took off like a wild fire, and soon we had dozens of volunteers geared up for the day. We were especially thrilled when local Scuba Divers (Oceantech) offered to scour the lake bottom for debris.

August 20th felt like a community celebration as much as a work party; with approximate 75 volunteers of all ages weed whacking, hauling junk and litter, roto-tilling and reclaiming this little piece of paradise. The brew master and promotions people from PWB rolled up their sleeves, as did 20 small kids from a Recreation Leadership Camp. The scuba divers came up with an old marine engine, several hunks of metal and 2

bags of random junk. After a hot lunch with the Recreation Commission, the volunteers all looked out to see a beautiful new vista; a new beach, a now useable walking path along the peninsula. The community pride was immeasurable.

With plans to keep the area clean, we have now installed bear-proof garbage bins and doggy bag dispensers, sponsored by the program. The feedback from the community has been so positive and uplifting and it is believed that the legacy of this day will be far reaching, as both an awareness of what can be achieved when people come together, and of the importance of taking care of our waterfront.



All photos courtesy of Janet Black.



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LakeLife: Sockeye Salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)

Submitted by: Kevin Rieberger

With their bright red spawning colours and distinctive green head, sockeye salmon are easily the most recognizable of our 5 Pacific salmon and carry a rich cultural, economic, and ecological significance. In BC, there are about 900 sockeye stocks and over 500 kokanee (land-locked sockeye) populations. Sockeye are the most economically valuable salmon species in BC with the value of the annual catch often exceeding \$100M.

The main spawning area of the sockeye extends from the Fraser River to Alaska's Bristol Bay. Sockeye and kokanee salmon are widely distributed in BC, with the anadromous (sea-run) form spawning in over 300 BC lakes and streams. The Fraser River is the world's largest single river producer of sockeye; it is surpassed only by the combined sockeye production from several river systems flowing into Bristol Bay. The Fraser's exceptionally high productivity is due to the presence of many large lakes that are accessible to anadromous fish and sufficiently productive to sustain a zooplankton community capable of supporting juvenile sockeye salmon densities beyond what presently occurs. This year has seen the greatest run of Fraser River sockeye in nearly 100 years – an impressive 35 million fish! Major spawning runs are also found in the Skeena, Nass, Stikine, Taku and Alsek watersheds as well as those of Smith and Rivers inlets.

Sockeye display two basic life history forms: anadromous (sockeye) and a non-anadromous (kokanee), with considerable variation in each. The typical sockeye life history involves a juvenile lake-rearing phase; however there are also populations which rear in rivers and streams, and populations which migrate directly to estuaries and then to the sea. In BC, lake-type sockeye typically spend 1 or 2 (occasionally 3) years in freshwater before migrating to sea; river-type sockeye spend at least 1 year in freshwater while sea-type sockeye migrate to the sea in their first year. Most Fraser River sockeye populations smolt after 1 year of lake residence and return to spawn in their fourth year after 2 years at sea.

From August to December, mature kokanee move into the inlet streams of lakes, and along lake shores to spawn. After the eggs hatch, the fry will spend about a month in the gravel, then emerge and make their way to the lake. In the lake, the fry move to open water and form schools close to the surface. Kokanee are intolerant of warm water conditions and live in cooler waters 5 m – 30 m below the surface, undergoing vertical migrations at dawn and dusk to feed on surface zooplankton and insects. Kokanee mature between 3 and 5 years of age and, like other salmon, die once they have spawned.

A distinguishing characteristic of sockeye salmon is their extensive use of lake rearing habitat during the juvenile stage of their life history. After emerging from the gravel, sockeye fry typically migrate to

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lakes associated with their natal spawning habitats, where they exhibit a pelagic life style, feeding mainly on zooplankton before seaward migration. The biological productivity in a sockeye nursery lake is therefore important for the survival and growth of juvenile sockeye salmon. Although sockeye salmon acquire 99% of their body weight in the ocean, survival in the freshwater stage is much lower than ocean survival. In addition, most marine mortalities of juvenile sockeye occur soon after entering the ocean and are related to the size attained in freshwater.

Most sockeye lakes are oligotrophic, where nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) limit primary productivity. In such systems, the nutrients supplied by the decomposing bodies of returning salmon can be very important in maintaining the productivity of the lakes and the carrying capacity for juvenile salmon. Declines in sockeye stocks may be, in part, due to the reduced loading of these marine-derived nutrients because of low escapement (returns) of adult sockeye. Sediment cores taken from sockeye lakes have shown substantial decreases in marine-derived nutrients in lakes since the rise of the commercial salmon fishery at the beginning of the 20th century; associated with this are apparent changes in zooplankton and phytoplankton communities.

To help address this problem, fisheries managers may implement a lake fertilization program improve the freshwater rearing conditions of sockeye salmon and kokanee. Juvenile sockeye salmon feed on zooplankton, which in turn feed on phytoplankton. Like any other plants, phytoplankton need nutrients and light for growth, and growth rates are limited by the amount of nutrients in the surface water of the lakes. By making small, regular additions of nutrients throughout the growing season, phytoplankton growth rates are increased and more food is available for the zooplankton. More zooplankton means more food for the young sockeye. The result is better growth for the sockeye and higher survival rates both in the lake and after they migrate to sea, which means greater numbers of returning adults to spawn. Lake enrichment may not increase fish abundance in every lake because of other limiting factors (e.g. fishing pressure, spawning habitat, predation, competition with other species), but, where appropriate, provides a tool to be used in conjunction with good stock management and habitat protection practices to help enhance sockeye populations.

One of the most remarkable features of sockeye is a phenomenon called “cyclic dominance”. In many of the lakes of the Fraser River system in particular, sockeye are abundant in 1 of every 4 years. Sockeye can mature at ages between 2 and 6 years old but in most systems, one age group (usually 4-year-old fish) dominates, meaning most of the offspring produced in any one “brood-year” return to spawn 4 years later. This year of increased population significance creates a cyclic dominance which leads to spectacular returns to the Adams River every 4 years (obviously, 2010 is a dominant cycle). Although there are many ideas about why this occurs, nobody knows for sure. To witness this spectacular event firsthand, be sure to take in the *Salute to the Sockeye* celebration at Roderick Haig-Brown Provincial Park (46 km west of Salmon Arm and 66 km east of Kamloops), from October 2 – 24, 2010.

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Adams River salmon run
Photo source: Kevin Rieberger

17th Annual Secchi Dip-In Results

This year marked another successful Secchi Dip-In. This year, BC's participation in this annual event fell short of our goal and of the previous year's results with 81 dips and 51 lakes participating. Data collected through the Secchi Dip-In provides worldwide information on water quality trends as they relate to water transparency. The variation of water transparency can provide information on how water quality is affected by water type, regional geography, and land use. For further information, visit the Secchi Dip-In website at <http://dipin.kent.edu>.

The History of the Secchi Disc

Pietro Angelo Secchi, an astrophysicist and scientific advisor to the Pope, created the Secchi Disc in 1865, when he was asked to measure the clearness of the water in the Mediterranean Sea. Secchi created a white disc attached to a line, which he lowered into the water and recorded its depth. He continued "dipping" from season to season and year to year, and compared his readings over time. Since then, various sizes of discs have been used, with the most common being an 8-inch diameter plastic disc with black and white quadrants.

How is the Secchi Disc Used?

The process is simple: using the attached line, lower the Secchi disc into the water until it is just out of sight. Record this depth using the marked 1-metre increments on the line. Now, raise the disc slightly until you can just see it and record this depth. The average of the two depths is your Secchi disc reading.

British Columbia's Dip-In Participation

With the fifth year of the BCLSS's BC Lake Stewardship and Monitoring Program nearing completion, the Secchi Disc Dip-In has continued to play a large role in BC. In 2005 the BCLSS set a goal to double the number of participants in the Dip-in from 26 to 52. This goal was surpassed with 53 lakes dipped. The 2006 event's goal of 60 lakes was also surpassed with 71 lakes reporting Secchi dips. Compared to 2009, 2010 had a 16% decrease in the total number of dips (81), a 26% decrease in the total number of lakes measured (51 lakes), and a 12% increase in "dippers" participating (46 dippers). Comparing the results of 2010 to those of 2002 reveals that this year there was a 153% increase in the total number of dips, a 96% increase in the number of lakes monitored, and a 84% increase in the number of "dippers".

Welcome New Dippers


This year welcomed 3 new dippers and had 49 returning dippers. Since 2009, the number of dippers decreased in the Kootenays, Vancouver Island & Skeena Regions. Participation remained the same in the Cariboo and Okanagan Regions, while participation in the Lower Mainland, Omineca/Peace & Thompson-Nicola regions increased slightly.

Temperature and pH

This year, we received temperature readings for 43 lakes, and pH readings for 15. Last year we had 52 temperature readings and 32 pH readings.

This year, the coldest reading was from Nita Lake (Lower Mainland) at 11.5 °C, and the warmest reading was

... article continued on pg. 8, graph of participating lakes from B.C. on p. 7



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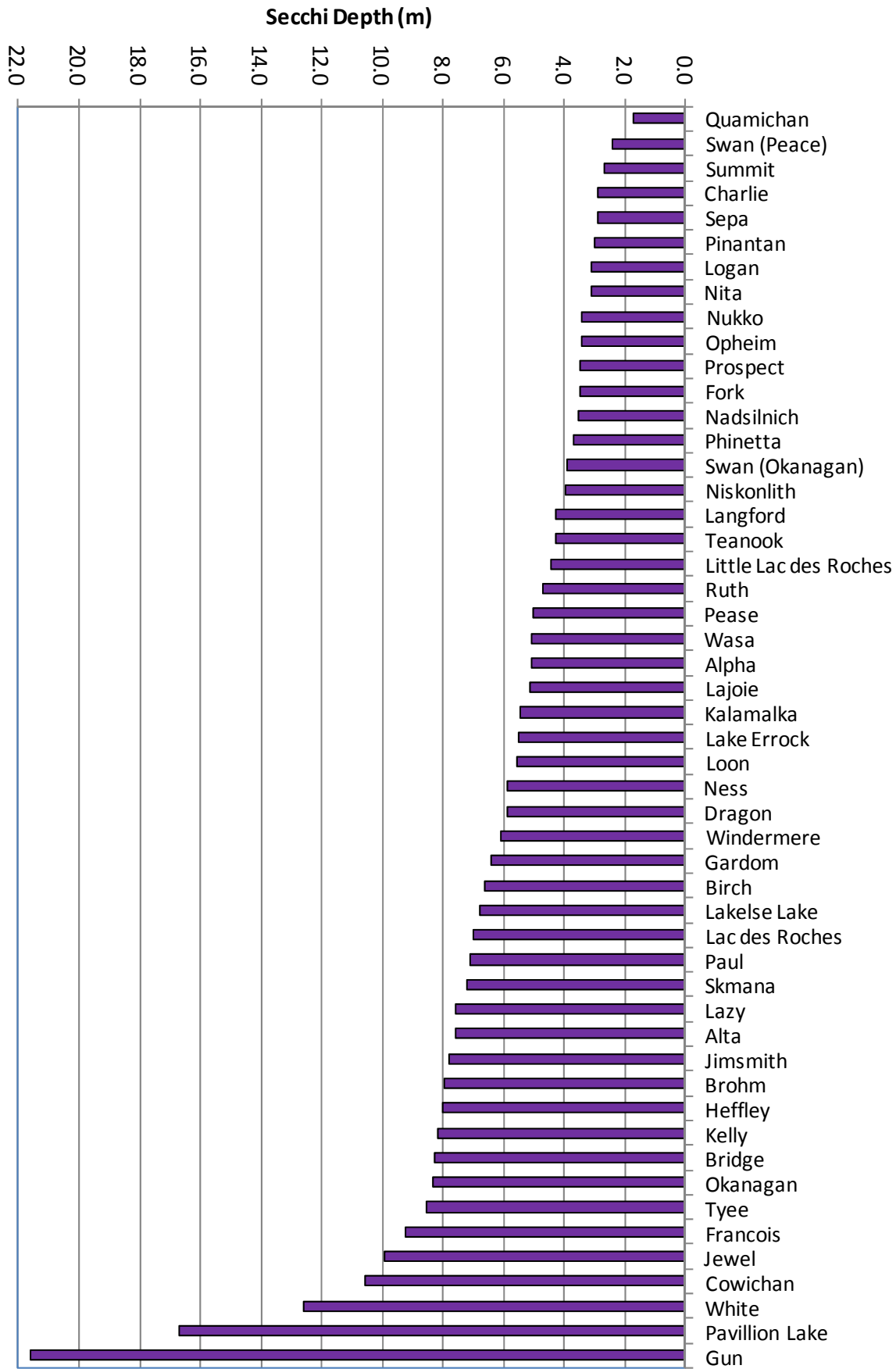
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2010 Secchi Dip-In Results



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22.0 °C at Okanagan Lake (Okanagan). Continuous long-term collection of this data can provide us with valuable information about climate change and water quality trends.

Clearest Lake in BC?

The deepest Secchi reading was recorded at Gun Lake in the Thompson-Nicola Region, averaging 21.6 metres. The final results for North America are still being compiled, but last year, Gun Lake was ranked as the second deepest last sampled (21.3 m) in all of North America. The second deepest lake measured in BC was Pavillion Lake (Thompson-Nicola) at 17.4 metres.

What Does the Secchi Disc Tell Us?

The Secchi disc gives us a reading of water transparency according to the depth of the measurement. The volume of suspended particles contained in the lake water affects transparency. These suspended particles can be a combination of things such as zooplankton, algae, pollutants, and silt. Secchi data collected year after year can provide valuable information on trends in transparency for monitored lakes. Every lake is different in size, shape, depth and geography, and each has its own combination of particles. Each Secchi reading provides a “snapshot” of the water quality in the lake at that particular time.

What Can Cause Changes in the Secchi Reading?

Readings that show a trend of **decreasing** depth for a lake during the Dip-In (in the summer) may be the result of one or more of the following factors:

- ≈ Environmental variability associated with annual climatic variation
- ≈ Higher nutrient levels which can increase algal growth
- ≈ Erosion of the shoreline or erosion from site development near the lake
- ≈ Recirculation of bottom sediment from motorboat activity
- ≈ Discolouration of the water from wetland runoff and/or plant decomposition
- ≈ Reduced zooplankton populations

Additionally, most lakes will experience increased boat activity on weekends and holidays. Taking a Secchi reading on the day after a weekend or holiday may show different results than a reading taken at a different time of the week. This can reveal the effect increased boat activity has on the transparency of a lake. Significant storm events, stormwater runoff, and turnover can also alter Secchi readings.

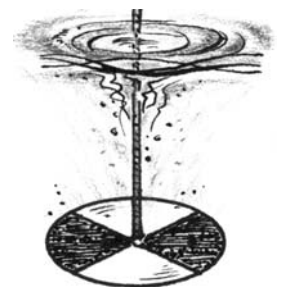
Readings that show a trend of **increasing** depth can be the result of one or more of the following:

- ≈ Environmental variability associated with annual climatic variation
- ≈ Low nutrient levels, which can decrease algal growth (lower productivity of the lake)
- ≈ Little or no mixing of the lake water (sediments settle to the bottom)
- ≈ The effects over time of shoreline restoration – clarity may increase if shoreline enhancement projects have been accomplished and consequently erosion and/or pollution sources have decreased
- ≈ Increased zooplankton populations

How Do I Become a Dipper?

To become a dipper for the 2011 Secchi Dip-In, please contact the BCLSS office. Registration is easy: phone our office or send us your name, phone number, and mailing address. Instructions, data sheets, and Secchi discs will be sent out in the spring. A **FREE** Secchi disc is provided to every new member or member group, and is sold for \$35 to non-members (or \$45 with 30 m tape measure), plus shipping.

Help put your lake on the map—
Participate in the Secchi Dip-In 2011!



Share Your Information With Us!!

One of the primary objectives of the BC Lake Stewardship Society is to provide a public forum to discuss information on specific lakes and watersheds, lake conservation issues/concepts and educational programs relevant to British Columbia's freshwater resources.

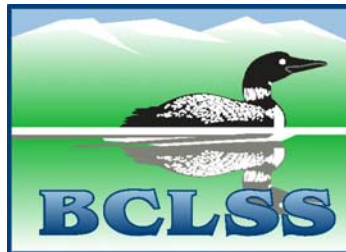
The BC Lake Stewardship Society Board of Directors welcomes written submissions, whether short articles, advertisements, or photos/figures relevant to British Columbia's lakes from both BCLSS members and the community at large. If you have information on BC's lakes, please forward it to us for publication in our quarterly newsletter. The BC Lake Stewardship Society Editor will be pleased to assist you with your submission upon request.

Please send articles and lake information to:

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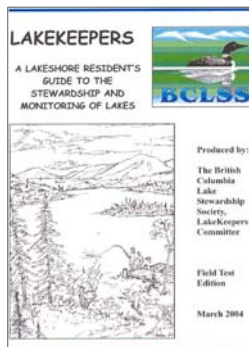
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Announcements & Reminders

LakeKeepers Manuals Available

The BCLSS office has a limited number of LakeKeepers manuals available for purchase (\$40 for members, \$70 for non-members). Additionally, we plan to finalize and print Chapter 6 (Aquatic Plant Surveys) in the coming months. This chapter will be distributed to all previous purchasers of the manual.



2010 Sampling Season

Thank you to all the volunteers that collected data on your lakes this past summer! As the sampling season is coming to a close, please remember to submit your data to the BCLSS office via regular mail, or by email. If you plan on taking a few more Secchi readings this season, **please be safe in the cool fall conditions!**

Ice-on/Ice-off Data Sheet on BCLSS Website

Don't forget to download the ice-on/ice-off data sheet from the BCLSS website. Tracking ice-on/ice-off dates are important in determining the long-term effects of climate change! We track ice-on/ice-off in the BCLSS office, as well as submit it to Environment Canada's IceWatch database. Please visit the BCLSS online library at www.bclss.org/library.html for a copy of the data sheet.

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Become a BCLSS Member or Sponsor

Sponsorship Information

Corporate sponsorship of the BCLSS has many benefits! Donations will be gratefully acknowledged with either a tax-deductible receipt or a non-tax-deductible receipt with the following benefits:

Platinum - \$1000 or more

- Advertisement (1/2 page) in quarterly newsletter
- Logo, link and company description on BCLSS website
- Exhibition space at BCLSS Conference
- Listing at events attended by BCLSS
- Framed certificate

Gold - \$500 - \$800

- Advertisement (1/3 page) in quarterly newsletter
- Logo, link and company description on BCLSS website
- Exhibition space at BCLSS Conference
- Listing at events attended by BCLSS
- Certificate suitable for framing

Silver - \$200 - \$400

- Advertisement (1/6 page) in quarterly newsletter
- Logo and link on BCLSS website
- Exhibition space at BCLSS Conference
- Listing at events attended by BCLSS

Bronze - \$50 - \$100

- Listing and link on BCLSS website
- Listing (business card size) in quarterly newsletter

Benefits of Becoming a Member:

- ⋈ Steward of BC lakes
- ⋈ Quarterly newsletters
- ⋈ Monthly e-newsletter, the *Loonie News*
- ⋈ Water quality monitoring brochures for your lake
- ⋈ Training and support
- ⋈ Assistance from director in local region
- ⋈ Insurance for active volunteers
- ⋈ Annual Conference and Workshops
- ⋈ Part of an extensive network of lake stewards
- ⋈ Access to limnological & water quality library

Don't delay—sign up today!

To become a BCLSS member or sponsor, fill out this form and return it to BCLSS with a cheque or money order, payable to BC Lake Stewardship Society: \$10 student, \$20 individual, \$40 group or your sponsorship amount.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Other information: _____

Coming to a Lake Near You!

Have you ever wanted to attend the Annual BCLSS Conference, but have never had the chance?

Are you interested in bringing the Annual BCLSS Conference to your area?

The BCLSS is always looking to bring the conference to new locations across the British Columbia. The BCLSS strives to make our conference accessible to all of our lake groups and volunteers, no matter where you live!

We are always accepting nominations for future conference locations (for 2012 and beyond), so if you would like to see the BCLSS Conference come to a lake near you, please contact Kristi Carter or Skye Dunbar at:

203-1889 Springfield Road
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info@bclss.org



The 2011 Conference will be held in the **Kamloops area**—stay tuned for details on the location and date!



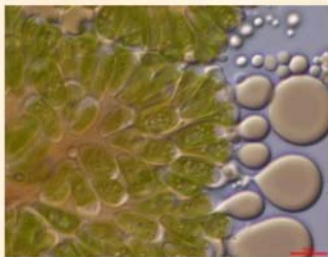
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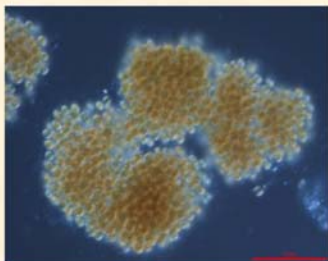
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BC Water Clean-Up Challenge Winners

Adapted from Pacific Pilsner media release, provided by Karen Cook

Earlier this spring, Pacific Western Brewery and sister company Natureland Organics announced that part of the proceeds from sales of Pacific Pilsner and Pureiän Springs would fund a \$20,000 water clean-up program. The sponsors invited communities all across BC to share the story of their stream, river, lake or shoreline and their proposed clean-up project for funding and other support, and promised to announce winners before BC Day weekend.

“We were thrilled to receive applications from communities from all over British Columbia, who told us why their local water is important to them. They shared their clean-up ideas, as well as photos, video and social media projects. Most importantly, they shared their passion for nurturing their communities and for clean water for everyone to enjoy,” said Kazuko Komatsu, President and Chief Executive Officer, Pacific Western Brewery.

The sponsors and The Pacific Streamkeepers Federation, BC Lake Stewardship Society and BC Rivers Day reviewed the applications and selected the following water clean-up projects to receive funding and other support this summer.

The sponsors and partners will share information about each of the clean-up projects as they take place at www.pwbrewing.com and at www.natureland.ca this summer.



Cowichan – *Cowichan Land Trust for Cowichan River*

- ≈ To fund the “Cowichan River Splash”, an event designed to clean up trash from the shores of the Cowichan River

Langley – *Langley Environmental Partners Society for Bertrand Creek*

- ≈ To fund “Salmon Saturday”, an event focused on cleaning up in-stream trash and non-natural debris in Bertrand Creek

Nadsilnich Lake – *(near Prince George) – Nadsilnich Lake Community Association for its lake*

- ≈ To help conduct a shoreline cleanup on Nadsilnich Lake, as well as a bring in a guest speaker to speak at the event

North Vancouver – *Morten Creek SEP Society for Lynn Creek/Keith Creek confluence*

- ≈ To help conduct a garbage and debris cleanup in the lower Lynn Canyon area, specifically along a local hiking trail located at the confluence of Lynn Creek and Keith Creek

Okanagan Falls – *Okanagan Falls Parks and Recreation for the South Shore of Skaha Lake*

- ≈ To conduct a foreshore clean up, including above water and below water areas, as well as install bear-proof garbage bins and an animal waste bag dispenser (*please see p. 3 for more details on this project!*)

Pemberton – *In-SHUK-ch Nation for Lower Lillooet River (south of Pemberton)*

- ≈ To help clean up a car dump site in order to re-establish a traditional fish camp for the local First Nation people

Prince George – *Fraser Basin Council for Nechako River*

- ≈ To fund a youth-based storm drain labeling program and social marketing campaign to raise awareness about salmon and watershed sustainability

Quesnel – *Baker Creek Enhancement Society for Dragon Creek*

- ≈ To help fund various ongoing restoration and cleanup projects along Dragon Creek

Quesnel – *Horsefly River Roundtable for Horsefly River*

- ≈ To help fund a shoreline cleanup project along the Horsefly River