

MEDIA RELEASE

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Shuswap Watershed Council opens Water Quality Grant Program for applications

The Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) is inviting another round of applications to its Water Quality Grant Program, beginning December 1st.

“One of our objectives as a watershed council is to protect and maintain water quality in Shuswap and Mara Lakes,” explains Erin Vieira, program manager for the SWC. “We’re looking to partner with and support Shuswap-area farms to introduce new nutrient management strategies and improve soil health.”

Vieira says the grant program has a particular focus on reducing nutrient inputs from the landscape to rivers and lakes. That’s because excessive amounts of nutrients, especially phosphorus, contribute to algal blooms which reduce the quality of water for drinking and recreation, and may become toxic to people, pets and livestock.

“Water quality monitoring and research have shown us that agricultural and settled lands in the Salmon River valley and Shuswap River valley are significant contributors of nutrients to the lakes,” Vieira says. “Therefore, our grant program is geared toward helping farms in those areas undertake projects or implement new practices to improve nutrient management and soil health.”

By doing so, nutrients such as phosphorus will be retained on the landscape and continuously cycle in the soil, being used by crops and vegetation – not washing off into nearby creeks and rivers through rain, snowmelt, or erosion. It’s a win-win for farms and for water quality.

Up to \$45,000 is available in the current intake. Farmers, agri-businesses, First Nations governments, indigenous organizations, hobby farmers, wineries, nurseries, landowners, and stewardship groups within the Shuswap watershed are invited to apply. Applicants are required to contribute at least 50% of the total project cost in cash and/or in-kind contributions. Funding will be distributed to successful applicants in early 2025.

Since 2020 the SWC has provided 18 grants to Shuswap-area farms and stewardship groups for projects that protect water quality such as riparian planting and restoration, riverbank stabilization, wetland restoration, livestock fencing, manure and effluent storage, cover cropping, irrigation efficiency, fertigation, and no-till agriculture.



More information about the grant program and an application package is available at www.shuswapwater.ca. The application period is open from December 1st 2024 – January 31st 2025.

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About: The Shuswap Watershed Council is a watershed-based partnership organization that works on water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap.

Contact: For more information, please contact Erin Vieira or Alex de Chantal c/o the Fraser Basin Council in Kamloops at 250 314-9660 and visit www.shuswapwater.ca.