

## Shuswap Watershed Council Terms of Reference

### V. 7 effective April 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 (approved December 11th 2024)

#### 1. Introduction

The Shuswap Watershed Council (SWC) was established in 2014 as a watershed-based partnership of several organizations with an interest or responsibility for protecting water quality. The SWC is a collaborative, non-regulatory group that focuses on strategic initiatives to protect, maintain and enhance water quality in the Shuswap watershed.

This Terms of Reference set the governance framework for the Shuswap Watershed Council.

#### 2. Shuswap Watershed Council Purpose

The SWC provides direction to the creation and implementation of its programs and initiatives for water quality, invasive species prevention, public engagement and communications, and advocacy, as set out in the Strategic Plan for 2021 - 2026 and additional work on water issues as needed.

#### 3. Shuswap Watershed Council Role

The Shuswap Watershed Council will work toward its vision, goals, and strategic objectives. The roles of the SWC are to:

- Increase collaboration of all relevant interests in the Shuswap watershed for the common good of water quality and the watershed
- Secure funding from diverse sources to support the implementation of SWC programs and initiatives
- Provide direction and oversight for the implementation of its programs and initiatives
- Monitor risks and quality of program implementation
- Approve annual work plans and budgets, as prepared by Program Managers.
- Receive annual reports, as prepared by Program Managers.

All SWC members sign and abide by a guiding [Principles Document](#).

#### 4. Shuswap Watershed Council Membership

The SWC is comprised of up to 19 members with interests and perspectives from a range of sectors:

Local government (municipalities or regional districts)	up to 6
First Nations	up to 3
Provincial government	up to 3 <sup>1</sup>
Community representatives (public/civil society)	up to 3
Science/Research/Academia	up to 2
Agriculture sector	1
Youth <sup>2</sup>	1

##### 4.1 Recruiting and appointing members to the SWC

The SWC will seek to fulfill the membership described in Article 4 as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Ideally, one member from each of the following: BC Ministry of Environment & Parks; BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food; BC Ministry of Water, Land & Resource Stewardship

<sup>2</sup> Youth is defined as a person between 19 – 30 years of age

- Members from local government and First Nations government may be elected officials or staff
  - An official appointment letter is not required, but will be accepted (i.e., an official appointment is at the discretion of the organization)
- Members from Provincial government are staff, ideally working in the Shuswap watershed or southern interior of BC
- Community representatives and the youth representative are appointed to the SWC through a process of evaluating Expressions of Interest
- The current membership will discuss potential new members before they are appointed.

#### 4.2 Duties

SWC members must:

- Be prepared to commit time and energy to participate on the SWC
  - Travel expenses will be compensated at a rate consistent with BC government allowance rates (See Article 11)
- Be committed to attending quarterly meetings, held within the Shuswap area or held virtually (see Article 11)
- Receive and respond correspondence by e-mail.

#### 4.3 Members' terms, resignations and succession

- SWC members should be committed to serving a three-year term (can be renewed) except for the youth representative who will serve a two-year term (can be renewed)
  - Terms will be staggered to allow for succession on the SWC
- SWC members must notify the Chair and Program Managers in advance of a resignation, if it they wish to resign before their term is complete
- The Chair will announce resignations and vacancies on the SWC membership
- When a SWC member's term is complete (and they do not wish to renew it) or if they resign, another individual may be appointed to the SWC from the same organization, but this is not obligatory. A vacancy may be filled from another organization to meet the membership as outlined in Article 4.
- If a SWC member is absent for two consecutive meetings, the Chair will contact them to clarify their intentions about whether to continue to participate.

#### 4.4 Chair and Vice Chair

The SWC will elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among its members for one-year terms (see Article 7).

### 5. Program Management and Administration

The Fraser Basin Council, a BC non-profit non-government organization established in 1997, provides staff services and program management to the Shuswap Watershed Council. The FBC is a registered society and provides the umbrella administration for the SWC. Key duties and responsibilities for Program Managers include:

- Develop and deliver the SWC programs and initiatives for water quality, invasive species prevention, public engagement and communications, and advocacy
- Develop annual work plans and budgets
- Apply for grant funding
- Financial administration, including:

- Establish Contribution Agreements with funders and ensure the terms and conditions of the agreements are being met
- Report to funders to meet requirements
- Track and pay project/program expenses
- Report to the SWC membership for information
- Prepare for and support SWC meetings (see Article 12).

## 6. Decision Making

The SWC makes decisions by consensus whenever possible.

### 6.1 Voting rights

Decisions, including the approval of annual work plans and budgets, will be made by consensus to the greatest extent possible. If a vote is required:

- Each SWC member has one vote (i.e., equal weighted)<sup>3</sup>
- Quorum is 50%
- A vote is won by simple majority.

## 7. Chair and Vice Chair

The SWC will elect a Chair and Vice Chair from among its members for one-year terms.

### 7.1 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Election of a chair and vice chair will take place as follows:

- Elections will take place at the first meeting of the calendar year, presided over by the Program Managers
- Chair and Vice Chair appointments are for one year
- Nominees for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair must be present at the meeting (in-person or virtual); or nominations may be submitted to the Program Manager in advance of the SWC meeting at which elections take place. The latter requires a nomination from the nominator and a notice of acceptance from the nominee.
- Elections will take place by secret ballot, unless election is by acclamation
  - If the meeting is being held virtually with remote participation, elections may take place by submitting votes via confidential emails or messages.

### 7.2 Chair and Vice Chair Roles and Responsibilities

Further to the purpose and role of the SWC described in Article 3, the roles of the Chair are:

- Chair SWC meetings
- Be an ambassador and a spokesperson for the SWC
- Ensure Council members are aware of their roles and responsibilities
- Bring issues and correspondence before the SWC for discussion
- Liaise with Program Managers on the following, but not limited to:
  - SWC meeting agendas
  - Key program deliverables and achievements
  - Review quarterly updates from Program Managers
  - Communications and advocacy.

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<sup>3</sup> Staff of Provincial government agencies may abstain from participating in decision-making

The roles of the Vice Chair are:

- Support the Chair in the activities described above
- Act as Chair in the Chair's absence.

## **8. Liaise with Water Quality Monitoring Group and Water Protection Advisory Committee**

The SWC will be supported by the Water Quality Monitoring Group and the Water Protection Advisory Committee, each of which have their own committee Terms of Reference. From time to time, the SWC may refer information or requests to the Monitoring Group or Advisory Committee for discussion and recommendations.

Summaries from the Monitoring Group and Advisory Committee meetings will be included in SWC agenda packages, to be received for information.

## **9. Comments in Public or the Media**

Council members should refer all questions and inquiries from the media to the Chair, Vice Chair or program managers. When speaking publicly, Council members must convey the interest of the SWC.

## **10. Term and revisions**

These Terms of Reference (TOR) come into effect on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

The Terms of Reference are subject to revision. The SWC membership will review the Terms of Reference every two years, or as needed to ensure the TOR remains up-to-date and to provide an opportunity for revisions.

## **11. Funding and Compensation**

The SWC seeks funding from diverse sources to support the implementation of its programs and initiatives. The Fraser Basin Council will establish Contribution Agreements with funders, as required.

### **11.1 Travel expense reimbursement**

SWC members without organizational support (i.e., local government and First Nations representatives, community representatives, scientific advisors, agriculture representative, youth representative) will receive compensation for travel expenses incurred for attending SWC meetings at a rate consistent with BC Government travel and reimbursement rates. SWC members from Provincial government organizations will have their travel expenses, if any, covered by their agency.

## **12. Shuswap Watershed Council Administration**

- The SWC will meet quarterly
- Meeting dates will be convenient to the majority of the members
- Meeting dates will be set for a calendar year, early in that year
- Meetings will be open to the public to observe
- Meetings may take place in-person or virtually (e.g., Zoom Meeting)
- The Program Managers will be responsible for:
  - Preparing meeting agendas, with the Chair and Vice Chair, and distributing meeting materials
  - Recording decisions and action items, and preparing meeting summaries
  - Making arrangements for meeting venues and refreshments.