



BC
WATERSHED
SECURITY
COALITION

THE CASE FOR INVESTING IN BC'S WATERSHEDS

Rich and abundant watersheds such as the Fraser, Skeena, Peace, Columbia and Cowichan bring life, health, and prosperity to communities in every corner of BC. Our rivers and lakes are the cornerstone of our local economies, our forests, our fish & wildlife, our food crops, our quality of life and survival itself.

Our watersheds provide critical natural defences to floods, droughts and fires, but are increasingly degraded in many parts of the province.

**\$75 Million
Annually**

**BC needs a
Watershed Security Fund
with a sustained investment
to rebuild our watersheds and
all the benefits
they provide**



WHAT IS WATERSHED SECURITY?

Watershed security is about two things:

- 1** Our watersheds provide essential benefits that underpin our economy, health and well-being—clean drinking water, thriving salmon runs, water for growing food, and natural protections against climate disasters.
- 2** The stewardship and actions we take to keep our watersheds healthy, strong and productive so that they continue to provide these services.



WHY WE CAN'T AFFORD TO WAIT

Last year provided a devastating reminder of the costs of our changing climate and increasingly severe floods, droughts and forest fires. Poorly planned development over the past 20 years has compounded these impacts and caused other problems—polluted drinking water, reduced food security, destruction of salmon habitat, and loss of cultural and spiritual values.



THE PATH TO WATERSHED SECURITY

What Will an Annual Budget of \$75 Million Achieve?

There are three priority investment areas that will strengthen community resilience and support better decisions for the benefit of all British Columbians:



REBUILD NATURAL DEFENCES

Healthy watersheds provide critical natural defences against the climate crisis: wetlands act as natural sponges, absorbing and purifying water; natural streambanks filter polluted run-off and provide shade to spawning salmon; mature forests hold back snow and rain in the winter and release it when it's needed most.



STRENGTHEN WATERSHED GOVERNANCE

Governance is organizing the way we work together to make better decisions at the right scale, involving the people that live in watersheds and know them best. It's relationship building in a deep way, between Crown and Indigenous Nations, governments and communities, and the various interests that have a stake in our watersheds.



BOLSTER COLLABORATIVE MONITORING

We can't effectively manage what we don't measure. Collaborative watershed monitoring grounded in both Indigenous knowledge and western science is the only way to ensure we are making the right decisions, at the right time, and investing where we need it the most.



WORKING FOR WATERSHEDS JOBS & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

BC's existing watershed sector supports 27,000 jobs across a diversity of professions from planners, to heavy machinery operators, from Indigenous guardians to industry technologists, from ecologists to software developers.

Dedicating a portion of the Fund for a skills and training program to grow the watershed sector—a BC Centre for Watershed Security—would align with BC's new Economic Plan and support youth employment and a better just transition for under-employed resource workers, in sectors such as forestry.



COSTS

As climate change intensifies year on year, the costs of inaction will continue to grow.

2021 Costs



FLOODS
\$9B

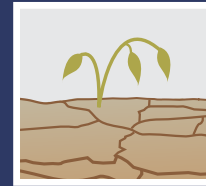
projected costs of
Nov floods



FIRES

\$500M

amount spent
fighting fires



DROUGHTS
\$20M

drought package for
farmers in Sept

BENEFITS

The social and economic benefits of investing in watersheds are substantial.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The natural infrastructure of a watershed (eg. wetlands, forests and streambanks) provide the same protection as built infrastructure *at half the cost.*

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

Investing in watershed security will strengthen Indigenous governance, contribute to Nation re-building, and support Indigenous economic development.

LESS CONFLICT

Funding for collaborative governance and forward planning reduces conflict, improves decision-making, and increases social cohesion.

JOB CREATION

Economists estimate the Fund could add 13,000+ new jobs over the next 10 years. 800 jobs were created in a single year (2021) through \$27 million in economic stimulus.

For every \$1 invested by the provincial government in watershed projects, another \$4 will be leveraged

This funding will catalyze investments from other sources, including federal, municipal, philanthropic and private sector contributions.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Meeting these four Indicators of Success will ensure a truly impactful Fund that will garner broad support across the province.



SCALED FOR IMPACT

Allocating sufficient funding is necessary to make a difference. An annual allocation of at least \$75 million is required.



SUSTAINABLE

Restoration, governance and monitoring require sustained funding over time to have impact. Long-term funding is essential for Indigenous Nation re-building in watershed stewardship.



INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE

The Fund should be co-governed with First Nations, advance Indigenous rights and principles, and ensure explicit roles for First Nations in the governance and leadership structure.



FLEXIBLE TO REGIONAL NEEDS

The Fund should be structured to respond to the priorities of different regions. These priorities could be defined by existing collaborative initiatives or new watershed based tables.

SUPPORT FOR WATERSHED SECURITY FUND

FIRST NATIONS LEADERS COUNCIL — “We applaud the Province for taking steps towards launching this long-awaited Watershed Security Fund and we look forward to working with the Province to advance the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the co-development and co-implementation of this important fund.”

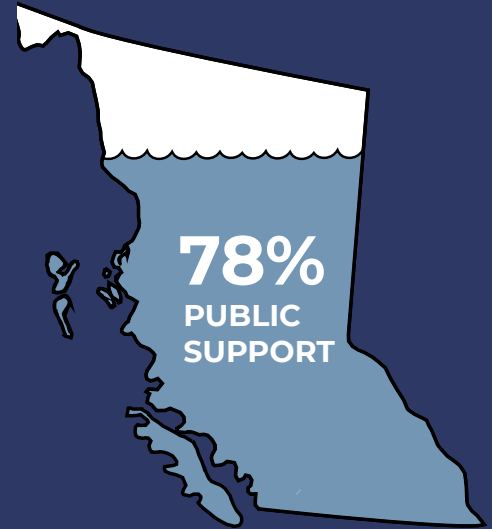
FNLC Press Release, April 2022

LOCAL GOVERNMENT — “UBCM requests that the Province of BC create a dedicated, sustainable, annual funding source for the Watershed Security Fund that provides \$75 million annually for community driven watershed security initiatives.”

Union of BC Municipalities Resolution, Sept 2021

PUBLIC SUPPORT — “78% of British Columbians hold the view that BC needs to make major investments in watershed security to protect fresh water in this province.”

McAllister Opinion Research, Sept 2021



**BC
WATERSHED
SECURITY
COALITION**

We are a non-partisan, diverse coalition, of 44 organizations including farmers, hunters and anglers, Indigenous peoples, local governments, businesses, and conservationists, representing 255,000 British Columbians from all walks of life. The Coalition focuses on advancing modern-day solutions that increase community resilience and security.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Lillooet BC. Title page. Photo by Marci Janecek, Marsupial Design.

Old growth forest. Pg 2. (Top). Photo by Province of British Columbia, flickr.com

Fisheries staff collect baseline inventory throughout Haisla territory on species including salmon, eulachon, and crab. Pg. 2 (Top left). Photo by Mike Jacobs, Haisla Fisheries Commission. Courtesy Coast Funds.

Okanagan Lake, from Naramata Bench. Pg. 2 (Top right). Photo by Becks, Commons.Wikimedia.org.

BC fruit, Summerland BC. Pg. 2 (Bottom left). Photo by Adam Foster, Flickr.com.

Pair of sockeye salmon. Pg. 2 (Bottom right). Photo by iStock.com.

Drought in the North Arm of the Cowichan River. Pg. 3 (Top left). Photo by Parker Jefferson, Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable.

Firefighter fighting forest fire in BC. Pg. 3. (Top right). Photo by Province of British Columbia, flickr.com

Flooding in Abbotsford. Pg 3 (Bottom). Photo by Province of British Columbia, flickr.com

Kwadacha Nation Wetland Training. Pg. 5 (Top left). Photo credit: BCWF Wetlands Education Program

Watertech researcher. Pg. 5 (Top middle). Photo credit pexels.com

Khaylish Fraser, Aquatics Program Coordinator of Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society, Workshop in Salmo, B.C. Pg. 5 (Top right). Photo credit BCWF Wetlands Education Program

Water testing technician. Pg.5 (Middle left). Photo credit iStock.com

Indigenous Central Westcoast Forest Society: Training youth, Clayoquot. Pg 5. (Middle right.) Photo by Lora Tryon

Field training participants. Pg 5 (Bottom left). Photo by BCWF Wetlands Education Program.

Forest Ministry staff and BCWF field training for Forest and Range Evaluation Program, Fort St James, B.C. Pg. 5. (Bottom right). Photo by BCWF Wetlands Education Program.