

ABOUT THE SALMON RIVER WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE

From the website: http://www.srwr.ca/about_us.php

A bit about the Roundtable

The Salmon River Watershed Roundtable is the action arm of the Salmon River Watershed Society which undertakes development and implementation of annual work plans under the guidance of a volunteer executive, membership and chair as well as many contributions from land owners, agencies, industry and First Nations. To date, several thousand individuals have participated in planning and field action activities. Each year, an annual workplan is developed following the mission statement, and guiding principles of the SRWR, which is based on the results of 3 levels of watershed scale planning (CCME, WFSP, PSF).

These watershed plans also consider funding availability and current priorities such as: farming economics, bark beetle infestation, flooding, drought and declining fish stocks. The overall objective of each overall workplan is to move forward incrementally toward a sustainable watershed in terms of ecological, economic, and social values within a 20 - 200 year perspective. Awareness and education are important activities as we strive to improve sustainability through human behaviour change and individual action.

Where are we today?

We have succeeded in continuing through the initial stages of developing a consensus-based watershed sustainability plan with a 20-200 year perspective toward a healthy watershed in the future. The stage that we now enjoy as the SRWR is one where we are nearing the end of the first 20 year step in the 200 year plan; with 18 years of success behind us and busy work plans on the horizon for the next few years. The first 20 year long phase seemed far off when the SRWR was formed, but at the time it was seen as the necessary first step in order to achieve the longer term goals.

How we got started

Brief Summary of how the SRWR formed:

- The Salmon River Watershed Roundtable began following the discussion of problems on the Salmon River near Salmon Arm at a local government Environmental Management Committee meeting brought forward by Neskonlith Band Elder Mary Thomas.
- The Environmental Management Committee (EMC) Chair, then Councilor Dorothy Argent moved the discussion forward to involve other related interests such as government, local landowners and First Nations participants.
- A River Restoration Committee (RRC) was struck which organized and undertook demonstration projects with assistance from agencies such as Ducks Unlimited, Ministry of Environment, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, First Nations and local landowners to bring attention to potential solutions for local issues.
- The group undertook a series of planning and action steps which led them to the realization that issues being addressed on the Salmon River near Salmon Arm

- were symptoms of larger issues stemming from human activity over the length of the river and its entire land base.
- This led to a watershed perspective. As an outcome the Salmon River Watershed Society was formed in 1993 (BC Society Number: S-32931), with a Constitution as below.
 - The SRWR continued to meet and plan activities based on its Mission Statement and Guiding Principles.

Our Mission Statement

"Our mission is to be a catalyst to achieve and maintain a healthy Salmon River Watershed through coordinated management of all resources, respect for all concerns and cooperative positive action."

Constitution

Society Act The Salmon River Watershed Society

1. The name of the Society is: "The Salmon River Watershed Society"
2. The purposes of the Society are:
 - a. To promote a heightened sense of community and of watershed stewardship among all stakeholders so that they desire to manage their individual and group actions in the watershed for the long run good of all.
 - b. To assemble and develop processes which allow stakeholders to come together and use the rich diversity of their individual talents and values to efficiently devise and carry out cooperative watershed strategies which benefit all.
 - c. To assemble, devise, test and implement a public information system to increase the level of knowledge of all stakeholders in the watershed about the ecological relationships which determine the consequences of individual actions.
 - d. To create a coordinated management plan for the Salmon River watershed which is sustainable economically, environmentally and socially.
 - e. To support a healthy Salmon River Watershed through coordinated management of all resources, respect for all concerns and cooperative positive action.

Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles have served the SRWR well over its 18 year history to date by keeping partnerships healthy and participation levels high.

- Maintain a healthy Salmon River Watershed
- Pursue coordinated management of all resources
- Exhibit respect for all concerns
- Follow a positive approach to problem solving (No finger pointing or criticism of past practices)
- Utilize an inclusive process based on consensus planning
- Follow an ecosystem approach with ecosystem objectives (Watershed perspective)
- Follow sustainable living practices
- Maintain a collective vision (no side tracking by special interests)
- Ensure that the Watershed Plan is useful to landowners, agencies, First Nations, businesses and citizens

Where the SRWR goes from here depends upon following our guiding principles in pursuing the long term vision with cohesion and continuity, flexibility and openness.

Community Participation

The SRWR has developed through the efforts of many contributions including funding support, technical resources, and personal assistance from literally thousands of individuals. Volunteer help has come from the towns and farms within our watershed, across our country and from as far away as Germany, Taiwan, China, San Salvador and other countries. Each has contributed to the SRWR that exists today. Partnerships have included participation from all levels of government as well as non-government agencies, industry, First Nations, landowners, and citizens.

Tremendous progress has been made over the past 18 years in working toward common goals through both existing and new partnerships. One of the early lessons learned by the SRWR was that partnerships cycle through, but the SRWR endures because of the collective contributions made, and becomes more than any one individual could accomplish.

The SRWR is a learning organization. Through our learning we continually refine our understanding and use of our fundamental principles, move towards our watershed goals, and carry out our mission. So, education and awareness is an essential component to everything we do; we learn from one another as we plan, carry out field and other activities, and monitor the results.