



**COWICHAN,
OUR CLIMATE
IS CHANGING**
We have a plan to adapt



TAKING ACTION ON THE NEW NORMAL SUMMARY

Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Plan 2023-2026

Climate change is a global issue that is affecting us at the regional level. The people that live and work in the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) are experiencing the impacts of climate change now as part of their everyday lives. With changing climatic conditions like hotter and drier summers, wetter winters, and more intensive storms, comes the increased likelihood of impacts felt throughout the region, including prolonged heat waves, wildfires, droughts, and flooding.

It's time to act to adapt to the new normal.

Cowichan Region Climate Adaptation Partners have developed a Board approved Climate Adaptation Strategy which includes local solutions to help us prepare. The Strategy will help move our region forward by focusing on activities to improve our built infrastructure, enhance our health and emergency preparedness systems, enable green economic growth, and preserve local biodiversity.

This document provides the summary highlights of the Adaptation Strategy and Implementation Plan which will be updated every four years. Read the complete Implementation Plan to view activities that will guide our efforts.



A STRATEGY FOR OUR REGION

The Cowichan Adapts Implementation Plan is our road map to climate action in the Cowichan region. The Plan identifies goals, objectives, actions, and current activities to help us prepare for future impacts. Now, it's time to implement it.



VISION

provides an enduring, shared purpose for staff, elected officials, partners, and residents as we work on climate change adaptation

Cowichan Region Climate Adaptation Partners will take a proactive approach to prepare the systems in our region for the impacts of a changing climate.



GOALS

provide overarching guidance on the breadth of what we wish to achieve through Cowichan Adapts



THEMES

around which



OBJECTIVES

outline focus areas for future action

- 1 Build upon the region's current work on climate change adaptation and hazard preparedness.
- 2 Increase the resilience of infrastructure, programs, and services to the changing climate in the Cowichan region.
- 3 Protect the health, prosperity, and well-being of residents, especially vulnerable populations, to climate extremes.
- 4 Foster sustainable development and economic growth, while ensuring that natural assets continue to provide the resources and environmental services on which our well-being relies.
- 5 Protect, conserve, and improve terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem health from the impacts of climate change.
- 6 Improve the awareness, knowledge, skills, and resources of government, citizens, and business people regarding climate change adaptation.



THEME 1

Resilient Grey & Green Infrastructure



THEME 2

Community Health & Emergency Management



THEME 3

Green Growth & Sustainable Development



THEME 4

Ecosystems & Bioregional Carrying Capacity



THEME 5

Cross Cutting Actions (apply to all actions)



PRIORITIZED ACTIONS

20 OBJECTIVES

Objectives and supporting actions are organized around the five themes. Objectives shown in *italics* indicate community and partnership-based actions in which CVRD would provide support, but actions would typically be led by another organization.



THEME 1 Resilient Grey & Green Infrastructure

Actions to improve the climate resiliency of the built environment, including its durability, functionality, and sustainability.

- 1 Consider climate change information in land use planning and the design, construction, and maintenance of infrastructure in the region.
- 2 Continue to upgrade stormwater management systems and pursue integrated flood management approaches for reducing flood damage.
- 3 Reduce the risk of power outages due to extreme weather events.
- 4 *Work with community partners to expand use of green infrastructure.*



THEME 2 Community Health & Emergency Management

Actions to prepare for and respond quickly to impacts associated with extreme weather and changing climate conditions

- 5 Minimize wildfire risk and associated impacts to the community, environment, and public health and safety, especially amongst vulnerable populations.
- 6 Minimize disaster risk caused by natural hazards and extreme weather events among residents, businesses, and the community.
- 7 *Work with community partners to minimize health issues caused by extreme weather, especially for vulnerable populations.*
- 8 *Work together to strengthen capacity to respond to weather-related emergencies.*



THEME 3 Green Growth & Sustainable Development

Actions to help our businesses and industry adapt to a changing climate while enabling a thriving economy.

- 9 Attract, retain, and expand local agriculture and agri-food businesses to support food security.
- 10 Support regional business innovation and continuity in the face of a changing climate.
- 11 *Improve local water security for agricultural lands, and continue to monitor, assess, and manage water.*
- 12 *Support and encourage community stakeholders to incorporate climate change adaptation into agricultural and food security planning.*
- 13 *Encourage the local forest industry to adapt to the changing climate.*



THEME 4 Ecosystems & Bioregional Carrying Capacity

Actions to preserve and enhance local biodiversity and the resilience of the natural environment and water resources.

- 14 Steward, protect, and restore the region's ecosystems and biodiversity in an era of climate change and continued population growth.
- 15 Steward, protect, and restore Cowichan region watersheds in the face of climate change, continued population growth, and other development pressures including forestry and mining.
- 16 Prepare for shifts in ranges of existing species and influxes of new invasive species.
- 17 *Support education and outreach on watershed health, tree planting, and ecosystem management.*



THEME 5 Cross Cutting Actions (apply to all actions)

Actions to build capacity, encourage resilience, and integrate climate risk management in virtually all aspects of future work in the region.

- 18 Research, monitor, and disseminate lessons learned on climate change projections, impacts, and adaptive actions.
- 19 Mainstream climate change adaptation into regional policies, programming, actions, and disaster risk reduction strategies.
- 20 Maximize collective impact against climate change through partnerships with local First Nations.

NEXT STEPS

It's time for action.

The work to date on climate change adaptation gives us the information we need to understand the issues and impacts within our region outlining what it is we want to achieve. Now, it's time to focus on the actions we need to take.

The actions of Cowichan Adapts will be implemented through partnerships, with the CVRD helping to facilitate work with local municipalities, partners, and representatives from other organizations. An advisory group will act as a coordinating body between the partners to review implementation and identify activities and projects to be completed.

Monitoring our progress.

We cannot achieve all our goals at once. Logical, coordinated actions will address areas requiring more urgent attention and using the knowledge we have will sustain our progress.

As we move forward, we'll want to keep tabs on how we're doing and celebrate successes along the way. Monitoring will allow us to take stock and shift directions so our efforts keep us on the path forward.

Stay connected, monitor progress, and find tools about how you can adapt using the Cowichan Adapts website link below.

CVRDNEWNORMALCOWICHAN.CA

