COMMUNITY IN NATURE
CLEAN WATER FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

# Community Values Survey Summary Report for the Bird Creek Watershed in Area E in the Regional District of Central Kootenay

WEST KOOTENAY EcoSociety

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The West Kootenay EcoSociety is honoured to have had the opportunity to have commissioned expert consultants to lead and inform this Nature-Directed Planning project.

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Contributors
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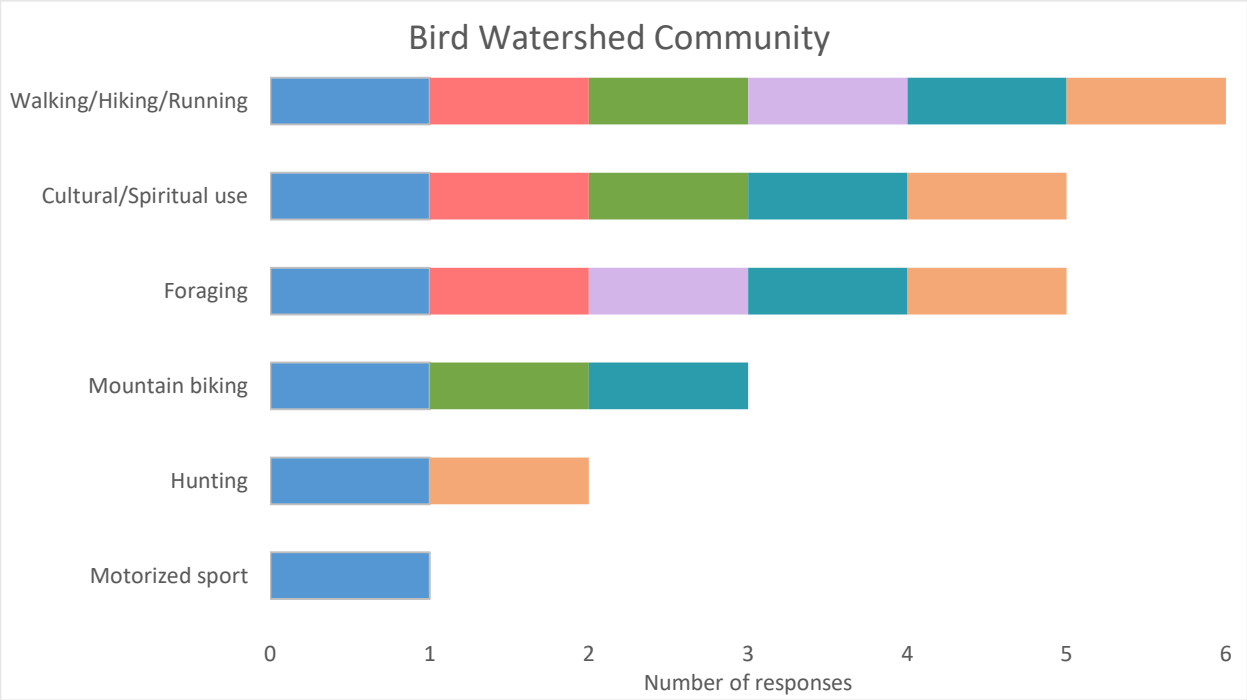
Overview of water and watershed uses

All six respondents from the Bird watershed community get their water from a spring or surface water.

Ways community members interact with their watershed (usership) varies greatly and shows most people do interact with their watershed in some way. The other various uses reported were gardening, horseback riding, growing food, micro-hydro maintenance/trail maintenance.




Q: *If you spend time in your watershed, what activities do you take part in? Check all that apply.*

Land-use preference for land base providing resident drinking water

Land-use or land-management preferences overwhelmingly represented a desire for the subject watersheds to be either closed to any resource extraction, or managed with nature-based planning to protect water quality and present rural way of life.

| Q: *I prefer that the land base that provides my drinking water be…* | responses |
|---|---|
| Closed to any resource extraction development thereby protecting our water quality and present rural way of life. | 3 |
| Managed by the First Nations and community steering committee, using nature-based planning with the possibility of sensitive logging. | 3 |
| Open for development by current Ministry of Forests standards, which has traditionally included clear-cuts, partial cuts and slash burning with public consultation at industry discretion. | 0 |

Community involvement in watershed planning

All of the respondents to this survey believe that the planning for human use of the watershed should include a meaningful role from the community living within the watershed.

Decision making in consumptive watersheds

Q: *Do you think decisions about possible resource use in consumptive watersheds (watersheds that provide clean drinking water to communities) should be made by…*

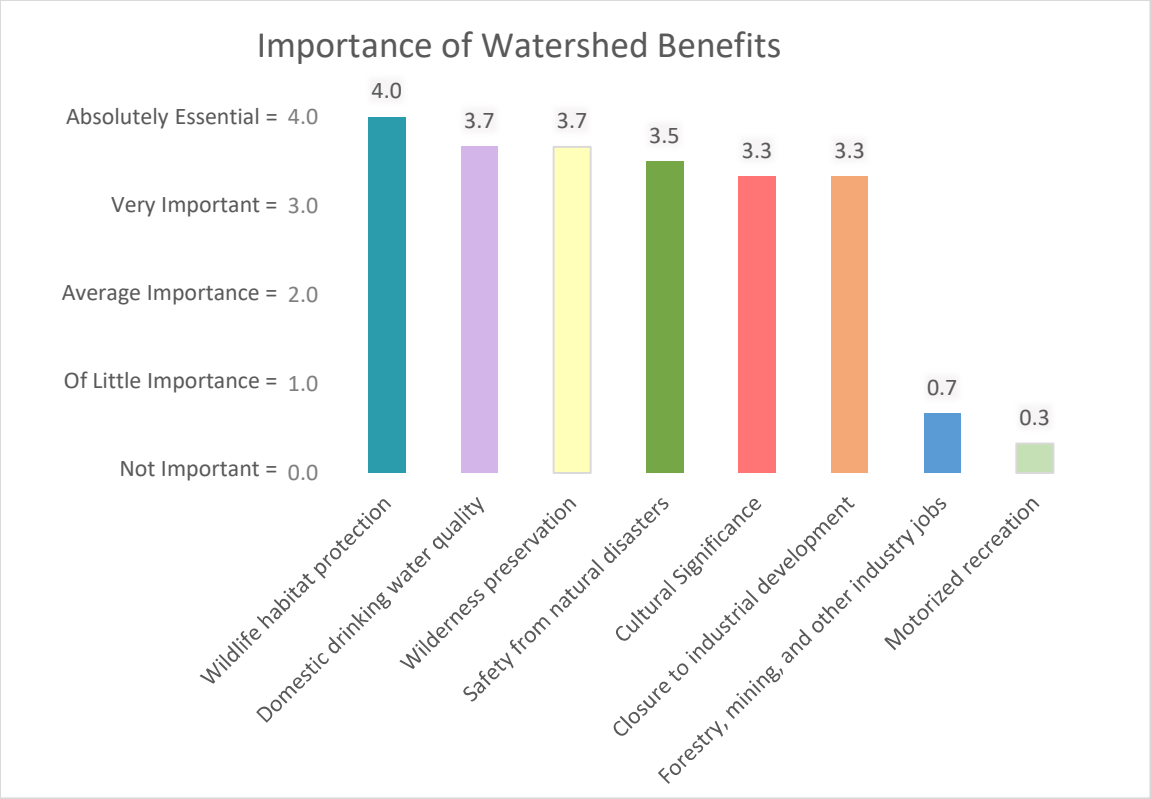
All respondents believe that decisions about possible resource use in consumptive watersheds should be made locally. Five out of six participants stated that the community should be responsible for these decisions, while the other said that "water license holders" should make those decisions. Two of the five vying for community involvement suggested additional collaboration with the RDCK.

Interested in Community Engagement

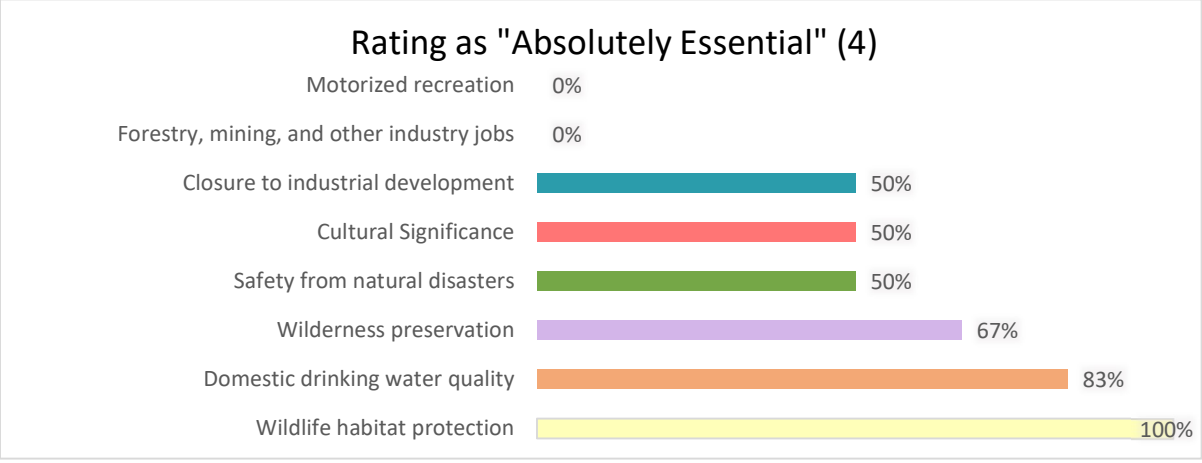
Interest in being involved in a community society or cooperative was low – 4 of the 6 respondents were not interested. However, 2 people who identified as having interest provided contact information.

Community watershed values

The following shows the top 5 responses and the lowest two both weighted and ranked.



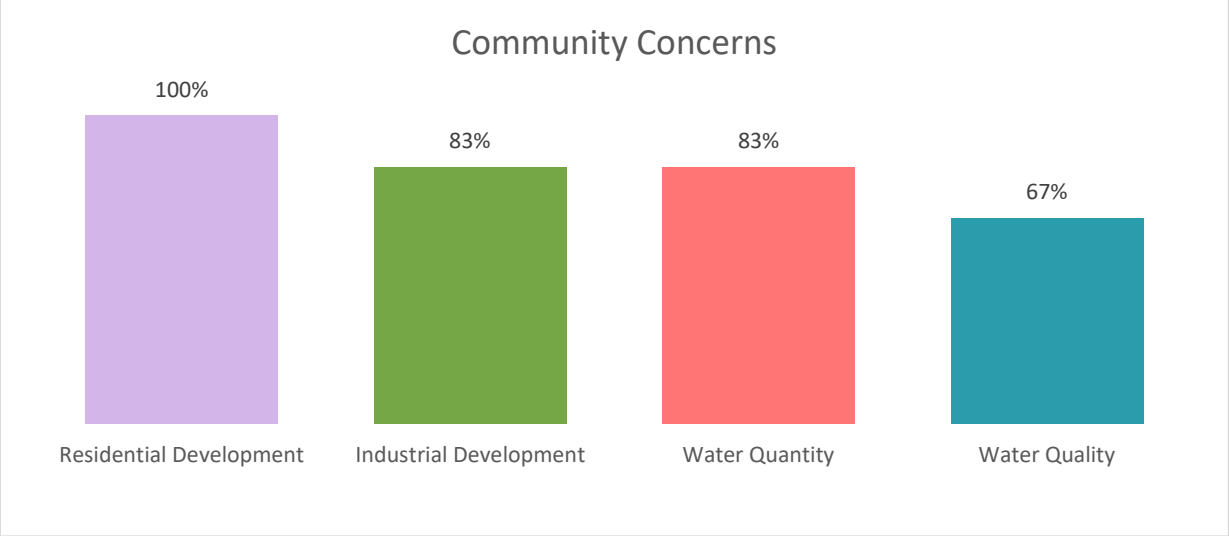

Q: *On a scale of 0 to 4 (0 being lowest, 4 being highest) give the importance of the following and list any others you think are absolutely important (4's). Weighted values averaged for all respondents; 4-point ranking system shown on y-axis.*




*Q: On a scale of 0 to 4 (0 being lowest, 4 being highest) give the importance of the following and list any others you think are absolutely important (4's). Motorized recreation was ranked lowest; 76% of respondents ranked motorized recreation of little (1) or no importance (0).*

Community watershed concerns

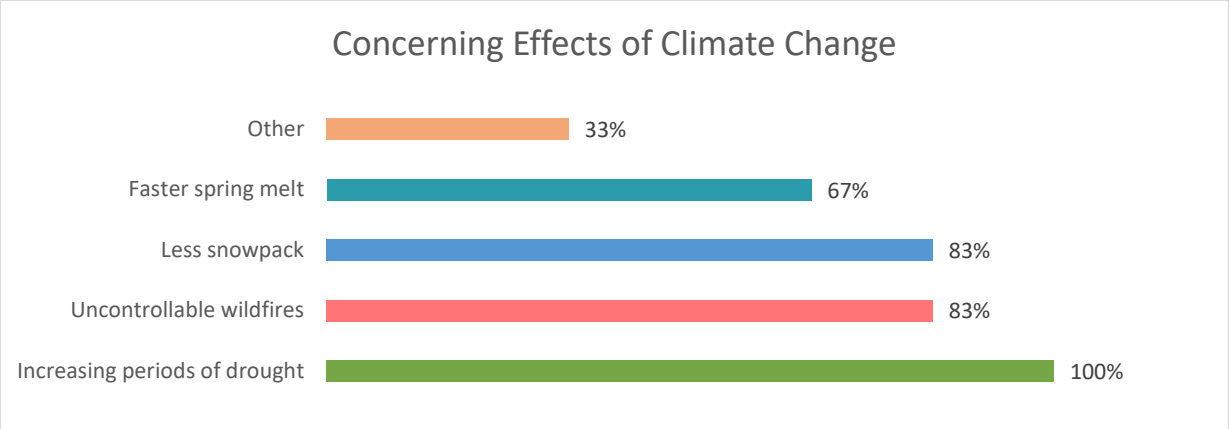
The following graph shows the top communal concerns about respondents' watersheds and the percentage of respondents selecting each category (could choose up to 5 categories). The lowest ranked were Invasive Species, Trespassing on Private Property, Not Enough Public Access to Nature, Healthy Fish Habitat, Environmental Degradation, all with no respondent selections. Other common responses were Natural hazards, and pollution and contamination, both with 33%.




Q: *What are the top 5 greatest concerns when it comes to the watershed where you live, and list any other top 5's not included in the list.*

Concerns relating to climate change

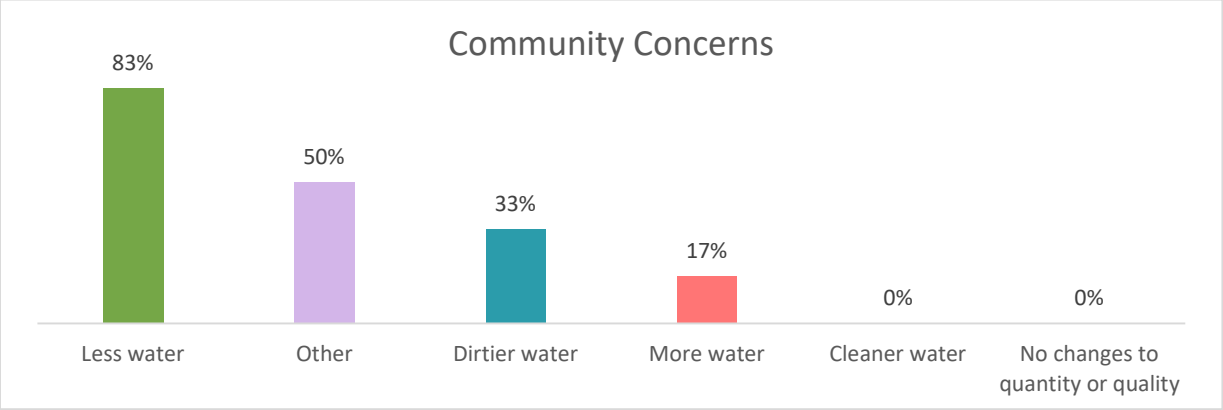
The response not selected by any respondents was "increasing occurrence of flooding;" all responses indicated concerns for future watershed health. Other responses included: "logging exacerbating effects of climate change", and "landslides, especially out of cutblocks."




Q: *If you are concerned about the effects of climate change on your drinking water, which concerns you most?*

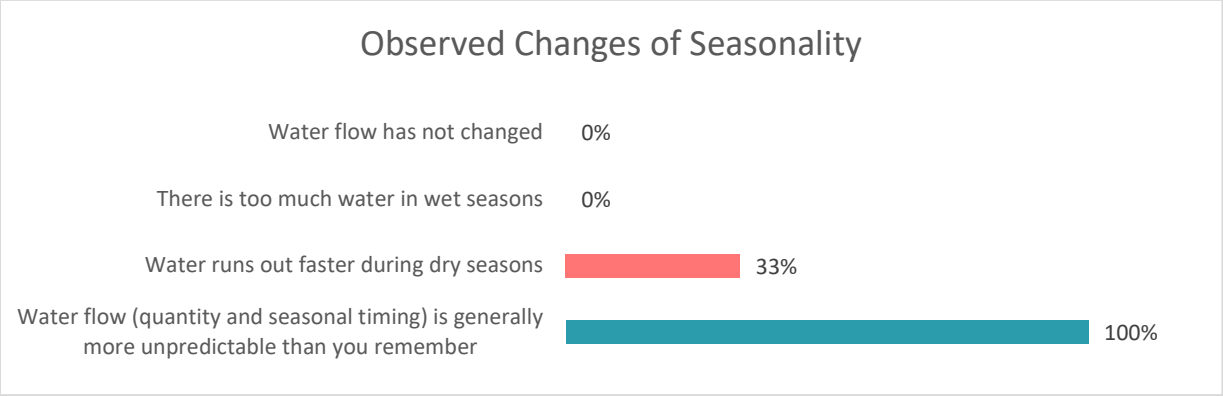
Changes to water supply

Most respondents have experienced less water in their water supply and many have experienced dirtier water. Few have experienced more water, and nobody has experienced cleaner water. The "other" category adds weight to observations of inconsistency: "Less water and less consistently throughout the year", "land slides and debris during freshet due to up-slope previous clear cut logging", and "Wild fluctuations in flow". These responses reflect the current general scientific understanding of how climate change and industrial activity can affect the ability of watersheds to function to manage water *quantity* and *quality*.




*Q: If you have experienced any changes to your water supply, what are they?*

The two highest responses reflect the current general scientific understanding of how climate change and industrial activity can affect the ability of watersheds to function to manage water *quantity* and *timing of flow*. The variation in the seasonality of these water events is projected to increase as altered precipitation and warmer weather change hydrological events.




Q: *In addition to the previous question, are you also finding that…*