



PWI
PERSEVERANCE
WATERSHED
INITIATIVE

MOSAIC
FOREST MANAGEMENT

CUMBERLAND
COMMUNITY
FOREST
SOCIETY





WHAT IS THE PERSEVERANCE WATERSHED INITIATIVE?

The Perseverance Watershed Initiative (PWI) is a new partnership between the Village of Cumberland, Mosaic Forest Management, and the Cumberland Community Forest Society. The initiative was developed in order to move away from the historic pattern of acting on forest harvesting concerns and other issues in the watershed on a block-by-block and case-by-case basis. The PWI instead brings together private forest industry, conservation leadership, and the Village to develop a collaborative strategy for integrated watershed planning and management in support of long-term sustainability and resiliency of the Perseverance Creek watershed.

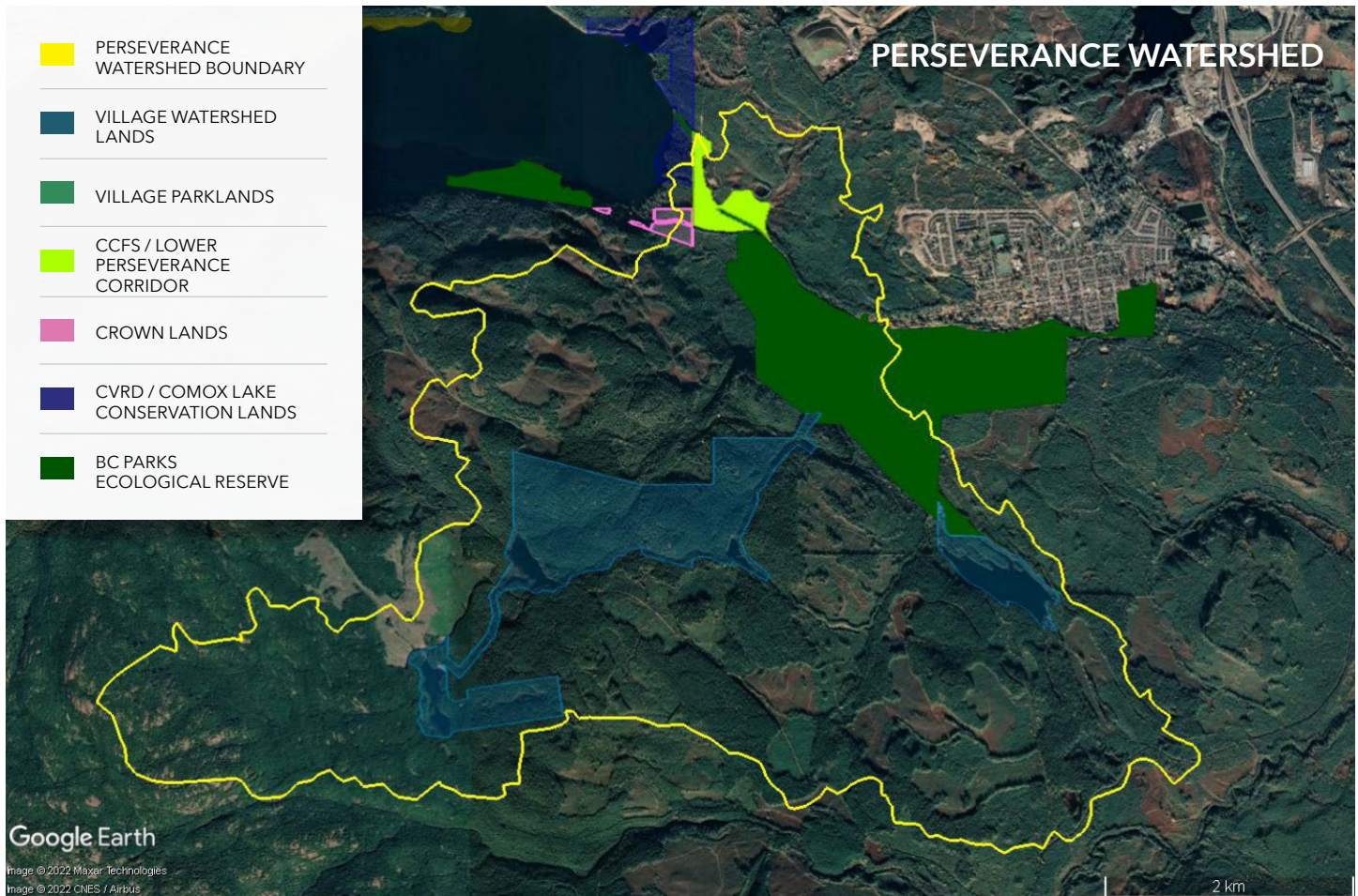
WHERE IS THE PERSEVERANCE WATERSHED & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The Perseverance Creek watershed (~2,200 hectares/5,400 acres) is located in the Village of Cumberland on east-central Vancouver Island in the unceded territory of the K'ómoks First Nation. The watershed includes Allen Lake and tributaries such as Cumberland Creek, Lookout Creek, and Hartley Creek. It has a long history of indigenous use as well as historic coal mining and associated settlements, historic and active timber harvesting. In recent years the watershed has also been a base for significant recreational development.

The watershed is rich with biodiversity, including species at risk and wild salmon. It is a community drinking water supply area providing clean drinking water directly to over 5,000 residents and businesses in the Village of Cumberland and the community of Royston.

The Perseverance Creek watershed is a sub basin of the Comox Lake watershed, and Perseverance Creek is a tributary to Comox Lake, which supplies drinking water to an additional 50,000 residents and businesses including the K'ómoks First Nation, the City of Courtenay, and the Town of Comox through the Comox Valley Regional District water service.





WHO OWNS THE WATERSHED?

Approximately 25% of the watershed is owned and managed by the Village of Cumberland for water quantity and quality, biodiversity conservation and low-impact recreation. A significant portion of these lands were acquired through the land protection activities of the Cumberland Community Forest Society (CCFS).

Most of the rest of the watershed (~74%) is owned by two private forest companies, TimberWest and Comox Timber, and is managed by Mosaic Forest Management and Manulife Resource Group respectively.

WHY IS AN INTEGRATED & STRATEGIC APPROACH TO WATERSHED MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT?

Both the forest companies and local governments have legal responsibilities, regulatory objectives, and policies to ensure that an abundant supply of clean drinking water remains available to the local community. Local conservation leadership has a strong interest in ecosystem health which is a foundation of clean sustainable drinking water resources. An integrated, collaborative, science-based partnership towards integrated watershed planning and management will support drinking water security, climate resilience, ecosystem health, and operational certainty for forest managers.



HOW WILL THE PERSEVERANCE WATERSHED INITIATIVE ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVES?

1. WATERSHED INFORMATION & SCIENCE

One of the first objectives of the PWI is to better understand how the watershed functions. Developing a firmer foundation of knowledge about the watershed by filling important information gaps and initiating monitoring programs will help inform land use decisions.

2. WATERSHED-CENTRIC LAND USE PLANNING

The identification and prioritization of critically sensitive areas in the watershed will help to determine which additional areas would be good candidates for long-term protection from future forest harvesting or other impacts through land acquisition or by other means.

3. WATERSHED AWARENESS & STEWARDSHIP

Elevating the communities' knowledge about the watershed and the water supply systems is an important objective of the PWI. Developing educational opportunities will benefit community residents of all ages.

4. WATERSHED SECURITY PROCESS ALIGNMENT

The Perseverance Creek watershed is complex when it comes to land ownership, jurisdictional mandates and boundaries, access agreements and constraints, planning frameworks and built infrastructure. PWI will provide a vehicle to connect these processes to support clarity, efficiency and effectiveness.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The PWI has already begun to take shape, and the intention is that it will be a productive, long-term, collaborative partnership that has no specified end date. 2021/2022 is considered Stage 1 and 2 of the initiative.

The partners have already made significant progress in Stage 1 including determining project definition and scope, partner endorsement, and developing a working Terms of Reference. Outreach and invitations to engage to K'ómoks First Nation has also been a top priority of the Initiative. A background literature review has been initiated and priority knowledge gaps identified.

The next steps for Stage 2 includes negotiating data sharing agreements between the partners and developing detailed action plans for education, outreach to strategic partners, and community engagement. Data collection to fill knowledge gaps and inform land use planning will be a priority. Stage 3 activities will be informed by the successes and lessons of Stage 1 and 2.

Financial resources to support Stage 1 and parts of Stage 2 have been obtained from the Village of Cumberland, the Province of BC, and the Real Estate Foundation of BC and the Cumberland Community Forest Society.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

The Perseverance Watershed Initiative will be developing resources and hosting information events to support the community in better understanding the function, condition, and importance of the Perseverance Creek Watershed.

Find Out More:

Cumberland Community Forest Society
www.cumberlandforest.com

Village of Cumberland
www.cumberland.ca

Mosaic Forest Management
www.mosaicforests.com/

