

Tsolum River Agricultural Watershed Study

Electoral Area Services Committee
March 11, 2019

DELIVERED BY

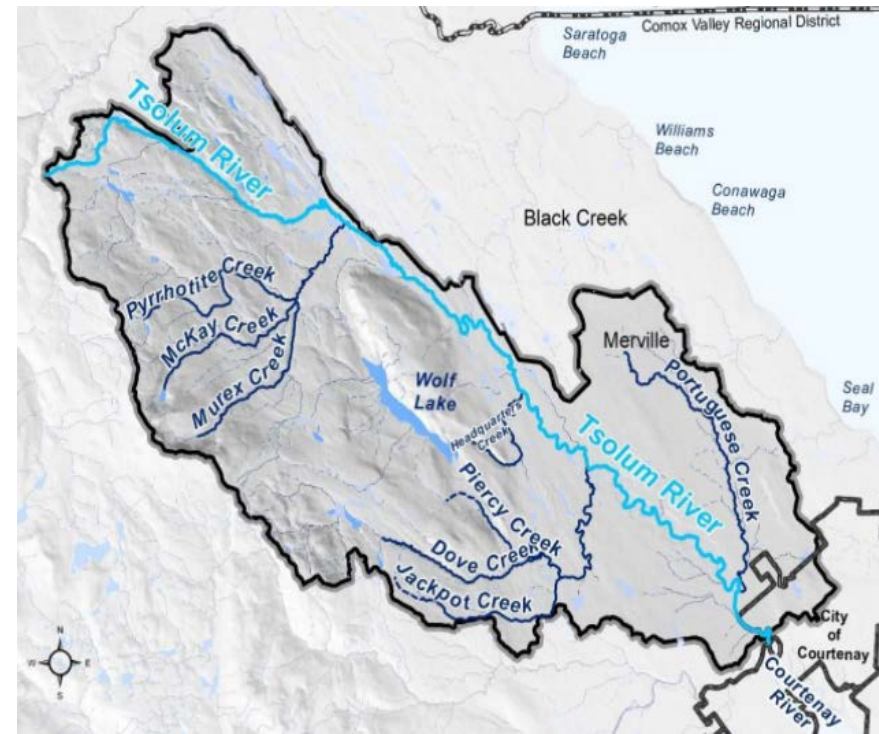


FUNDING PROVIDED BY



Project background

- Tsolum River sees significant seasonal variations in flows
- Land use within lower reaches is primarily agricultural
- Concerns with water availability
- High level of community interest in better understanding issues related to water quantity and quality



IAFBC Agricultural Watershed Planning Pilot Program

- Identify significance of agriculture in the watershed
- Ensure that agriculture is considered in the development of watershed plans
- Lessen potential for water use conflict

Phase One work:

- Collect and analyse existing data —————→ May – July 2018
- Engage with the public and stakeholders —————→ Sept 2018 – Feb 2019
- Collaborate with Advisory Committee —————→ Ongoing
- Report with recommendations for future work —————→ Dec 2018 – Feb 2019

Key Findings:

Data Collection and Analysis

- Agriculture is the primary consumptive user of water in the watershed
- Groundwater accounts for the majority of water used
- Climate change and/or future growth in agriculture will place further demands on surface and groundwater resources.
- Important to determine how much water needs to stay in the river (Environmental Flow Needs)
- Still many data gaps, important to quantify available surface and groundwater volumes, and surface/groundwater interaction

Key Findings:

Community/Stakeholder Engagement

- Water supply is a current limiting factor and is becoming an increasing concern.
- Require a better understanding of water availability and the interaction between aquifers and surface waters
- Require a better understanding of environmental flow needs to ensure fish and aquatic life are protected
- Support for water storage and improved efficiency to increase agricultural water supply and reduce demand during dry summer months
- Concerns about the impact of land clearing
- Interest in development of a Water Sustainability Plan

Recommended Next Steps:

Phase Two

- Water budget and assessment of environmental flow needs
- Assess water storage options or alternate sources to improve agricultural access to water
- Consult with province regarding Water Sustainability Planning
- Continued outreach and engagement



Questions

