

DRINKING WATER & WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

Community Watershed Monitoring Network



REGIONAL
DISTRICT
OF NANAIMO

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Monitoring Network Coordinator

OVERVIEW

- Surface water quality monitoring program background
- Key aspects of the program
- 2025 monitoring
- Water quality parameters monitored and a summary of 2025 results
- Case study – French Creek
- 2026 monitoring



COMMUNITY WATERSHED MONITORING NETWORK

- Program began with the goal to increase knowledge and understanding of surface water quality in the region
- Monitoring started in 2011, designed with protocols and methods that aligns with provincial standards and best practices
- Partnership between Ministry of Environment (ENV), RDN DWWP, Streamkeeper volunteers, and private forestry (Mosaic Forest Management)
- Sites are chosen to fill data gaps in provincial monitoring networks and are based on local knowledge of Streamkeepers



COMMUNITY WATERSHED MONITORING NETWORK

- Streams are sampled during two seasonal periods
- All data is entered and stored in publicly accessible, provincially managed database, the Environmental Monitoring System Database (EnMoDS)
- Volunteers are trained on equipment use and sampling methodology at annual training sessions
- Use of provincial protocols supports the comparison of data to Ambient Water Quality Objectives/Guidelines
 - i.e., Quality Assurance Quality Control at 10% of sites



COMMUNITY WATERSHED MONITORING NETWORK

ASPECTS OF PROGRAM

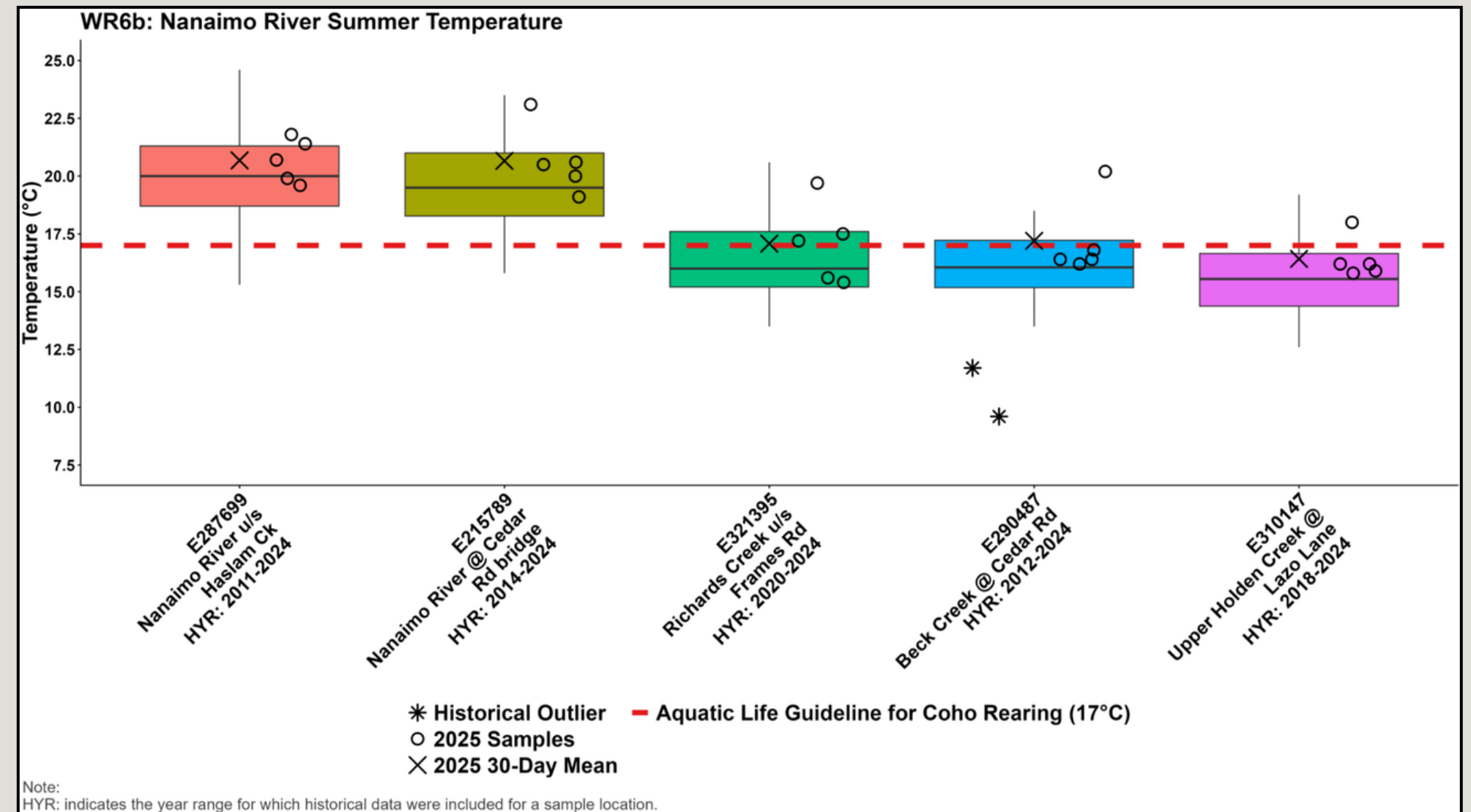
- Analysis and reporting of collected data
- Asset management of equipment and supplies
- Equipment support for RDN program and additional monitoring (i.e., tire toxin, provincial drought program)
- Sampling coordination, communications, and training
- Quality assurance and quality control
- Data management



COMMUNITY WATERSHED MONITORING NETWORK

SURFACE WATER QUALITY DATA

- Two 5-in-30 sample periods provides data for highest stressed times, in 2025:
 - Summer low flow
 - Aug. 5 to Sept. 2
 - Fall flush
 - Oct. 14 to Nov. 12
- Parameters include water temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and specific conductance
- Consistent methodology across all sites has created a successful monitoring program for 15 years
- In 2025, 69 sites, 44 streams, and 29 watersheds were monitored



- Thirteen volunteer groups collected 2,780 results sampling in 2025 alone
- Analysis available on www.rdn.bc.ca/cwmn this summer

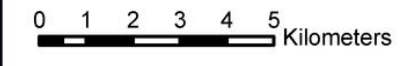
2025 SITES

Salish Sea

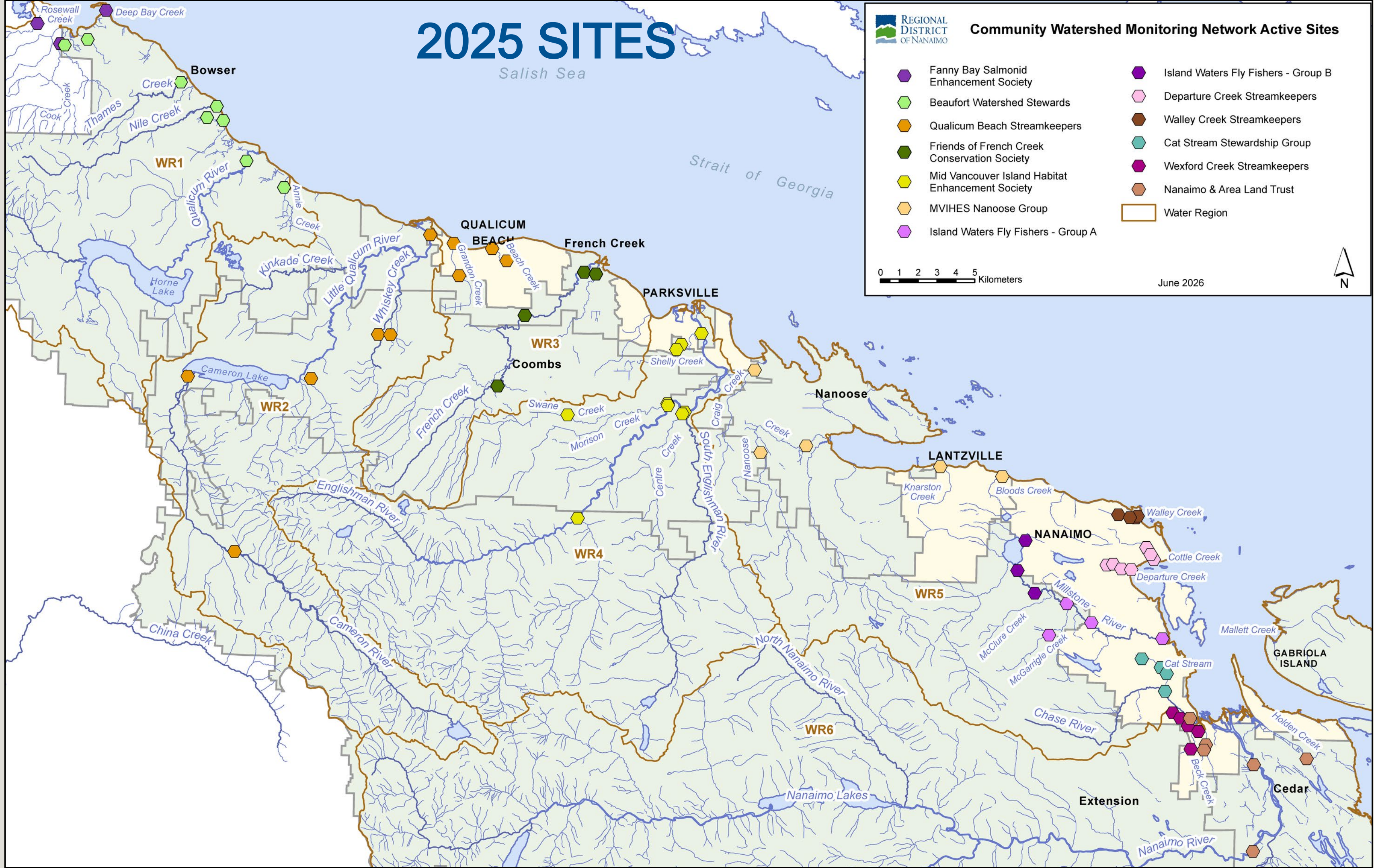


Community Watershed Monitoring Network Active Sites

- Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society
- Beaufort Watershed Stewards
- Qualicum Beach Streamkeepers
- Friends of French Creek Conservation Society
- Mid Vancouver Island Habitat Enhancement Society
- MVIHES Nanoose Group
- Island Waters Fly Fishers - Group A
- Island Waters Fly Fishers - Group B
- Departure Creek Streamkeepers
- Walley Creek Streamkeepers
- Cat Stream Stewardship Group
- Wexford Creek Streamkeepers
- Nanaimo & Area Land Trust
- Water Region



June 2026



TURBIDITY

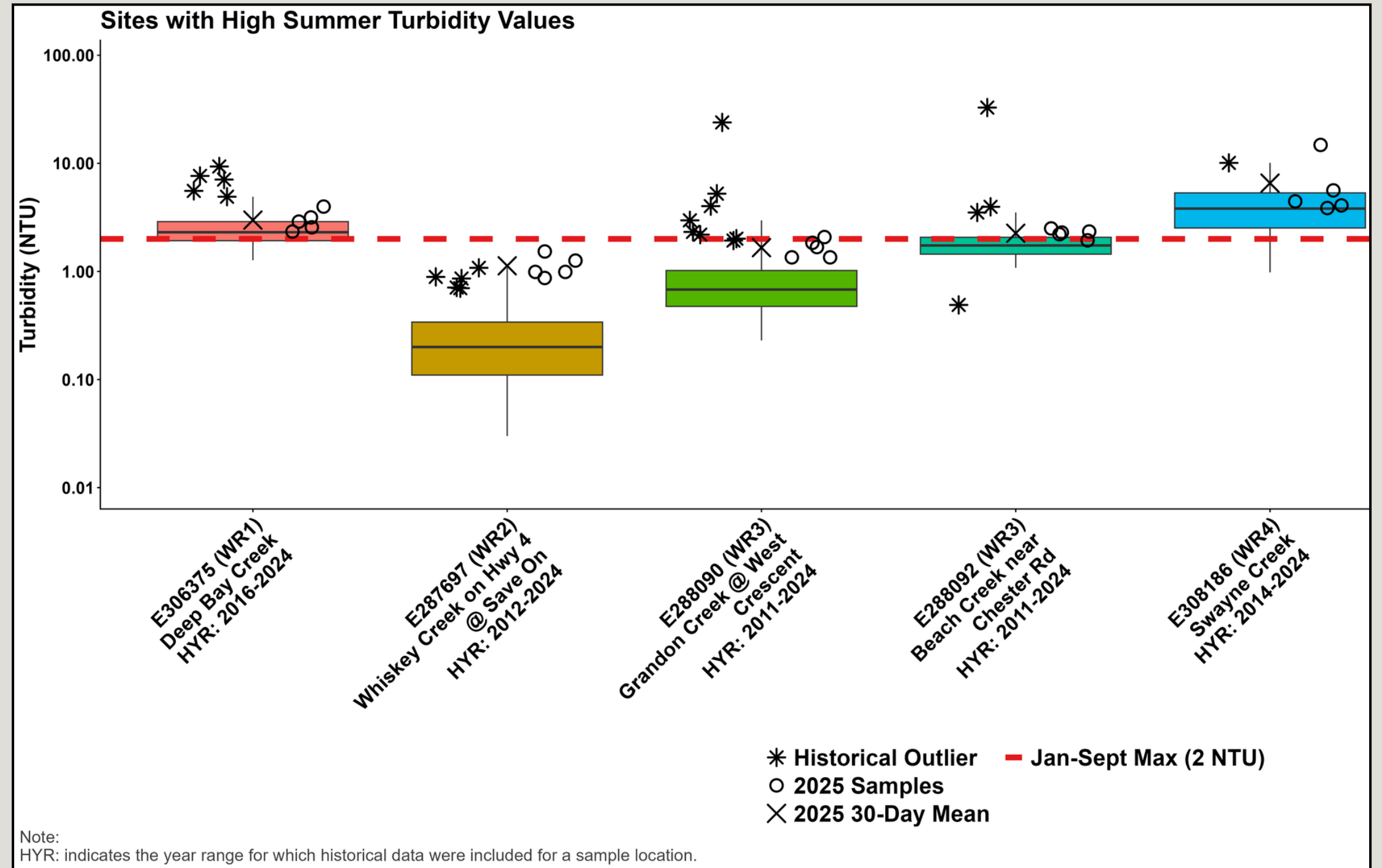
- Measurement of water clarity by way of light reflected by suspended particles in the water column
- Correlated to water temperature as turbid water can absorb more heat
- Impacted by stream flow; large increases in volume via stormwater can increase turbidity through erosion and introduction of contaminants
- Parameter analyzed by laboratory to validate procedures and equipment (QAQC)



TURBIDITY

Provincial Guidelines

- **2 NTU** maximum January to September used for summer low flow period
- **5 NTU** maximum October to December used for fall flush period



Exceedances

- Fall values above 5 NTU guideline are highly correlated with rainfall
- Summer values above 2 NTU guideline often related to human influences (recreation) and algae blooms (particles refract light)

TURBIDITY RESULTS

In 2025, there were 113 exceedances over 10 sample dates for both turbidity Guidelines

- **Fall period 5 NTU maximum**
 - **16 exceedances at 11 sites**
 - Rainfall events captured after periods of rain – no true flush captured in 2025
- **Summer period 2 NTU maximum**
 - Low flows and light rain events (0.1 – 5.1 mm) during summer period
 - **97 exceedances at 31 sites**
 - 11 sites with turbidity exceedances during all 5 sample dates
 - 4 sites with exceedances during 4 date



TURBIDITY RESULTS

WR	EMS ID	Site name	Summer	Fall
WR1	E306375	Deep Bay Creek	5	0
WR2	E318150	Harris Creek d/s Hwy 4	5	5
WR3	E288093	Beach Creek near Memorial Golf	5	0
WR4	E308186	Swayne Creek	5	0
WR5-1	E309186	Cottle Creek d/s Hammond Bay Rd	5	0
WR5-2	E325371	Cat Stream d/s Wakesiah Ave	5	0
WR5-2	E290478	Millstone River @ Biggs Rd	5	0
WR5-2	E306294	Millstone River @ Jingle Pot Rd	5	0
WR5-2	E340665	Millstone River @ Neufield Rd bridge	5	0
WR6	E318153	North Wexford Ck d/s Tenth St	5	1
WR6	E321395	Richards Creek u/s Frames Rd	5	0

WR	EMS ID	Site name	Summer	Fall
WR3	E288092	Beach Creek near Chester Rd	4	1
WR5-2	E325373	Cat Stream @ end of Albion St	4	0
WR5-2	E290486	Cat Stream u/s Chase confluence	4	0
WR6	E318152	North Wexford Ck d/s Douglas Ave	4	0



Physical stream assessments, flow measurements, and mapping flow inputs could be conducted to investigate the cause of consistent summer exceedances

WATER TEMPERATURE

- Measurement of heat
- Correlated to air temperature, amount and depth of canopy cover, and stream structure
- Temperature is influenced by the amount of groundwater inputs, which maintains cooler water temperatures
- Alters physical and chemical properties of water, affecting the metabolic rate of aquatic organisms
 - i.e., warmer water holds less oxygen and can increase algal growth



WATER TEMPERATURE

Provincial Objective

- Englishman River for drinking water supply weekly average ≤ 15 °C

Provincial Guideline

- For aquatic life (Coho rearing) weekly average ≤ 17 °C

Exceedances

- Have only been recorded during the summer low flow period when air temperatures are consistently above the objective and guideline



WATER TEMPERATURE RESULTS

- There were 96 instances of values exceeding guidelines; of these 37 were also above the Englishman River (WR 4) objective
- In previous years, the highest weekly average air temperature correlated to the greatest number of exceedances; however, **in 2025 it was the highest daily air temperature that determined the greatest number of values over 17°C**



Date	Station Name	Max Temp (°C)	Weekly Average (°C)	Station Name	Max Temp (°C)	Weekly Average (°C)	Exceedances
8/5/2025	Nanaimo	23.2	26.70	Qualicum	20.4	22.67	18
8/12/2025	Nanaimo	34.7	29.21	Qualicum	30.1	26.64	53 ←
8/19/2025	Nanaimo	21.3	24.96	Qualicum	20.9	21.53	16
8/26/2025	Nanaimo	31.2	29.97	Qualicum	28.8	27.74	24 ←
9/2/2025	Nanaimo	27.6	26.71	Qualicum	25.0	25.19	22

WATER TEMPERATURE RESULTS

- Nine sites had summer temperature readings above the guideline during all five of the summer sample dates

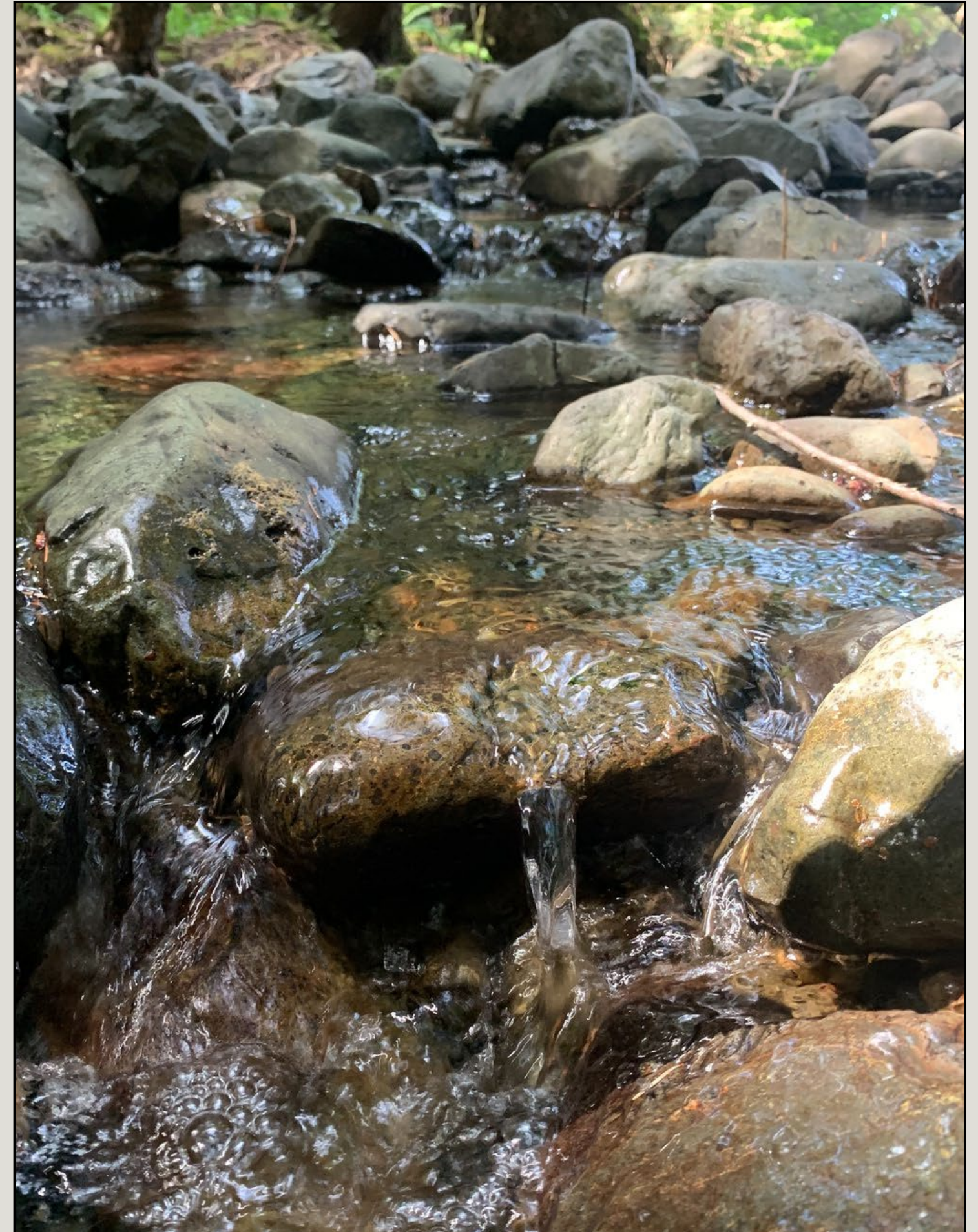


WR	EMS ID	Site name
WR4	E248834	E. River u/s from Morison Creek
WR6	E287699	Nanaimo River u/s Haslam Ck
WR4	E290452	Shelly Creek @ end of Blower Rd
WR4	E308186	Swayne Creek
WR6	E215789	Nanaimo River @ Cedar Rd bridge
WR5-1	E306256	Walley Ck d/s Hammond Bay
WR5-2	E290478	Millstone River @ Biggs Rd
WR5-2	E290481	Millstone River in Barsby Park
WR5-2	E340665	Millstone River @ Neufield Rd bridge

These sites may benefit from habitat assessments to determine primary cause of exceedances, riparian plantings, and streamside landowner outreach

DISSOLVED OXYGEN

- Measurement of oxygen molecules dissolved in water
- Strongly correlated with stream flow, stream structure, water temperature, and nitrification
- Dissolved oxygen (DO) supports aquatic life, allowing organisms to breathe
- DO is also key for water purification processes



DISSOLVED OXYGEN

Provincial guidelines

- 5-in-30 day **average** of 8 mg/L
- **Instantaneous minimum** of 5 mg/L

Exceedances

- DO levels below guidelines are usually recorded during summer low-flow period when temperatures are high and flows are low
- Sites with very low flow in the fall sample period may also experience DO levels below guidelines



DISSOLVED OXYGEN RESULTS

Instantaneous minimum 5 mg/L guideline

- 47 instances occurred at 13 sites
- Three of these occurred in the fall at Swayne Creek and Nash Creek at bridge LCR trail

30-day average 8 mg/L guideline

- 38 occurrences at 36 sites
- Two of these occurred in the fall at Swayne Creek and Cat Stream d/s Wakesiah Ave



DISSOLVED OXYGEN RESULTS

As in previous years all sites with levels below instantaneous guideline were also below the 30-day average guideline

WR	EMS ID	Site name
WR1	E335567	Nash Ck @ Bridge 15 LCR trail
WR3	E288091	Grandon Creek @ Laburnum Rd
WR4	E308186	Swayne Creek
WR5-1	E290473	Cottle Creek @ Nottingham
WR5-1	E318233	Walley Ck d/s McGuffie Rd
WR5-2	E290478	Millstone River @ Biggs Rd
WR5-2	E290479	McGarrigle Ck @ Jingle Pot Rd
WR5-2	E306294	Millstone River @ Jingle Pot Rd
WR5-2	E325371	Cat Stream d/s Wakesiah Ave
WR5-2	E340665	Millstone River @ Neufield Rd bridge
WR6	E318153	North Wexford Ck d/s Tenth St
WR6	E318172	North Wexford Ck u/s seniors complex
WR6	E321395	Richards Creek u/s Frames Rd

- Monitoring flow and nutrients may give more insight as to the cause of low DO
- Stream assessments increase understanding of stream structure and influences to water temperature (warmer water holds less oxygen)

SPECIFIC CONDUCTIVITY

- Measurement of the concentration, charge, and mobility of dissolved ions in water
- Specific Conductance measures conductivity corrected to 25°C, standardizing readings across monitoring periods and regional sites
- Increases with temperature, turbidity, groundwater, evaporation, saline inputs (i.e., tidal, road and agricultural run-off)
- Supports data interpretation, i.e., groundwater generally has a higher conductivity than surface water

Provincial Guideline –none for this parameter

Parameter analyzed by laboratory to validate procedures and equipment (QAQC)



COMMUNITY WATERSHED MONITORING NETWORK

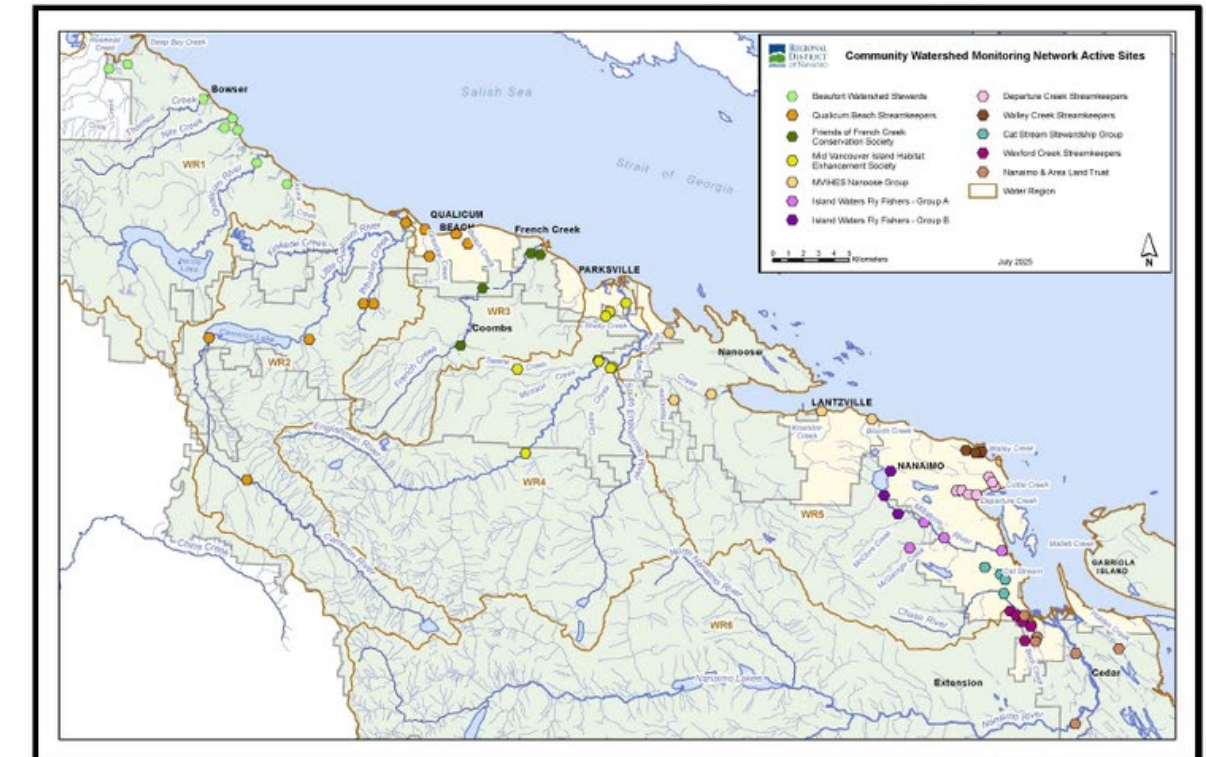
2025 REPORTING

The analysis of CWMN data 2011–2025 is available in Water Region (WR) handouts

- WR 1 Big Qualicum
- WR 2 Little Qualicum
- WR 3 French Creek
- WR 4 Englishman River
- WR 5–1 Nanoose to North Nanaimo
- WR 5–2 North Nanaimo to South Wellington
- WR 6 Nanaimo River
- WR 7 Gabriola, Mudge, and DeCourcy Islands

Handouts include sites sampled, updated box plots, and maps of the sample sites

Community Watershed Monitoring Network 2025 Results by Water Region



Included in Water Region (WR) 1 package:

1. CWMN WR1 sample sites
2. How to interpret a box plot
3. Box Plot Comparison – 2025 data to previous years: *displayed by parameter (Turbidity, Dissolved Oxygen, Temperature, Conductivity) & sample period (summer, fall)*
4. FBSES CWMN map of sample sites
5. BWS CWMN map of sample sites

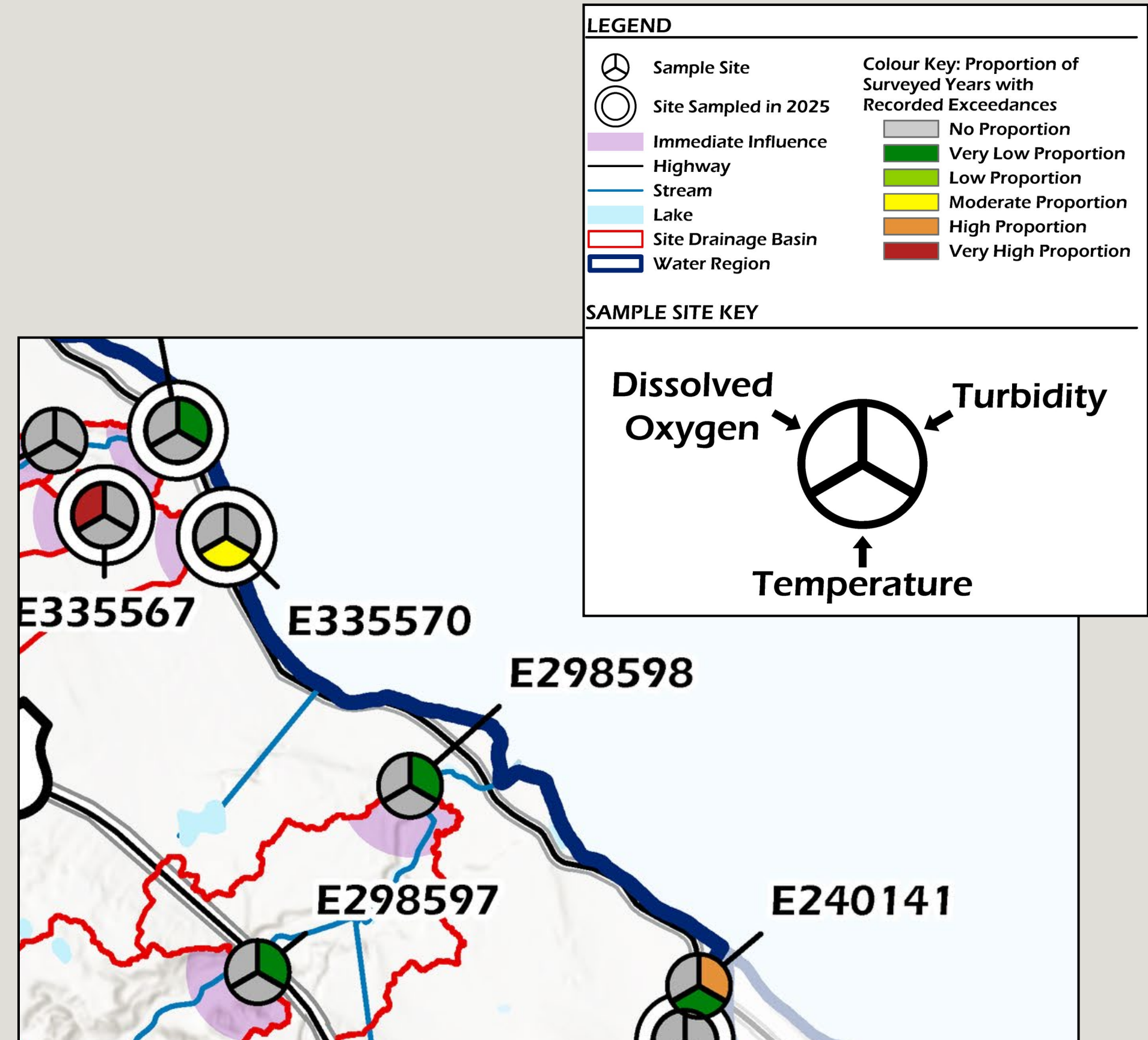


Final versions will be posted online at www.rdn.bc.ca/cwmn

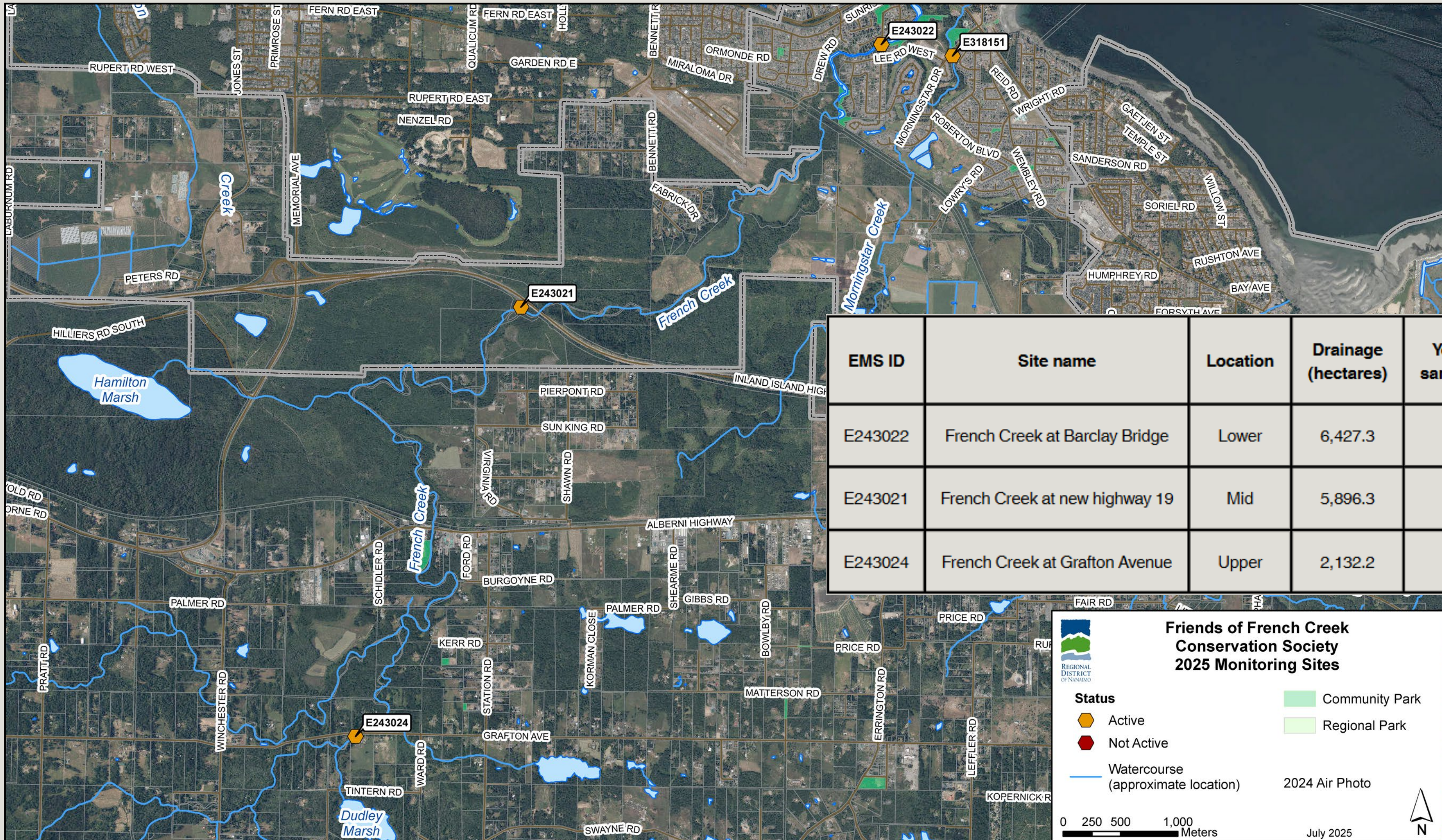
COMMUNITY WATERSHED MONITORING NETWORK

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

- Colour coded instantaneous exceedance categories per water region and sample period
- Drainage basins with purple 500m upstream area of immediate influence
- Inclusion of stormwater layers to account for anthropogenic alteration to water flow
- Shows 2011–2025 data
- Maps will be available online www.rdn.bc.ca/cwmn



FRENCH CREEK CASE STUDY



EMS ID	Site name	Location	Drainage (hectares)	Years sampled	Date range
E243022	French Creek at Barclay Bridge	Lower	6,427.3	15	2011 - 2025
E243021	French Creek at new highway 19	Mid	5,896.3	15	2011 - 2025
E243024	French Creek at Grafton Avenue	Upper	2,132.2	15	2011 - 2025

Friends of French Creek Conservation Society 2025 Monitoring Sites

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

Status

- Active (Orange hexagon)
- Not Active (Red hexagon)
- Watercourse (approximate location) (Blue line)
- Community Park (Light green square)
- Regional Park (Light green square)

2024 Air Photo

0 250 500 1,000 Meters

July 2025

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SUMMER EXCEEDANCES

Regional District of Nanaimo
CMMN 2011-2025 Summer Exceedance Assessment

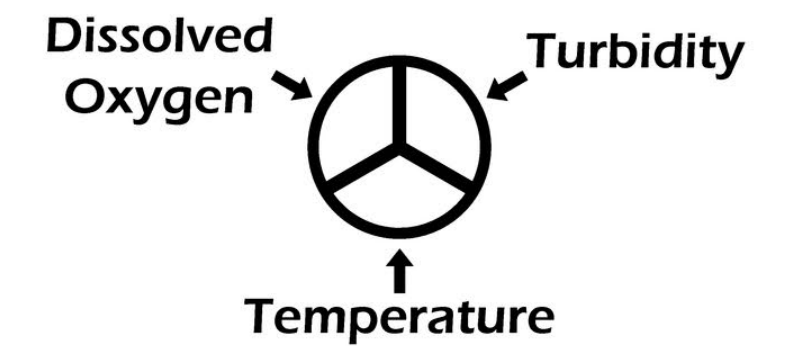
WR3: French Creek

Location: Nanaimo, BC
 Project No.: 26-5399
 Prepared for: Regional District of Nanaimo
 Prepared by: Ecoscape Environmental Consultants Ltd.
 Coordinate System: NAD83-UTM Zone 10
 Imagery: ESRI Canada

LEGEND

	Sample Site	Colour Key: Proportion of Surveyed Years with Recorded Exceedances	
	Site Sampled in 2025		
	Immediate Influence		No Proportion
	Highway		Very Low Proportion
	Stream		Low Proportion
	Lake		Moderate Proportion
	Site Drainage Basin		High Proportion
	Water Region		Very High Proportion

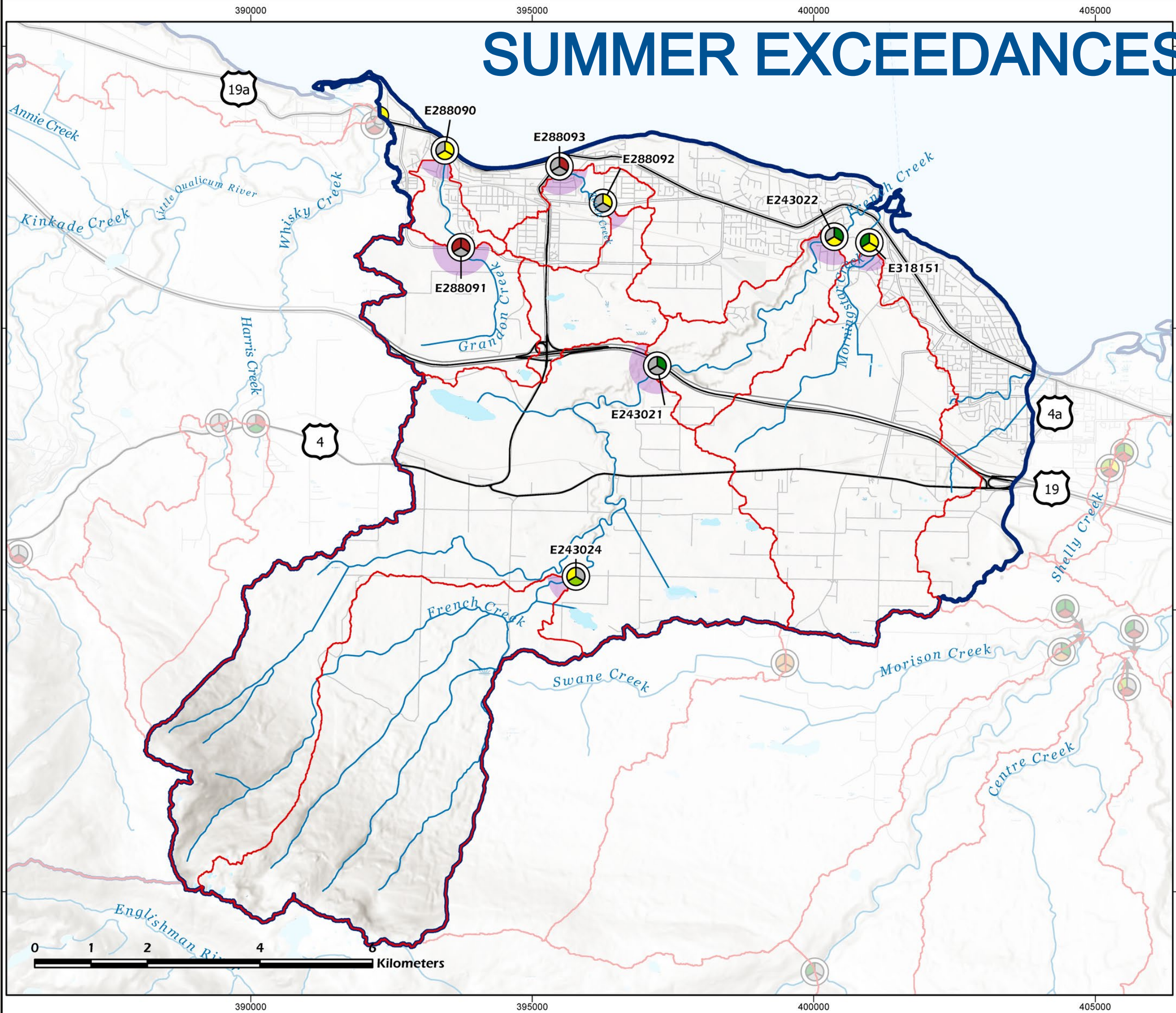
SAMPLE SITE KEY



WATER REGION INDEX



DISCLAIMER
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FALL EXCEEDANCES

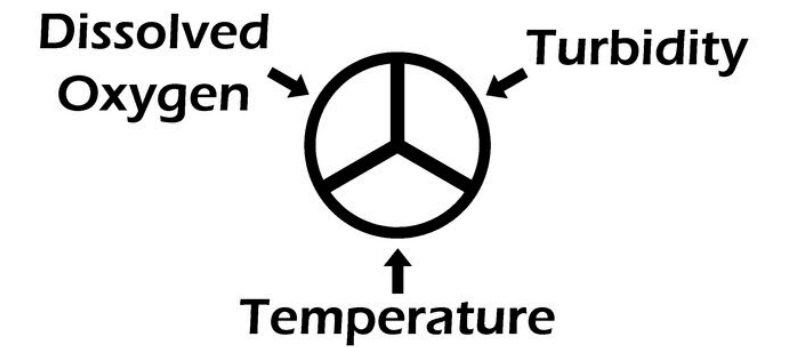
WR3: French Creek

Location: Nanaimo, BC
 Project No.: 26-5399
 Prepared for: Regional District of Nanaimo
 Prepared by: Ecoscape Environmental Consultants Ltd.
 Coordinate System: NAD83-UTM Zone 10
 Imagery: ESRI Canada

LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| | Sample Site | Colour Key: Proportion of Surveyed Years with Recorded Exceedances | |
| | Site Sampled in 2025 | | |
| | Immediate Influence | | No Proportion |
| | Highway | | Very Low Proportion |
| | Stream | | Low Proportion |
| | Lake | | Moderate Proportion |
| | Site Drainage Basin | | High Proportion |
| | Water Region | | Very High Proportion |

SAMPLE SITE KEY

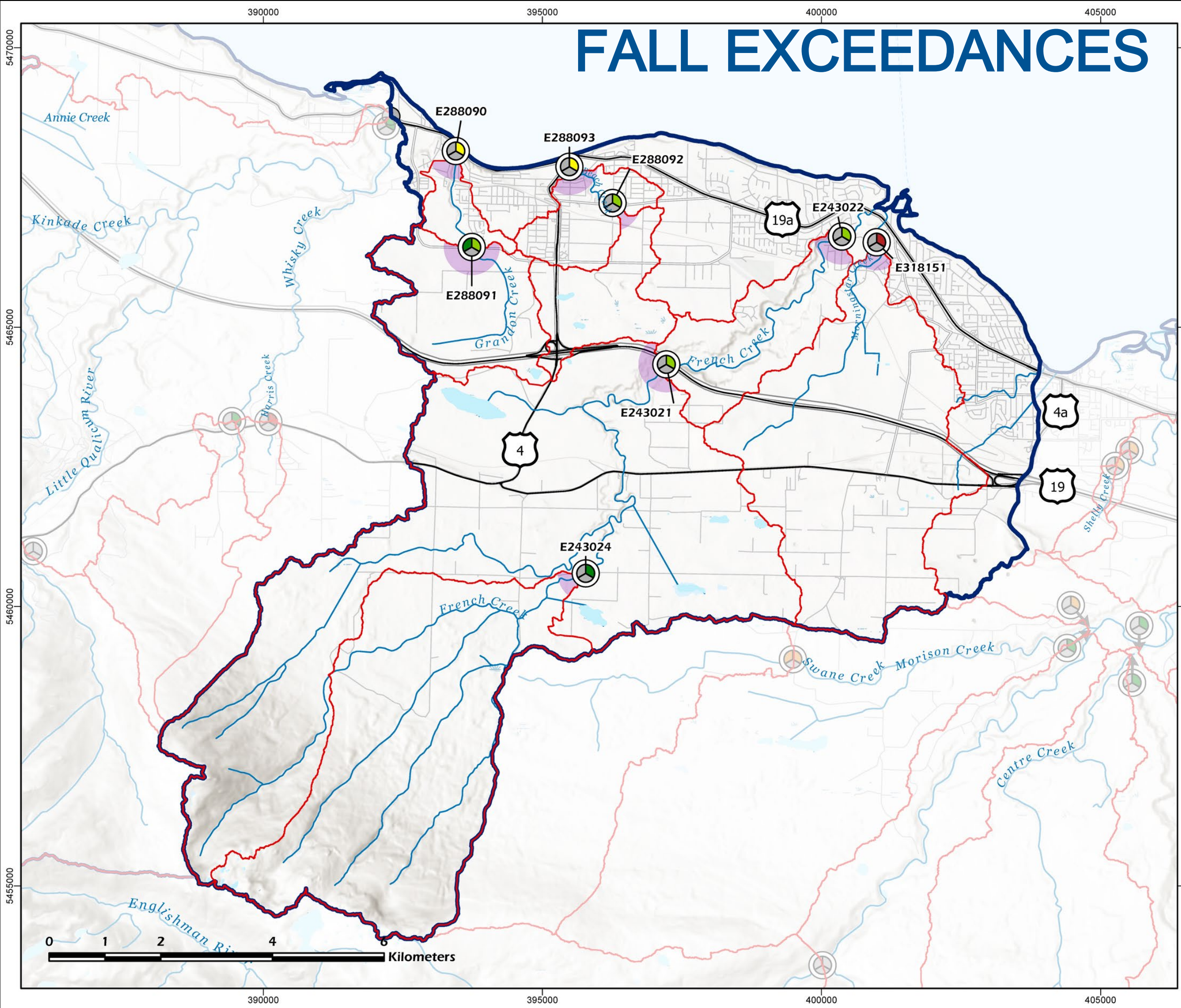


WATER REGION INDEX



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CWMN CASE STUDY

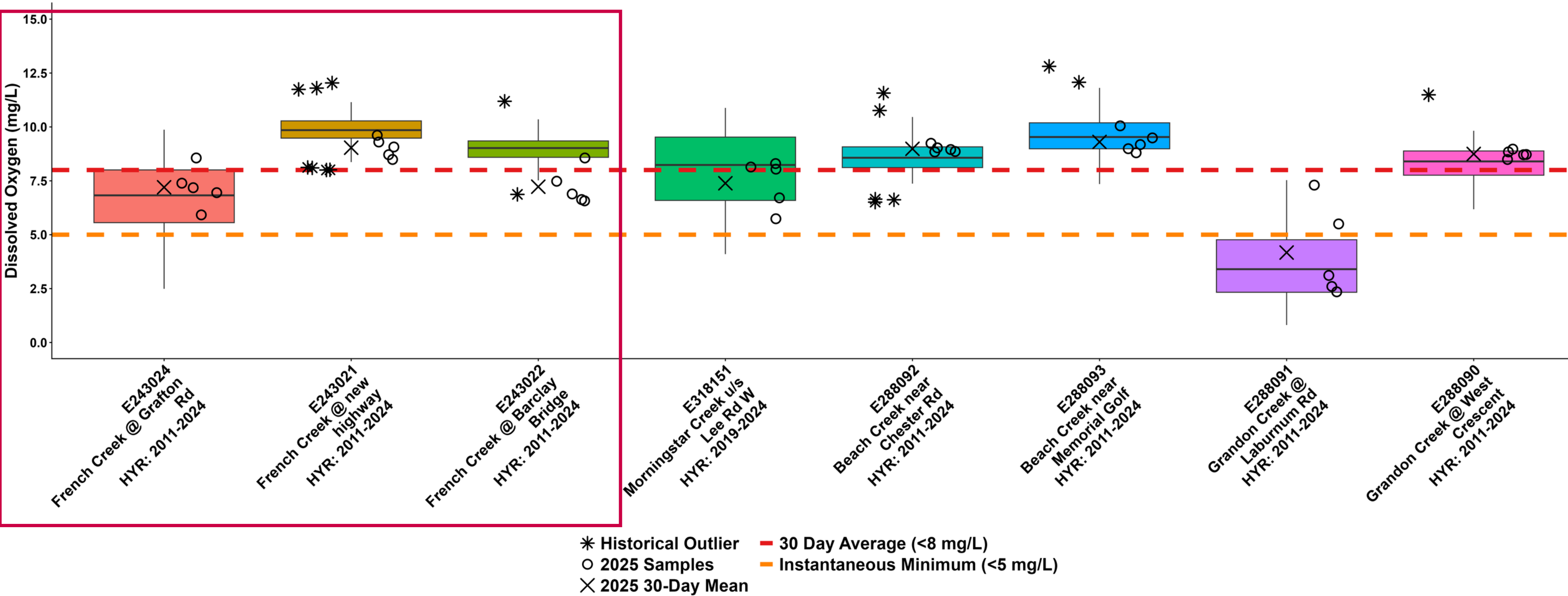
EXCEEDANCE MAP SUMMARY

- Upper (u/s Grafton; E243024)
 - Summer **DO moderate proportion**; turb no proportion; **temp low proportion**
 - Fall DO no proportion; **turb very low proportion**; temp no proportion
- Mid (u/s Hwy 19A aka new Hwy; E243021)
 - Summer DO no proportion; **turb very low proportion**; temp no proportion
 - Fall DO no proportion; **turb low proportion**; temp no proportion
- Lower (u/s Barclay bridge; E243022)
 - Summer DO no proportion; **turb very low proportion**; **temp moderate proportion**
 - Fall DO no proportion; **turb low proportion**; temp no proportion

CASE STUDY

BOX PLOTS- SUMMMER DISSOLVED OXYGEN

WR3: French Creek Summer Dissolved Oxygen



Note:
HYR: indicates the year range for which historical data were included for a sample location.

CWMN CASE STUDY

BOX PLOT SUMMARY AND EXCEEDANCE SPREADSHEETS

- Upper (u/s Grafton; E243024)
 - **Summer DO below 30-day guideline 12/15 years (below instantaneous 10x);** turb no exceedances; **temp above guideline 5x (more in recent years)**
 - **Fall DO** none below guideline; **turb above guideline once;** temp no exceedances
- Mid (u/s Hwy 19A aka new Hwy; E243021)
 - **Summer DO** above 30-day guideline; **turb twice above guideline;** temp no exceedances
 - **Fall DO** none below guideline; **turb above guideline 5x;** temp no exceedances
- Lower (u/s Barclay bridge; E243022)
 - **Summer DO below 30-day guideline in 2025;** turb once above guideline; **temp above guideline 14x (more in recent years)**
 - **Fall DO** none below guideline; **turb above guideline 5x;** temp no exceedances

CWMN CASE STUDY

EXCEEDANCES TO ACTION

- Upper (u/s Grafton; E243024)
 - Summer
 - DO below 30-day guideline 12/15 years (below instantaneous 10x)
 - Temp above guideline 5x (more in recent years)
 - Fall
 - Turb above guideline once
- Mid (u/s Hwy 19A aka new Hwy; E243021)
 - Summer
 - Turb twice above guideline
 - Fall
 - Turb above guideline 5x

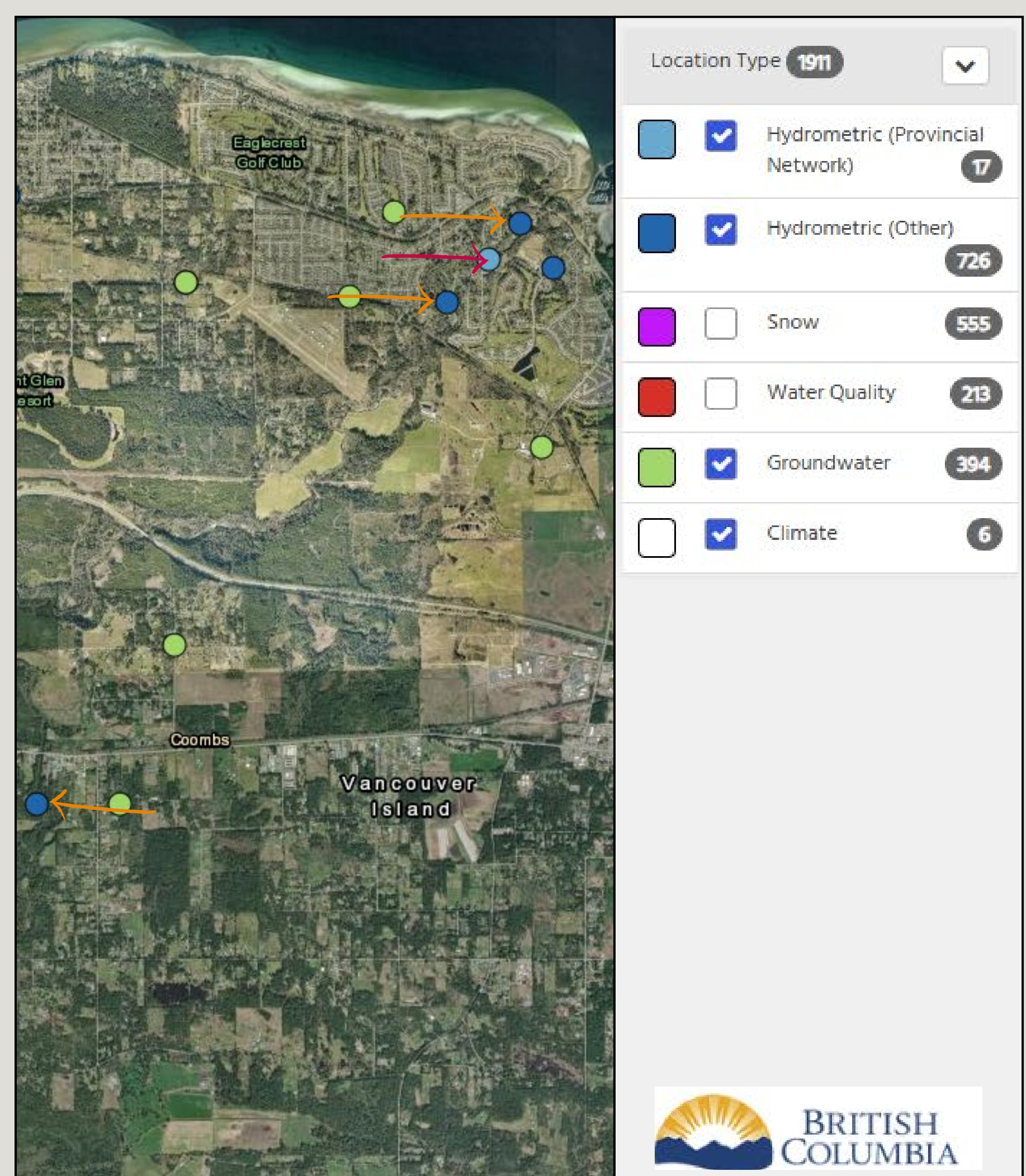
Exceedance category colour

- Moderate proportion
- Low proportion
- Very low proportion

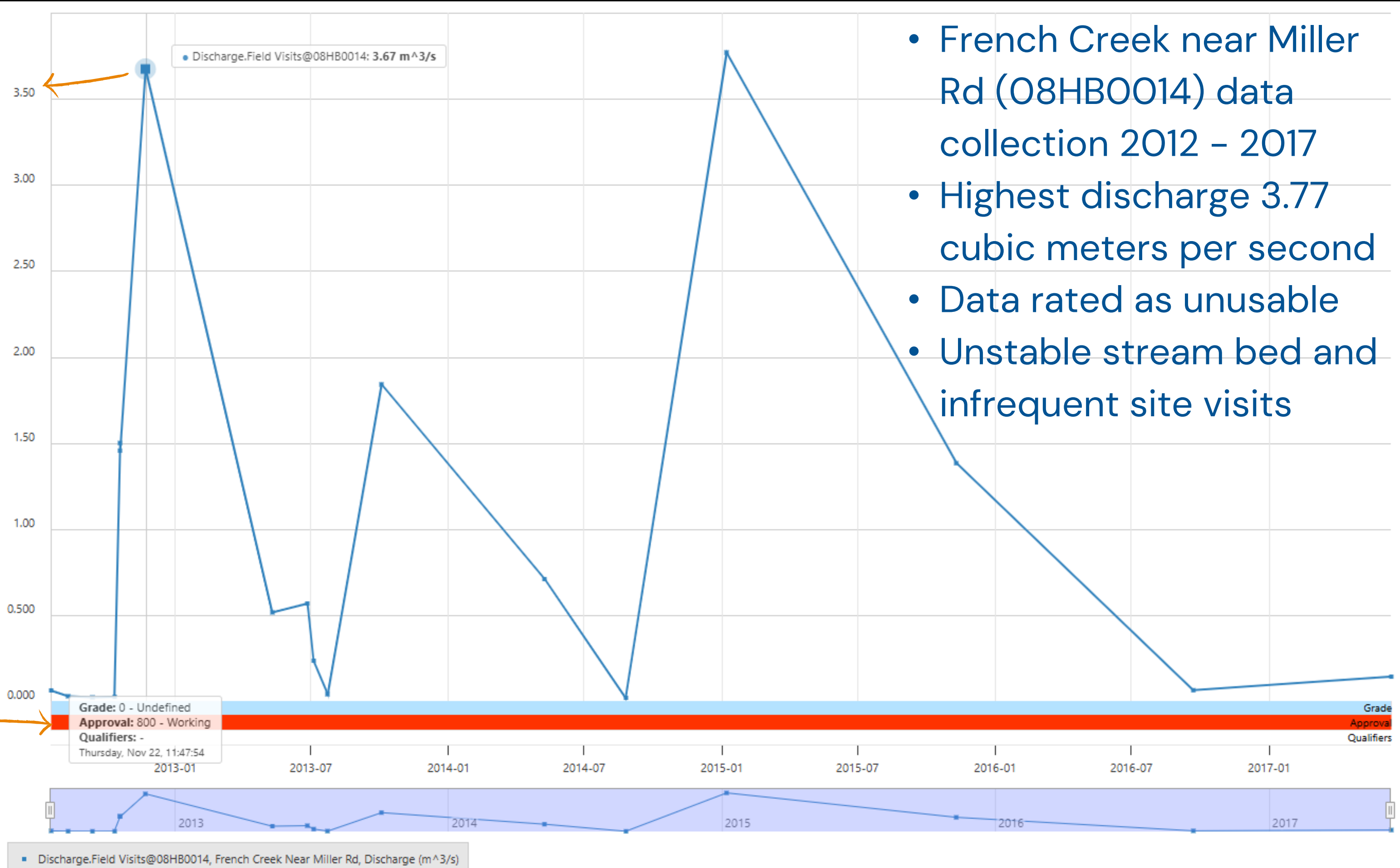
- Lower (u/s Barclay bridge; E243022)
 - Summer
 - DO below 30-day guideline in 2025
 - Turb once above guideline
 - Temp above guideline 14x (more in recent years)
 - Fall
 - Turb above guideline 5x

STREAM FLOW

- Monitoring and data management via provincial hydrometric network
- **Three inactive sites**
 - French Creek (lower site; 08HB004)
 - No data – manual
 - French Creek near Miller Rd (08HB0014)
 - 2012 – 2017
 - French Creek (upper site; 1AHB004)
 - 1977 and 1985
- **One active site**
 - French Creek ds of Barclay Crescent (08HB0021)
 - 2018–2026



STREAM FLOW



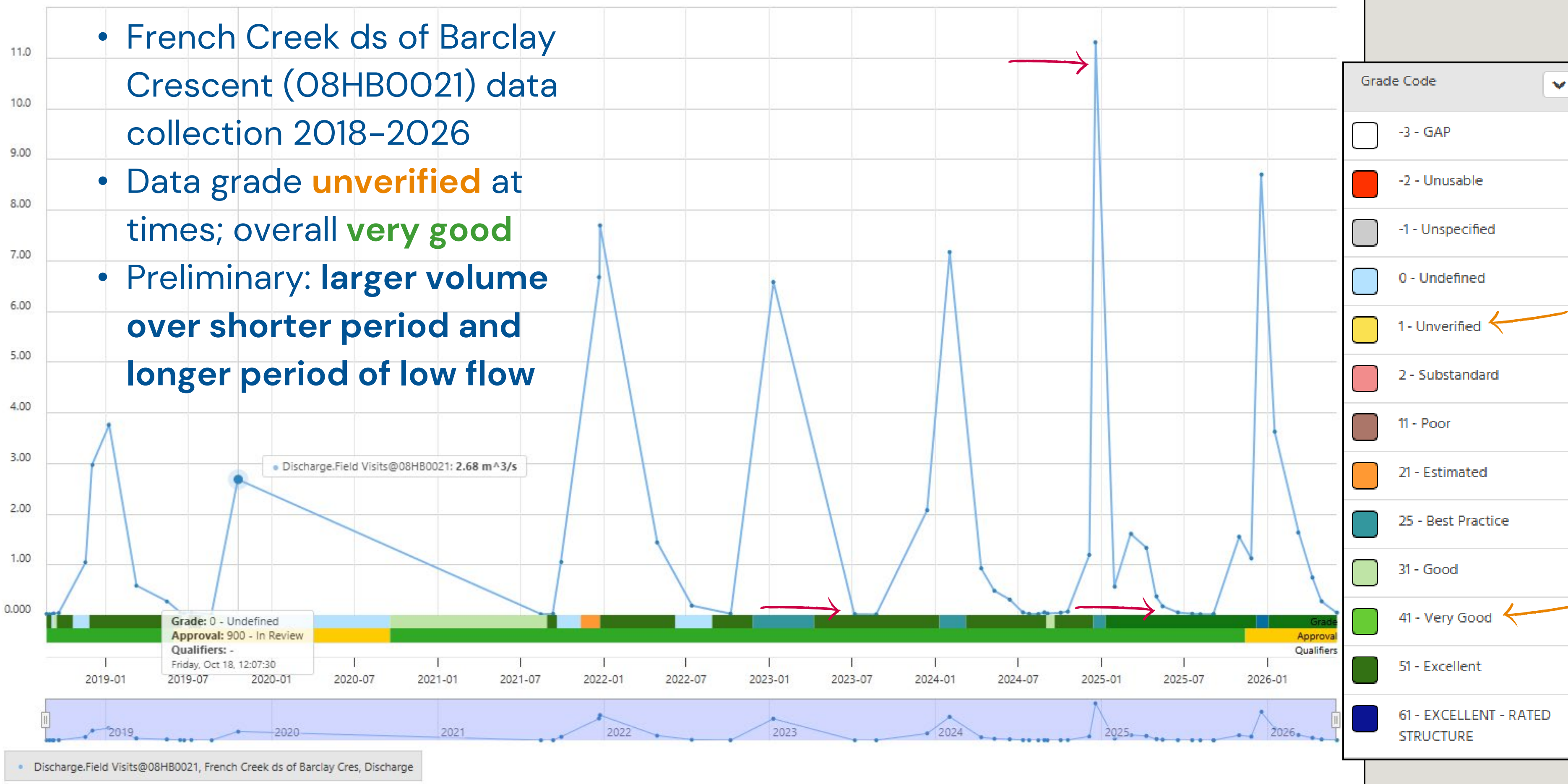
- French Creek near Miller Rd (08HB0014) data collection 2012 - 2017
- Highest discharge 3.77 cubic meters per second
- Data rated as unusable
- Unstable stream bed and infrequent site visits

Grade Code

- 3 - GAP
- 2 - Unusable ←
- 1 - Unspecified
- 0 - Undefined
- 1 - Unverified
- 2 - Substandard
- 11 - Poor
- 21 - Estimated
- 25 - Best Practice
- 31 - Good
- 41 - Very Good
- 51 - Excellent
- 61 - EXCELLENT - RATED STRUCTURE

STREAM FLOW

- French Creek ds of Barclay Crescent (08HB0021) data collection 2018–2026
- Data grade **unverified** at times; overall **very good**
- Preliminary: **larger volume over shorter period and longer period of low flow**



EXCEEDANCES AND FLOW

Values **above turbidity guidelines**, primarily during fall monitoring and **potentially larger wet season spikes** in flow data

- These results were at the mid and lower sites
- Speak to concerns around erosion and/or sediment input
- Potential factors: storm water, adjacent land uses, and lack of bank stability

Values **below DO guidelines** and **above temperature guidelines** seen throughout monitoring history

- These results were primarily at the upper and lower site
- Speak to concerns around flow, stream structure, and heat
- Potential factors: scouring during high flows/widening stream, low riparian cover/sun exposure, decrease in groundwater inputs

Potential actions: updated habitat assessment, riparian restoration, green infrastructure, reconnection to flood plain

ADDITIONAL DATA EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE

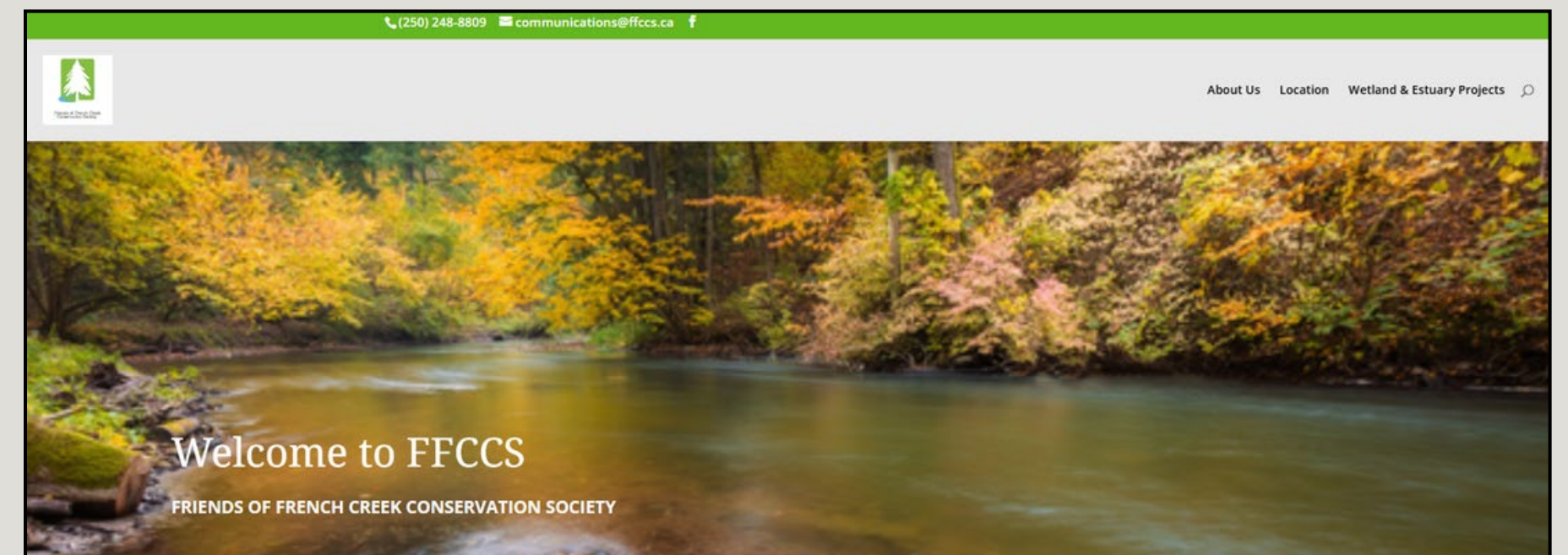
- Completing a desktop study and speaking with stewards to source additional information and learn what research has been completed in an area
- DWWP reports webpage houses regional and water region specific reports (www.rdn.bc.ca/dwwp-reports)
- Streamkeepers are an invaluable resource; for French Creek, Friends of French Creek Conservation Society volunteers have vital knowledge and understanding from restoration, monitoring, completed works and activities

Water Region 3 - French Creek

The French Creek Water Region consists of steep forested headlands that drain from the mountains at 1080 meters above sea level, and the more gentle topography of the Nanaimo lowlands. The total drainage area is approximately 121 sq. km. It includes most of the communities of Parksville, Qualicum Beach, and parts of Electoral Area F (including Hilliers, Coombs and Errington) and Area G (including French Creek, Dashwood and San Pareil).

Reports

- French Creek Ecological Accounting Process (Year 2_ - 2025 **Summary Report** and **Final Report**)
- French Creek Ecological Accounting Process (Year 1) - 2024 **Summary Report** and **Final Report**
- **Water Budget - Phase 3 - French Creek Water Region - 2023**
- **Watershed Performance Targets for Rainwater Management (Phase 2) - French Creek Water Region - 2023**
- **Watershed Performance Targets for Rainwater Management (Phase 1) - French Creek Water Region - 2021**
- **Area F Water Quality & Quantity Risk Assessment -2020**
- **Wetland Classification and Geologic Assessment Report - French Creek WR - 2017**
- **Aquifer 217 - State of our Aquifers Report - 2017**
- **Aquifer 216 - State of our Aquifers Report - 2017**
- **Aquifer 220 - State of our Aquifers Report - 2017**



DATA GAPS AND NEXT STEPS

- What are your goals? What are you wanting to answer? How to get there?
- From information gathering, determine what data is missing and what (if any) data is needed to work towards your goals
- What is the capacity of your group? Can you reach your goal with your given capacity?
- Know where to get support—partner with stewards, non-profits, government, and streamside landowners
- DWWP wants to support—tell us how we can!

Start a surface water quality stewardship program

To learn more about water stewardship in streams and rivers, review the available resources in the surface water quality toolbox.

For more information on lake monitoring, visit the [B.C. Lake Stewardship and Monitoring Program](#) page.

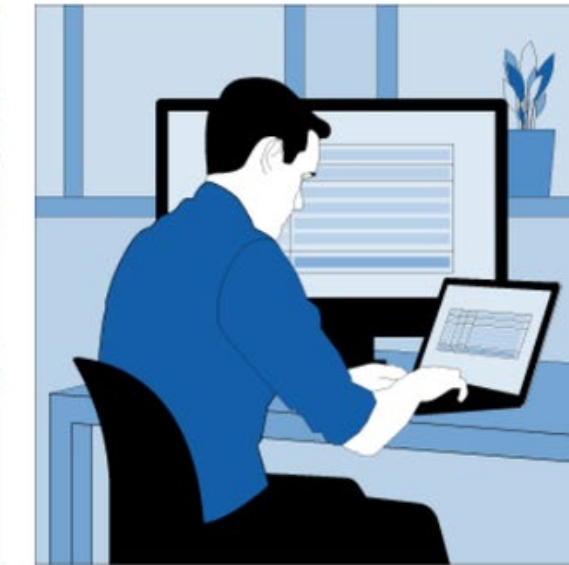
The toolbox has:

- Management documents for stewardship
- Guidance to help ensure quality and accuracy of data
- Information to demonstrate how data affects and impacts decision-making



Gather Water Samples

Set up for success before you gather surface water samples.



Share Results

Analyze and share your results. Data must be in electronic format.



Improve Practices

Learn how to improve and expand your stewardship practices.



2025 Stewardship Seed Funding Information

RDN DWWP Stewardship Seed Funding supports environmental stewardship organizations within the region to complete restoration, enhancement, and research projects. These projects rehabilitate and monitor our local watersheds while protecting both the ecological and economic values of our natural systems.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- Projects must:
 - be located within the RDN, including electoral areas (A, B, C, E, F, G, H) and member municipalities (Nanaimo, Lantzville, Parksville, Qualicum Beach),
 - be led by a not-for-profit organization,
 - actively enhance the stream health, hydrology, and/or function,
 - involve volunteers,
 - be jointly funded by other partners, donors, and/or include in-kind contributions,

COMMUNITY WATERSHED MONITORING NETWORK

2026 SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING

- Interested volunteers will be supported to continue sampling in 2026
- Strategic planning – simultaneous development and action
 - Drafting plan
 - Continued data collection to support decision making and actions
 - Streamside dialogues – four completed, will continue this fall
 - Case study support



2026 SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING TRAINING SESSIONS

Supporting consistent sampling protocols and methodologies with two in-person training sessions

Wednesday, **July 29**

10:00 am to 12:30 pm

Millstone River, Nanaimo

(Bowen Park Lower Picnic Shelter)

Thursday, **July 30**

10:00 am to 12:30 pm

French Creek Hatchery

(815 Miller Road)

Additional support

- Online training videos
 - www.rdn.bc.ca/cwmn
 - Resources
 - Videos

Videos

→ [Community Watershed Monitoring Network program information \(2020\)](#)

→ [How to take a sample following provincial protocols \(Temperature, DO, SpC, Turbidity\)](#)

→ [How to complete monitoring equipment calibrations \(YSI ProQuatro and LaMotte turbidimeter\)](#)

→ [How to calibrate the Hach Turbidimeter - NEW!](#)

[RDN YouTube Channel](#)

[Shaw TV - RDN Watershed Protection in the Englishman River](#)

2026 SURFACE WATER QUALITY MONITORING

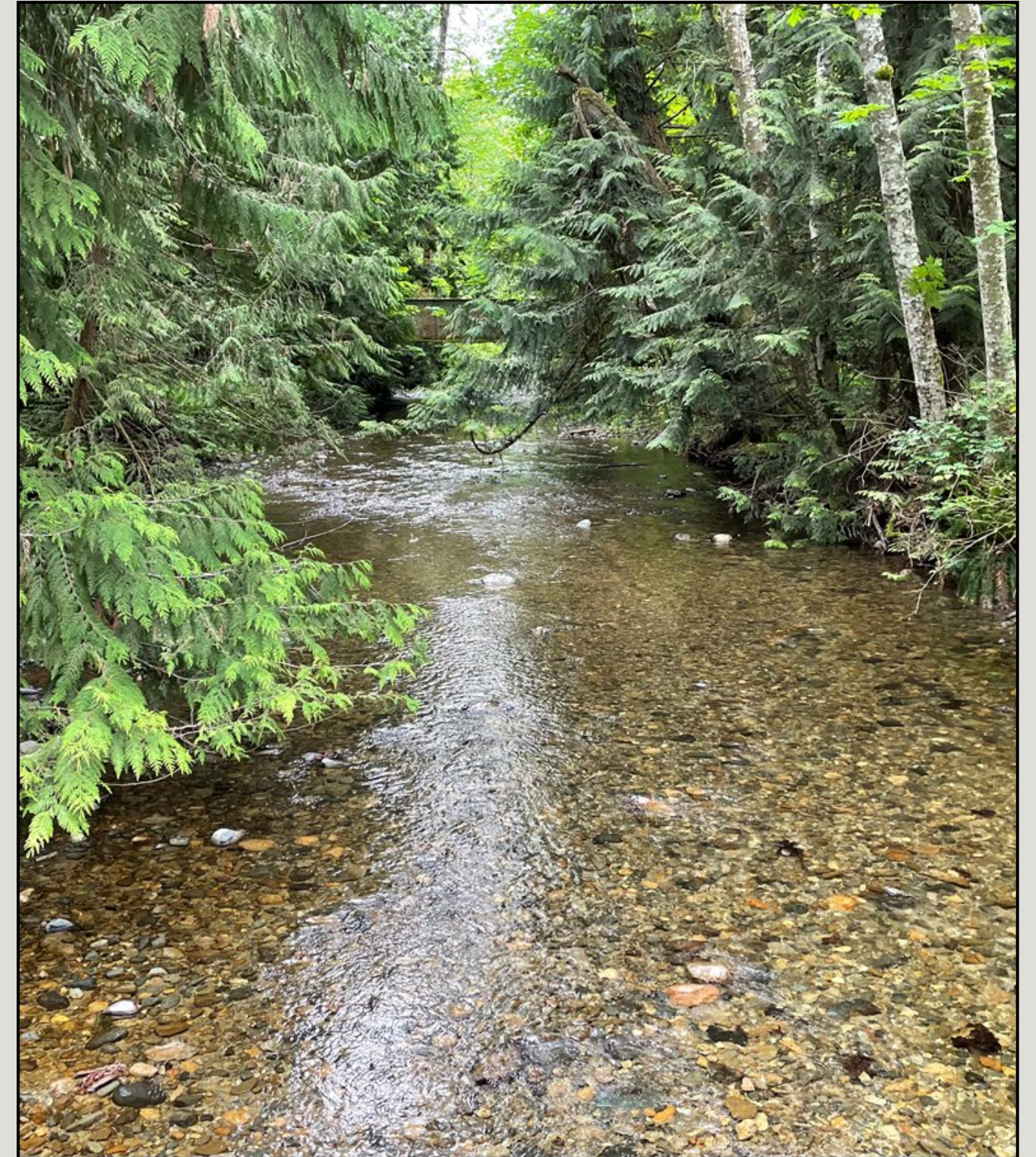
SUMMER SAMPLE DATES

Sample between 8 am and 2 pm for regional consistency

Tuesday **summer low flow monitoring** dates in 2026

- Week 1 – **Aug. 4**
- Week 2 – **Aug. 11**
- Week 3 – **Aug. 18**
- Week 4 – **Aug. 25**
- Week 5 – **Sept. 1**

Tuesday fall flush monitoring dates are weather dependent, usually starting in October and continuing into November



Benson
Creek

THANK YOU COMMUNITY STEWARDS!!!





THANK YOU

Questions?



REGIONAL
DISTRICT

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Monitoring Network Coordinator