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For Immediate Release:

## Pumping water into Cowichan River to begin mid-September

CROFTON, BC – Due to extremely dry conditions, pumping water from Cowichan Lake into Cowichan River is set to begin as early as September 11 depending on rainfall. Water will be pumped at a rate designed to maintain current flow conditions in the Cowichan River, approximately 4.5 cms (cubic metres per second).

The Cowichan Basin has experienced fourteen droughts since 1998. A winter with below average snowpack followed by a drought beginning in mid-May are root cause of this year's conditions. This has led to low lake levels and reduced flows which now requires water pumping of Cowichan Lake into the river to preserve the river and its habitat.

Authorized by BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, Catalyst Crofton will manage the pumping. Pumping will occur until water levels naturally restore themselves later this fall.

"Best efforts will be made to minimize any impacts from water pumping to protect the Cowichan River and the Lake," explains Brian Houle, Catalyst Crofton Environment Manager. "We have engaged authorities and consultants to provide oversight and surveillance during pumping operations."

To protect those using lake and river, a local guide familiar with Cowichan Lake will deploy buoys to highlight any new hazards to navigation.

"Catalyst Crofton has been collaboratively managing Cowichan River since 2002 with First Nations, local government and other key stakeholders," states Bruce Eby, Catalyst Crofton General Manager. "While curtailed, the mill's water requirements are significantly reduced. However, we continue to work with our partners on our shared priorities of habitat protection of the Cowichan River and the water supply for the town of Crofton."

### Quick Facts:

- The general area around the weir spill gates, the weir and the pumps in the lake and their discharge area in the river will continue to be inaccessible. Boaters should exercise extreme caution especially near shoreline areas looking for navigational hazards.

- The provincial water manager has guided Catalyst Crofton to work with Transport Canada to ensure boater safety on Cowichan Lake due to low water level hazards which may impact navigation.
- Canada Coast Guard officials are assisting Catalyst with the impacts on Cowichan Lake and are guiding Catalyst on deployment of buoys that will be needed for marking of the temporary hazards to navigation.

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