



COLUMBIA LAKE STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

September Newsletter 2025



AGM November 1st, 2025

Columbia Lake Stewardship Society works to preserve the ecological health and water supply of Columbia Lake for present and future generations. You are invited to attend the CLSS Annual General Meeting, on November 1st, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at Columbia Ridge Community Hall. We would be delighted to meet you there. Coffee and treats will be provided.

A Huge Thank You to Our Boat Volunteers!

Each year CLSS carries out scientific investigation of the lake's health, measuring water quality and monitoring changes in water level (quantity).

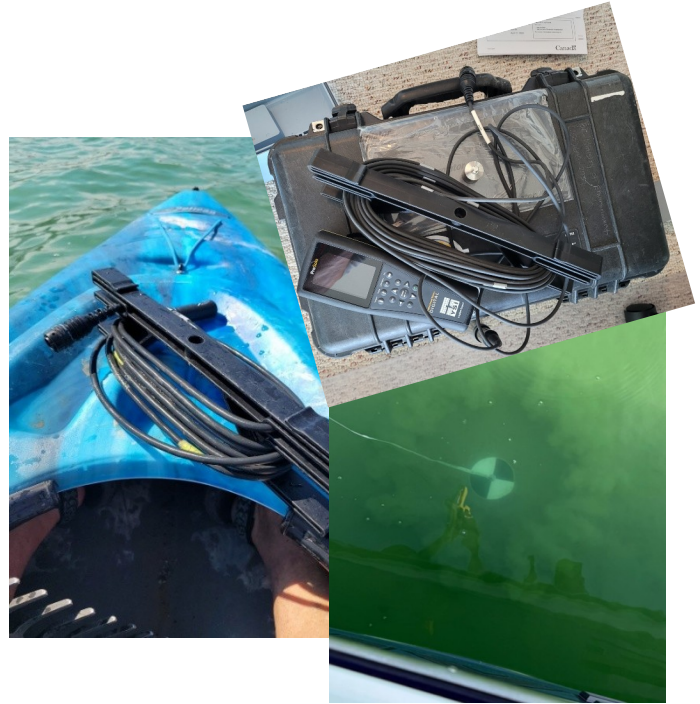
We were able to get out on the lake about twelve times this summer, between early May and mid-September. As usual, we are hugely grateful to our boat volunteers for their willingness to donate their time and their boats to take us out onto the lake.

Your help is invaluable! We could not do it without you.



CLSS Continued Monitoring the Health of Columbia Lake in 2025

On our lake trips we measured various indicators of water **quality** at different locations on the lake. These included temperature, pH, conductivity, and clarity (turbidity) of the water, as well as the concentrations of phosphate, chloride, manganese and arsenic (metals), and chlorophyll in the water. In addition, CLSS takes regular water samples from the beach at Tilley Memorial Park for *E. coli* testing, on behalf of the Village of Canal Flats.



The other major aspect of our lake science is monitoring the **quantity** of water in Columbia Lake, which is extremely shallow despite its deceptively large surface area. Monitoring the quantity of water in Columbia Lake is important because the depth of water in a lake has a significant impact on its water quality, affecting such things as algae growth and the disturbance of lake sediments which make the water murky. More directly, water is drawn from Columbia Lake to supply several local communities with drinking water by their water utilities.

If you want further information about our work, please consider attending our AGM or contacting us at info@columbialakess.ca. Reports on the water quality and quantity of Columbia Lake in 2025 will be available on our website in early 2026.

A Busy Summer on Columba Lake in 2025

This year, CLSS conducted regular counts of watercraft on Columbia Lake over the summer.

On Sunday June 29th, between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. a total of 104 watercraft were seen on the water, and 78 of these were motorized. On each of August 3rd, 24th, and 31st, more than 50 motorized watercraft were seen on the lake in a similar one-hour time period.

Docks & Buoys on Columbia Lake

RDEK conducted an inventory of buoys on Lake Windermere this summer. For more information, see <https://engage.rdek.bc.ca/buoy>.

Importantly, [RDEK has indicated that they are planning an inventory on Columbia Lake in 2026](#) and CLSS will continue to encourage RDEK to do this, as well as an inventory on docks. In the meantime, inventories of docks and buoys on Columbia Lake have been taken by both Wildsight Invermere and CLSS in 2025.

As part of the inventory process on Lake Windermere, RDEK tagged all buoys on the lake and categorized them as one of the following:

- **Green Tag** – This buoy conforms with the regulation and is compliant.
- **Blue Tag** – This buoy is non-conforming but considered to be grandfathered and must be placed/removed on an annual/seasonal basis. If use is discontinued for a year, any future use must comply with the zoning regulations.
- **Red Tag** – This buoy may have been placed contrary to the Zoning Bylaw. These buoys may be subject to removal if the owners do not contact the RDEK to confirm eligibility.

Since regulations governing docks and buoys on Columbia Lake can be unclear—with regulations at federal, provincial, regional, and municipal levels—CLSS has produced a brochure which outlines those regulations clearly and in one place. The information is available online at <https://columbialakess.com/documents/docks-buoys-regulations/>

A PDF version is available for download at <https://columbialakess.com/docks-buoys-regulations/>

If you would like a printed copy of the brochure, please email info@columbialakess.ca.



2025: An Unusual Year for Water Levels on Columbia Lake

Normally, Columbia Lake fills-up in the Spring with water from the melting of the snowpack in the Dutch Creek watershed, and from spring rains. It achieves its maximum levels sometime in June or early July, depending on weather conditions and the size of the snowpack in the watershed. Then, as the summer progresses, the lake's water levels drop again as water drains into the Columbia River.



Early Spring: Typical low water levels on the beach at Columbia Lake Provincial Park, March 2025.

Because of its extreme shallowness, Columbia Lake is highly dependent upon the annual inflow of water in the Spring to maintain its ecological health and water supply.

Those of you who love the lake and spend time there will have noticed that this year its water levels were a little unusual. In fact, in 2025, Columbia Lake achieved two notable water level 'records.' In late May, lake levels were among the lowest observed during the past 14 years, likely because of both a below-normal high-elevation snowpack in the Dutch Creek watershed and a rather cool spring. Then, significant rains fell in June and early July, helping to delay the lake's normal decrease in depth over the summer and by late August the lake level was among the highest levels we have recorded for that time of year.

These unusual variations in lake level indicate how sensitive Columbia Lake is to weather events.

Membership in CLSS

Being a member of CLSS is a simple but really important thing you can do to help us continue our work. Members are invaluable for us in our applications for the funding we need. If you received this newsletter directly, you are already a lifetime member of CLSS. We had a membership drive in 2024, during which membership was offered free. Going forward, a new lifetime membership of CLSS will cost \$10.

If you are an existing member who joined during our free membership offer, we are always grateful for donations. A symbolic \$10 would be more than welcome! (See Donations, below.)

Ways to Help CLSS

1. Volunteering

As always, we are extremely grateful to those who volunteer to take us out in their boats to do our sampling on the lake. It would be almost impossible without you. However, you do not have to have a boat to help! Opportunities to help are varied and everyone can do something: participating in knapweed-pulls, assisting in our water sampling outings as citizen scientists, helping us with our website or writing articles, and participating in fundraisers. You could also consider volunteering on CLSS Board of Directors. Fresh ideas and perspectives are always welcome.

Please contact us at info@cumbialakess.ca if you would like to help.

2. Donations

We are a non-profit organization that survives and thrives thanks to donations from community members and grants from various agencies (see our website for a list of our grantors <https://cumbialakess.com/>). Unfortunately, grants cannot be relied upon entirely and so financial support is key to continuing our work. [Please consider making a donation.](#)

- 1) To donate directly to the Columbia Lake Stewardship Society, go to our website at cumbialakess.com and click on the **Donate Now** button. Your official tax receipt will be issued immediately.
- 2) If you prefer to write a cheque and receive a tax slip from our treasurer, mail it to:

*Columbia Lake Stewardship Society
4441 Cedar Bay
Fairmont Hot Springs, BC
V0B 1L2*

- 3) To donate to our endowment fund, go to the Columbia Valley Community Foundation website (columbiavalley.ca), click on donate, and select our fund: Columbia Lake Stewardship Society Endowment. Your official tax receipt will be issued immediately.

If you would like to know more about what we do, you can find the following reports online. Our reports for 2025 will be available early in 2026.

Annual Report 2024

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I0vL15CTbAQw2G6bYpPEm9CWXTODAs3q>

Water Quantity Report 2024

<https://cumbialakess.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2024-water-quantity-report-final.pdf>

Water Quality Report 2024

<https://cumbialakess.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/clss-2024-water-quality-report-final-1.pdf>