Stewarding Agriculture Watercourses in British Columbia

Changes in and About a Stream Guidance
for Agricultural Users

June 2026

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership
British Columbia
Canada

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Disclaimers

Some of the information provided in this document summarizes sections of legislation. If a discrepancy arises between this document and legislation, the legislation takes precedence. While this guidance document relates primarily to the *Water Sustainability Act*, some works, such as instream works, are also regulated by other federal, provincial and municipal enactments, and regulations and bylaws. Although this guide references legal requirements, the content of this guide should not be interpreted as legal advice. It is an individual's responsibility to ensure they are compliant with all applicable legislation and to seek independent legal advice where appropriate.

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Purpose of this Document

This document aims to:

- Inform farmers' and agricultural professionals' planning activities that involve changes in and about a stream (CIAS) requirements under the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) and Water Sustainability Regulation (WSR).
- Provide agriculture-specific guidance complementing the more in-depth User's Guide to Changes In and About A Stream In British Columbia.
- Provide recommendations on how to prepare and submit high-quality CIAS applications for provincial approval.

Projects That Require Permission Under the WSA

Water in B.C. is a valuable shared resource managed by the Province. As a result, even when water flows through private property, it is protected, and landowners must have permission to divert, use, or make changes to the water or where the water flows or accumulates. These changes are called **changes in and about a stream (CIAS)**. The term stream is used broadly in the WSA[1].

Section 11(2) of the WSA establishes that there are four mechanisms through which someone can obtain permission to make CIAS:

1. a **change approval** (WSA section 11),
2. an **authorized change** (WSR Part 3),
3. terms and conditions of an authorization (WSA section 9 Licence or WSA s.10 Use Approval), or
4. an order (e.g., remediation order issues by WSA engineer, water manager or comptroller).

In most cases, to undertake projects involving streams on your farm or ranch you will likely need to submit either a **notification of instream work** or an application for a **change approval** under the WSA. This guide will thus focus on these two mechanisms only.

It's also important to remember that you may need a **water licence** or a **use approval** to use or divert surface water or groundwater. If you have one of these

[1] Under the WSA, a stream is defined as a natural water body, watercourse[1], or source of water supply. The definition would include (without limitation): a lake, pond, river, creek, spring, ravine, gulch, wetland or glacier (whether or not these features usually contain water or ice).

authorizations already, it will lay out what CIAS you are allowed to perform as part of its terms and conditions[2]. Should your project involve a new water diversion or use, confirm the water licensing requirements under the WSA before proceeding with your project[3].

There are several exemptions from requiring an authorization to divert water for drainage activities if the water is not used and is discharged without harm[4]. A constructed ditch that carries only overland flow (e.g. for draining fields to increase production) is a type of artificial watercourse that is not considered a stream and thus is not regulated under the WSA. However, if an agricultural drainage ditch is a modified natural watercourse or stream channel, or a natural source of water supply, then it is considered a stream and the WSA requirements for CIAS would apply to ditch alterations. **It is important to carefully consult pages 6-9 of the CIAS User's Guide to determine if ditch alterations require permissions.**

The following section will walk you through the different types of permissions that are required for common types of work or projects involving streams.

Notification of Instream Work

There are many projects that will fall under the category of "authorized changes[5]" under the WSA. Typically, these projects are lower risk activities that have minimal impact on the environment or third parties.

Part 3 of the WSR (Sections 36-45) contains information on authorized changes and requirements related to making such changes. Most authorized changes require submission of a notification of instream work ("notification") to FrontCounterBC[6] **at least 45 calendar days before the work begins**. Other limitations, obligations, and protections are described in this part of the regulation.

During the 45-day period after your submission is received, you may not receive any further communication from the Province. If no communication is received,

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[2] Authorization holders should confirm any additional requirements with the Ministry of Water Land and Resource Stewardship, such as ensuring work is done in the appropriate fish windows.
[3] Visit https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/air-land-water/water/water-licensing-rights/water-licences-approvals for more information on water licences.
[4] Division 3 of the Water Sustainability Regulation [SBC 2014], Government of British Columbia. https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/14015
[5] As prescribed under Part 3 of the Water Sustainability Regulation
[6] FrontCounterBC has regional offices across BC. You can find a map of office locations along with contact information here: https://portalext.nrs.gov.bc.ca/web/client/locations

you may proceed with your work after the 45 days. Alternatively, the Province may notify you of additional terms and conditions required to proceed. In that case, you must provide all requested information to the decision-maker and wait until their assessment is complete before starting work.

In some cases, the decision-maker may determine that the proposed work requires an application for a change approval. This can occur even if the activity falls within the list of authorized changes under Part 3 of WSR if a designated WSA engineer determines the project may have significant adverse effects on the stream. You will be informed of this revision within 45-days of your submission, if applicable.

Change Approval

If the project you wish to complete is not one of the activities listed as an authorized change, then you'll need to apply for a change approval.

Change approvals are most often required for projects that[7]:

- **Occur within the stream or the stream channel** (for example, streambank erosion control projects such as installing riprap),
- **Are likely to modify the stream over time** (for example, re-aligning the stream channel or conducting in-stream work), or
- **Are likely to impact the stream bed over time** (for example, adding or removing boulders or large woody debris).

It is important to keep in mind that even if you have permission from the Province under the WSA, you still need to ensure that the proposed project activities comply with all other legislation, regulations and local bylaws. One important example is that activities cannot result in the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction (HADD) of fish habitat as per the federal *Fisheries Act*. See the companion document: "Legislative Guide for Agricultural Watercourses: Understanding Regulations, Rights, and Responsibilities in B.C" for more details.

Deciding Which Permission to Apply For

Table 1 summarizes the most common farm activities and their likely WSA

[7] These are examples, please see the definition of changes in and about a stream in the for complete definition. If the project constitutes a CIAS, is not an Authorized Change under WSR s. 39, and is not authorized through the other 2 mechanisms, a change approval will be required.

requirements. If you are unsure whether a planned activity requires a notification or a change approval, and/or *Fisheries Act* authorization, then it is best to discuss your project or plans with a qualified professional (QP) whose area of expertise is aligned with the type of project you're planning to undertake. If you are not sure how to proceed, contact the FrontCounterBC team.

Table 1: Summary of activities commonly taking place on farms and the possible approvals required. Please note these are examples only and not intended to be legal advice[8].

Activity	Notification	Change Approval
Annual cutting of vegetation in a stream channel	☑	
Tree clearing using mechanical and/or manual cutting to clear land for agricultural production.		☑ If it affects the stream channel (both the bed and banks for the stream) or the aquatic ecosystem of the stream – should be interpreted by a QP.
Vegetation removal and/or invasive species removal: mechanical or manual cutting of annual vegetation within a stream channel; removal of Eurasian watermilfoil and other invasive species of aquatic vegetation.	☑	
Planting of trees, shrubs, and other plants for establishment of a riparian area (vegetative buffer), above top of bank.		☑ Exempt if not directly affecting the stream, stream channel, or aquatic ecosystem.
Erosion control (soft): using nature-based solutions (e.g. willow staking below **top of bank**).		☑
Erosion control (hard): using hydrological engineering methods (e.g., rip rap).	☑ If repairing existing dikes or erosion	☑

[8] It is recommended that you consult the WSA and Regulations for specific requirements prior to conducting any of the activities listed in this table.

Activity	Notification	Change Approval
	protection works to original state (if functional in the previous year)	
Culverts: installing, maintaining, or removing.	☑ Notification if WSR conditions are met, otherwise a change approval	Possibly
Bridge/Stream Crossing: construction, maintenance, or removal of a clear span crossing.	☑	
Bridge/Stream Crossing: not clear span bridge.		☑
Drainage outlets: installation or cleaning.	☑	
Fencing: installation, repair, or maintenance, or removal if it is not in the stream channel, does not block debris in the stream channel, and does not interfere with navigation of the stream.	☑	
Beaver dams: removal of a beaver dam for drainage purposes under Section 9 of the *Wildlife Act* if the removal does not cause flooding or erosion downstream.	☑	
Retaining walls: for streambank erosion protection.		☑
Stream channel: realignment or other engineering works.		☑
Channel or in-stream pond: construction or removal.		☑
Debris and Sediment Removal: Large debris removal, gravel removal, especially by machine.		☑
Sediment sump: construction, installation, removal.		☑
Dikes or erosion protection works: repair or maintenance.		☑

Activity	Notification	Change Approval
		May also require authorization under the *Dike Maintenance Act*
Dams or weirs: construction / maintenance / removal (includes small rock or log structures that create natural habitat pool areas)		☑

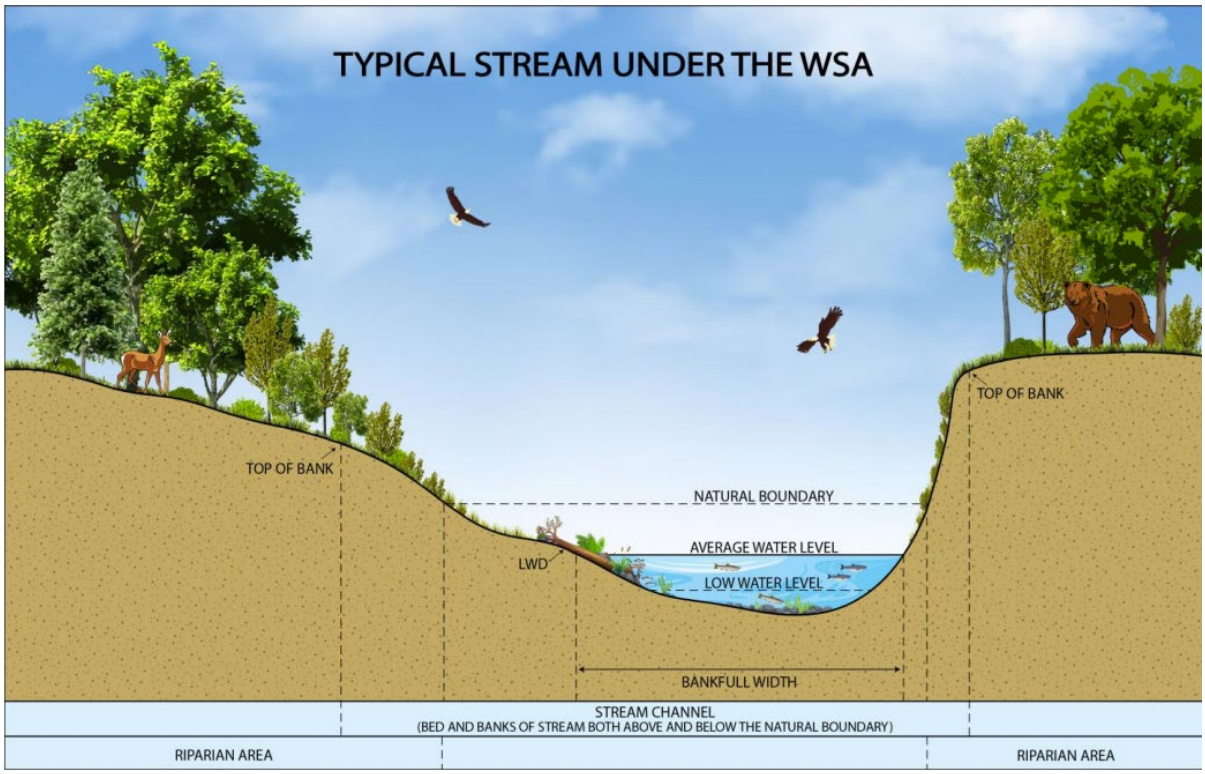

Figure 1: Anatomy of a stream.

Installation of a culvert that adheres to WSR conditions.
Photo by: Stock and Waterways.

Establishing a clear span bridge.
Photo by: Road Runner Bridge.

Installing livestock exclusion fencing.
Photo by: Stock and Waterways

Beaver dam removal by an authorized individual.
Photo by: The Wildlife Society.

Figure 2: Examples of on-farm projects that require a notification of instream works.

Streambank erosion protection.
Photo by: P. Powell

Stream channel realignment.
Photo by: Resource Institute.

Dredging and sediment removal.
Photo by: P. Brinkman

Removal of logs and rocks in the stream channel.
Photo by: A de Bruin.

Figure 3: Examples of on-farm projects that require a change approval.

Notification and Change Approval Process Comparison

There is a similar process for submitting a notification or a change approval, yet there are a few key differences (see Table 2). For example:

- Both can benefit from involving the expertise of a QP. QP support is recommended for projects requiring a change approval due to the higher complexity of the projects and approvals. Notifications can be submitted without a QP particularly if an experienced contractor is involved in the project design.

- The notification process is faster (typically 45 calendar days) than a change approval, which takes significantly longer (timeframes will depend on your region, time of year, project complexity etc.)[9].
- Change approvals typically take longer because the application review process is generally more intensive and may result in requests for more information from you.
- A decision on a change approval is appealable to the Environmental Appeal Board under s. 105 of WSA, whereas proceeding on a notification is not.

  Whether or not you submit a notification or a change approval, the authorization officer is likely to apply several conditions to the project – this may include a **timing window**, which will require you to complete the work within a specific timeframe to minimize impacts on fish and/or fish habitat.

Table 2: Comparison of notification and change approvals.

Category	Notification	Change Approval
Project Type	Intended for **low-impact projects** unlikely to affect downstream users	Intended for **complex or higher-risk projects** that may directly impact a stream
Regulatory Intensity	Lower level of review	Higher level of review, often involves more scrutiny
Qualified Professional (QP)	May be submitted **without a QP** in some cases, especially if an experienced contractor is involved	A **QP is typically recommended** due to complexity
Processing Time	Usually processed within **45 days**	**Typically longer than 45 days**; timeline depends on region, project, season, scale
Review Process	Generally straightforward	Detailed review which may involve requests for additional information, First Nations consultation
Conditions Applied	All relevant or applicable limitations, obligations, consequences and protection conditions contained in the WSR Part 4 (Sections 36-45). Additional discretionary Habitat Officer terms and conditions, such as **timing windows,** may also be included	**Typically more numerous and detailed discretionary terms and conditions** may be included in the change approval.

[9] If your circumstance is of an urgent nature, such as where there are significant risks to public health or the environment, contact your local water manager immediately. In exceptional circumstances they may be able to expedite a change approval application or issue an order to complete the work. Inadequate planning does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Helping Your Application Succeed

To increase your chances of a successful submission, try to think about what government decision makers must consider (under the WSA) when they are assessing a submission. Figure 5 on the following page provides examples of key questions that you should try to answer with the information that you provide in your submission.

Be sure to strengthen your submission by including the following information whenever possible:

- Accurate mapping of your farm (see drawing standards and Figure 4 on the page below for an example).
- Clear reasoning and timeline for the activity.
- Role of QP (if applicable).
- List and description of Beneficial Management Practices that will be followed[10].
- Acknowledgement of adherence to fish timing windows (if applicable).
- Plans for proper disposal of cut vegetation, sediment, or other materials.
- Indications of support from downstream neighbours and local First Nations.
- A professional plan or design (this may include hydrological assessments, environmental assessments, engineering design, construction, maintenance, mitigation strategies to avoid or minimize erosion and habitat disruptions).

[10] For more detailed information on BMPs, refer to the Requirements and Best Management Practices for Making Changes In and About A Stream in British Columbia document.

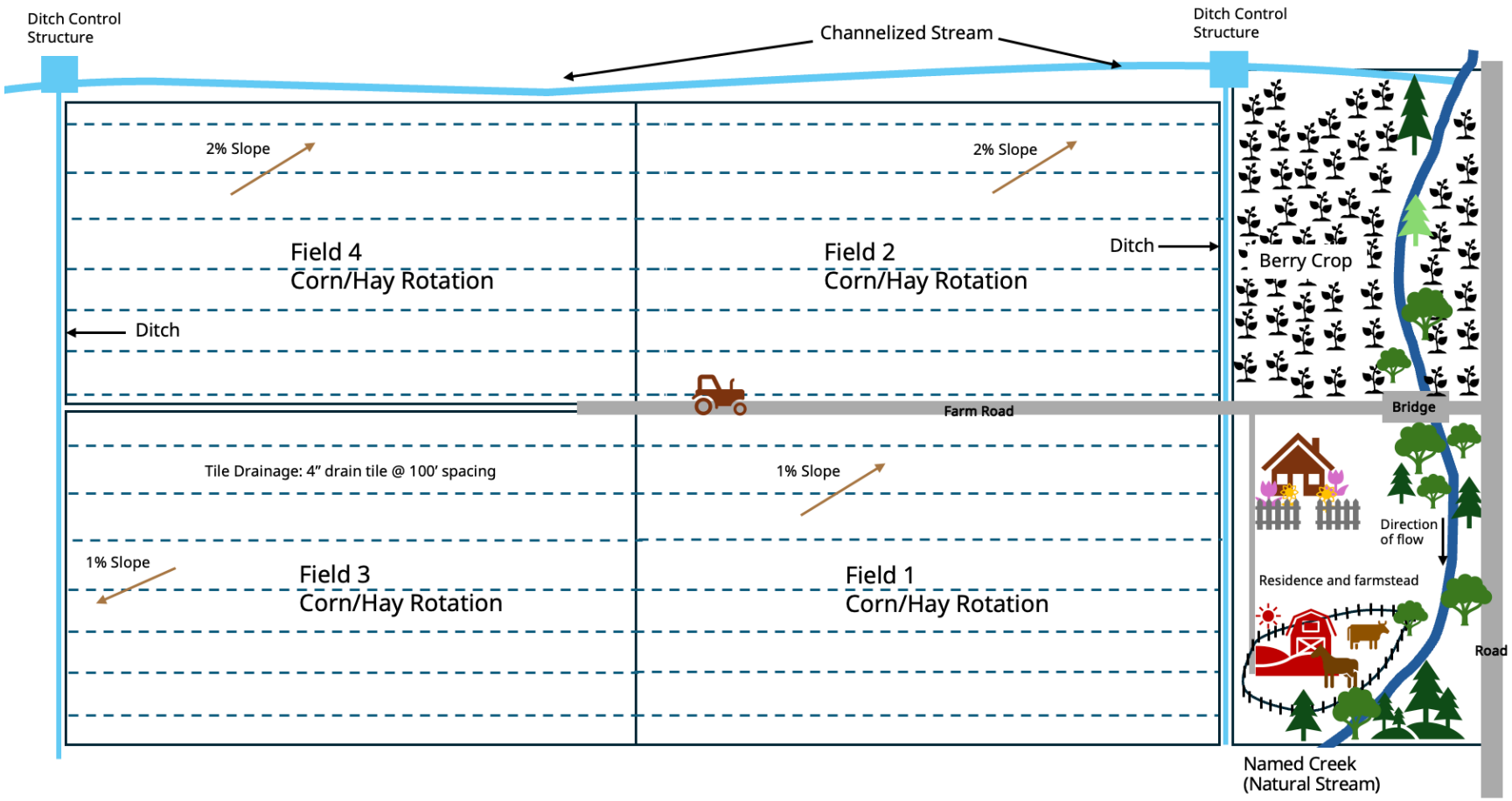

Figure 4: Example drawing of a farm and watercourses for use in WSA applications.

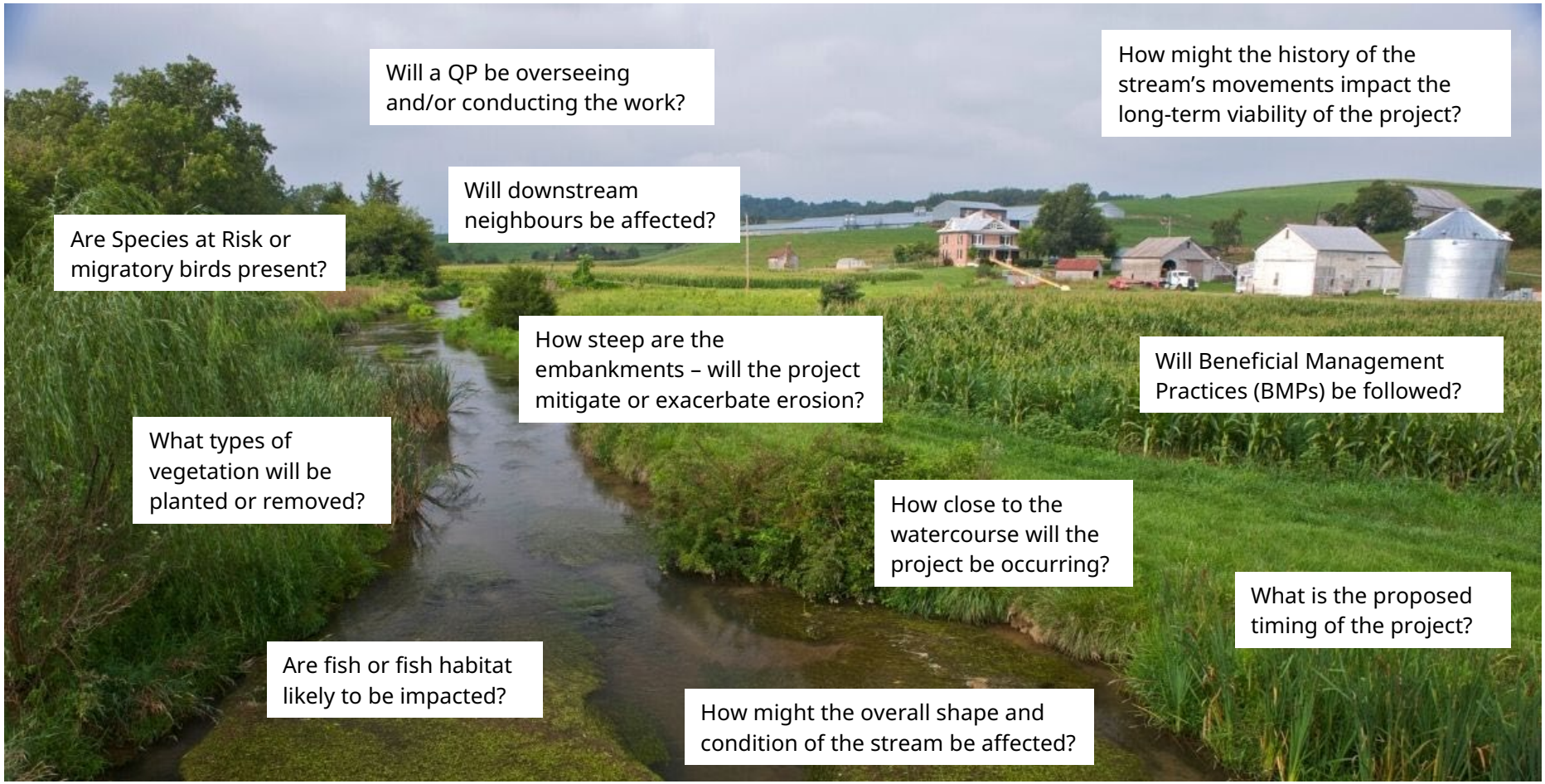

Figure 5: Questions to consider when developing your submission.

Table 2: Comparing the application process: notification vs. change approval

Step	Notification	Change Approval

1 Prepare and submit notification or change approval application	The Notification submission must include the following:
	• Your contact information.
	• Copy of your land title indicating land ownership, or the name and contact of the owner if you are renting/leasing the land.
	• The name of the stream you're planning work on and the name of any other stream into which the water discharges into downstream – you may want to use the BC Freshwater Atlas to complete this step.
	• A description of the project with accurate drawings that are to scale that include (see example and drawing standards):
	  ○ location and boundaries of the property,
	  ○ the location of the proposed work,
	  ○ the boundaries of any land that may be physically affected by the work,
	  ○ a map of all of the water features in the area, and
	  ○ the location of the stream and the direction of water flow.
	• You may wish to work with a QP consultant on this part of the submission. Other helpful tools
		The Change Approval application will need to include (at a minimum)[11]:
		• Your contact information.
		• Copy of your land title indicating land ownership, or the name and contact of the owner if you are renting/leasing the land.
		• The name of the stream you're planning work on and the name of any other stream into which the water discharges into downstream – you may want to use the BC Freshwater Atlas to complete this step.
		• A description of the project with accurate drawings that are to scale that include (see example and drawing standards):
		  ○ location and boundaries of the property,
		  ○ the location of the proposed work,
		  ○ the boundaries of any land that may be physically affected by the work,
		  ○ a map of all of the water features in the area, and
		  ○ the location of the stream and the direction of water flow.
		• You may wish to work with a QP consultant on this part of the submission. Other helpful tools include GoogleEarth and the BC Freshwater Atlas. You will want to be as specific as possible and provide exact

[11] See section 4 of the Water Sustainability Regulation for complete list of requirements.

Step	Notification	Change Approval
	include GoogleEarth and the BC Freshwater Atlas. You will want to be as specific as possible and provide exact dimensions/footprints of the project including GPS coordinates. You can submit a notice through FrontCounterBC. **Where can I get more information about the notification application process?** FrontCounterBC application for a notification of authorized changes in and about a stream	dimensions/footprints of the project including GPS coordinates. • You should scope your project in such a way that it minimizes any concerns that may arise under the WSA. For example, avoid or mitigate impacts to the stream, stream channel and aquatic ecosystem and try to concentrate work above the high-water mark and include best management practices into your project planning. • For more complex projects, you may be asked to summarize any environmental mitigation approaches in an environmental management plan. You can submit an application for a change approval through the FrontCounter BC webpage and portal. You will need to be prepared to pay the $250 application fee. **Where can I get more information about the Change Approval application process?** FrontCounterBC Change Approval Application for Changes In and About a Stream
2 Review of application and additional referrals or requests	FrontCounterBC may contact you for additional information and may also send the application to a habitat officer to undergo a technical review. The habitat officer will determine whether the activity counts as an "authorized change" and may also contact you for additional information.	Your application will be reviewed by a water manager and may be referred to other provincial and federal regulatory agencies for comment. They may contact you for additional information or if the application was incomplete. The file will be sent by the water manager for First Nations consultation, and you may be asked to respond if any concerns are raised. Many First Nations have pre-determined consultation timeframes ranging from weeks to months, depending on the complexity of the project and the potential for impacts to the watershed.

Step	Notification	Change Approval
		In certain situations, you may be requested to submit additional reports and/or assessments. These are typically required to be completed by a professional with appropriate qualifications. This may include design drawings, plans for construction works, assessment of potential impacts, and identify and/or implement mitigation measures. The approving officer may request that you work with a professional with specific qualifications (e.g., expertise in a topic area). This request may come as part of an application review or as a condition of authorization.
3 Await decision outcome	One of three outcomes may occur: • If you are not contacted within 45 days then the work can go ahead as proposed, subject to the many requirements provided in Sections 40-45 of the WSR. • The habitat officer may issue additional terms and conditions that must be followed in addition to the criteria provided within Part 3 of the WSR. Examples of conditions of approval: the work must be carried out by a QP or the work must occur during a specific timing window (over a certain timeframe to minimize impacts of fish or fish habitat). In this case, the proposed start date may need to be amended beyond the 45-day period. • A WSA engineer may determine that the project doesn't qualify as an authorized change, and you may be asked to submit a full change approval application instead.	The **decision maker** will decide to either "grant" or "not grant" the application. • If your application is granted, you can go ahead with your project as long as you follow the terms and conditions provided by the statutory decision maker. These may relate to the time of year in which you may do the work, and/or to other measures that protect the aquatic ecosystem, the integrity of the stream channel and the rights of other water users and landowners downstream. Conditions are often related to mitigation measures or environmental monitoring. If the work window doesn't align with the schedule for the project, you can apply to amend the timeframe. • If your application was not granted you may be able to appeal the decision, subject to Section 105 of the WSA. **How long will the change approval application process take?** Depending on the project, the application review and consultation process can take months or even up to a year. You should keep this in mind and consider how it may impact your project plans.

What about water licence and water use approval applications?
If diversion, use or storage of water will be occurring as part of the project, it is probably appropriate to seek a water licence or a water use approval rather than a change approval. Examples include construction of a side channel of a stream that will be flooded for conservation purposes, building a wetland or pond, or installing beaver dam analogues. A water licence or a water use approval can allow a person to make changes in and about a stream as well as provide rights to divert, use or store water (subject to terms and conditions). The main difference between the two is that use approvals are temporary and cannot exceed a term of 24 months.

Where can I find more information?

- A Users' Guide for Changes in and About a Stream in British Columbia
- Guidance for Applications or Notifications for Changes in and about a Stream under the Water Sustainability Act in the South Coast Region
- Requirements and Best Management Practices for Making Changes in and About a Stream in British Columbia
- Apply for a Change Approval or Submit Notification of Instream Work

Appendix 1: Glossary

A list of commonly used terms is provided below for reference.

"aquatic ecosystem", under WSA in relation to a stream, means the natural environment of the stream, including
(a) the stream channel, the vegetation in the stream and the water in the stream, and
(b) fish, wildlife and other living organisms insofar as their life processes
    (i) are carried out in the stream, and
    (ii) depend on the natural environment of the stream.

"**aquifer**" as defined under the WSA is:
(a) a geological formation,
(b) a group of geological formations, or
(c) a part of one or more geological formations that is groundwater bearing and capable of storing, transmitting and yielding groundwater.

"**authorization**" under WSA means except in references to drilling authorization, means a licence or use approval

"**Authorized Change**" refers to prescribed activities listed in Section 39 of the Water Sustainability Regulation that are exempted from a Change Approval or Authorization as per section 11(2)(b) of the *Water Sustainability Act*.

"**Change Approval"** means an approval, to make changes in and about a stream, issued under section 11 (1) *[changes in and about a stream]* or a similar approval issued under a former Act.

"**changes in and about a stream**" as defined under the WSA is:
a) any modification to the nature of a stream, including any modification to the land, vegetation and natural environment of a stream or the flow of water in a stream; or
b) any activity or construction within a stream channel that has or may have an impact on a stream or a stream channel.
The changes made in and about a stream can include activities (e.g., removal of invasive vegetation) or "works." Under the WSA, "works" is defined to mean anything that can be or is used to divert, store, measure and convey water; and

produce measure, transmit or use energy.

"constructed ditch" is one that conveys drainage water from an individual farm or supplies irrigation water to an individual farm property. A constructed ditch does not have headwaters, may be permanently or intermittently wet, and does not form a part of the natural waterways that drain a watershed. Fish or other aquatic life may or may not be present. Some channelized streams may look like a ditch, however a constructed ditch only conveys drainage and/or irrigation water from or to an *individual* farm property (from the BC Drainage Management Guide).

"**decision maker**" in relation to a decision under the WSA, means:
a) the person authorized to make the decision, and
b) if more than one person is authorized to make that decision, the person who is making or has made that decision, whether on application or on the person's own initiative.

"**notification"** is colloquialism used to refer to the 45 day notice of intent to conduct an authorized change that must be provided to the province for activities listed in section 39 of the WSR.

"qualified professional (QP)" typically refers to a professional engineer or geoscientist acting with the scope of their competencies and qualifications. However, depending on the activities or works proposed, a QP may include biologists, agrologists, geomorphologists, hydrologists, forester, qualified specialists in other disciplines, or persons with other qualifications specified by a decision maker.

"**riparian area**" is a concept captured within the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation. It is the area adjacent to a stream, lake, or wetland that supports the natural features, functions, and conditions needed to maintain stream health and fish habitat. Under RAPR, the riparian areas are typically measured at about 30m on each side of the stream, but the ecological riparian zone is in reality a gradient from aquatic to upland vegetation and can vary in size significantly depending on many ecological, geological, and hydrological factors.

"**stream**" as defined under the WSA is:
a) a natural watercourse, including a natural glacier course, or a natural body of water, whether or not the stream channel of the stream has been modified, or
b) a natural source of water supply.

including, without limitation, a lake, pond, river, creek, spring, ravine, gulch, wetland or glacier, whether or not usually containing water, including ice, but does not include an aquifer.

The WSA definition of a “stream” does not consider fish presence. A natural watercourse or other natural body of water without fish can still be considered a stream under the WSA.

“**stream channel**” as defined under the WSA is:
in relation to a stream, means the bed of the stream and the banks of the stream, both above and below the natural boundary and whether or not the channel has been modified, and includes side channels of the stream. Water features that are not considered as “streams” under the WSA may be regulated by other legislation, such as local government drains or fish habitat in ditches.

“**top of bank**”: Referred to in the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation. The first significant break in a ravine slope where the grade beyond the break is less than 3:1 for a minimum distance of 15 m measured perpendicularly from the break, and the break does not include a bench within the ravine that could be developed.

“watercourse”: is defined in the Code of Practice of Agricultural Environmental Management as an area of land that perennially or intermittently contains surface water, including drainage ditches. This does not include puddles, groundwater, dugout ponds for livestock watering, furrows, grassed waterways and other temporary ponded areas that are normally farmed.

Appendix 2: Roles and Responsibilities During Application Review

FrontCounter BC
FrontCounter BC is the 'front desk' for natural resource authorization inquiries in the Province, other than in relation to oil and gas activities which are handled by the BC Oil and Gas Commission. Whether you're applying for a change approval, water licence, mining permit or land tenure, you will start with FrontCounter BC. Their role is to answer your questions about natural resource management (NRM) permitting, review your application for completeness and help determine which authorizations you might need to submit. FrontCounter BC staff may also request additional information if your submitted applications do not meet application requirements.

Technical Staff
A change approval, water licence or use approval application will be reviewed by different Provincial staff depending upon the nature of your proposed activities or works. Reviews for CIAS are typically completed by a water technician, technologist, water officer, hydrologist, lands officer, assistant water manager or water manager. Technical staff will review the technical aspects of your submission, assist with consultation with Indigenous Nations, and may engage with potentially impacted parties. They may also request additional information if the submitted information is deemed insufficient to properly assess project impacts.

Decision Makers
Decision makers are authorized under the law to make a particular decision. For change approval, water licence and use approval applications; they are typically the comptroller, a water manager or an assistant water manager. The decision maker reviews the application and any recommendations from the technical staff and decides whether to grant or not grant the application. For example, they may require you to engage with (give notice to) potentially impacted parties. Following the decision, the applicant and potentially impacted persons are informed of the decision maker's decision.

Habitat Officers
Habitat officers review notices of proposed authorized changes and respond with terms and conditions that the client must follow (see WSR s.41). Authorized

changes listed in section 39 may or may not require notice to a habitat officer[12].

WSA Engineer
A WSA engineer is someone designated as an engineer under the WSA. Often, the person fulfilling the role of an engineer will also have another designation, such as an assistant water manager or water manager. The engineer can require that a person, among other things, install, remove or alter works in accordance with WSA s.93. An engineer can also require that a person proposing to make an authorized change obtain a change approval or authorization in accordance with WSR s.37(2).

Compliance and Enforcement Staff
Enforcement of the WSA typically involves Natural Resources Officers (NRO) in collaboration with WSA engineers, habitat officers and technical staff. NROs may conduct inspections to verify compliance with the legislation, investigate potential contraventions under the WSA and its regulations and, where appropriate, take enforcement actions including issuing violation tickets, executing stop work orders or pursuing prosecution through the courts, whereas engineers may order corrective actions, such as under WSA s.93. Oil and gas activities are typically monitored by compliance and enforcement staff from the BC Oil and Gas Commission.

First Nations
Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is a guiding principle in the Province's decision-making. Accordingly, the Province consults First Nations on decisions that may have adverse impacts on Indigenous interests (claimed or proven Aboriginal rights (including title) or treaty rights). Applications for change approvals, water licences and use approvals under the WSA are referred to Indigenous Nations with Indigenous interests within the project area. The Province may request additional information from the client if questions or concerns are raised by Indigenous Nations further to their sharing of Indigenous knowledge. More information is available on the Province's Consulting with First Nations webpage.

Potentially Impacted Persons or Agencies
A decision maker must direct that a client give notice of an application to persons or agencies whose rights as authorization holders, applicants, riparian owners or owners of potentially impacted lands are likely to be detrimentally affected if the application is granted, subject to WSA s.13. Alternatively, a decision maker may

[12] See Part 3 of the Water Sustainability Regulation [SBC 2014], Government of British Columbia. https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/14015

give that notice. These persons or agencies who may be impacted have the right to submit an objection and have the objection heard by the decision maker. You may be required to submit additional information in response to an objection from a potentially impacted person or agencies. These persons will also be given notice of the decision made on the application. A change approval or authorization application may also be referred to potentially interested or impacted agencies, such as municipalities or regional districts, such as if there appears to be a potential adverse impact in their jurisdiction.