

# Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable



Jan 17, 2013

## MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Kate Miller at 9:05 am.

### **In attendance**

Roger Hunter & Lorna Medd- CWB, Dave Lindsey - Timberwest, Don Closson – BC Parks, Brain Tutty - Retired, Brian Houle – Catalyst Paper, Paul Rickard – Sport Fishing, Ted Brookmen – BCWF & Rec Fish, Helen Reid & Tim Kulchyski – Cowichan Tribes, Ray Demarchi & Carol Hartwig- Cowichan Estuary Restoration Committee, Eric Marshall, Genevieve Singleton & Dave Polster CVNS, Kerry Davis – Green Party of BC, Tom Rutherford & Erica Blake - DFO, Meghan Loop & Kai Rietzel – Cowichan Land Trust, Ian Morrison – CVRD Area F, Kate Miller – CVRD, Parker Jefferson – One Cowichan, Clay Reitsma – District of North Cowichan, Ken Epps – Island Timberlands, Wayne Haddow – BCMA. REGRETS: Gerald Thom.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes were circulated from the Dec 15th meeting and approved.

### **Report of the Co-Chairs**

Letter was developed by Paul & assistance by Roger sent to the Province last week. Deb Epps

### **Roundtable Member updates**

Rietzel – Several events coming up. Film Night Jan 31<sup>st</sup> at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre 7pm. Beer & Burger Fundraiser Feb 17<sup>th</sup>, 5-8 pm at the Cowichan Bay Pub. Bioengineering workshop March 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, location TBD.

Closson – Heavy rains have caused excess slumps and flow at Stoltz Bluffs and sedimentation has exceeded containment; however water flow is at an ideal level.

Marshall – New Year's Day bird count: Anna's Hummingbirds record number spotted. Swan and Goose numbers are down from last year. On the second Sunday of every month the Nature Centre has water bird survey, matched with CERCA North Side bird count.

Rickard – Wildlife Federation met with Randy Kamp , Parliamentary secretary for Fisheries, for a discussion around the changes to the Habitat Act. Suggestion was made for the Cowichan to be used as a template regarding the dyking; suggestion was well received and could possibly result in positive habitat work. The bureaucratic part of FLNRO are becoming more engaged, and strongly interested in the need for the flexible rule band.

Jefferson – One Cowichan released a survey asking about community based interests on the valley. Please fill it out, available online on One Cowichan's website.

Houle – Catalyst is back on its feet financially. The Lake river gauge, at the crest of the weir, has been fixed. Definite evidence that FLNRO is moving, Catalyst will be meeting with them tomorrow.

Blake – Hatchery has about 1.2 million eggs, 600,000 salmon treating tanks for this spring.

Demarchi – took photos of King Tides. Local sawmill moves the booms into safer area during storms, so with no drifting logs it is easier to count seals. Numbers are down.

Hartwig – 642 ducks, quite down from previously but it is after salmon runs and duck migration.

Kulchiski – Was able to do some diving on the kelp strings project, most of the strings were looking really healthy. Completed soil contaminates and shellfish tissue samples.

Miller – CSRT membership in BC Lake Stewardship Society has been renewed, good until Jan 2014. All of our member organizations fall under this membership. Environment Commission, an entity of the CVRD to provide advice to the board of the CVRD has 3 positions opening up - 2 year rotating membership, applications open until the end of January. Canadian Heritage River's Conference this June is still open to submissions/posters/etc putting forward watershed work. Have received the LIDAR coastal data, beginning as of yesterday the preliminary sea level rise for impact on coastal habitat and infrastructure; if you have any information relevant please pass on to Kate. The Water Balance work being done in this region is impressive, water quality and runoff information for developers. Agricultural Land Use Inventory presentation Feb 1 & 2 at the Agri Fair; Analysis on ALR or lands zoned or farms, roadside survey to do a current state analysis to look at crop type and irrigation type to make recommendations to the agricultural community.

## **Business**

### **Roundtable Terms of Reference and Workplan**

The Original Terms of Reference called for a review of the chair on an annual review, and from time to time we call for a new chair.

Tutty - This roundtable came out of a crisis of water where our organizations were inadequate on their own, we needed to cooperate and do business. The roundtable became a forum for this business, able to bring in management and resources. From this came the Water Management Plan that looked forward 50 years. This holistic plan included fish, looking after our water, and climate change. We started with 5 people and now are over 30. We are all here due to crisis and finding a new way to do business. We are seen as a germinal movement away from mandate authority to grassroots beyond.

Morrison - This table has a tremendous amount of expertise to see the results of the interactions that take place here, and benefits extend from this collaboration. A resource for the area directors and to help convey what is actually going on.

Rickard - We started around a specific water issue, we discovered when we were talking about water we were also talking about things the water effected, acted upon, or enabled by water (ie ecosystems, lands, fish, etc). So this group grew with this common theme. There are several important concepts. 1) We are stronger together, and there is plenty of behind-the-scenes leveraging and support that we provide to the whole group. 2) We are all able to prioritize our time to commit to this group and discuss and exchange. Issues have come up that weren't important seeming, but shows a commonality and opportunity for collaboration. 3) We create or enable new groups to start around specific concerns.

Demarchi - This roundtable captures the energy and expertise of retired professionals to utilize and further collaborate.

Polster - The roundtable will become increasingly important as a counter to climate change stressors, as a way to enable innovative reactions to change.

Lindsey – Timberwest has lands all over the Island, and these lands have similar roundtables. The terms of Reference from the Cowichan have been directly applied by offshoot tables or groups desiring the roundtable model. The Cowichan is the superior organization primarily because there isn't any hidden agendas, more open and inclusive organization. It is working really well.

Rutherford – 1) This is an effective and enjoyable way to get things done. We live in a different world now than 10 years ago. We have many powerful active groups. This table is here to make sure that we aren't stepping on each other's toes, that we all have a function within the Valley. Several of us are involved in multiple groups and tables. Let's not duplicate efforts, and if we are we can fix it. COMMUNICATION is a piece that needs to be improved upon in the future. 3) There is a certain amount of work, especially behind the scenes, which Kate has been shouldering. Facilitating the meetings is a relatively minor role, the work around talking about the right things, the meaningful things, and bringing the right people to the table. The work involved in this such as the correspondence, setting the agenda, etc may need several people to help take this on.

Jefferson – BC Freshwater Alliance, attending weekend long conference about communication and networking within watersheds, and will bring that information back to the next meeting.

Hunter – There is a need for local actual power in governance rather than being subject to distance. The Watershed Board would not exist without the crisis, the plan, the champions (including this table). On the 8<sup>th</sup> of January planned a fieldtrip for the Moore Foundation and the BC Real Estate Foundation as they are interested in potentially funding governance – They kept talking about communication.

Kulchiski – The roundtable catches and fills the gaps, and growth of relationships, processes, and groups have developed as a result. Increased communication is key to successfully build and strength those relationships.

Miller – Over 100 members, around 30 that come out to each monthly meeting.

**Action items: Don & Paul co-facilitating next meeting. ToR: Tim, Clay, Genevieve, Roger, Kate (Tutty to comment) – core group but also open. Communications – Jefferson to present on workshop information.**

#### **Update on Chinook Recovery Plan Report – Paul Rickard**

Chinook Rebuilding Strategy is alive and well. Wilf Luedke, Area Chief Stock Assessment, has been assigned the coordinating of the task of being a large 100 page report on what is known about the Cowichan River, historic and current knowledge, and factors in the Chinook lifestyle. This is still in draft form but it is very comprehensive. A series of planned workshops, facilitated by Paul Rickard, will be inclusive of the entire community but in different stages to gain multiple layers of knowledge. The first workshop will gather Chinook scientists and people with high-level specific knowledge on the Cowichan River including Cowichan Tribes. Examine what we think we know is required for Chinook and what we think is happening in the river, and being evaluating level of risk and mortality at each life stage for recovery planning around lifestyle: spawning, incubation, and early life in river, transition to estuary and near-shore environment. End of the workshop pull out what are the limiting factors in the river for Chinook, and can we prioritize these factors for action.

Second workshop will be brought to the roundtable for review and discuss what came out of the first workshop. Third workshop will involve all those in the valley who are knowledge of restoration – biologists, watershed restoration etc. By look at this list of limiting factors hopefully have identified the causal factors of the limiting factors, and pose the question can we fix these? If we can, how do we go about this – budgeting, responsibility, map out the art of possible solutions/mitigations by the collective Action Plan. Holding a general public evening meeting introducing what has been done and public comment. Core group has asked Paul to do some of the facilitation, Brain and Wilf providing feedback. Progress involving broad base of people, not end up as a report but action item. First workshop around Feb 19<sup>th</sup>, Second will be March meeting. The third remediation workshop is to take place in early April. Roundtable has been a pushing force to get this, as is Cowichan Tribes. COSEWIC is looking at this, and as well harvest has been reduced on the West Coast since it was a more easily addressed limiting factor. Other watersheds are following quickly behind what we are doing here.

#### **Cowichan Watershed Board Updates - Members**

Next meeting is Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, the technical advisory working group meeting may be needed if we get the water quality results back. Farmer's may be likely involved.

Rule Curve/Band Progress – Meeting last Friday with Graham Kissack, DFO, and the Province was there. Essentially the 20cm band above the weir, gives 20 more days of water. For 10 cms look like hold across the 30<sup>th</sup> of July, ramping it down from there down until 7cms. Rob Grant's group is now looking at the 20cm increase at the lake in the CVRD.

Catalyst is telling the Province that this is their program; the Province may be considering creating an order for 2-5 years instead of insisting on license. New storage requires a new license, meaning an increase to 20cm will have to be licensed. If the Province is doing the order they should be doing the consultation. Would One Cowichan or CVRD organize the meeting for consultation?

Riparian Meeting schedules on April 11-13<sup>th</sup> in Nanaimo to organize an action plan dealing with the riparian protection, rehabilitation, and restoration including public education at the lake. Opportunity to share mapping and analysis of the information we currently have about the Lake and to talk about potential next step forwards as most of the area impacted is at the high water mark. Margot Parks tour has been inspired to organize a cross-Canada public health working group around water quality.

#### **Flood Control Update – Kate Miller & Clay Reitsma**

Large amount of work has been done on the Tier 1 and Tier 2 dyking project. Tier 3 project \$1million to remove sediment and log jam sites. Totally is \$16.2 million for the project, blue dykes have been completed

spring of 2012. The red project (Lakes & Beverly) projects are well under way. Potential slope failure prevention has been completed to protect Quamichan Village. The green projects are contained in Tier 2 South, North Cowichan has been doing the Red, Norm Olive of CVRD is Green. Green projects supposed to start this year (Mission Road dyke), but tendering issues have resulted in this being moved, no approvals for 2013 projects. Trying to create a process to have a quick turn around with the works and streamline DFO approval, if we don't spend the money by a deadline we lose the money

Tier 3 Projects have to spend the money or lose it by Feb 2014. Long-term flood management of the Cowichan and Koksilah involves the proposed sediment management strategy by reducing gravel aggregation in the lower river system (and log jams) on a regular basis. However, how much gravel and where it is removed is important for fish values. Determined what the annual average sediment deposition in the lower system is and where this deposition occurs. This information has resulted in a management system proposed by the railway bridge. If we can manage gravel by the bridge there then can manage appropriate levels and types of gravels towards the North Arm and impacts to the industrial site in the estuary. Removal sites: 1) at the bridge for largest and regular site, 2) JUB has good access developed for regular maintenance, 3) Quamichan Village, 4) North Arm. Looking forward to a discussion with DFO, what are the impacts of gravel removal and can it be beneficial for creating beneficial deep pool and riffle systems. A substantial amount of work will be taking place through 2013.

The 2009 flood was a 1 in 7 year flood; the previous dyke was built for 1 in 200 year flood. The area flood management plan allowed us a model to use set-back dykes. Most important point is in 20-30 years we will have to build more dykes if gravel is not managed, so it is critical that we come to some agreement with DFO as to how we are going to manage gravel. We are receiving 18,000 cubic meters of gravel coming in from the train bridge dam, resulting in a 1.8m increase to the bed load and river height increase. Looking at a climate model and sediment loading, there is a pinch point by the railway bridge and Allenby bridge, runs straight through the industrial park and would seriously impact aquifer quality. Stabilizing upstream may be appropriate, also further issues around gravel ownership to be discussed.

#### **Meeting**

**Feb 21st, 9:00-12:00 am. Location TBD.**

#### **Agenda for Feb 21**

The main topics for the next meeting were proposed and agreed to:

Debra Epps to present data gathered from the water testing project

Andrew Thompson, South Coast DFO Area Director to present on various topics around the Dyking project approval, Chinook rebuilding plan