



Feb 21, 2013

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Paul Rickard at 9:00 am.

In attendance

Kai Rietzel (CLT) Gerald Thom, (CLRSS) Jean Crowder (M.P.) Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), Tim Kulchusky (Cowichan Tribes), Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Erica Blake (DFO), Kate Miller (CVRD), Eric Marshall (Cowichan Naturalists) Tom Rutherford (DFO) Andy Thompson (DFO) Ted Brookman (BCWF/Rec Fish) Deb Epps (Ministry of Environment) Clay Reitsma (Dist. Of N. Cowichan) Al Chatterton (Timber West) Craig Wightman (BCCF/ Living Rivers) Brian Tutty (RpBio) Kerry Davis (Green Party of BC) Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan) Genevieve Singleton (Natural History Interpreter) Rodger Hunter (Cowichan Watershed Board) Bob Crandall (Cowichan Lake Salmonid Enhancement) Lori Iannidinardo (CVRD) Rodger Hart (Quamichan Lake S.S.) Paul Rickard (BCWF/Rec Fish)

REGRETS: Paul Fletcher (Somenos Marsh), Dave Lindsey (Timberwest), Don Closson (BC Parks), Ian Morrison (CVRD Area Director), Tracy Michalski (MFLNRO), Rusty Sweeting (DFO).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were circulated from the January meeting and approved.

Report of the Co-Chairs

Business arising from minutes:

- Please tell Paul if you need your name added to the list serve.

ACTION: Kate Miller will call the next meeting of the Terms of Reference Committee.

Roundtable Member updates

Wightman – Took Dave Polster to look at the right bank slope on the Cowichan River that is in need of remediation. Polster assessed that a bioengineering only remediation would not be adequate. There are several challenges that the site poses including design, funding, and summer usage by the public. There is a design team in place and designs will be brought forward to the CSRT for input.

ACTION: Craig to present at next meeting (tentative).

Davis – Concerns regarding buildings being demolished and then trucked up the Malahat and burnt.

Jefferson – One Cowichan Has released the results of their survey. They are available on-line at onecowichan.ca. They are trying to get 5000 people to pledge that they will support local watershed governance.

Crowder – In Ottawa they are still trying to make sense of Bill C-45 and what it will mean on the ground.

Thom – CLRSS is undergoing strategic planning for the next 3-5 years. There is a strong focus on riparian protection and enhancement. They will host a workshop on lake issues and riparian protection, April 24th and 25th.

Rietzel – Several events coming up. Film Night Feb 28th at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre 7pm. Bioengineering workshop March 8th and 9th, location TBD.

Singleton – Somenos Marsh Society is concerned about ALR exclusion adjacent to the marsh that was advertised in the paper. CVNS and GOERT are asking people to keep an eye out for returning bluebirds.

Kulchusky – Cowichan Tribes would like to strengthen relationships with the community and governments. There is a need for open discussion. Has anyone heard of “gold trout” there is an Elders reference to “gold trout” in the Koksilah system.

Blake – Hatchery has about 1.2 million eggs, will be clipping fins and also tagging 600,000 salmon.

Miller – CVRD is working on climate scenarios and sea level rise analysis using LIDAR, geomorphology and ecosystems. The web portal for the watersheds of the eastern CVRD region will be ready to launch in April. The Regional Agricultural Mapping is wrapping up. They will be hosting a series of Septic workshops.

Marshall – No log booms in Cowichan Bay and subsequently no seals. Swan and goose counts are ongoing and they have seen collared tundra swan on several occasions and have sent in its info. The number of swans is down from last year, number of geese is up. One farmer has been chasing them off with an ATV. The shoreline bird surveys are held the 2nd Sunday of each month at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre and they have also started beached bird surveys.

Rutherford – The Okanagan has invested in an interactive model of its watershed which can have different variables inputted it would cost approximately \$100,000 to develop a similar one for the Cowichan watershed. Meetings between MFLNRO and DFO would benefit from more scientific studies to back up the issues at hand.

Brookeman – Wants the CSRT to consider nominating the Cowichan River for the Outdoor Recreation Council’s Endangered Rivers List. Canadian Wildlife Federation will be meeting in Victoria this year and the CSRT should consider sending someone.

Reitsma – Quamichan village slope stabilization is complete. Currently working on Lakes and Beverly dikes. Sweeting (via email) – the beach seining program will continue this year April to June.

Rickard – BCWF is concerned with changes to the federal Habitat Act and are working with BC Outdoors Council. BCWF held a meeting with the Parliamentary Secretary of DFO and brought it forward to use Cowichan as an example. There was a report generated by BC statistics that stated that \$1 billion is generated annually from fishing and aquaculture.

Business

Andrew Thompson – South Coast DFO Director

Andrew introduced himself as the DFO South Coast Director in charge of operational delivery of fisheries management, habitat management and hatcheries. He became the Director just over a year ago.

An open question and answer period followed. Highlights of the discussion:

- Better relationships can be fostered by defining linkages between different bodies and improving cooperative work between agencies.
- DFO will be trying to give more authority to local governments and there will be a plan for more consultation. Changes in the Fisheries Act show building partnerships. There is concern that this will occur as “downloading” to local governments without proper consultation and support that will be needed.
- Concerns about the dike works, and sediment control and that the DFO biologist overseeing the works is in Kamloops. DFO no longer has large engineering resources. Some areas in Washington are taking dikes out and putting large woody debris in to help control sediment and flooding. Dikes are not planted and vegetation on them is managed in an effort to maintain their strength and does not take riparian values into account.
- Cowichan Lake storage, water license – provincial and federal governments are reluctant to take on the risks of an additional conservation water license. Andrew suggests that a local partnership (agency or society) should hold the license.
- Chinook – experts will be meeting in early March to identify critical habitat and limiting factors. They will produce a list of the limiting factors and what can be done mitigate them. The Chinook workshop will lead to a pre-COSEWIC assessment for the species.

Water Quality Project Testing Results- Debora Epps, Prov, MOE

Deb provided a summary of water quality sampling results from this falls water quality sampling program. The program aimed to investigate where water quality issues are coming from (i.e. point vs. non-point sources). It was an intensive large cooperative effort. Four (4) areas were sampled – Cowichan river, Koksilah river, Cowichan Bay freshwater and Cowichan Bay marine. Parameters tested included turbidity, nutrients and bacteriological. Summer results showed high turbidity in Howie and Patrolas creeks, high phosphorous in Glenora, Howie and Patrolas creeks. Fall results showed high turbidity levels in the Koksilah system. E. coli levels were elevated in the Koksilah system and especially high at the Bright Angel Park sample site (above secondary contact guidelines). This site is of special concern because it is at a popular swimming area. Cowichan Bay Freshwater sites were almost all above the secondary contact guideline. Deb commented in all of her years of sampling she had never seen values this high. All turbidity values were high. Bacterial source tracking is complete for human and cattle. Human and cattle are present in Cowichan bay, No human found in the freshwater sites, cattle present in Koksilah and Cowichan Bay sites, none in Cowichan river. In summary the Cowichan river system has good water quality only showing elevated E. coli in the fall at Vimy and Allenby. The Koksilah system and Cowichan bay streams showed elevated E.coli and turbidity related to land usage and rainfall events. Cowichan Bay showed elevated enterococci, both human and cattle. All permit inspections came back in compliance. More sampling is needed in the Koksilah system and we need more information about the human sources in Cowichan Bay. Shellfish and sediment data has not been looked at yet. A summary report will be coming out shortly.

Next steps: conduct beach sampling in Cowichan Bay, strategic sampling in Koksilah and Cowichan Bay freshwater, DFO shellfish closure signs need to be posted, site visits by MoA and CWB to discuss land use with farmers, VIHA to establish long term sampling program for some sites, MoE to conduct additional sampling at a few sites through summer/fall 2013. An integrated liquid waste management plan is needed for the region. This fall there will be an intensive sampling program in the upper watershed.

Discussion followed the presentation and included topics regarding communication to the public, metals, pharmaceuticals, and concerns about cultural practices in smaller creeks during the winter months.

Cowichan Watershed Board Report – Rodger Hunter

Rick Nordine gave a presentation at the Watershed Board meeting and spoke of setting up a research station in the Cowichan. CWB will spend \$5000 for riparian protection. They have endorsed a model for the rule band that will see 10cms held until July. The bathological work at eh lake is about half complete. POLIS wants to have a 2014 conference on watershed governance and Cowichan is going to ask to co-host. There is a Heritage River Conference in PEI this July.

CSRT Committee Reviewing TOR update

Committee has not met yet.

ACTION: Kate Miller will call the next meeting of the Terms of Reference Committee.

Next Meeting

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

Potential Agenda Items for March 2013

CLRSS – presentation on strategic plan

Parker Jefferson - report on conference he attended in Whistler

Rob Hutchins – report on status of rule band/rule curve changes and water license.

Kim Hyatt – Okanagan Watershed Model

Shawnigan Roundtable