



Mar 21, 2013

MINUTES

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

In attendance

Tom Rutherford (DFO), Meg Loop (CLT), Ken Clements & Claude Theriault (Sidney Anglers), Klaus Kuhn (CLRSS), Sandy Cumming (CLRSS/ One Cowichan), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Gerald Thom, (CLRSS), Ray Demarchi (CERCA), Rob Hutchins (CWB), Yana Stratemeyer-Trinczek (Jean Crowder, MP) Roger Hunter (CWB), Kerry Davis (Green Party of BC), Helen Reid & Tim Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes), Don Closson (BC Parks), Ted Brookeman (BCWF/Rec Fish), Pamela Williams & Genevieve Hill (MESL), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Dave Lindsey (TimberWest), Molly Hudson (TimberWest), Kate Miller (CVRD), Paul Rickard (BCWF/Rec Fish), Rusty Sweeting (DFO), Genevieve Singleton (Natural History Interp)

REGRETS: Tracy Michalski (MFLNRO), Paul Chapman, Paul Fletcher (Somenos Marsh), Ian Morrison (CVRD Area Director).

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were circulated from the February meeting and approved.

Report of the Co-Chairs

Terms of Reference Committee has not yet met.

Paul & Don will be continuing chair until May. Next meeting date, would like to have a workshop reporting out with factual information, and a discussion forum, the people at this table, regional directors, naturalists. For those who are active in the community and some ability to talk about the community. Full day workshop on April 19th, would like to talk about next steps, where as a community go with this information.

ACTION: Paul will organize the April 19th meeting. Need confirmation of attendance, please email Paul within the next week. Thursday April 18th meeting is cancelled for April 19th.

Roundtable Member updates

Rutherford – Meeting with Any Thompson, brought up a couple pieces to move forward on. 1) Need to work on pulse flow strategy in the fall to allow the Chinook to migrate upstream; this year should look at how those flows affect the side channel connect ability. 2) Studying the critical habitat utilized by Chinook in the lower river at spring time, where they are and what are they doing.

Jefferson – Pledge campaign to only vote for candidates supporting local water control. Tyee posted about the issue, so it is becoming a political election issue.

Thom – Changes in the operation to the weir, articles within the opinion column in the Citizen.

Hutchins – Potential of a Cowichan Watershed Conference. Mar 27th, meeting to look the proposed soil contaminates issue.

Reid – Cowichan Tribes support the changes to the weir. Letter sent for the March 9th meeting at the Lake and the lack of acknowledgement for Tribes.

Singleton – Look for the bluebirds, we should be seeing them about now. A pair released yesterday, releasing a total of 20 adults this year. Somenos Police Station – thinking is to take it out of the ALR now that it is behind the diking. We are not negotiable for any marshland being taken out for any purpose. The species at risk strategy is complete garbage.

Ted Brookman – Problem of resident geese, part of the group from BC Wildlife Fed to talk about goose and ungulate problems, if this table ever wishes to readdress the issue. Working to see if the geese harvest can actually be consumed, not wasted with the current practice.

Marshall – 415 swans, numbers are dropping off. Counted 90 seals on the log boom, and a week ago was over a hundred seals. Shorebird Counts, and last month did a beached bird survey.

Miller – The Province has released a species at risk strategy for public comment deadline of April 13th. Folk can go to the provincial website and a document that outlines the strategy with its broad and vague language for dealing with an integrated at risk species. Document was built on the premiers' task force. Our area has the second highest biodiversity index, within the top 10 hot spots within Canada. Completed a sea level rise analysis based on LIDAR collected last fall indicating substantial implications in the near coastal high biodiversity zones. Currently finalizing arrangements with DFO with the proposed dike works on the south side of the river to be completed no later than Feb of 2014. Wanting to go into the lower river and manage sediment issues, looking at 2 sites this year (black bridge area) and next year doing sites in the midzone. Finishing up a rainwater modeling tool for residents to identify what watershed they live in, background issues for that watershed, and model their particular property's impact on that watershed. Minor reorganizing within CVRD, two new projects within Kate's division. Shawnigan Lake roundtable April 6 & 7 community wide festival with tours, presentations, art, dance etc for issues for the Shawnigan Lake.

Sidney Anglers – Primary intention is to enhance salmon habitat. Last year operated a net pen, 8,000 supercoho were released at James Island Warf, very successful survival rate. This year anticipate receiving 20,000 clipped coho from Goldstream.

Sweeting – Beach seine program has operated for about 6 years, have PSF interested. Plan to do more intensive sampling on the zooplankton, phytoplankton, forage fish etc. This project has become a model throughout the province to get community groups involvement with the project. Schedule has been set, 4 or 5 hours each date. We still don't understand that first 6-8 weeks of estuary life for salmonids (May & June), so this is where we plan to focus work.

Rickard – Brian Riddell, \$350,000 grant to look at a near shore habitat to understand Chinook and what is going on. BCWF has a large grant for water sustainability and fisheries for community connections. Communicating to FLNRO to pay attention to the rule band/curve.

Business

Madrone – Heritage River Decadal Report

Cowichan River was declared a Canadian Heritage River in 2003, with 3rd party confirmation that it needs protection. This report is to do analysis based on original criteria to assess if the river still meets the Heritage River status. We are asking for additional criteria included as the Heritage Values are very East Coast- centric, so adding content would be critical. Short timeline to complete this decadal report; have developed a survey to solicit feedback. Marsh 25th have table of contents and report, later today survey will be available online. Targeted interest group for specific input, wish to see the cultural component and Cowichan Tribes use of river included.

- Are we at risk for losing heritage status? We always run the risk, thus this report is being taken very seriously. Report needs to be reviewed by the May annual review, if we don't make it then it wouldn't be reviewed until 2014
- These reports are routine, there isn't negativity rather it is standard. Three years ago we won a National award for the work done on the river. Hope to have the community history, cultural history, natural history included.
- There is a Provincial and a separate Federal designation for Heritage River. We would function with a proactive provincial gov, and yes it is dragging its feet.
- The focus on the Heritage River conference is around local governance, so a fantastic opportunity for the Cowichan to build up on this and present the report as based on community-based governance and a new perspective at the provincial gov level.

Action: complete the survey that Paul will be circulating from Madrone.

Cowichan Watershed Board - Updates

Snow Pillow – presented at tech advisory meeting, essentially there is no correlation between Jump Creek and our watershed. Ministry is willing to help, looking for volunteers to go up and look at the sites. Either April 1 or May 1. A snow pillow may not be worth it, but a snow course may be more feasible since material would be provided by ministry. Would need to work cooperatively with TimberWest, get the model up to speed (private or province sector). If we do it manually with volunteers it will cost the same amount each year and not have to buy the \$50,000 snow pillow with 10-year replacement.

Up to \$3,000 allocated to develop displays at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre, looking at how to make interpretive elements for increased education and outreach with the community.

Bathymetry Work at the Lake: 380 gigabytes, marry up to the LIDAR, measuring low since the dry winter. Only one other lake within BC with this kind of movie-like data. 3cm resolution can break it down to break it down to look at sand cobble, bedrock, vegetation, etc.

Mar 9th Meeting at the Lake: CWB was given 5 minutes to present.

Date Tattam & Roger went out and talked to farmers. By the end of the meeting with the first farmer, was allowed to check out his site. Next farmer was very positive, and identified another point source for the poor water quality.

Rob Hutchins – Water Flow Updates

The quest to change the operation of the weir came about in 2003. In May of 2012, due to some diking work, there was appeal to change the operation of the weir to allow water compensation, which then went nowhere. The ministry was very concerned with objectors at the Lake and tried to get Catalyst to take out a new water license. The fall drought led to our fall water crisis and the origin of One Cowichan. In Nov we endorsed a change in the operation of the weir to allow 20cm additional storage, and more LIDAR work was done to reflect 20 cm rather than 30 cm. The March 9th meeting was part of the process to change operation, not a mandatory process but suggested. The room was not full, even though it is an important meeting and plenty of coverage. Two major shortfalls that occurred was the lack of Cowichan Tribes on the panel, and Branson did not explain that 20cm was not an option and should have just focused on the July date change. Plus side, the meeting allowed for people like Parker and Gerald to continue a public dialogue in the paper that would have not happened if it was a clear and well informed meeting. The public process stops April 5th and then the controller has to decide on if there will be hearings of up to one week in length. If there is no hearing, they need to consider this information and make a decision. The ultimate decision allows 30 days for appeal. Best case a decision in April, otherwise a clear go-ahead in June. Feels there is time to make changes in time for July 9th. This is not the end game, this is just an intermission. The end game is raising the weir. Provincial Gov will be missing in action until June 5th with the new cabinet.

- We need more personal relationship building with homeowners at the lake. There are a number of absentee homeowners. There is a small group of largely absentee (some of the 58 strongly effected by water level change) are only there in the summer and only concerned with beach recreation. Need to be very organized and articulate in explaining the issue. If legal action gets threatened and goes ahead it may indeed be a good thing. Dealing with people one-on-one on their property and explaining what the water level change exactly means, which requires an understanding of engineering, hydraulics, and more to understand how the weir can hold more water.
- A part of the problem since the beginning is that we have spent time on understanding every detail, but need some investment into the public education and image. Get some sign posts out at the parks showing where the water levels are during different types of the year, and what we are talking about. Be strategic of how those levels can be interpreted.
- Need a communication strategy.

CLRSS - Gerald & Klaus

Nature Habitat Fund was established as Area I Nature and Habitat Fund, to provide money for lakeshore improvement, water quality, etc to enhance habitat around the Lake. Current director wishes to take the

money out of the trust to buy a truck wash to take care of the dust and mud in Youbou from the logging. Would be a joint ownership with TimberWest to finance a truck wash, which may be a good thing but uses funds belonging to Area I to address problems caused by the forestry industry. Inappropriate use of the funds, and would set a precedent for industry to force local government to deal with the problem industry caused. Same for a letter of support addressed to the Fund Committee, and a second letter CVRD board to decide against withdrawing these funds. Timberwest has been an incredible supporter of the RoundTable and the CLRSS.

- TimberWest recognizes there is a problem of mud in winter and dust in the summer. The Northshore road is primarily used by TimberWest but technically a public road and used by many companies and the public. The road is not a "sole industry" origin. TimberWest would like this to be a joint commitment rather than a TimberWest issue, thus trying to connect partners with CVRD. Need to be careful in differentiating what the issue is. Timberwest is taking the lion share of the cost but need to be careful in the particulars. We need to be careful to say that we support dealing with the sediment issue, perhaps this fund is not an appropriate source.
- Truck wash is a great idea and possible solution to the problem. No one other than Pat Weaver is in favour of setting a precedent using the habitat funds for an industry issue.
- There is a decision making process involving a committee in charge of the funds. The area director is the chair of the committee, there are 4 people chosen for the committee. 3 out of the 4 are in favour of using the funds for the truck wash. From that decision it will go to the CVRD board will decide then if it is an appropriate use of funds.
- The Fund that was set up is not generated by tax, rather by developments that occur on the lake, the funds try to leverage projects. The CVRD can tax levy for the issue, but extremely careful, if it is a health issue they can tax. Apply for grants from UBC etc. Need to be very clear not against the very large public issue, rather alternative financial sources for partnership with Timberwest.
- Is it a serious environmental concern? The most productive area of the lake occurs on the south shore by a highly degraded area. It is not a simple issue but stating the problem with the precedent.
- Timeline: Rumour that there is a non-public meeting very soon to ram this issue through. While this may go to the board, the board has 9 directors, and since this is an issue within a single director 99% of the time they go with those individual director's wishes. Very clear letter addressing concerns.
- The wording on this is extremely important. The issue is not if this is a good idea or not, just the wrong source of funds. This table shouldn't be commenting on that, rather that this is environmental money.

Next major event is the April 23/24 workshop, new strategies for lakeshore and waterfront environmental protection. See newsletter for updates.

ACTION: Klaus and Gerald to write the letter, letter will be sent to Dave for check, then roundtable. Kate will explore other mechanisms for funding.

Jefferson – Canadian Freshwater Alliance

Parker was selected from the watershed to connect and share with other organizations over a weekend conference, Engagement Organizing Training. Canadian Freshwater Alliance is a new large organization to connect folk who are doing good work in response to the direction of our current government. Cost \$100 of the workshop was per person rather than \$1500. Largely attended by young people, and focusses on effective storytelling and getting people engaged with what is going on.

Storytelling communication is extremely important. Stories do create our culture, traditionally oral, then one-way broadcast era, which is now ending. The digital age is back to two-way communication again. How to Tell a Story: Story of Me (Challenge- choice-Outcome, personal story), Story of We (Community in Action), Story of Now (Fierce urgency of now).

The General Public:

Choir (15% sustainability is possible with healthy economy)– Atheists (5% sustainability will destroy the economy) – Heathens (15%, don't think and only follow atheists) – Congregation (65% believe in sustainability but don't know how to get there).

Enlightenment is dead, facts don't actually matter anymore. Politicians are followers; groups like ours can push through our supporter's voting power. To engage the public is to respect, empower, and include. Local media will always support our local stories; need to get more people aware of what is happening.

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- We have excellent access to our local papers; every story gets clipped and put in front of the MLA to read. This can be a provincial issue. Twitter online- articles
- Need more junior members at the table.

Next Meeting April 19 Chinook workshop.

DRAFT