



June 20, 2013

MINUTES

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

In attendance

Kai Rietzel (CLT), Julianna Currie (CLT), Rushton Sweeting (DFO), Klaus Kuhn (CLRSS), Ken Clements & Claude Theriault (Sidney Anglers), Bernette Laliberte (Cowichan Tribes), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Gerald Thom, (CLRSS), Ray Demarchi (CERCA), Rob Hutchins (CVRD), Yana Stratemeyer-Trinczek (Jean Crowder, MP), Roger Hunter (CWB), Kerry Davis (Green Party of BC), Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Kate Miller (CVRD), Paul Rickard (BCWF/Rec Fish), Al Lill (Living Riers), Ray Demarchi (CERCA), Ian Morrison (CVRD Area F), Nick Versteeg (DV Media. DV Cuisine), Bob Crandall (CLSES), Brian Tutty (retired), Brian Houle (Catalyst), Tracy Michelski (Min Env Fish and Wildlife), Doug Morgan (Bill Routely Office, MLA), Tom Rutherford (DFO), Derek Haupt (Western Forest Products), Goetz Schuerholz (CERCA), Lori Iannidinardo (CVRD Area D) Wayne Haddow (Min Ag), Erica Blake (DFO)

REGRETS: Genevieve Singleton (Natural History Interpreter), Dave Lindsey (TimberWest) Paul Fletcher (Somenos Marsh), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), Don Closson (BC Parks)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes were circulated from the May meeting and approved.

Report of the Co-Chairs

Nick Versteeg - Documentary Film Producer was introduced.

Roundtable Member updates

One Cowichan – At 7pm on Tuesday June 25th at Cowichan Cultural Centre there will be a presentation on Resilience and the Future of our Watershed, Brian Plumber, Jane Kiltz and David Slade will be on the panel.

CVRD (Rob) – Cowichan Watershed Board and Cowichan Tribes have endorsed 20cms of storage at the weir at Cowichan Lake.

CLRSS – Annual River Clean-up will be held on Aug 17th upper river, and Aug 18th lower river. A meeting regarding the Laker's education program will be held June 24th at the Legion in Lake Cowichan.

CVRD (Kate) – They have put in two applications for additional diking works and are flying LIDAR and acquiring air photos for some spots that were missed in previous flights.

DFO (Tom) – There is a new source of funding for fish habitat projects carried out by sport fishing and conservation groups. They are releasing \$4 million this summer and another \$6 million in the fall. It is a nationwide program. Proposals are due July 12th. Erica Blake our current Community Advisor has been offered a job at the Nitnat Hatchery as Operations Manager. She will stay on as CA until mid-summer.

CWB – CWB has approved a motion that CVRD and Cowichan Tribes apply for a water license of 20cms storage at the weir. This has now been referred to the CVRD and Cowichan Tribes Boards. Pat Lapcevic presented the water budget model and discussed her ground water work. There was a motion approved for the Riparian targets to protect 50% of 70% of the intact lake riparian areas and to restore 30% of the degraded habitats. They have committed \$3000 for the Saywell Park restoration.

Min Ag – The farmer's workshop was successful. 12 farms were represented. There was an overall positive tone. They will need to look at next steps on how to help and take action

CVRD (Kate) – The 2nd phase of the Agricultural water analysis has just been completed and is being used to develop a water balance model for the Ag. community. CVRD will release call for proposals to find out what role the CVRD should play and how to coordinate effectively.

BCWF - Have been discussing with the Federal government about the rewriting of the Fisheries Act. BCWF has representatives on the committee and they have been asking lots of questions about the language in the Act.

Nick Versteg – He is creating a film on the Cowichan Watershed and wants to come and film a round table meeting. He hopes to be able to show the film in January. There are many local contributions going into the budget for this film.

CLT- Kai gave an overview of the history of the organization and the work they do. They are running summer science camps at the Nature Centre and will be holding an eelgrass transplant event August 15th to 17th.

Business

Craig Whiteman & Al Lil – Gravel Removal

The Chinook workshop has influenced decisions for the diking and gravel removal projects, \$50,000 given to BCCF to handle compensation projects, and \$250,000 for habitat mitigation. Work will take place next year in the fish window.

Gravel removal is taking place in the Cowichan River North Fork to maintain flows. Islet channels will be created to increase flow connectivity. More gravel removal is also taking place upstream of the black bridge. The project will start Aug 7th to Sep 7th.

Craig gave a handout which gives information about the snorkel surveys taking place in the lower floodplain and estuary. They are monitoring flows, temperature and dissolved oxygen. From the data they will develop strategies for the estuary. There is a need to look at connectivity issues between the different sides of the estuary. Eight of the 11 swims are completed. So far Chinook abundance is highest in deep fast water.

Rusty Sweeting - Beach Seining Results

The beach seining project is a six year program. It has relied on lots of volunteer help. Sampling is done between April and June, one to two times a week. There are six sites, three on the river, two on the North

side of Cowichan Bay and one on the south side. This year there were 646 Chinook and (125 hatchery and 521 "wild"). Hatchery fish were found to be ~20mm larger than wild.

This year PSF approached DFO to give the project a larger scope so they are also doing an outer beach seine, purse seine, mid water troll, oceanography, plankton and gill net (predation) studies.

Brian Houle – Catalyst reporting on lake levels, new flow management policy/practice

The boat lock closed in March. Last year water was released July 9th. This year the water will be held until July 30th. The new rule curve allows for 20 extra days of full storage. They are still holding weekly conference calls.

Discussion re Western Forest Products proposed dredging of estuary channel and pond channel

A discussion was held on issues regarding Western Forest Products dredging project in the estuary.

A proposal for dredging was put forward last year but Cowichan Tribes (CT) expressed concerns. CT has met with Western Forest Products and last week a letter was sent from CT to WFP.

Derek from WFP - Authorization for the project was given the same day as the meeting with CT. The application was never denied but was asked for more clarification. The project aims to restore the channel to the same as 27 years ago, they are dredging 12,000m³. Environmental Consultants are involved and four Tribe's members are to be on-site at all times. Follow-up sampling will be carried out next year. Habitat compensation projects will be a shore restoration.

Brian Tutty – BCCF and WFP should be working together on compensation projects. WFP should come and sit on the CSRT.

Tom R.- There have been missed opportunities here. The Cowichan Estuary Management Committee is a key link, how can we work more closely with them? CEMC has limited resources; we should be trying to figure out how to get it involved in our local government model.

Goetz – CERCA would like to see public representation on the CEMC. A letter to the Minister needs to be sent.

Paul – CEMC needs to be revamped. BCWF has booked a meeting with the Environment Minister to discuss the CEMC and suggest changes that could be made.

A review of the CEMC was done five years ago and none of the recommendations have been implemented.

Next Meeting July 18th – Agenda to be set at later date by co-chairs