



October 17 2013

MINUTES

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

In attendance

Gerald Thom (CLRSS), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Catherine Macey (Jean Crowders Office), Ken Clements & Richard Lake (Sidney Anglers), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Tom Rutherford & Steve Baillie (DFO), Paul Rickard (BCWF), Keith Lawrence & Kate Miller (CVRD), Don Closson (BC Parks), Meg Loop (CLT), Wayne Haddow (MoAgriculture), Rodger Hunter (CWB), Ian Morrison (CVRD, CWB), Doug Morgan (MLA's Office), Ray Demarchi & Nan Goodship (CERCA), Bob Crandall (CLSES), Derek Haupt & Makenzie Leine (WFP), Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Paul Fletcher (SMWS), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Ted Brookman (BCWF)
Regrets: Rob Hutchins (CVRD), Al Martin, Genevieve Singleton & Dave Polster (CVNS)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the September meeting were circulated and approved.

Roundtable updates

Thom – Putting in multiple applications for a 3 year restoration/education program around the lake. Deadline Nov 1, combined with similar application with BC Conservation Foundation, budget of \$336,000 for 1 km lakefront restoration and contact 1/2 of lakefront owners. So far have had 2 seminars in schools, 15 students going to be helping out on projects.

Demarchi – Made applications for 2 projects to PSF, one to clean up logs on Mariner's Island, and to breach the causeway (shortlisted), and a proposal to increase water flow through culverts to have two major inflows of water. There is a bridge available to purchase.

Naturalists – On October 9, Dave Polster was awarded the John Reiger Award at the World Conference of the Society for Ecological Restoration. This award acknowledges those who have dedicated their time and skills to advance the science and practice of ecological restoration. Thank you to Brian Tutty for naming Somenos as such an important fisheries location at the Somenos Forum. Bird counts begun last Sunday with 1500 widgeon signifying the winter arrival of ducks. 2 trumpeter swans spotted. Next month starting the Swan & Goose count.

Brookeman – Al, Paul and Ted trying to get another meeting with Sue Farlinger, Regional Director of DFO to discuss changes to Fisheries Act. Continue to offer up the Cowichan as a spot to prove the commitment of the government.

Jefferson – Working with the Canadian Watershed Alliance, Cowichan story won the National Pecha Kucha.

Rutherford – RFCPP program, there have been some snags in rolling the program out. There may be some good news; Adam Silverstein has come back to the Department to take on the Recreational Fisheries Conservation and Protection Program. So we now have a local guy with a lot of influence, so we should see some improvements. Staffing a CA for this area, Tom will be accompanying the new CA at the next meeting, not able to announce who that is yet, the position is only an active position. Sue Farlinger, has instructed our science branch that they have to get more involved in supporting the community program. Mark Saunders is head of salmon science, so there will be a meeting with the science folks and community folks. After a year and a half work, there is a new handbook and technical manual for partners working in the hatchery business.

Miller - CVRD is in budget season, one of the ramifications is we won't be able to support for minute taking any more. Environment Commission postings available if any members are interested in sitting on it.

Closson – On behalf of Genevieve Singleton for Eves Park, their board has recently had retirements and they are actively recruiting for the board for the park. Very education focused, just south of Crofton. BC Parks has

been a defacto manager for the Trans Canada Trail from Holt Trestle to Trestle 66, Parks doesn't have responsibility, but we agreed to operate the locks etc, having issues with locks being cut for ATV access. Some folk here have key access, Parks would like to hear from them about missing locks/keys don't work. Keith Lawrence CVRD – We have all the pieces in place to do the Fall water quality sampling, except the weather. Need sustained rainfall for that to go ahead. The Sandy Pool project, we are continuing to work on the contract with DFO (RFCPP), getting close.

Loop – Map Our Marshes Event Sunday 9 – 3 at the Thrifties Community Room. The Cowichan Land Trust and Cowichan Watershed Board has managed to see almost every single grade 4 class in the Cowichan Valley. Excellent feedback from the students and the teachers.

Wayne Haddo– Reviewing RFPs for Climate Adaptation projects including one for on farm water management planning. This pilot project will be initiated in the CVRD in late winter to early spring 2014.

Rodger – Forum Jan 27 - 29 to be held here regarding watershed governance, climate change, and watersheds. We have been allocated 15 subsidized seats at \$225 each. Hoping for evening presentations so the community can partake as well. Cohosted by Canadian Water network, Brock University Sustainability Group, and UVic Geography. Have over \$80,000 invested in the Water Quality project. Probably going to add some additional money to re-do the Koksilah. How do we wade into more governance on our watershed. Need to meet with catalyst and Timberwest. Looking for money to look at the flow issues in the Cowichan River, Governance, and Communications (\$225,000 over 3 years).

Morrison - Water Conservation Challenge, spoke to Duncan and Lake Cowichan councils, not yet in position to take on a challenge, we want to get everyone to beat Ladysmith's water use numbers. Cowichan Lake Sports arena "green parking lot" to collect storm/rain water to be treated through filtration system, looking at putting in another in Honeymoon Bay. The Road to Nitnat Lake is a private road, so if it was put into public road there needs to be clarity around the ramifications of opening up the South side. CVRD turned in preliminary budget, means groups like ours is at risk at losing funding.

Crandall - Many projects on the go, most are funded. Oliver Creek able to look at expanding the project for improved fish passage, plenty of opportunities. Shaun Wong (MoT) looks like there is support for expanded work. Perhaps more support on the Beaver Creek project. The weir has twice as many Chinook this week (10-15 adults) as last week (15-30 adults,).

Western Forest Products - Cleaning up the back dyke area. Meeting with Cowichan Tribes revegetation along the dyes (dykes can be compromised by the roots of plants, John Baldwin). The new Environment Critic is excited about the area and the river. WFP donated time for bailiwicks for the work done in the river.

Rickard - Had a tour with Rodger and the Salmon Endowment Fund, spent time looking at the areas where people submitted applications for projects: Broadway Run, Stoltz Bluffs, the counting fence, and the Causeway. The Causeway and Broadway Run to get first-round approval, the tour was probably a major helper. A boat tour out to Shaw Creek to demonstrate the value of the property. The Salmon Foundation has significantly more money now that all the money from the conservation stamps: \$7 x 250,000 licenses goes towards the Salmon Foundation. Some groups are waking up across the Province to the same problems we face here in the Cowichan (stream restoration/stabilization). There is a difference between education and exposure, if you are education you are going to do set designed programs with evaluations.

The table sent a letter for the RFCPP program giving feedback, Paul heard back that this was very constructive and well received.

Business

Minute Taking – Roundtable

The CVRD is no longer able to fund the minute taking for this roundtable. Currently the Cowichan Land Trust takes minutes for \$100 per meeting. The minutes are seen as highly valuable, and have had a lot of time invested to get the format and timing correct. Where can the minutes get posted publicly? The roundtable members will need to collectively raise the funds to continue minute taking.

ACTION: Roundtable members will need to collectively raise \$1100 annually for minute taking to continue. Issue to be raised once more at next meeting.

CERCA Estuary Event 2014 – Ray Demarchi & Nan Goodship

Ray Demarchi: CERCA is planning a Cowichan Estuary Event for next summer. One aspect is the development of a mobile estuary exhibit, which the Royal BC Museum will be assisting with the design and advice. CERCA is looking to partner with other NGO's and Agencies to host this exhibit around the Cowichan Valley. The exhibit will focus on 1) ecological functioning of an estuary, 2) components of an estuary, 3) Productive estuaries, 4) Historic use of the estuary. Secondary event will be a Symposium for impacts on Estuaries and Estuary Restoration, leading to a Vancouver Island Estuary Alliance. CERCA is looking for help

in this project. Those seeking more information or offering assistance in making this project happen should contact Cowichan Estuary Event Coordinator, Jenny Ferris at: jennyfer@islandnet.com

Nan Goodship: There are a tremendous amount of local artists fully connected to the environmental movement; we would like to find a way for science and art to meet. How can we connect the science to the artists willing to take on a project (a concert, dance, art show) with a vision to move forward: start with a planning team (local gov, art, and science community) of 6-12 brainstorming people?

Action Item: Revisit both topics next meeting with names of individuals or groups interested in these projects.

Somenos Forum – Paul Fletcher

350 people showed up to the Friday evening forum, but a definite lack of politicians present. Results indicated a lot of support for what we are doing and opportunity for more connection/education with the community around the dyking. Finished second year of storm water management plan, and now ready to take it to the creation stage. "Arms around the Marsh" event this Saturday, using the demonstration as a bit of a political statement to demonstrate support. On the 27th there is an art show in Just Jakes Restaurant, and the Wild Wings Festival begins.

Counting Fence Numbers – Steve Baillie

Last year without the rain we lost a significant amount of salmon (probably 25% or so, but unknown) due to their inability to get up the river. This year we got a lot rain in September so the salmon had no problem getting up from the estuary and no problem to get up the river to the spawning beds. First Nations and hatcheries had difficulty harvesting and broodstock collection with the deep water.

Counting fence went in Sept 9 with flow levels over 10cms on Sept 6. On Sept 29 we had a massive rain event that submerged the fence, and it is still submerged to this day. The counts are not comprehensive since fish can pass the fence undetected. Minimum estimate is 3112 adults and 897 jacks. We probably have more Chinook in the spawning area since 2001. 30-50% of the spawning population is hatchery origin. Something to keep in mind is that the target escapement of 6500 Chinook adults is wild origin only, not a combination of hatchery and wild origin. There are still fish coming into the system, probably 100-200 fish coming in a day, but it is the tail end of the run. The North Arm was opened up on the 16th; fish were in the North Arm before the storm.

Chum forecast is 134,000 to 186,000, which is around the target. DFO doesn't count pink, but 549 were counted at the fence. Decent numbers of pinks considering this is a warm water system and pinks spawn early in slightly less favourable water temperatures. Pinks probably have an easier time in the Koksilah as a cold water system. Coho is also not counted, and while the numbers look pretty bad, Coho are very difficult to count. Coho start in September and go until January. DFO uses a model that looks at weekly fish counts within tributaries and extrapolates that data for the whole system. If we have volunteers, teams of two people can go out to count and send the data to Steve to give an indication of what the run is like. Rates of survival has improved since the early 2000's, numbers are probably around 10,000-20,000 Coho.

- Cowichan is second to San Juan for big salmon run
- Mesachie Lake and Mesachie creek used to be prime coho grounds, is this currently the case?

Potential DFO Habitat Meeting– Paul Rickard/Kate Miller

Once Paul gets confirmation as to DFO Habitat folk coming, he will email the CSRT for potential questions. The CVRD is one of the only lines of defense regarding riparian habitat. Going to need to look as a community at what DFO Habitat has to offer

Integrated Flood Management– Kate Miller

Putting in a proposal for the next round of dyke construction; 1/3 funding from the Province and 1/3 Federal and 1/3 local government funding. The focus is on the remaining flooding risk area from the Cowichan River around Allenby Rd and the Highway. This is a very climate sensitive section so determining risk is difficult. Originally the river flowed across the Allenby escarpment along to Busy Point Creek, which used to be a hub of activity where the Koksilah and Cowichan joined. This feature was destroyed with the construction of the highway. There used to be two rail bridges, one was filled in and creates a 90 degree turn, and another tight turn further along. This makes a huge challenge for water, especially high velocity, deep water, moving through an industrial area with highly sensitive groundwater. From this industrial area there is a straight run to Somenos. The law says the CVRD can only spend money the public has deemed ok, and there is no money okayed for flood works. There are 3 potential funding partners, CVRD, Cowichan Tribes, and City of Duncan. Do not have a by-law in place or a financial system in place to go ahead with this funding in a very tight funding window.

- These dykes are supposed to be around a long time, yet these funding windows are so short are we even doing good work?
 - o These projects put forward are coming from a 3-year project on Integrated Flood Management to identify areas that need work and the strategies to deal with those challenges. Identified the enhancement work of previous channels with and try to return the river to as historic as possible or using set back dykes. A top priority is to upgrade the Trans-Canada highway bridge, but it isn't a municipal issue so trying to get the Province to do that work is challenging. This is extremely complex issue with pre-arranged projects so it is prioritizing and strategizing for funding applications. There is no money to fund more detailed studies or community communication.
 - o Should the Watershed Board become the dyking authority? Where does the Board get all the funding for future studies and to update the dykes? Eventually this will lead to a referendum and will be on a regional basis. Kate hopes that the CSRT will support this institutional process.
 - o There is no dedicated funding stream to support this critical decision making and development. This work will involve a degree of education to the public.
 - o You have many jurisdictions within the flood impact, then communities above the flood zones that have responsibilities.
 - o 2 years ago had a public meeting, well over 1000 people attended and when we talked about how to work together and share resources. There are numbers of folk who only care about their own resale value, and real issues with areas. There will be winners and losers and it is not linear. Need actual regional thinking.
 - o There is thought and work currently going into a Dyking Authority. We are building infrastructure, and we can't build in one jurisdiction that harms another jurisdiction, and we need a continuous funding source to maintain the dykes and underpin the legal entity.

Project Ideas and Fish – Tom Rutherford

There are groups interested in knowing what is going on with the Chinook in the tributaries of Lake Cowichan, and currently not a lot is known about these spawners. Shaw Creek is the only creek that has sufficient habitat to support Chinook and 9 years of records with 1-2 fish sighted. In 2001, Steve Bailey saw 6 fish and another had 20 jacks. We don't know the genetics or which season the fish are running, so it would be nice to take a look at the DNA of the summer run and winter run Chinook, and look at the fish in the lake tributaries. Summer run fish could work with Cowichan Tribes for the harvested fish. Bob Crandall gets fry in his traps every year, low numbers but they are there. Don't want to stock the lake tributaries, so need to determine if they are genetically different.

The hatchery program used to rear fry in the lake for release, the program was stopped because the fish never left the lake, just stayed freshwater. We have some questions that need answers, and then can make informed decisions around increasing fish stocks with a hatchery (has to go through a long process for approval). Sidney Anglers want to improve the fish stocks, they want to help this resource, and can we do something to help the resource.

Came up with a couple ideas:

- Our egg to Chinook survival rate is 6-12%, and in comparison to other systems our rate is normal to low-ish. We have the protected off-channel habitat with stable flows, so what happens if we place spawners in those protected systems? We may have higher survival rates. We put the spawning fish in the creek, and in the spring we can count the juveniles coming out.
- Besides from Chinook mysteries, we also do not know what is going on with Coho. General opinion is that the Coho are doing better but no real data on populations or health. So establish volunteers on safe access tributaries to establish numerations and models to give a better idea of what is going on with the Coho.
- Since all fish have to go through the fishway (aka fryway) around the weir, can we establish some early season trapping and DNA data?

Next steps are to get some actual information and data. We need to know the genetics of the fish, some real counts, and then get an enhancement program off the ground. While we are doing that we can get ideas on how to encourage Coho. From this baseline, we can improve the resources, stream restoration, and perhaps purchase land around Shaw Creek with the tremendous habitat.

Next Meeting November 21st.

Action Items: Revisit CERCA Event & Funding CSRT Minutes.

DRAFT