



May 15, 2014

MINUTES

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

In attendance

Meg Loop (CLT), Shona Smith (DFO), Keith Lawrence & Kate Millar (CVRD), Paul Rickard & Ted Brookman (BCWF), Klaus Kuhn, Gerald Thom (CLRSS), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Catherine Macey (Jean Crowder MP), Rodger Hunter (CWB), Goetz Shouholz (CERCA), Claude Theriault & Ken Clements (Sidney Anglers), Ian Morrison (CVRD Area F), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Tracy Michalski (MLNRO – Fish & Wildlife), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Don Closson (BC Parks), Derek Haupt (Western Forest Products), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Nikkie Wright (Sea Change), Elizabeth Bailey (Somenos), Genevieve Singleton (Nature interpreter),

Regrets: Tom Rutherford, Shona Smith

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the April meeting were circulated and approved.

Roundtable updates

Parker Jefferson - Successfully built up a citizen-based initiative that is in training and preparing for a campaign if the Enbridge Pipeline goes through.

Dave Lindsey - Working on the projects involving Timberwest Land.

Gerald Thom - Another good news funding letter, almost now fully funded for year 1 and year 2. 4600 square meters of shoreline restoration in year one, planting plans to be approved by Dave Polster. Working with homeowners, Cowichan Tribes, and Timberwest.

Sidney Anglers - Another successful derby, more fishers than last year. 59 fish were caught (up from 52), collected DNA to determine origin. The largest fish was 34 lbs and was a hatchery fish. Ray Creek smolt fence has been operating for the last month (from the airport to east island), has produced 400 smolts. Application up on Sidney Anglers website for funding proposals.

Elizabeth Bailey - Got some PSF money so starting on Coho water quality and habitat assessment, collecting daily data and looking for volunteers to assist. AGM tonight in the Nitnat room of Island Savings.

Shaun Chadburn - Hired a summer student, so she will be going into over 50 classrooms presenting on invasive species.

Steven Stussi - Enforcement in FLNRO (law enforcement arm), offenses of the legislation. Conducting investigations into alleged offense. Most of the officers came from the forest service, forestry leg, some wildlife, wildfire, water act, provincial land act, services to environmental assessment. The water act and the land act, most aquatic and marine environment are crown land and can get involved as people need permission. Connection with Conservation Officer - we take on a lot of the RAF calls. No jurisdiction with the Federal Fisheries Act. Mainly CO who will do the hunting/fishing offences. Riparian area regulations enable muni's to deal with in bylaws. Habitat is outside of our mandate for the Water Act; we are able to deal with works in about the stream channel. Upland veg damage we can't deal with. Contact front counter BC, or the supervisor in Port Alberni.

- Will be calling a meeting to speak to local enforcement

Genevieve Singleton - Sidney Anglers made a kind donation for the coffee at these meetings. Many requests for nature interpretation in the valley. Chris Cole from Timberwest met at Honeymoon Bay preserve. Bluebird Beer & Burger. 10 babies hatch, total of 8 return, two pairs and 4 lone males. 14-20 bluebirds, 3 pairs are unaccounted for. Another 2 1/2 years of the project left. \$3.5 million for Eagle Heights. New signs up at Lake Cowichan Saywell Park. June 2nd 2-4 pm at the Forest Discovery Centre a celebration for Roland Brown in his awarding of Legacy Contribution Award (please RSVP with Genevieve so we have an idea of numbers).

Houle - at full storage, ramping up the gates a bit to preserve storage as long as possible. Try to do the drying up at slow as possible so the river drops gently to save fry (always stranding happens), at 15 cms.

Don Closson - Chemainus River embarking on an enforcement endeavor for the May-long weekend rednecks. Try and bring about compliance, soft compliance as we're not handing out tickets and it's only a day use park. Educate around ATV use in around the island and provincial parks/ forest service road.

Ray Demarchi - Piscatorial bird survey, for the main fish eaters; 100 merganzers, 30 great blue herons and a few seals hunting juvenile salmon or herring. A current buoy showed up in the bay, lots of attention and surveys.

Keith Lawrence - CVRD by-law enforcement are interested in the discussion. Regional water management and governance studies, May 9th, 50 organizations for discussion around water quality and health and talking about a region for the entire region (14 watersheds in the region), included a discussion around guiding principles for working together. 2 day workshop series in June to include input from specialist, 6 key issue areas: governance (appropriate structure for water resources), delegate, reporting structure, coordination, funding. Future actions will involve another meeting in July, a report back to the board, and then recommendations to the province. Sandy Pools has some extra money due to the change of scope due to changing the method to stabilize the banks. One of the options is the Skutz Falls boat launch, if there are other locations beyond the Skutz then please let Keith know so DFO can go have a look. Could look at work in the estuary component of the estuary? Stoltz bluff could be considered to revegetate along the rip rap.

Paul Rickard - The Recreational Anglers are the ones who fund the PSF's money distribution. PSF has their large Salish Sea project to bring back coho and chinook, several millions of dollars of work. Cowichan is being used as a focus to try and figure out what is going on in detail to get a complete picture of salmon lifecycle. Young fish have high mortality so trying to find the direct cause. Gerald had Parker and Paul come up to Lake

Cowichan and the entire school watched the clips of the film Resilience, asked some really good questions. Task Force on Water Management, the regional district created a subcommittee to deal with water governance in general to beyond the Cowichan Basin Water Management Board, getting involved in the visioning process. Impressed with the facilitation group, as one of the best observed.

Rodger - Environmental Appeal Board (Lake level issue) will be resumed June 3 - 6th will be in Victoria. Water quality, heartening with the waste management meeting and Phil and Lori got on the agriculture issue. Cowichan Tribes is sending a letter to the farmers who lease land in the estuary. If you are in breach of rules/regulations/best practices your lease will cease. Group based environmental farm plan, each of 12 farmers would get \$70,000 that would result in less pollution inputs to the river and estuary. Hopefully will be able to do more water sampling in the future. The Water Governance meeting was a great thing to get a regional watershed, lots of things to learn from the Cowichan and Shawnigan. The vision is good to create a larger overarching working model. Potential to expand the scope of the Shaw Creek acquisition to be larger than the 148 acres of the mouth of the river, to the land above North Shore as NCC is looking for large tracks of lands. May 27th kicking off a water conservation event. Speaker this month will be David Slade, 15-20% of water lost is through leaks in the muni systems. Metering and billing, then challenge folks to reduce use.

Business

Cowichan Lake Level – David Slade

Raised a concern about 10-12 years ago as we found some regions in the Valley where we were chasing the aquifer. Folk had good years for 20 years and the water table dropped out (100-200 deep wells), MoE got interested in putting in monitoring wells. There are some areas of the valley where the aquifer is being mined and water is being taken out faster than it is being recharged; particularly in near Arbutus Ridge and Shawnigan Lake in the Black Swan area, and on Panorama Ridge in Ladysmith. In the Cowichan we get so much rainfall in the winter that most of the aquifers are fully charged again. The Cobble Hill seems to have plateaued for the time being, but climate change may see a continued drop in that aquifer. Most of the municipal water comes from wells right next to the river, so recharge is fine but contamination is a concern as it is downstream from the Trans-Canada highway and industrial zone. If any contaminate went off the road near there, there is a substantial chance that the well-field could be impacted. So far there is no back-up plan for contamination crisis. Good idea to have a contingency plan such as other wells, direct use from the river, or share with Catalyst?

Extensive surveys are ongoing with the relationship between groundwater and surface water. We know some groundwater feeds surface water that maintains a cool influx of water to the river. Doing isotope tracking studies to find out where the water is and where it is going. I believe there is a relationship between the water being drained from the shallow riverside aquifer for Duncan's water use. For every 1000 gallons of water taken out of the wells, what is the percentage of the water coming out of the river itself?

There is a zone known as the capillary fringe, maltose zone that has tons of bacteria etc that clean water. Pesticides, herbicides, hydrocarbons, hormones and other things humans have

added to water over the past 300 years are not processed in this zone, thus these contaminants persists in the water.

- Fossil water, ie the ogalala aquifer feeds the bread basket.
- There are some areas in the Cowichan that still have salt water trapped within it. Other areas where the water moves very slowly, and some areas that move km's per day. Surprised all the time. Fisher Rd aquifer goes 90 degrees from where I thought it was going.

CERCA – Goetz

See presentation slides.

- CERCA has completed a SWAT analysis and set out certain priorities and a rating of the difference threats and weaknesses and if there is a window of opportunity to push on the issue quickly.
- Engage the local high school
- Western Stevedoring is working on making the docks and such safe
- The roundtable tries to present things in a factual objective manner and share ideas. Not a debate, its sharing where we are all at and what we are doing, presenting ideas and community action.
- Would Western Stevedoring like to present strategic plan and visionary, to share outlook and perspectives.
- CERCA is here because the Cowichan Estuary Management Plan didn't work. We are having to learn how to take care of ourselves. We have all kinds of opportunity to improve the estuary, and multi-faceted approaches to make it better.

Miracle Creek – Paul Rickard

This time of year the water level should be many feet higher. Volunteers dug a channel for water to flow through the gravel at Miracle Creek. This creek should have 50 coho spawning, but there is currently none. Almost enough water to get up the creek, but there are massive de-watered areas. Considering going on control at the weir since the water levels in the lake are so low. Precedent for this in the past, in 2000 had to go on control twice (dec & feb), current lake levels are at August Levels. Chinook are in the main channel flow, right now the steelhead still need to spawn in their redds or they will be dry.

Next Meeting

June 20th.