



MINUTES

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

In attendance

Kai Rietzel, Emily Fulton, Chantal New, Jared Bates & Meg Loop (CLT), Shaun Chadburn & Danielle New (North Cowichan), Joe Saysell (Friends of the Cowichan), Judy Brayden, Christine Brophy, Klaus Kuhn & Gerald Thom (CLSRSS), Keith Lawrence, Ian Morrison & Bruce Fraser (CVRD), Dave Aldcroft, Eric Marshall (CVNS), Hilda Paige & Tim Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes), Brian Houle (Catalyst Paper), Derek Haupt (WFP), Ray Demarchi, Geoff Strong & Goetz Schuerholz (CERCA), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Shona Smith (DFO), Elizabeth Bailey (SMWS), Don Closson (BC Parks), Jenny Thomson & Laurie Thomson (Residents), Claude Theriault & Ken Clements (Sidney Anglers), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Bob Crandall (CLSES), Genevieve Singleton (Nature Interpreter), Paul Rickard (BCWF)

Regrets: Tom Rutherford

Approval of Minutes

Roundtable updates

Parker Jefferson - Further work going on at the Skutz Falls boat launch, needing a local source of aggregate
Genevieve Singleton - Atherton is on leave, no progress on the Eagle Heights. Island Timberlands is trying to meet with Parks. Bluebirds are doing well. Beer & Burger raised around \$3,500 for the bluebird project.

Don Closson - Many thanks to the volunteer appreciation for Roland Brown. On contract for the Cowichan Bundle (previously the South Island Bundle), so now have additional opportunities for park maintenance under contract. No approval to Broadway Run, we have a permit for the road repair.

Goetz - Estuary Display created in collaboration with RBC Museum, currently on display at the Duncan Mall. Hoping to have it circulate between schools and other communities.

Ian Morrison - Watershed Board initiative creating a water conservation challenge, to challenge metered communities to meet Ladysmith's water consumption levels at 246L per person per day. Increase the community understanding of potable water and how wasteful we are as a community. David Slade is lead on the project.

Elizabeth Bailey - Summer project is a water quality analysis of coho in Somenos and tributaries.

Shona - Another call for funding, opens at the end of this month for 6 weeks. Will be able to have a wider access to contributions to the grant for municipal funding.

Gerald Thom - RFCPP Cowichan Stewardship project underway. Dave Polster is reviewing the plan and making tweaks to maximize environmental enhancement, homeowners are just signing their section 9. Still waiting on the actual money for the Federal Government, but everything is underway. Two public planting events, July 5th at Paradise Village in Honeymoon Bay 200m of restoration on the site (one of the most heavily impacted sites on the lake). July 26th Lake Cowichan First Nation Site on North Shore Rd, planting on that site. BBQ's and refreshments. Monday - Friday will be working with the student groups for the private properties and join the student groups. Erosion Specialist from Kernwood Lyle to look at the erosion problems. Riparian visits are going well, approaching 20 or 30 visits. Doing a survey prior to a visit to assess knowledge and understanding of the riparian area, after program will do another assessment to see change. Clean up scheduled for Aug 16/17.

Dave Lindsey - Facilitating a couple of ongoing projects, ie Heather Mountain snow pillow monitoring, the CL rehab project and a lot of the work is being done on lake bed so Timberwest Project. Broadway Run project

will go ahead next summer, this summer the access road is going in through Timbewest and BC Parks property. May have aggregate available for the boat launch from Hill 60. Gosshawks, two or three groups and all doing very well.

Ray Demarchi - Would like to see some effort put into coalescing the data with all the studies going on in the Bay. Aerial Photographs of the seals in the bay. Piscarious Bird survey to look at juvenile salmon predation. A part of the committee with the JUB to get the phosphorus out of the estuary which may be linked to algal blooms.

Derek Haupt - Providing access to the studies and surveys in the bay. Collecting poop from the heronry.

Kai Rietzel – In planning and implementation stages for this year's projects on Bings & Avril. Bings removing old culvert, Avril looking at Spawning Gravel additions between waterfall and train culvert. Planning for the Wetlands Institute, September 6 - 11. Weeklong workshop. Summer Camps for the Nature Centre are open. Quamichan Stewards - Riparian restoration work at Woodmere Townhouse and Stirling Ridge planting. Originally applied for fine bubble aeration, but not able to use RFCPP money for aeration, but still going ahead with planning and installing the hoses etc. Should be operational by August.

Joe Saysell - Gathering fry, about 10,000 dried up and died. Working on surveys on salmon predatory birds up river.

Shaun Chadburn - Invasive Species removal.

Danielle New - 38 classrooms visited to talk about Invasive Species.

Keith - Sandy Pools, meeting at the site to talk about the Year 2 stabilization works. Refinement of the plan for the live gravel bar staking to take place this August. Staking work that took place this year have leafed and looking good. Unallocated funds from the RFCPP project may be going to the causeway breach project in the estuary.

Paul Rickard - Meeting with Robert Socap the Conservative MP in charge of the Hunting Caucus, had an hour and half long round table to talk about how government policy is impacting recreational fishing and hunting. Gently we gave them a bit of an earful. The Conservatives are in full blown election mode. Quite a bit of money the government is putting out to conservation and restoration, of which the Cowichan has a fair bit of funding. 28 grants went to BC alone, which is the bulk of the grants. The recreational community is well organized in BC. "New" money to land preservation and protection through the Nature Conservancy, two targets 1) land that needed protection within the working landscape. 2) Preservation and development of wetlands. The only way we understand policy is the people working with the community to connect.

Beaver Creek, what we are finding is there seems to be a difference between the conversation we have with Minister Thompson and what seems to happen in the working bureaucratic government. Paul is willing to help bring folks into tune with PSF and PSC grants. Both groups talk about the importance of the reporting out after you get funding, then hardly hear anything about their funded projects (Ie Bob Crandall's report on Beaver Creek). Request another Region One fisheries staff can supply information and background.

Tom Rutherford - Currently process underway to staff CA positions long term, that process is available to the public. Start offering longer-term work hopefully before Christmas. There will be a place for references and letter of support. Any correspondence to Senior Managers is helpful. Regional Lead for community involvement, changing hands at the end of the month. Adam Silverstein will be taking over from Alice Cheung. Changes to RFCPP, there will be more flexibility in regards to partnership funding. Up to 25% can be allocated to planning or retaining experts to plan the project. This round will be good for projects that end this fiscal year and next fiscal year (2016) so next year's summer work window. 25% could go to planning this year and 75% in the work next year. The two SEP evaluators from Ottawa were impressed with the work happening here. Meeting this afternoon (4pm) for the River Flow Working Group (TAC) putting together contingencies for this summer.

Business

Catalyst Water Report– Brian Houle

See Powerpoint Slides. No decision yet on the appeal to the Rule Curve. Lake level is quite a bit lower than it was last year. We are projecting a very desperate outlook for the year, quite a bit worse off than the bad year of 2003. We have to ramp down the cms to not harm the fry and strand them. Tomorrow night we are approaching 7 cms flow rate. Message is we are expecting a hotter than normal summer with less rainfall. Snow pack from the winter was half as expected and long gone.

- Vancouver Island 10 years ago had 140 glaciers. Today we have 4 on the entire Island.

Local Control over Water management – Bruce Fraser

Movement to bring control of the watershed and water systems down to the local level. This year we are facing a severe crisis with the water management of the river and unable to get control over the necessary

control. How do you provide a level of overall organization and funding from regional management? Develop a governance structure from the Regional District to provide regional management. What is the best governance structure for the Cowichan that would provide effective oversight? What powers do local governments need to get from central government for effective control? What kind of reporting structure so appropriate bodies are kept in the loop? What kind of organization structure would be most effective? What kind of initiative do we need at the local level without becoming a bureaucratic overload? What is the most cost effective method to fund the efforts being done by conservation so that stewardship groups don't have to spend considerable amount of time chasing grants? The process at the regional scale is Urban Systems (facilitating firm) looking at other models to cherry pick adaptable initiatives to do from a governance and funding point of view. Next workshop will be in early July, idea is to work towards a proposal to government on behalf of the region to try and implement and use the suggestions in the new Water Act. If local control is allocated, it will likely be through local government due to accountability. Like to have a proposal to go in the fall so the Cowichan is head of the line for pilot program for the regulatory download that may be possible next fall.

Shaw Creek Chinook – Bob Crandall

See Powerpoint. Shaw Creek has 5 separate species of salmonids confirmed through fry and smolt, two species unable to ID. In a typical year, we have trouble walking across the creek until July. Need 15 cms until end of June to make sure any spring run salmonids can move up the river. Hoping to get genetic material from those chinook fry.

- Our rains have changed with climate change; rains in March are now in April.

Cowichan Tibes Downstream V Trap – Tim Kulchyski

CT has been operating a fry trap for about 5 years over a certain period; it has worked extremely well to give a look at what happens in the side channel. Presence of invasive species can be affecting fry such as Knotweed, decent presence of Pumpkin Seed Sunfish (pretty aggressive killer), and a notable number of brown catfish (particularly in the Somenos system). One of the big issues is identifying fry through the stages. Emergent fry look very similar through the life cycle to all other species. James Craig workshop on salmonid ID, good to have a nice ID workshop and if you are moving throughout the system and include other species, such as trout, it gets more complicated. Trying to ID some of the larger fish. The largest chinook in the system was about 86 mm and some 85s. As soon as the chinook and coho smolts hit the estuary they look very similar once they merge in size/age, need to use microscopes.

Beaver Creek Weir & Restoration – Kate Miller

- 1) Question of managing streams and tributaries in our own Cowichan Basin. Appear that work we are trying to do to assume local control, while provisions are in the Water Act leave room for that, given the actions with the weir, the control is not remotely local.
- 2) This is a little system with a lake as a headwater and tribs to Cowichan Lake and a main area for cutthroat trout which is a major concern in the lake. Fishing restrictions to restrict the removal of fish from the system. This creek also has brown trout that are protected in the Cowichan system and don't have a lot of spawning grounds. Very much a coho spawning area and trying to bring the Cowichan coho back to historical levels (hundreds of thousands), lake rearing salmon were a major source of the coho.

Not a major creek, not a lot of damage concerns. In 1985 worked on it to provide year long water flows. Took out a beaver dam and put in a gravel weir. Rediverted a creek back to Beaver Lake, and other work. Approximately \$200,000 to enhance the creek, spawning beds/gravels, mouth improvements. A report in 2010 stated the dam was in risk of failure since they observed seepage. However there is little risk if the dam did fail as it was common practice to let large flow events happen to clean out the spawning gravel. The Cowichan Lake Salmonid Society rebuilt the weir, they went in with excavators, reinforcement, new control valve sluice gate, improved water collection source. \$15,000 worth of work to do and would bring the weir to condition better than how it was built. Shaun Wong thinks it is a well done project.

The group received a Stop Work order letter from Mike Stalberg. A very harsh and demanding letter stopping work, claiming trespass, revoking license, and demanding removal. There was over 100 conservation water license the province took out for conservation water support for fish. Due to a dam

failure in the Okanagan, it is expected the province will remove all weirs with liability issues. We have a letter stating permission from FLNRO to do the work on beaver creek.

Complete refusal to come to this meeting from Mike Stalberg, the manager who issued the stop, due to the absence of his superiors, is disappointing. The only people who can take out the water license would be the property owners, which is Timberwest and that is a lot to take on considering it is a publicly funded project.

Timberwest has several options going forward to enable a water license. Fairly confused on where the Province is going on this. Looked at the legal issues around third party leases, etc. The Province has told us it isn't possible. The license can be held by the land owner or the crown, so the Province, the Feds, or the owner. Timberwest is not able to take on the liability of the structures. There is a possibility to sell the land under the dam, involving surveys and assessments, which is time consuming and very fund-heavy. Lengthy and expensive process.

This issue looks to be political. It would appear that the letter from Mike Stalberg is to remove the water license and the weir. Perhaps some political pressure might be generated from the media. Pretty clear demonstration that local control is not being considered. Traditionally this table has been about solving problems and challenges by working together to positive solutions. Want to meet regulatory obligations and preserve fish habitat. Dams are a big regulatory deal. Lots of risk involved: Risk to the dam, risk to failure, consequence of failure, risk of loss to fish, risk to first nations. Focus on how the benefits outweigh the risk. Quantify the habitat, how many fish are involved. This isn't your standard water storage issue. This project is different, its meant to allow enough water to let the fish out in the spring, rather than 100 days of water over the storage its just 30 days. Tom could make a case for his superiors to why DFO should take the license, less than 50% of success. If we could get a legal agreement for someone to hold the license, then the province would have to accept that as well. Is it an interpretation of policy, or actual policy that the license holder has to be the landowner? Perhaps this is an example where the CV could be innovative with the new Water Act. Gather the information, technical piece, to gather the information.

- Bob Crandall, Tom Rutherford
- The work that was called for by FLNRO was not exactly done; it was approved by the engineer regardless.
- Larry, John, and Mike can come to the July meeting.
- Perhaps the heart of the problem is the Province can't pay for the upkeep.
- Need to have all of our ducks lined up. Need a legal opinion

ACTION ITEM: Working group to form around this issue to be prepared for the July meeting. (Tom, Shona, Bob).

Next Meeting

July 17.