

July 17, 2014

COWICHAN STEWARDSHIP ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

April 17, 2014

DRAFT MINUTES

Regrets: Rodger Hunter, Traci Michalski

The meeting was called to order by Don Closson at 9 am.

In attendance

Keith Lawrence, Kate Miller (CVRD) Ian Morrison (CVRD), Rick Bryan (Recreation Canoeists Association of BC), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), Chris Cole (Timberwest), Rob James (Western Stevedoring), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Elizabeth Bailey (Somenos), (MP), Ted Bookman (BCWF), Don Closson, (BC Parks), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Gerald Thom (CLRSS), Tom Rutherford (DFO), Tim Kulchyski & Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Joe Saysall (Friends of Cowichan, Jenny Capps (Youth Cowichan safety) Richard Lake and ???..... (Sidney Anglers), Trevor Haupt, (WFP) Goetz Schuerholz. George Croy, Geoff Strong (CERCA), Elizabeth Bailey (Somenos Marsh Society), Rob Hutchins (CVRD), Jean Crowders asstin, Rodger Hunter (Watershed Board), Genevieve Singleton (Nature interpreter), Ted Brookman (BCWF), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands),

Regrets: Shona Smith, Meg Loop

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the June meeting were not available. Carried over to September meeting.

Housekeeping, Genevieve announced that due to space restraints at Cowichan Tribes we will have our meetings for the foreseeable future at FW Eco Centre. Our appreciation to Cowichan Tribes for their kind hospitality over the past years and we look forward to meeting there again in the future.

Roundtable updates and highlights:

- **Derek:** almost one year since dredging, last week invertebrate sampling was done for final DFO report and info from NW Hydrology shows most of channel the same, but big deposit where the tributary meets the log haul channel almost 1 meter deep. Notification to DFO asking for dredge in low tide in August, the bridge will not need to be put in and should only take a few days. Goetz asked whether rip rap can be removed and Derek responded that it will be removed during the dredge.
- **Goetz:** timing and funding issues are slowing down breaching causeway project. Mobile display about the estuary now on display at library.
- **Richard Lake of Sidney Anglers:** mentioned that the Sidney Anglers attend since they want to do all they can do to help since they fish salmon from our watershed. Offered their net pen for use here if that is helpful, remind us that requests for funding must be in for end of August, they make \$10000 to \$20000 from derby funds and have some extra funds. They are particularly interested in projects doing chinook research. Please contact Richard Lake at 250-656-1071 and www.sidneyanglers.ca
- **Gerald Thom:** re knotweed, meet with Joe to discuss this, plans to deal with this issue next summer with students and working with Don Closson. CLRSS needs help on July 26 for work bee at Cowichan lake First Nations land, 1500 plants to go in.
- **Ted Brookman:** thanked Rob Hutchins for replying to everyone who sent emails to him re water situation. Ted has rewatered two half mile sections of river; it was 29 degrees in one place. Fry from one place did not survive. They have built shades in some places. Commented that he walked more in pontoons than floating.
- **Ken Epps:** IT would be shut down soon.
- **Sean:** Clay Reitsma met with CT re lower dilution worries and additional sampling is being done. Measurement is being done right at the outfall. There is a proposal to extend the outfalls and divert effluent
- **Eric Marshall:** herons in rookery near Estuary Centre are in distress, taken over to Saltspring rehab centre, 2 students hired at Estuary Centre for summer, nudibranches all over eel grass in bay, good sign of ecosystem improving.
- **Kate Miller:** we are in stage two of water restrictions; stage 3 in honeymoon Bay, there is some public pushback re the draught,
- **Chris Coles:** forest will be shutting down soon, has met with Craig Wightman about Broadway Run, road is brushed out, spoil site is confirmed, two year project, Joe questioned as to whether Broadway is a done deal. Ted says that BCCF is still trying to get funding
- **Genevieve Singleton:** reported on Eagle Heights and lack of progress, bluebirds have been under stress of house sparrows attacked them several bluebirds killed by house sparrows and unknown predators, met at HBER with Don Closson and Erica McLaren to take care of several issues, Genevieve requested to let her know if anyone finds a dead bat, handle it with gloves and freeze immediately. MOE is interested in more info on bats.
- **Keith Lawrence:** reported that on August 25 live staking will be done on gravel bars at Sandy Pools, also reported that on July 7 and 8 over 60 people gathered to work

on Regional Water Management and Watershed Governance, building on first workshop held May 9th, specialists attended providing excellent information and sharing models from other areas, the larger group discussed options in breakout sessions. Consultants are now putting together the results from these two days, which will result in another meeting to be held in late August or September.

- **Don Closson:** as of today fire ban is in effect, RFP process for campground operation in Cowichan Valley is in place, 7 applicants, will be evaluated in August and awarded in the fall. Please note that there is a lock change at Burnt Bridge; please contact Don if you had a key to this. There is great concern re public safety in the River with low flows, in particular the channelized areas in Marie Canyon are more dangerous, and more signage has been put up in Marie Canyon area regarding this.
- **Elizabeth Bailey:** water quality monitoring and chum?? Monitoring, in Somenos, restoration undertaken at Yumnuts, had 10-14 youth assisting with removing invasive species
- **Tim Kulchyski and Helen Reid , Cowichan Tribes:** Tribes is focused on low level of river, will have report on fry trap and rotary trap info at upcoming meeting (note this for next agenda)
- **Rodger Hunter:** Watershed IQ with grade 5s has not gone well due to job action, addressing participation, there is a survey being done on door to door watershed info, trying to make a deal re Shaw Creek, water quality sampling continues to be done, had a meeting with Keith and building a schedule for coming year, there is an issue with farmers in Koksilah and Cowichan Bay. Talk held at VIU on water conservation by David Slade, well attended and good kick off to current situation. Watershed Board is pushing can we meet or beat Ladysmith's water usage, last weekend Board members reached out to public at Duncan Days to sign up on pledges website, Water woman was introduced, there will be water shed tour every Wed for rest of summer, let Rodger know if you wish to attend, MOE has agreed to meet with parties concerned re Beaver Creek crisis
- **Tom Rutherford:** announced that Shona Smith sends her regrets, Shona has been moved to other duties for August and September, she does have contract with DFO till the end of March, for next two months please contact Tom for duties that Shona was covering.
- **Ian Morrison:** in HBER water consumption has gone up! Still have people watering mid-day, many in seasonal residences, folk are frustrated, we are below 50 % in storage,

Business

1. **Brian Houle of Catalyst on River flow reductions:**

Shared graphs 2003 was a very different year with lower river flow in one month could be as bad as 2003 5 cms. In 2003 dropped to 7.6 at beginning of August. Early season recommendation minimum flow of 25 and 15 cm for fisheries management.

Rob Hutchins said that a meeting has been held at FLMRO and CT and is expanding to include wider governments; we do not have an emergency plan in place, what happens if we run out of water before weir change? Temporary pumps could be \$500000 to \$740000 a month. CVRD staff tasked with funding formula, meeting with Mr. Thompson soon, another

meeting on Friday, on Monday meeting need permission from FLMRO, if permission was received there has to be 30 day advertising

Tim: working with VIHA and NC looking at effluent and water volumes re sewage. difficult to get all of the info together, tributaries keep it cooler at higher end, great concern re lower end, chum passage seen into June, hoping to work in fall to see how chinook are doing, coliform meets swimming requirement at Allenby bridge, flow is 6.5 cms, temps in lower end are 23 degrees plus

Rob: on long term, \$8 million is needed for raising weir and pumps; we need to be shovel ready for When Build Canada fund gets announced. We need to get design done. Gas tax funds could be used to help, if all parties in agreement, political messages, letter to paper, Effluent at Lake Cowichan lagoons, never had a problem with dilution, 200:1, JUB does not have dilution limit, now down to 35, best practice to not be below 40

Joe S: what can we do, we must all write letters,

Gerald does not think we should go below 4.5, is visiting lake owners, do NOT underestimate need to consult, please put forward two plans

Rob explained that pumps would be built into weir; FLMRO wants to know what public wants

Geoff, can CVRD limit watering of farming? Kate answered that there is no regulatory framework with agriculture, education is the key point re pumping water from stressed aquifer, mention was made of red listed lamprey since it was federally listed it would trigger our preview

Tim: Cowichan Tribes does support to 4.5 without all users making concessions. Closing River down to fishers is not a good idea, very important to CT is the ability to catch fish, north Fork is healthier, Tim recommends that we got our personal stories out to the public about the importance of our River

Kate: have boating community do visual assessment of docks

Joe: worries that pumps might be seen as solution, but really this is only a stopgap.

Ted: requests that CVRD asks for more money i.e. \$10million to be on safe side to cover all costs.

Rob: reminded us that Catalyst has 600 to 800 families depending on it, loss of customers permanently if they have to shut down, lake front owners have trump cards; do not underestimate the power of us all writing letters,

2. Rick Bryan of Recreational Canoe Association of BC, VI zone rep

Concerns re summer recreational use of Cowichan River, Rick Bryan contact info:

rickbryan@shaw.ca, 250-597-3932

Rick has pulled off lots of garbage on river from tubers and is most concerned re river garbage. He feels that tubers and river boaters are an untargeted population for assisting with river conservation. Desires that tours of watershed be done from river on tubes. Acknowledged that Terry, BC Parks Ranger has been helpful. Other concern is unsafe practices in river of both tubers and fishers. Injuries lead to increased regulations so wishes to have good safe practices followed. Believes that users such as tubers, boater, picnickers should be writing letters of concern re status of river. Rick is concerned that his association has not been invited to the table re discussions re the river, passionate about taking care of the river.

Gerald responded that CLRSS has been supervising Cowichan River cleanup for 6 years and they would be delighted to have help from the Recreational Canoeist Association. The cleanup is on August 16 and 17. Gerald suggested that Rick meet with local tubing companies, they are very respectful and are trying to have their customers be respectful to the river, offer to assist them.

Rick says he will pass on dates of clean-up to his membership, Gerald encourages other groups could do more cleanups at other times of year when river flow is higher.

Ian: Says working with boating issues important. Says CVRD has some funding for this. RCMP does not always have the right boat and have only two officers available. Liaising with them and Lake Cowichan Fire department would be a good idea. RCMP (??) just got a river boat to do rescue and they would appreciate input from Recreational Boating Assoc.

Rick: responded that enforcement by itself does not solve the problem, installing values, supported by education is what needed

Joe, 2008 is when tubing and drinking took off as a huge issue. , it took presence of an officer to stop poor practices, feels enforcement of RCMP and CO is important.

Rick says need of education is huge, important to work on attitudes

Gerald says issue of problem is using sub stand air mattresses and garbage

Rick, why not a class for tuber safety from CVRD, have a tuber fest and free tickets to event for picking up garbage. We do not need to discourage people from using river, believes we are not using imagination to try and fix problem.

Don; we all need to do more. Need public bathrooms along route, have a Valley Tuber day, people need to use common sense, BC Parks is signed on to assist however they can.

Joe: tubers only encourage alcohol stores,

Rick says we need to turn idiots from enemies into allies.

Ted wondered if the Roundtable should do a letter re tubing concerns. Don felt it would be better to go in person to RCMP, and ask for help. Don expressed that he appreciated the concerns that Rick was bringing to the meeting. Ian Morrison will ask for help from RCMP and have a chat re enforcement. Don will start email chain re concern of this issue.

New Business:

Joe Saysall, reporting in from Friends of Cowichan, Joe will not be here in Sept; Chris Morley will attend in the fall on his behalf. Fry are doing ok in side channels, in about 4 places channels have been dug to keep water moving, if it goes lower than 5 fish will be in serious trouble., have salvaged around 10000 fish. Joe and group have been fighting for raising weir for years, really worried about resident trout and steelhead; water temp 22 degrees at his house.

Friends of Cowichan have been writing letters to MOE re updating fishing regulations with several proposals. Believes that river should be closed July 1 to Sept, 1, since even if we don't have low water, we always have warm water, should not be fishing in deep pools, unethical, since this is like fishing in a goldfish bowl, has also requested ban on crayfish, would like to see no retention, in Washington state they are banned. Crayfish important food source all the way up the chain, before 2008 when tubing companies started there was healthy population of crayfish but now numbers going down, has viewed tubers eating large numbers, people don't know you need fishing license to catch them, not allowed to catch them with a little net, limit is 25, in the past drift from house to Skutz you would see dozens of decent size. Our water is so clean that our crayfish do not have good taste and

they are not desirable eating. Joe is also concerned re poaching on river, no CO on river, folks are taking vehicles on to gravel bar, throw onto beach brown trout. What is saving river right now is the corridor; thank goodness that Province in 1993 saved area the corridor has the best timber since river was logged first. Swamps and lots of little channels providing fish habitat.

Has concerns re proposed pull out above Skutz Falls, went with Chris Morley and Parker to look at it, says it is a bad proposal because you have to rip out willows, right now solid fry, because of Bear Creek, water underground, water very cool, this proposal is no good for river, Joe put in old pullout 45 years ago. Joe says this proposal is bad for fish and for park, park was set aside for adventure wilderness, want to keep it as wild as possible, believes that pull out should be put in at outside corner, suggested location will be continually be worn back. Joe went on to say that the creeks are drying up, logging second growth higher up impacts on this severely. He has spoken to renowned journalist, Steven Hume that the river is dying. No structure is left to lower part of river top part is better, it is not just logging, people cutting down willows, cutting back beaches, etc.

Broadway run: has talked to Craig about it, Joe's group does not believe that this project should be done, totally different than Stoltz, Broadway does not have a 90 degree slope, way more gradual. Hopes to meet with Craig and Pete Law soon to discuss further. Joe is alarmed re these proposals and thinks cost is too high. We should be focusing funds on problems with knotweed and fry rescue. He believes Broadway is healing itself.

Update from Rodger: thanks to people for coming to water rally, thanks to Eric for taking photos, put out on website pictures

After meeting a planning session was held re Cowichan River clean up. Gerald will give info to Jenny Capps of Cowichan Safe Youth

In previous years segments for clean-up were too long, so Gerald wants shorter segment, also of concern is that due to low flows it will be harder to work on the river, since this means more walking, which is difficult with a higher likelihood of twisting ankles. One suggestion made was to do a split off at the new CVRD Park at Irvine Road, since there are parks on both sides here, most important to have people who know river well at end of each segment. Insurance waivers need to be done, free food and prizes need to be organized, Tim will introduce Jenny to Larry re getting fish and elk for barbecue

[Next Meeting](#)

Sept. 18, 2014, 9 AM at Freshwater Eco Centre