

# Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable



September  
18, 2014

## MINUTES

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

### In attendance

Meg Loop (CLT), Kate Millar (CVRD), Paul Rickard & Ted Brookman (BCWF), Christine Brophy, Diana Gunderson & Jean Atkinson (CLRSS), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Rodger Hunter (CWB), Goetz Schueholz & Geoff Strong (CERCA), Claude Theriault & Ken Clements (Sidney Anglers), Ian Morrison & Rob Hutchinss (CVRD Area F), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Craig Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes), Don Closson & Terry McDonald (BC Parks), Elizabeth Bailey (Somenos), Genevieve Singleton (Nature interpreter), Yana Stratameyer – Trinezek (Jean Crowder – MP), Kerry Davis (Green Party), Lauri Thomson, Brian Houle & Dennis Pollestone (Catalyst Paper), Shari Willmott (Island GIS), Ted Leischner (Plan Bee Now!), Wilf Luedke & Willi Jansen (DFO), Wayne Haddow (BMA), Rob Lawrence, Rob James (Western Stevedoring)

Regrets: Tom Rutherford, Bob Crandall

### Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the July meeting were circulated and approved.

### Roundtable updates

Genevieve Singleton - Ian Atherton has been put back on the file for Eagle Heights, so he will be in touch with all the partners and hopefully see some movement. Bluebird season was very positive this year.

Kate Millar - Sandy Pool restoration has been completed, a little bit more work to take place this fall.

Parker Jefferson - One Cowichan surveyed 500 local residents 10 questions about their focus for the upcoming municipality elections. CLRSS planted over 2000 on 7 different properties, finished year 1 of 3. Really great involvement from Lake Cowichan School in the projects this year. Big hole to fill in our board, looking for new people to get involved, there will be an informal meet and greet at the Lake this afternoon for interested parties. Surveys of lakeshore residents, discussed with them the importance of riparian areas and tried to figure out the level of knowledge the community has around riparian issues to be repeated over the next 3 years to see if there is an improvement. CLRSS have a really great newsletter, the kind of thing PSF wants to see in terms of level of follow up - available on the website.

Meg Loop – Trout refuge installed at Quamichan Lake, water quality monitoring study starting this fall. Participated in the BCWF's Wetland Institute, interested in more wetland projects. Spawning gravel installed at 3 sites in Avril Creek. Old culvert removed on Holms Creek.

Dave Lindsey - continuing lakeshore rehab program. Wille Jansen is starting up a water quality sampling program and we will contribute with a couple locations. Found a couple more goshawk nests in the Valley. Reminder that it is hunting season, elk hunts ongoing on the north side. Timberwest has been a major contributor in the beaver creek weir to try and find a good solution, still doing a lot of work voluntarily.

Christine Brody - Completed first year with the lake project, made a commitment to be with the project for the next 2 years.

Diana Gunderson - Lake Studies program has expanded to a class each semester.

Rob James - Working on a few projects with CERCA.

Ken Clements - Donation committee is working with CERCA for help in the breach project.

Tim Kulchyski - Chinook counting fence is up and running just below the white bridge, fish are up and running in the system. Crews being mobilized for the trapping and trucking. People out on the river to measure the low flow sections, one of the big concerns with the very low water flows and we are worried about the increased predation.

Elizabeth Bailey - Water Quality, we have a new partner CWU - H2O in Nova Scotia. Their project is working with community groups doing water quality data collection to standardize the information coming out. Kits are the same level as what MoE uses; Somenos is the pilot project for Vancouver Island. We are able to lend out the equipment if people completes the online course and uploads data to the database for display on map. Aquatic plant survey next week, BC Lake Stewardship providing it to establish a baseline on native and invasive aquatic plants in Somenos. Wild Wings starting next month Nov 9 - 14, 4 big events including nature tours, party at the pub, art show, concert, birding opportunities. [www.wildwingsfestival.com](http://www.wildwingsfestival.com)

Ken Epps - With the dry ground we have been waiting for rain to plant, may not happen this fall.

Goetz - Reached an agreement with Western Stevedoring who is current leaseholder, last hurdle for the permitting system and applying for the permit from FLNRO. Aiming for January/February for the project in place, almost all funding secured. Clean up of Mariners Island adjacent to the Mill Pond, excess timber washed up is harming the flora of the island; hope to be starting next year. Estimated 1000 logs extra, hope to have a mobile mill and use the logs to establish a new trail and viewing platform along the causeway to increase nature viewing on the north side of the estuary. Would like to do herring enhancement within the Bay, selecting 3 trial sites using the technique in Squamish to provide habitat for spawners. Planning for Jan/Feb 2015 which is key spawning time, if it works we would like to expand the program, working with the Squamish Streamkeepers. In process of applying for charitable status.

Rob Hutchins - Regional Water Management Governance Study, the entire region has a host of issues and challenges that have only been dealt with on an ad-hoc basis or not dealt with at all. Contamination of water etc. In last Nov initiated a regional wide governance structure, 4 full day workshops by Urban Systems (last one had 60 people) looking at how we can do better as a region. POLIS and academia, PhD and MA students interested. The CVRD committee heard the findings so we have 2 models going forward. One is a new regional authority or a commission of the CVRD. Biggest challenge, condition going forward is to have full participation of First Nations. Cowichan Tribes has attended, but there are 7 other tribes in the region. Made a commitment to consult with the 8 councils by Nov 12.

Ian Morrison - Muni elections Nov 15th. "Over consumption crisis" on Aug Long Weekend with huge influx of people to the area the reservoir ran dry. We initiated a project for labour day along with a drinking road block to inform about the drought issue. In 3 hours stopped over 500 cars and had great feedback.

Don Closson - Park Tenure for Cowichan parks process has completed where an offer has been made.

Broadway Run split up into 2 phases - 1 road reconstruction, 2 bank stabilization. Project is on hold currently, needs to have additional work to fully understand the issues. Terry has been working with Dave Polster and the homeowners using the park to dispose garden wastes. Terry put together a package and homeowner contact. Compliance issues, kicking people out of restricted areas, putting out fires, atv's.

Ted Brookman - In the North Island and East Coast, fish are all stacked up and stuck at the base of rivers as the whole island has not received rain.

Eric Marshall - Heron Rookery near Wessex Inn, condo construction right next door. Number of nests was normal, although some herons started to nest again this season which is unusual. 8 juveniles were found on the ground and sent to rehab place in Salt Spring, unusual to have even 1 on the ground. Total surviving young isn't known. Osprey are doing well in the Bay, one nest raised 2 babies. North side had another successful nest, 3rd nest is not easy to see and not sure about the success. At least 5 babies. Eagles didn't do so well.

Shari Wilmott - Putting transmitters on western toads to dry and find wintering habitat. We know more of the breeding habitats, but want to know where they overwinter and see if we need to protect that location. Need help to monitor the adult toads for the 3 days to see if the toad doing well. Need homeowner help and permission. If you see toads regularly (adults, size of your fist), let Shari know so we can approach the neighbors around Thanksgiving.

Ted Leischner - General trend that pollinators are declining and our native seed bank is declining. Need to keep the health of the pollinators up for the health of the ecosystems. Our grant has finished up, still lots of work to be done with pollinator conservation in our wild spaces.

Wilf Luedke - learned a lot about how the small fish use the river, can report out at another meeting. Strait of Georgia Initiative early October can report out. A lot of money attached to SARA, it's for species that are going down quickly that are being provided COSEWIC. If you can show they are in trouble there are grants and contributions. Can work with Cowichan Tribes etc. There is a lot of funding, for next year around \$75000 for around salmon juveniles and water.

Willie Jansen - Fisheries Officer working as Drought Coordinator.

Wayne Haddow - Climate Action initiatives, Extreme Weather workshops discuss storm water management and water management planning on farms and contamination.

Laurie Thomson - Public education and communication is very important, happy to contribute to website/newsletters for non-profits.

Paul Rickard - Spent 7 hours in a boat with \_\_\_\_\_ Northern Manitoba MP, chair of conservative hunting and angling caucus. He was one of the principle drivers and authors of the new Fisheries Act. Prime Directive behind the money put aside for recreational fisheries and now he knows Cowichan well. Beaver Creek, Roger did an excellent job of chairing a solution based meeting, Timber West were an excellent contribution to the meeting. Harris Creek right at the Port Renfrew road is an active coho and steelhead system, huge amounts of damage by campers and trucks.

- Don Closson there is attention and action towards fixing that. FLNRO has a contact.

## Business

### **Catalyst Water Report– Brian Houle**

**See Powerpoint Slides.** August 7th we dropped it to 4.5 cms, keeping it there as we just don't have the storage for any higher. Warmest water occurs at 1 am, over the last 6 years seeing similar trends in high temperature during the summer.

- 130000 cubic meters per day, 800 cubic meters per day. Draw 1.6 cms from the river.

- is there any possibility for recycling water?

- We use water about 7 times, there is a new mill in Saskatchewan that uses zero water, but it's a very expensive process to get there.

### **Watershed Board Report – Rodger Hunter**

Sept 30, VIU CWB speaker series, Dave Polster is going to talk about global and local perspective on riparian restoration. How might the CWB help with the restoration at the Lake. Acquisitions of habitat, 70% of the habitat is undisturbed and want to protect 50% of that. Need to talk with Timberwest about what we can do there. Shaw Creek, there is an interest to commemorate Gerald and riparian habitat would be ideal. The Nature Conservancy of Canada wishes to see larger parcels of land than the 3 parcels for sale at Shaw, hasn't been a lot of interest in that land otherwise.

Meetings on July 3rd, coming out of that meeting was the Drought Initiative. A lot accomplished around water quality, temperature, fisheries issues including harvest (closing harvest until Nov), flows, pumps, around longer term. Environmental Appeal board, still no action from that process with homeowners at the lake. JUB became an issue, learned a lot about it.

Clean up was hugely successful. 107 people came to the lake, more than double than the year before. Lower River up about 20 people, had youth working with us.

Water Quality: The Marine issue is going forward; could Cowichan Tribes could write a letter to the marina's to add weight? 12 letters were issues to 12 farmers approving their group based environmental farm plans. Need to have some monitoring money as well. Ray Demarchi is the chair of the Central Sector Liquid Waste Management Committee, focus on getting the outflow out of the river.

Water Conservation Initiative: It actually helps the cause to put the initiative out on a drought. Developed a 6 step program for water-holics, David Slade has been moving around from purveyors. 246 L/per person per day for domestic use. Water Woman videos, little you tube clips. She was all over the community. Media tour was a hit, radio station, chek tv, etc. Plan to do another tour in October.

Snow Pillow, not enough money to do anything which is regrettable as we really need one.

POLIS Institute requested a history on the Cowichan Watershed Board. Available to download from [www.cowichanstewardship.com](http://www.cowichanstewardship.com)

Cowichan Estuary Management Committee needs to be more active and tried to get it included with the regional management. Needing a formal request from the Watershed Management Board sent a formal request, but has not quite got a response. Need to reroute.

## Rob

Crisis situation at the end of June, so met on July 3<sup>rd</sup> with all the major players met and talked about how to go forward as we had no crisis plan, nor funds to fund a crisis response when in actual crisis. The Flows Committee would continue to take a leadership role, we realized the Board didn't have the HR or capacity to take the on the crisis. Recommended the flows committee CWB would be advisory to the CVRD which would take over.

We had to cancel planned initiatives to reallocate and ask around for funds from the major players. Staff came up with \$150,000 tasks to get us through. Catalyst, DFO, Muni's have helped. Took the minister on Sept 9, showed the weir. On the bus was Chip Seymour and he set the tone with the minister, he got a good look at what is going on in the Cowichan. The minister seemed to get it. Less than 48 hours later got a letter of \$40,000 towards this initiative.

- In July were looking at temporary pumps. Spent so much time looking at the long term to get the weir raised, but no plan on what happens if we run out before then. Allocated \$20,000 for trucking fish.
- [www.flowdowns.ca](http://www.flowdowns.ca) a communication plan for engaging the community around the repeating crisis.

38,000 people who are impacted by the low flow, not just the 802 property owners.

The CVRD Board last week approved two motions/resolutions 14 to 1:

1. Endorse raising the weir
2. We know with better management we can store more water. We could store 20cm more even before raising the weir. It will take 2 years for that process. We want to go forward to change that rule curve so we can store 20cm over a longer period of time. CVRD is taking this issue on to the Province.

- The Board has come together with very strong leadership, fantastic work
- This was set up at the flows meeting 3 weeks before, Rob, Lori, and Ian had to go back to the board and convince them this had to go forward. The Waterfront Owners are going to be staring at Ian in getting ready for the elections and having the Board's support is a big help.
- On the River Clean up, Diane took a major event that existed in Gerald's head and put together a template and plan to deliver the event going forward.
- Critical importance to get the snow pillow in for future forecasting.
- Very challenging 2 years ahead, get everyone on the same boat and going forward to encourage the social license.
- Need \$600,000 from partners to have Bill Canada Funds, need to be shovel ready for the next round comes out. We want Steve Thompson to say Priority Number One is Lake Cowichan Weir. About \$10 million for the project, Valley would have to fund 1/4 of this money.

### **Short Term Drought Response – Willi Jansen**

August 15th Willi was brought into the process; Looking at the short term broodstock collection and an inevitable trap and truck. All our monitors have been calibrated properly so we have a cohesive whole of information collected. There is a lot of work being done by diverse partners, but not knowing what others are doing. ARCmap can plug in where and who is doing the work and access that data. Have 10 temperature loggers in the water, looking at cold water refugia, looking at long term protection of these areas. With the low water access to the sites has changed, pools aren't the same as they used to be and we have to upgrade to get nets and trucks into place. The fence was installed beginning on Monday the 15th, having Chinook go through it (4 so far). Do have chinook in the system, September 2nd and there were some chinook holding by the JUB. Do have some fish above and below in the north and south arm - last year the north arm went totally dry but this year it's flowing. It is not easy going though as the fish are vulnerable to non-human predation. Working with PhD students on the seal pinniped predation, the seals are mainly coming up the south arm and herding the chinook. 3 particular animals and 8 otters that are working in tandem. Concern that if we work at getting them off the log booms that they'll spend more time hunting and make the problem worse.

Trap and Truck (netting and taking them up the river. It is a very invasive process but important to get them out of the predation zone), currently don't have broodstock running. Hope the crews start next Monday and looking at 800,000 eggs, about 250 males and females. Once broodstock is obtained, the trap and truck will start to Sandy Pools and just below the weir. Critical that the temps stay below 18 degrees C. The counting fence has a passive trap for counting and perhaps trapping broodstock there. The water is 18 inches to 2 feet sometimes, very low water.

Fish often move at night and starting night patrols. Total fin fish closure in the area until Oct 15 - 31. Chinook non-retention in the approach. Aug 1 the river was closed to recreational angling below Mile 66, open to fly fishing only. Harvest Roundtable meeting supposed to happen Sept 9, but the meeting was rescheduled for Sept 24. There will be a lot of pressure on the Province; we need to close the river to take the pressure off the fish. Open for trout and incidental by catch of chinook.  
- 33% infill to the North Arm gravel removal, but we didn't have heavy flows to move the sediments.

**Terms of Reference – Genevieve**

**ACTION: Review the Terms of Reference for next meeting to review changes.**

Agenda items should be sent to Paul and Don. If you have major items and send ahead to work into agenda

**Next Meeting**

**October 16.**