



March 19,
2015

DRAFT MINUTES

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

In attendance

Klaus Kuhn (CVRD Director Area I), Debra Toporowski (Cowichan Tribes), Rodger Hunter (CWB), Bill Routley, MLA, Doug Morgan (Constituency Assistant), Genevieve Singleton (CVNS), Paul Rickard (BCWF), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi (CVRD), Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Ray Demarchi, Joyce Behnsen (NC Counselor), Morgan Kennah (Island Timberlands), Cheri Ayers (Consultant DFO, CT), Ken Clements, Claude Theriault (Sidney Anglers), Laurie Thomson, Diana Gunderson (CLRSS), Goetz Schuerholtz (CERCA), Dave Preikshot (Madrone), Ian Morrison (CVRD Director Area F), Dave Lindsay (TimberWest), Keith Lawrence (CVRD), Jennifer Hermary (assistant Jean Crowder MP), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Derek Haupt (Western Forest Products), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Kerry Davis (CVRD Director Area A), Al Moore (Western Stevedoring), Don Closson (BC Parks), Brian Houle (Catalyst Pulp and Paper), Carol Hartwig (CVNS, CSRT minutes).

Roundtable updates

Paul Rickard, Co-Chair– Pleased to be here on Cowichan Tribes territory. It is noted that no provincial or federal fisheries representatives are present at this meeting. One and one half hours are allotted for the Round the table introductions and updates session and we feel it is important but should we cut back and streamline? Your feedback is welcome. Welcome to Bill Routley MLA and Assistant Doug Morgan. We enjoyed the clip from the BC Legislature during which the Cowichan water management was highlighted. Should we distribute or is it political?

Bill Routley MLA – All of the debate now captured in Hansard is part of public record. The benefit of the Official Opposition is the role to speak out. I have the opportunity to bring issues such as low River flows and contaminated soil to the House. These are opportunities to speak out on issues missed by government in the Throne Speech. Fascinating to listen to other parties and often agree with them. Collaboration does happen in Victoria. Enabled by a \$500K budget, the bilateral Forest Committee toured the province and developed recommendations to help alleviate pine beetle problem. I have been talking about Cowichan River since 2012 and before that. In 2012 the mayors, First Nations and the CVRD called for an emergency meeting with the Minister over water and the drought. The Minister had told them that there could be problems from lake property owners and the Minister wanted to hear from the MLA. I told the Minister about the water needs for the community. I want to see information about the water situation publicized. I have talked a lot to the Minister and have reminded him of his responsibilities. He is responsible for fish, forest and water management, First Nations' consultation etc. That helps him because he can't act without validation from Opposition because he will be affecting the lake owners. There are rare moments when things get done.

The Minister is now seeing the need to act and it is legitimate to ask what he is planning. Should thank Catalyst because the weir is why we are able to do so many things in the Cowichan Valley. We need to work on being able to work on management of water at local level. If we [NDP] had been elected, I would have instituted local control in the Cowichan Watershed on a trial basis. The Water Comptroller, John

Baldwin might have been reminded of his responsibilities regarding fish and drought and now is allowing more leeway with control of water.

Doug Morgan, Assistant: I work with the in between people (below the Minister) and I have a great relationship with some of them. Often these people do not want to lose control. They would rather work with me rather than dealing through the chain of command above through the Minister. Bill Routley said the right things and was ahead of the file so I can act. Need to talk to me when need more action on issues. Routley needs to be ahead of the curve about what are the issues by hearing from constituents.

ACTION: Paul will send the video clips out to CSRT.

Parker Jefferson, One Cowichan – We are launching a film about energy, The Future of Energy, lateral power to the people, because we want the Cowichan Valley to become the solar capital of Canada. Lots of places like Germany are now using solar and we need to build momentum. The film starts at 7PM Heritage Hall, tonight at Island Savings Centre.

Started fry sampling but found only two coho so far. Looking for Chinook to see if there is a summer run. Bit early yet as the tributaries are still cold at 4 degrees . Fry rescue has started due to stranding already because of low flow. Time to get going, they have nowhere to go. Yesterday 2:30 PM, the river ran white after being gin clear. Milky, white and sample was taken. Determined below Greendale Trestle, something, clay bank or something. Reported to RAP provincial line and seemed serious about it. May be cement. .

Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi, CVRD - Consultation will not be done during the CSRT but I will be updating on the relocation of the outfall periodically. Hosting first info session for specific stakeholders or any keeners in public. Groups invited to March 25 7PM Somenos Room Island Savings. Not a lot of rsvps yet. Open houses are generally not well attended. Hope to have day meeting with Parks, and other agencies. First Nation consultation is operating on their suggestions. If your group is not on the list provided here, please contact Emily at the CVRD.

Invitees

Community Groups - Environment
Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Assc.
BC Wildlife Federation
SeaChange Marine Conservation Society
Cowichan Land Trust
Cowichan Valley Naturalists' Society
Cowichan Lake & River Stewardship Society
Fishermen's Wharf Assc.
One Cowichan
Friends of Ecological Reserves
Community Groups - Recreation
Dragonboat Clubs

Cowichan Kayak and Canoe Club
Community Groups - Other
Arbutus Ridge Strata Council
Oceanfront Ratepayer's Community Assc.
Cherry Point Marina
Aquaculture/Fisheries
Underwater Harvesters' Assc.
Area H Commercial Crab Fishermen
Pacific Prawn Fisherman's Assc.
Local fisherman and seafood retail business owner (Cowichan Bay)
Landowners/Industry
Western Stevedoring
Catalyst Paper

Debra Toporowski, Consultant, Cowichan Tribes – Cowichan Tribes is supporting the holding back of water to accommodate for low water levels this spring. She sits on the CWB and on fishing committee for CT.

Joyce Benson, attending meeting as a private citizen but wishes to learn more as a Counselor for North Cowichan.

Morgan Kennah, Island Timberlands – Provided access and ability for Polster Environmental Services to harvest deciduous whips for staking at the Broadway Run site.

Cheri Ayers, Consultant CT and DFO: Drafts of Watershed Health Chinook initiative, please refer to website on Volumes I and IV and I am working on II and III. Working on Action Plan on how to move forward on plan. From Feb 27 to now working on set of projects for this fiscal year from EC Stewardship program by March 31. CT collaborating on broad set of projects: 1) finish weather station installing precipitation gage, 2) fry trapping in side channels 3) riparian assessment about areas that need restoration and cleaning up garbage on edges of river, and 4) CT working with partners about modeling of flows. Have to be fulfilled by end of March. Appreciate work of many people. Rotary screw trap also going in April 7 by DFO and Pacific Salmon Foundation. She will supervise group. Try to quantify the survival of hatchery fish, information added to picture for marine and fresh water survival. LGL will be doing a temperature study to look at connectivity in the river. Will generate a model using that information and pair with temperature in river for last year. Data from water survey Canada data will be used to understand the flow and how it changes, in order to identify where ground water intrusion occurs.

Claude Theriault and Ken Clements, Sidney Anglers – Pleased to cooperate with CERCA on herring recovery and to provide funds for coffee for CSRT.

Laurie Thomson –

Diana Gunderson, Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society - Lakeshore rehab Stewardship report is done. Jean Atkinson set up power point presentation for stakeholders, and there is also a backgrounder. CSRSS has begun an initiative about boating practices. They have produced a Welcome Boaters brochure about safety, laws, bylaws available at local businesses, marinas, boat ramps.

Goetz Schuerholz, CERCA – Prepared a power point so will address. Establishing close relationship with "Comox Project Watershed" regarding blue carbon protocol and with MoE Climate Secretariat. CERCA contribution to proposed BC protocol on blue carbon will be focused on biofilm of estuarine "mudflats". Attended workshop on blue carbon and climate change and work of Project Watershed in Comox. Contacts with Karen Richardson, Director Programs of Commission for Environmental Cooperation will visit Cowichan Estuary to discuss CERCA work on blue carbon research.

Dave Preikshot, Fisheries Consultant – Waiting for funding decision. Previous research is online on Somenos Marsh Society website. Looking at more Coho issues such as Shawnigan Lake where he has been working with local volunteers. Two small mouth bass about 5 lbs. were found, most common was perch 90%, pumpkin seed also introduced. Will try to put a project together. Will be doing habitat mapping ground flows and will be important for Cowichan River. Coho Shawnigan is artificial but can be productive, 1 million smolts each year. [Paul stated that there is a group acting illegally that is introducing bass and other coarse fish into VI lakes but so far the authorities have not been able to identify who these people are].

Ian Morrison, Director CVRD Area I – Concerned about shoreline erosion, water quality, recreation on lake and safety. Looking for people who might participate and present on issues regarding recreation. Enforcement opportunities will also be explored by CVRD, 90 minute event want community engagement. Fishing and guiding in area are the types of activities, volunteer fire dept will also attend, on Saturday, April 18, 10 -12 when boats start to be launched on lake. Contact him if want to participate. Water storage, governance, budget, all are issues at this time. The Honeymoon Bay ground water system is of concern, but seem to have hit a gusher just now.

Dave Lindsay, TimberWest - Snow pillow is installed and operating. Craig Sutherland installing precipitation gauge. Broadway staking largely completed. Will try to get funding for that. Beaver Lake continuing, administratively. Financial details being completed. Storage and governance are major issues. As one of large landowners, TimberWest is concerned and involved.

Keith Lawrence, CVRD – Regional Level regional water governance was shared with Regional Services Committee (RSC) and Board and valuable feedback was received. Next steps where go from here. Appreciative of all feedback from CSRT, thank you and across region. Next meeting will be on agenda. Cowichan Watershed at headwaters, CT and Timberwest to install snow pillow so now on website, but graph not that exciting without some snow. Dr Hamid Hatami will present on March 25 to RSC to go forward with application so if you wish to show support, it will be at 6 PM at CVRD on March 25. River looking at sediment management at completion phase. Removal of sediment is at three key sites black bridge, north fork and JUB treatment plant. Test cases were the basis and net positive for fisheries. The reduction in sediment from the Broadway Run is one important project. Plan includes early flood warning. Within the system note that Sandy Pool interpretive signs being developed.

Jennifer Hermery, Assistant to Jean Crowder MP. MP Crowder's private members bill on delerlict vessels was introduced into Parliament on Feb 26th but did not receive the reception we had hoped for from the government. Jean appreciates the letters of support and there is still time to write more letters to help get the legislation passed. April 28nd is the date of the second reading and vote.

Derek Haupt, Western Forest Products - Working with CERCA and Heavy Metals Marine Ltd to clean up the many decades of accumulated logs and woody debris on Mariners Island. DFO funds received by CERCA. WFP's contribution will be \$17,000. Helping Somenos by providing some large woody debris, Heavy Metals Company to deliver the wood for free. Meeting with contractors on log salvage to prevent stray log build up in the Bay.

Eric Marshall, Cowichan Valley Naturalists' Society (CVNS) - Birds now starting to mate and begin nesting. "Wild Goose and Swan Chase", observed two Red Tailed Hawks swoop down and displaying kill. Herons: 90 birds counted with, 45 nests more than last year. Now less disturbance at construction site. Six juveniles fell from nests last year and sent to Rehab facility. Last week there were 500 adult swans, 200 immature. This week down to 180 adults and 108 immatures [due to spring out migration]. Geese are pairing so more difficult to count. Total 500 last week and this week and one Sandhill Crane. Next week last count until next fall.

Sean Chadborne, North Cowichan - Starting to do invasive outreach, Campbell River knotweed coming early.

Al Moore, Western Stevedoring: CERCA in cooperation with Western Stevedoring has completed Cowichan Causeway breach project. CERCA received funding for the bridge project from Pacific Salmon Foundation, MoE (Wetland Fund), DFO, and Sidney Anglers. In-kind contributions have been provided to CERCA by Ryzuk Engineering, Herold Engineering, Pacific Marine Industrial, Mark's Instant Signs and Nanaimo Foundry. Expect to have completed digging breach on north side of bridge, in the next few days. Project will be completed by the end of next week.

Kerry Davis, Area director, Mill Bay Malahat: More issues, more to learn about.

Don Closson, BC Parks - Staking project took place last week and now compete at Broadway Run. Early Spring, lot of work for particular location of stakes. Knotweed workshop last week, interesting and not encouraging. Good discussion and coordination. BCCF treatment concerns, want to have ducks in row before starting project. Expensive lock on Burnt Bridge was taken, so please notify if you know who has it. Fair bit going on in that area. Recently approved still photography for a media crew for Canadian Tire to display their camping wares, coming from Ontario.

Brian Houle, Catalyst Pulp and Paper - Cowichan Lake and River Status Update

Early control began Friday, March 13. Had requested early and did begin. Rainfall over weekend has impacted lake level and now controlled at 25 cms in river. Weekly stakeholder calls began March 18 and will continue. 27 cms Lake inflow but now has quit rising so now on net inflow/outflow. But we are now in a desperate situation compared to recent years. Coordination with Rodger Hunter to work on a different outcome so met in Nanaimo FLNRO fisheries, C.T., BCCF, CVRD. Focus of meeting was early control and existing spring flow protocol of holding 25 cms from April 1 to May 1 and 15 cms from May 1 to June 15 to benefit fish. Now authorized that flows could be as low as 15 and 10 cms respectively. Discussion at weekly stakeholder calls. Last year was a wet March/April but could not hold the water. We are now desperately low in rain and water on lake. Today the prediction is for 35 to 45 mm and then mixed rain and sun. Snow pack is minimal, especially compared to other years so we are now dependent on rain only. Media release was sent out and now people at Lake are asking when you will be on control, good to see. Now agree that there could be likelihood of having very low levels in fall so there is agreement that can now store water. **(Paul Rickard:** the reasoning is that one can preserve Steelhead redds at a minimum of 25 cms.) We do not need to challenge the 25 cms yet and will try to hold on to that but may have to reduce it below 25 cms early, depends on fishery people (in response to question from Klaus Kuhn about fish needs). May not get rain.

Ray Demarchi: Dr. Hamid's report is key as next step with his presentation to CVRD Board scheduled for March 25th.

Genevieve Singleton Co-Chair - I am doing interpretive walks now that spring is here. Please contact me if I can be doing one for your group. Thank you to Sidney Anglers for their donation towards Roundtable coffee fund. Western bluebirds are being sighted, some overwintered on the Island, some new translocations will be happening soon. Please report any bluebirds that you observe to me. Eagle Heights nothing to report yet. Polster Environmental Services wishes to thank Island Timberlands for whips for plantings at Broadway Run. Thank you also to Derek Haupt for providing the contact for Heavy Metals Marine to do the work at Sandy Pools. I attended BC Parks workshop on knot weed and would be happy to address any questions on this later.

Genevieve Singleton speaking on behalf of Meg Loop, Cowichan Community Land Trust. A teacher from Queen Margaret's School is looking for environmental projects to do on April 22, 8:30-11:30. Please contact Meg if you have a project.

Paul Rickard - Genevieve, thank you for contributing and organizing coffee, others may contribute. With the coming summer and in chatting with senior DFO, I think we have the limbo method of water management, "how low can you go." Fish people are not talking about how we are losing fish, we are indeed stranding fish, in side-channels most productive habitats we had 24 degrees C last year. River system is not rebuilding, so we are only containing loss. I want DFO to stand up and be counted. Water license and weir raising are critical and at this point we don't know if they will happen and how DFO feels about them.

Klaus Kuhn, Director CVRD Area I: By reducing the flow we are enabling the BC Govt to do nothing. It is ridiculous and not good for the environment. We should keep the river at 7 cms and then get into a mess and get action from the government. I know this is not the right thing to do but knowing humans this is the only way to get things done.

Diana Gunderson, CLRSS: Need to "reconstruct and increase storage", not say "...raise the weir". Use the correct language so that people will agree with you.

Goetz Shuerholtz – CERCA' Priority Issues: Breaching Causeway, Mariner's Salt March, Herring Recovery and Illustrated Nature Trail. We have been using a map from 1968 to see the dynamics of the original forks of the river. Used to have a trestle bridge and the river flowed freely back and forth across the Estuary. Key issue is that part of [Cowichan River] water needs to reach the south side where the eel grass has recovered. The breach in the causeway is reactivating an original river channel. Geotechnical survey was completed and then pilings were installed. This work is in cooperation with Western Stevedoring and now contractor Pacific Marine Industrial is flying ahead with money from PSF, DFO and Sidney Anglers. Also in-kind support from such groups as engineers, Duncan paving etc. Except the bill from BC Hydro is \$52K as they would not donate their services. Phillip Joe from Cowichan Tribes is providing archaeological monitoring. Seven steel pilings are in on each side with rip-rap on both sides of channel. There has been an artificial separation of the two rivers for some 60 years. The original eelgrass distribution used to be across the whole bay. **Mariner's Salt Marsh:** Mariner's Island work to clean up logs is a partnership with WFP, CEEMC, DU, CT and Vancouver Island Conservation Mgt Program. Funded by DFO and WFP and CERCA. CT will do vegetation surveys. Logs and woody debris was covering salt marsh and reducing carbon sequestration potential. Decomposing woody debris produces CO2 instead of marsh vegetation sequestering carbon and it blocks intertidal channels and destroys habitat. From decades of logs washing up, mostly saw logs, channels were plugged up with wood with no access for fry, all tidal channels. During King Tides and other high tides, even very large logs will shift around and destroy habitat and block water flow. DU and FLNRO will come in and help to clean up. Log inventory proceeded removal. Inventory done by CERCA jointly with DU. The area of Mariner's Island was stratified into three polygons based on CVRD orthophoto according to large woody debris density. Will monitor to see how this changes over the years. Estimated 10,000 logs or 22,000 cubic meters which may be a high estimate. Solid logs will be used for chips, others for hog fuel. CERCA signed contract with Cedar Harmac Mill for log purchase and processing Employing one excavator to remove the logs and woody debris. The wood was so thick that there was little or no vegetation underneath. Project to be completed by 30th of March.

Herring Recovery: Herring Recovery test site at fishermen's Wharf, Cow Bay. Wrapped 28 pilings with environ liner Jan 3, 2015. Monitoring showed that no roe have appeared so far. We are monitoring shorelines of Cow Bay, discussing options of roe transplant with fishery biologists. Selecting two more pilot areas WestCan Terminal and Mill Bay. Because of disappearance of eelgrass and kelp there is no place for spawn so herring have to use artificial spawning habitat. **Illustrated Nature Trail:** Surprising number of people are using this area daily along WestCan Terminal road. People walking, dogs, painting, taking photographs, and birding. Hope to have eight observation platforms and one observation tower. One side looks great and more bird activity but other side is not great. Many partners wish to cooperate. There would be display panels modeled after CERCA's mobile estuary exhibition designed jointly with the Royal BC Museum.

Paul Rickard: The Round Table wishes to recognize the support of Western Forest Products and Western Stevedoring that has developed very quickly in support of projects in the Estuary and participation on CSRT.

Al Moore, Western Stevedoring – My slides duplicate what CERCA has provided. This project went very quickly; quite a feat in such a short time. This is where the natural river broke through and is an area where the road used to flood. Aerial map from 1960's showed there was a natural river channel in this area.

Rodger Hunter, CWB: Photos of mud slide at Stoltz slide but it is contained by the berm that keeps getting built higher each year as material comes down. None of it gets into the River.

CWB 2014 Highlights CSRT March 2015. Achievements for last year, this was shown to CVRD recently. In 2011, at a National Cumulative Impacts Workshop in Ontario. Six watersheds were provided with \$800K each to do monitoring work. The amount of money was and tripled and funded some valuable work. The

amount learned in Muskoka, Ont. was best organized. CWB and the Fraser Basin folks were asked to attend because we had communication with community and interest groups while the others did not. CWB was asked to talk about collaborative work and Rodger mentioned that 40 people were meeting at CSRT which amazed them. Here are elephants in room in watershed discussions: climate change, population growth, diversity and diffuse responsibility, financial pressures and debt, peak senior govt. and rights. We need water, need to manage for water. People in control and in senior govt are not here. It is a mess, who is responsible? For three years nothing got done. In 1996 had 37K staff in govt, now 25K and morale has been affected as well as the public service being affected. Property rights, right to water, FN rights. Plan for water management in Cowichan was completed in early 2007 and after three years nothing happened so it was recognized that there were leadership issues within CVRD. CVRD and Cowichan Tribes became full partners, under local leadership in the CWB. So CWB formed and we are now studied after 5 year as an example of local governance by watershed. Model is inclusive of federal and provincial governments, including opinion leaders, special advisors, TAC.

The CWB has no regulatory authority, it operates by consensus, cooperation and partnership based. Education and awareness are key. Targets consist of seven areas: fish, flows, water quality, estuarine health, efficient water use, Watershed IQ, and Riparian R&P. Talked to Catalyst about water use and will report this spring. Survey money is used for drought instead of survey this year. Highlights for 2015, Environmental Appeal Board (intervener), Snow Course, Flows Working Group guided drought response 9 Mayor Ross Forrest Chair), Major awareness raising, Ministers tour. End of first week of June. Shawnigan middle of July finished EAB. Two full pages in Times Colonist, Minister came with a large cheque for the drought which was used for the Snow Pillow. The Flows working group has been effective this year because relationships worked and consensus ruled. Catalyst waited for consensus and everyone was respectful. Awareness raising through Parker Jefferson's One Cowichan and through Water Woman about need for restructuring the weir. Minister focused on Chief Chip Seymour who stated that he expected things to happen. David Slade also gave many talks on water and was well received by the local community.

Joint CWB and TAC meeting is being organized to receive report about water quality sampling. Highlight was the development of the second group based environmental farm plan in the province. CVRD Marine bylaw Central Sector Outfall and initial action on moored vessels. April 28 will be Federal debate on the Derelict Vessel bill. Water woman attended 40 different events promoting water conservation. Videos are generic so they so they will apply anywhere in world. There is a challenge between municipalities in the CVRD to reduce water consumption. Need champion and a dry summer so this has worked and we have wrapped up the Water Woman promotion.

Watershed IQ workshop co-hosted governance forum and supported the resilience video, 20 watershed tours including candidates, launched speaker series with VIU, and a special media tour. Over 30 candidates attended the tours and they were very candid and it was uplifting to hear how much they learned. Speaker series is to improve knowledge and awareness. Riparian Committee purchased Sunrise 5 acres. Shaw Creek Tours and advocacy, support for CLRSS in pursuit of joint target.

Need: Sr. Govts to focus on 4 things:

Policy setting and associating checking, Inventory, monitoring and research, compliance and enforcement, increased local influence, public service and attending these meetings.

Needs: refresh plan and include Koksilah with equal status important element ID monitoring and research priorities.

Specific applied research projects climate change, hydrology, forest practices, Chinook targets, fisheries impact assessments. Needs: short term and long term drought communication; quasi military approach to reconstructing the weir; press on other targets and governance; integrate and analyze functionality of [VI

regional] MFLNRO. Other studies: climate change, hydrology, forest practices assessment. Need to be a living laboratory.

Challenges: elephant dancing, relationships/trust, resources stable adequate long term, urgency and patience.

Joyce Behnsen; water governance how does it fit: Rodger: two projects, long term CVRD and CT, in short term, keep your eye on the prize strong relationship, things to achieve, have more influence, two tracks, biased to keep eye on prize, ideally everyone work together, yes, can work if all agree on governance.

Keith Lawrence: Will not take away any of great groups in watershed but will weld the capabilities for the region. We will present the watershed study next month. Thanks for groups that have contributed.

Paul Rickard: Develop models to see if would work, then move to larger scale. Build template of best practices. Premature to create a new high expense bureaucracy; better to use the existing structure.

Next Month: Keith Lawrence: Water Governance.