



THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2015 MINUTES, 9-12 AM.

Freshwater Fisheries Society 1080 Wharncliffe Rd, 9:00–12:00

In attendance: Brian Houle (Catalyst Paper), Stefan Quaglia (Trillium Environmental), Goetz Schuerholz (Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Association), Geoff Strong (CERCA), Don Closson (BC Parks), Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi (CVRD), Morgan Kennah (Island Timberlands), Klaus Kuhn (CVRD Area Director), Bob Crandall (Cowichan Lake Salmonid Enhancement Society), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Jean Atkinson (Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society), Diana Gunderson (CLRSS), Claude Theriault (Sidney Anglers), Ian Morrison (CVRD/Cowichan Watershed Board), Joe Saysell (Friends of the Cowichan, Keith Lawrence (CVRD), Jan Tavershan, Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Carol Hartwig (Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society), Kerry Davis (CVRD Area Director), Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi (Green Party C-M-L Candidate), Dave Preikshot (Madrone Environmental), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Barry Hetschko (Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society), Shona Smith (Department of Fisheries and Oceans), Elizabeth Bailey (SMWS), Ray Demarchi (P.A.L.), Rob James (Western Stevedoring), Genevieve Singleton (nature interpreter)

Regrets: Parker Jefferson, Tom Rutherford, Tim Kulchyski, Ron Diederichs

9:00 welcome, apologies, agenda changes, Attendance list to be circulated

-Ron Diederichs's request, is anyone an expert in algae in Cowichan Bay? Dave Preikshot can help

Approval of Minutes (as circulated from Elizabeth Bailey)

9:10 Around the Table BRIEF updates as to projects, activities since last meeting

-Brian Houle (Catalyst) Cowichan Lake Level update, we are much lower than same date last year, we are currently at 5.5cms and lake levels are still dropping, it is currently like August conditions, as of today will need to be moving down to 4.5 cms, which causes issues: risk for current fish resources vs. risk for fall fish resources, projecting forward: lowest level by Oct. 5. -Questions: Do we have info on temp in lake

and river? Peak right now is 23-25C. Is there an update on CVRD planning matrix for raising weir? Keith to ask Dr. Atami to give update to group soon. The mill withdraws 1.7cms from the river. Will the mill be shut down? Mill is required to keep certain level of flow; if they can't sustain 4.5 cms the mill will be impacted.

-Stefan Quaglia (Trillium Environmental), resident, biologist, consultant, parent who uses the river with his children, wants to see how he can fit it, is a contaminated sites expert, also clean up, toxicology, water quality, interpreting guidelines

-Goetz Schuerholz (CERCA), putting together stakeholders committee for development of causeway; would like to see slough rehabilitated as part of nature trail project;; Western Stevedoring are replacing a footbridge; \$9000 still needed for bridge project, going to put up interpretive sign near bridge next week, having a problem with lack of flow under bridge at low tide, will rethink in fall with rains whether they have to do dredging to connect river and estuary; new project: blue carbon, habitat mapping of estuary, guest speaker next week, Bill Heath, ecologist, will report on Comox estuary; mariners Island, survey post cleanup, invasive species is coming in, DU is running a plant id course on coast and estuary plant id, applaud Geoff on working on climate issues

Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi (CVRD), coordinator of Liquid Waste Management Plan amendment, env. impact study is complete and will be posted on project website www.cvrld.bc.ca/lwmp, looking for updated eelgrass mapping if anyone can help, Dave Preikshot will send blue carbon report, last info session on LWMP happened on June 2nd and was successful, report on consultation will be available on website as well, presenting to environment commission tonight, more detailed technical review of routing options still to come (separate from amendment), waiting on next meeting of Cowichan Tribes environment committee which will be happening soon, will be extending contract part-time with cvrd, not leaving as announced at last meeting. - Questions: When will the choice of routing be made? Over the coming months, she will keep us updated

-Morgan (Island Timberlands), dry in the forest, concerned about forest fires, operations are half shut down due to August-like conditions

-Don Closson (BC Parks), no fire ban currently but will likely be coming; update on property at 4660 West Riverbottom Rd. re concern about public access to property to reach river, parks not planning to develop public access at that location, they have flagged park boundary so people can avoid trespassing, working with landowners to come up with compromise

-Bob Crandall (CLSES), seeing water truck drivers looking for water, worried about fry in pools; storm drain marking going on around valley, trapping and fry salvaging, they found Chinook fry in Ashburnam system, will forward report when it comes out, their goal is to find Chinook in tributaries and dna test to see if they are fall run. -Comments: Shona, there is a ditsun? at weir now, there's little info on spring Chinook. There are 2

distinct runs of Chinook, May/april (spring Chinook) and fall Chinook. Fish have been seen this spring in river.

-Dave Lindsay (Timber West), fire hazards high and extreme in forest, shutting down all high risk activities, lots of people out of work; re Beaver Lake situation, weir is in place and functioning won't be lowered, things going fine; Somenos lake, ultimate objective to get area designated as WMA, have been helping out as they own bottom of lake under management of DU, going through process of raising title and transferring ownership, currently surveying properties around lake

-Jean Atkinson (CRLSS), group has started riparian visits for this year, goal to visit all property owners and identify people who may participate in stewardship project, installing stewardship signs in project partner's driveways

-Diana Gunderson (CRLSS), Christine and Mandy are busy planning the summer students work; Gerald Thom bursary has been awarded for the first time, other schools to adopt watershed stewardship education course; Oliver Creek stream signage has been stolen, please keep an eye out for it. Having water safety workshop put on with RCMP helping to promote boating safety

-Claude Terriault (Sidney Anglers), Thanks to Goldstream Hatchery, got 25,000 coho and operated net pen, fish released last Sunday at James Island wharf after feeding them for 6 weeks, had lost 3000 smolt in transport because of oxygen equipment failure

-Ian Morrison (CVRD Director), Ashburnam creek visit, talking about decommissioning dam, CVRD holds water license, it's filled in with gravel, wondering if it could be excavated so they could do pulse flows to flush newly discovered Chinook into lake, found remnants of mill pipe, records of pumping, could potentially pump from lake up above weir, needs funding, been in touch with Stantec, fair bit of data, looking for suggestions or input. Attended flows meeting the other day, reluctance from Tribes for reduction of cms flow, not alone in concern, Ian's disappointed in provinces lack of willingness to close in-river fishing, Tribes has for 3 years had a voluntary closure

-Joe Saysell, (Friends of Cowichan), Letter to Minister Steve Thomson on closure of all fishing in was sent out, would like groups to write letters to support this. Trout in the river are concentrated in pools, stressed, unethical way of fishing, fry salvage almost over, will be lobbying PSF to get money for merganser study; Skutz falls fish ladder is plugged and Joe would like to work with Timber west to get in cleaned out, Dave Lindsay hoping to clean it out by hand rather than machinery, Joe has concern about corridor on upper river; ATV trails have been cut, picked up a lot of beer cans on gravel bar.

-Keith Lawrence (CVRD) long-term water storage at lake plan has been to CVRD board and they are going forward with application for money from federal gov., released new communication tool, website: newnormalcowichan.ca, looking for ideas of locations for

banners and billboards. Let him know. Two reports going to regional services this month, sediment management report and groundwater report at June 24 meeting. Surface water report will be going to CWB.

-Helen Reid (CT), Tim is very concerned re lowering River water from 5.5 to 4.5, Cowichan Tribes are not on board, will be at also flows meeting tomorrow. Tim mentioned there is money coming in to Cowichan for chinook study. Helen visited Broadway Run to do interview with Shaw, really happy with project and Dave Polster's work on this. Talked about importance of collaboration

-Dave Preikshot (Madrone Environmental), working on CERCA projects; Management plan for Somenos basin; fish survey work for Somenos, beach and poll seining lake and tribs, 20-30'000 coho estimated to be in tribs around Somenos lake, good place to look at conserving these fish, these tribs need to maintain summer flow, Richards comes out of Crofton lake, will be closely monitoring tribs for discharge and temp; promoting side channel and back channel habitat protection, lake system a lot hotter than in past, Caught 1400 sunfish in 100m2 of lake; talked to NC about opening dike access points so they get into channel near playing fields

-Eric Marshall (CVNS), 96 active heron nests in Cow Bay, bald eagles are predated young; monthly Waterbird count not many ducks, lots of cormorants; working on model watershed with Royal BC Museum for Estuary Nature Centre, working on draft for interpretative signage.

-Shona Smith (DFO, Community Advisor) knotweed at fishway, offered permanent fulltime position in Nanaimo, last day likely June 30th, this is probably last roundtable meeting, thanks from Genevieve on behalf of all of us

-Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), has environmental student talking to schools about water conservation; coordination of water restrictions, simplifying and assimilating different jurisdictions rules, at stage 2 across all now; treating invasive giant hogweed and poison hemlock as well as knotweed on NC property; on board of directors for CISC, trying to pump up budget for invasive species

-Carol Hartwig (CVNS), Sooke reservoir is looking good, could be a goal for us

-Elizabeth Bailey (SMWS), continuing water quality monitoring work in Somenos Lake and Beverly St. storm water, looking for volunteers, great for high school or university students looking to gain scientific monitoring experience

-Ray Demarchi is chairing central sector liquid waste management planning committee

-Genevieve Singleton (nature interpreter) bluebirds – 54 currently in valley, made \$3000 at pub fundraiser for bluebirds; knotweed, will be cutting every 2 weeks, strongly against use of roundup near river; Eagle Heights, things are moving along and

looking hopeful; hundreds of school children have come through nature walks in last 2 months

10:40 Brian Riddell of the Pacific Salmon Foundation spoke on the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project and upcoming changes to Community Salmon Programme grants.

Power Point Presentation: Understanding a marine ecosystem and Pacific salmon

In the 80s and 90s BC had the most valuable fishery in Strait , since then major crash in production of coho and chinook, turns out we were fishing 85% of production – not sustainable, populations crashed, have not recovered

PSF is a charity founded in 80s. Staff of 12 people.

They are doing a review of funding, creating strategic envelopes, know of other resources that people could tap into

Community salmon program is main funding program

Smolt survival is big issue currently, looks like 90% mortality within 3 months at sea, creating integrated program to look at key factors affecting marine survival and growth of juvenile salmon

Fresh water work seen as complementary

Report from 2009, Strait of Georgia Chinook and Coho Proposal, PSF

Led to Salish Sea Marine Survival Project 2014-2018 www.marinesurvivalproject.com

Lots of jellyfish in cow bay now causing problem with sampling

Work has been done in Strait of Georgia for a hundred years, what's different now? Past work and information has been fragmented, this project is integrating a network of factors, thinking bigger and collaborating, doing things holistically and with other orgs. Working together in Canada and US

Expected outcomes: rebuild production of salmon populations, provision of sustainable fisheries; provide a foundation for long-term monitoring of Salish Sea and salmon health

Other aspects: Genome BC focused on pathogens, Acoustic tagging and arrays, PIT tagging to directly test the effects of dispersion from mortality losses, looking at seal diets, citizen science oceanography equipping small vessels to get large amounts of oceanographic data in one day, working on building remote sensing network on ferries, looking at harmful algae if it effects salmon

Questions: Genevieve-what do we need to know if terms of tapping into this resource? RFCCP is renewed for 3 more years has to be for habitat restoration, matched 1:1, insisting that PSF is not considered federal money so can be used a match, working on changing that. Will know about RFCCP match within a week, how to synchronize for matching funding. Get letter of agreement from PSF. Goetz-can they apply to salmon foundation for carbon study in estuary? See what happens in election year, will be

getting more money for estuaries. Merganser study on docket for next year. Claude- How much effort to devote to study forage and biomass? Need intensive study on heron recruitment. Ray- What can be done to get Vancouver Port Authority to engage how they should? PSF taking science approach, they say they look at acoustics of orcas on southern population that's where they focus their attention, they talk about putting deep sea ports in Fraser which would change estuary and have huge impact on fish. Keith- could get support from individual businesses in port authority. There's a group called Green Marine working on it. Seattle will be taking on their methods.

11:55 New Business / next meeting on July 16.

On July 16 we will have an outdoor field meeting at day use area (picnic site) of Stoltz Pool, Cowichan River Provincial Park, 10 am to 1 pm. Genevieve and Parker will let us know details.

It was agreed that we will meet in August and not take that month off due to River worries.

12:00 sharp: conclusion of meeting

Future meetings: salvaging of fry presentation by Parker Jefferson and Bob Crandall

Our meetings are always the third Thursday of the month, with the possible exception of August, in 2015 we will also be meeting in August.