

MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2016, 9-12 AM

Old Freshwater Ecocentre, Freshwater Fisheries Society, 1080 Wharncliffe Rd,

9:07 Meeting called to order 9:07am by Co-chair Genevieve Singleton

Acknowledgement that meeting is on Cowichan Tribes territory and welcoming words from Tim Kulchyski

In attendance: Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan/CSRT Co-Chair), Elizabeth Bailey (Cowichan Land Trust/Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society), Ashley Spencer (Cowichan Land Trust), Joe Saysell (Friends of Cowichan), Lori Iannidinardo (CVRD Area Director), Jessica Lines-Wikkerink (BC Parks), Clive Baudin (Natural Resource Officer), Frank McCorkell, Loren Duncan, Shawn Kerr (Department of Fisheries and Oceans), Claude Theriault (Sidney Anglers), Tom Rutherford (Department of Fisheries and Oceans), Rob James (Western Stevedoring), Tim Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes), Martha Lescher (Volunteer), Leroy Van Wieren (Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society), Mandy Hobkirk (CLRSS), Christine Brophy (CLRSS), Genevieve Singleton (Nature Interpreter/CSRT Co-Chair), Kerry Davis (CVRD Area Director), Miyo Stevens (citizen), Dave Preikshot (Fisheries biologist), Barry Hetschko (SMWS/Cowichan Valley Naturalists), Eric Marshall (Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society), Ted Brookman (BC Wildlife Federation), Dave Lindsay (Timber West), Diana Gunderson (CLRSS), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Brian Houle (Catalyst Paper), Vaughan Blackman (Catalyst Paper), Klaus Kuhn (CVRD), Mark Kissinger (Conservation Officer)

Regrets: Don Closson

9:15 Presentation by Mark Kissinger (Conservation Officer) and Clive Baudin (Natural Resources Officer)

Mark Kissinger

Mark explained the duties of his job. There is a great demand for CO services and more and more work is complaint driven. The process now is to call into the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line where in the past we were able to do a direct call to COs cell phone. The new process requires patience. Staff numbers have become smaller over the years and the amount of legislation to enforce has grown. Cowichan Valley zone is the 3rd biggest in BC and one of the smaller units. Issues get triaged.

Human safety is top priority so sometimes habitat issues get overlooked. Concerns were expressed by CSRT members about riparian damage done in Greendale area. We were told this is an open investigation. Environmental protection agency (EPO – Kevin Telfer) will decide what route to go legally. Riparian Area Regulation is managed by municipalities, the only teeth they have is to withhold development permit (which wasn't applied for in the first place in this case). A lot of issues that are developing is because of recent changes to Fisheries Act. The definition of a HADD (harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat) has changed. Changes now have to be permanent to be considered a HADD. As vegetation will grow back destroying the riparian is not considered a HADD. Also sediment in the stream is now considered a natural thing.

Clive Baudin

Used to have around 400 Forest Officers working in the forest. Now with cutbacks (since about 2012) they've got about 170 people plus they've got more legislation to deal with. He used to be with Ministry of Environment but some pieces have moved to Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations. Now they interact together as different ministries. The process has become very reactionary to complaints. They used to have a separate call line but have now merged with RAPP line (NR0 tips is an electronic form you can fill out if you don't want to phone line). This deals with authorization and licensing to re water (works in and about a stream permits – if there's fish habitat destruction involved that goes to the COs)

Both Mark and Clive recommend reporting issues to RAPP line as the best way to have them dealt with. RAPP Line: 1-877-952-7277, Comments were made from CSRT members of difficulty using RAPP line and questioning its effectiveness.

10:34 Coffee break

10:48 Round the Table: BRIEF updates as to projects, activities since last meeting

Elizabeth Bailey, CLT/SMWS – Meg Loop will sadly be leaving us in the fall to pursue a degree in midwifery. Appreciation was expressed for Meg's hard work for CSRT in taking minutes over the years. Marine biology summer camps at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Center still have room. Contact us to register kids. SMWS hosted BCWF Map our Marshes workshop on the 11th of June. It was a great workshop with about 20 participants. SMWS is working hard to plan WildWings for the fall which will include many nature education events. Looking for groups or individual that would be interested in hosting a tour or talk about nature.

Ashley Spencer, CLT - Working on covenant monitoring and stewardship projects this summer. Studying in the RMOT program at VIU.

Christine Brophy, CLRSS - Completing plans for 9 sites for riparian restoration around Cowichan Lake this summer. Still looking for sites. Please let them know if you have info on sites around the lake that may have issues in the riparian for future restoration.

Volunteer days upcoming to clear ivy, need a lot of hands, will email dates out to the CSRT list. Will be putting on workshops about invasive species and riparian vegetation near end of summer.

Mandy Hobkirk, CLRSS - Working at the native plant nursery and with students from high school. Helps spark interest in stewardship with the youth.

Leeroy Van Wieran, CLRSS – Recently had AGM. Shoreline Stewardship Program is in 3rd of 3 years, do they want to continue it? Discussing ways to potentially do that.

Martha Lescher, volunteer – Working on water quality monitoring and fish salvage projects with different organizations.

Loren Duncan – Wooden boat society has an event on June 25th

Joe Saysell, Friends of Cowichan – Salvaging fry and helping to keep little pools running. Group is mostly phoning and writing to politicians on river closure and Greendale property. Also aware of atvs in park and on gravel bars damaging redds. Another big concern is knotweed which is taking over certain areas. Concerned also with logging practices.

11:08 Parker Jefferson presents new Water Woman video

[Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1vECrkrCE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1vECrkrCE)

11:15 Round the Table...cont.

Tim Kulchyski, CT – Working on drought issues and raising the weir. Having a hard time dealing with day to day issues for that reason. Putting forward idea for restoring tributaries around Lake Cowichan which are important for fry. Have been partnering with DFO on funding for species at risk (early Chinook) and Didson counter. Completed trout predation study in upper portions of the river which showed that there's some predation. Looking into strategies to improve survival of released juveniles

Claude Theriault, Sidney Anglers – Had fishing derby, all money raised goes to enhancement projects (September granting). 54 fish caught, been taking dna samples of fish caught for 4 years. 98% of fish caught come from Puget Sound. This year's net-pen stock has been released in Goldstream early due to high temperature.

Jessica Lines-Wikkerink, BC Parks – Senior Ranger (April to October). On shortest term in 11 years due to cutbacks. Off road vehicle act has come in (since November 2015) meaning all 'non-road worthy' vehicles now have to be licensed making it easier to track and ticket offenders.

Ian Morrison, CVRD – Upset about Stin-Qua development, it's looking like too many docks and riparian destruction. Honeymoon Bay and Youbou were only two water systems out of 10 to reduce water consumption after stage 2 restrictions came in. FLNRO has put out a new water license brochure and water sustainability act brochure. CVRD official community plan steering committee looking into new zoning for waterfront, transferring riparian as critical habitat.

Dave Lindsey, Timberwest – Issue with atvs accessing through their property, working on management plan with parks to deal with this. Knotweed in Nixon creek, possibly highest pint of infestation on river. Working on mapping and eradication plan. Doing harvesting around Beaver Lake and Beaver Creek, bridge was damaged by logging truck, will be repaired during low water.

Ted Brookman, BCWF – Dealing with visits to Ottawa and conference calls re change in Fisheries Minister. Attitude of DFO staff in Ottawa is not comparable to a year and two years ago, they are more open and able to speak. DFO has 130 positions that they are filling at the moment. COSEWIC process is being initiated in some bigger river systems in BC (Thompson, Chilcoten). Neil Fletcher won award for work on BCWF Wetlands Education Program.

Eric Marshall, CVNS – Genevieve had award presented for BC Parks 2015 Volunteer of the Year. Cowichan Estuary Nature Center will be closed next week due to new floor installation. Bird count occurred in bay last week. Heronry seems to be well.

Dianna Gunderson, CLRSS – Working to eradicate a patch of knotweed on Oliver creek.

Shaun Chadburn, MNC – Stage 2 water restrictions are in effect. Installing 450 LED streetlights.

Barry Hetschko, SMWS, CVNS – SMWS had AGM last week with good turnout and talk by Karen Barry about invasive species. Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Society is holding a stakeholder meeting on Monday June 20 at 10am at Wooden Boat Society in Cow Bay about display panels for new nature trail and open air classroom.

Dave Preikshot, Fish biologist – SMWS, will be monitoring environmental conditions in Somenos Lake and tributaries this summer but not fish due to lack of funding. Cowichan is entering 2nd year of 1/50 year drought (very rare, probably a trend). Tribs are super important for juvenile fish, temperatures are also about 3 weeks warmer than last year at this time.

Brian Houle, Catalyst - Lake level update: Recent rain has only worked to stop reduction of lake level not increase the level. This year it's been dry since April 1st.

Heather Mountain snow pillow showed some snow this year. Kerwood Liedel working on projecting how long of 4.5 cms of river flow will be sustained with gate adjustments at weir. Expecting something like Sept. 4th but it depends on what kind of rain we get. Measures being put in place in case lake needs to be pumped down to keep river flowing.

Bob Blackman, Catalyst – Very impressed with how passionate our group is.

Miyo Stevens, citizen – Brought example of drought updates from California newspapers. Would like to see something similar in our newspapers.

Jennifer Hermary, MP Alistair MacGregor – Alistair is hoping to attend next meeting. Kathryn Mckenna, Environment Minister is asking for climate change action ideas. People can submit online.

Kerry Davis, CVRD – Citizen newspaper has a 1-pager for CVRD. Drought update should probably go in there weekly.

Genevieve Singleton, Co-chair - Changing system from Mailchimp to gmail with Megs help. Bring Back the Bluebird Project: There are currently 24 eggs in nests. This is the last year of funding for the projects then responsibility will be passed onto naturalists. The Docents have taken over 600 children on nature walks at the Somenos Marsh in the last few months. . Genevieve is continuing a knotweed removal project. Cutting every 2 weeks. Other people can get involved by taking on a patch.

Update from Shawn Kerr, DFO - Cowichan River Hatchery has released all their fish. Rotary Screw trap is still running in the lower Cowichan River and good success on wild chinook capture and of hatchery release fish. Good capture of pitt tag fish too. Sooke and Port Renfrew net pen releases went well, low mortalities and good growth/ chinook smolts.

Rob James, Western Stevedoring – Trestle on Dock Road will be replaced by a yellow cedar bridge.

Parker Jefferson, Co-chair – Thanks to Catalyst for hiring LGL to help with fry salvage. Stoltz is exploding with knotweed.

12:19 Meeting adjourned

Next meeting to be held at Stoltz Pools with bbq, let Genevieve know if you want to present. Possibly a longer meeting from 10am to 2pm. There will be no meeting in August.