



September 15, 2016

MINUTES

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2016, 9AM-12PM

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

Meeting called to order by Co-chair Genevieve Singleton

Acknowledgement that meeting is on Cowichan Tribes Territory

In attendance

Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan/CSRT Co-Chair), , Kai Rietzel (Cowichan Land Trust), Lori Iannidinardo (CVRD Area Director), Frank McCorkell, Loren Duncan, Rob James (Western Stevedoring), Tim Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes), Martha Lescher (Volunteer), Genevieve Singleton (Nature Interpreter/CSRT Co-Chair), Kerry Davis (CVRD Area Director), Barry Hetschko (SMWS/Cowichan Valley Naturalists), Eric Marshall (Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society), Ted Brookman (BC Wildlife Federation), Dave Lindsay (Timber West), Jean Atkinson (CLRSS), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Brian Houle (Catalyst Paper), Klaus Kuhn (CVRD), George Croy (CERCA), Geof Strong (CERCA), Steve Landygo (PPWC Local 2), Jennifer Hermary (Alistair Macgregor MP), Debra Toporowski (Bill Routley, MLA, Cowichan Tribes Councillor), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), David Slade (Cowichan Watershed Board), David Benjamin (PPWC), Brian Thacker (Pacific Industrial and Marine), Ken Clements (Sidney Anglers), Chelsey Toth (Timberwest), Craig Lauridsen (Cowichan Secondary School-Land Based Learning), Don Closson (BC Parks), Kyle Yakimovitch (Outside Design), Amy Melmeck (CVRD), Todd Carnahan (Cowichan Land Trust/Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre)

Regrets: Tom Rutherford (DFO), Keith Lawrence (CVRD)

Roundtable updates

Kai Rietzel, CLT–Had a busy summer with conservation covenant monitoring, and summer camps. They have hired Todd Carnahan as our new manager for the Cowichan

Estuary Nature Centre. Several events coming up - September 25th 12-1 Volunteer Meet and Greet at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre, 1-3 Shoreline Clean-up, 5-8 Beer and Burger at Cow Bay Pub, September 27th CLT AGM, presentation Mapping Bull Kelp by Kayak and Satellite, a Community Collaboration by Leanna Boyer of Sea change Society and Sarah Schroeder or the UVic Spectral Lab. They are seeking Board members especially a Treasurer.

Geoff Strong, CERCA – Open Air Classroom Nature Trail is open, the parking area, bridge, kiosk and the first viewing platform is done. Birds are nesting during the summer so no new trail trimming has been done. They are considering removing the train old tracks.

Steve Landdygo, Crofton PPWC-Active against raw log exports. They are working with the Ancient Forest Alliance and Western Wilderness Committee.

Lori Iannidinardo, CVRD Area D-The VORR eelgrass protection area needs now needs to purchase buoys to define the area. They are about \$3000 installed each. We have ordered three buoys so far. The beach restoration at Hecate Park will have second phase to complete the western beach fill. Cowichan Land Trust is organizing with CVRD to complete his in the next year.

Ken Epps, Island Timberlands-Eagle Heights assessments are still undergoing.

Rob James, Western Stevedoring-working with CERCA on the nature trail.

Jean Atkinson, CLRSS-This is the third summer of the shoreline project. 8 properties were completed and a ninth starting in October/November. There is a tour this Friday starting at Saywell Park at 9am.

Ken Clements, Sidney Anglers-Taking applications for projects right now.

Ted Brookman, BCWF-Will be meeting the new Minister LeBlanc to discuss Recreational Fisheries. BCWF is active in the steelhead situation. The Shuswap River has dried up the chinook couldn't get up, dikes and flaps have been built to get the fish up.

Jennifer Hermary, Alistair MacGregor, MP-Alistair co-hosted a climate change town meeting. There will be a report from the meeting out for the public next week. Parliament returns on the 19th.

Deborah Toporowski, Bill Routley/Cowichan Tribes-Bill Routley will not be going for re-election, Deborah will be running for candidacy. She wants to see the weir raised.

Tim Kulchyski, Cowichan Tribes-They have been busy with gravel removal 15,000m³ in the North arm. This is a recurring issue and should be a bi annual program but their I n funding for it. Cowichan Tribes has applied for the funding this year. The work is starting early next week. The north arm has been dry for almost 4 months, the creeks

have almost non-existent flow, but they do have lower temperatures than the River. The Didson counter at the weir was taken out over a week ago. The mid-river count used a Gopro but it is not working well to determine species. Despite the rains the creeks are not filling up. The counting fence is going in and will be operational next Monday. The fish are starting to move into Cowichan Bay.

Craig Lauridsen, Cowichan Secondary School-working with Denise Augustine they have developed a land based learning pilot project. There are 30 kids from grades 9 to 12, about half are First Nations. They are looking for community partners to get involved with for monitoring or other science projects. To contact Craig as Genevieve, Kai or Elizabeth.

David Lindsey, Timberwest-They are conducting knot weed control trials. They are trying different types of removal including manual treatments and herbicides. They are starting to see what is effective and what is not. Once the report is done it can be sent around. The Beaver Creek bridge replacement with CLES had been completed, and spawning beds installed. In Crofton at the Stuart channel wharves the osprey nest platform had been replaced, they are working with the Purple Martin Society to put snags with holes for habitat in the Chemainus Estuary. They are trying to add cavity nesting instead of houses.

Barry Hetchco, SMWS/CVNS- WildWings Festival is starting in mid-October, the Trumpeter Swan Society AGM and Conference will be in mid-November.

Eric Marshall, CVNS-Water Bird count, Sunday Sept 11th saw 70+ common mergansers, five osprey nests this year all had young, Purple Martins seem to be doing well, they don't like the plastic tube boxes they prefer the wooden boxes.

Don Closson, BC Parks-Skutz bridge is being replaced starting today, it will take three to four weeks. The trestle 66 loop hiking r=trail will not be able to cross. They are trying to stop illegal vehicle access on the Trans Canada Trail (Cowichan Valley Trail). Gordon Bay Park is in year two of an infrastructure rebuild, playground, bike park, washrooms etc.

Shaun Chadburn, North Cowichan- Completed Parrots Feather survey on Somenos Creek from the mouth of the lake to the Cowichan River. It is not in Richards Creek or the lake. Working on knotweed control on private land

KyleYakimovitch, Outside Design-He has just moved here from Ontario and wants to learn about what is going on in the community.

Kerry Davis, CVRD Area A- CVRD has voted to send a letter of intent to the province re: local watershed governance. The SIA trial was in court in August and they are now waiting for a decision. Sonia Frustenoua is seeking a nomination for the provincial Green Party.

Loren Duncan-It is his 65th Birthday tomorrow.

Todd Carnahan, CLT- He is the new manager for the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre. He is planning on increasing opening hours, visitors, programming and a corporate sponsorship campaign.

Parker Jefferson, One Cowichan, CLRSS – One Cowichan has sent a letter requesting Federal climate change infrastructure money to raise the weir. The Didson trap will need to be moved back as soon as the water moves up. The pit tag array went well. BCCF tagged 10's of 1000's of hatchery and wild fish. There was a lot of predation at the array. Fishing is now open in the South Island rivers. The lower river clean-up had 3-4 pickup trucks of garbage. The upper river clean-up garbage all fit into a little car. The first year there was an overflowing one ton truck. Sunglasses and smart phones are the most common items found. The tubing companies have been instrumental in educating the public.

Genevieve Singleton-She will be teaching some 3rd year business students at Cowichan Lake Education Centre. The bluebirds project update there were about 100 birds this year, 30 adults, 65 juveniles. She will be heading to the BC Nature AGM as a delegate for CVNS.

Business

Lake levels and river flows – Brian Houle

The lake is at zero storage. September 28th is the expected last day of zero storage. Lake levels are worse than last year at this time despite the large lake levels we had this past winter. There are small rain fall events projected in the next weeks so hopefully they will not need to pump. If there is no rain in the next weeks they will start installing 20 pumps to pump water over the weir. The pumps are about 8 feet down on the lake bottom. This year they are connecting to electric power instead of diesel generators. They will be running the pumps to test them even if they are needed. There are two short term initiatives, 1. sustain flow of 4.5cms with the pumps, 2. add storage of stop logs to the existing weir to add about 12 inches of storage. This week Madrone is doing surveys to see if they are allowed to salvage lamprey during low levels.

Water Sustainability, the Act and the Facts- David Slade

David was part of the user's group leading up to the legislation. He thought one Ministry of Water would be a better system than all of the different Ministries looking after different parts as is the current system. The WSA was brought in in part because of an outrage in Hope where Nestle is pumping out huge amounts of ground water for sale. The new WSA seems to be streamlining development and moving in more of a profession reliance model. Onsite waste water systems can now be 50 feet away from a well if they deem it an irrigation or geothermal well. Water use regulation is in the new legislation, groundwater and surface water will be billed. There will be exemptions for

single family dwellings but if there are second dwellings you will need a groundwater license and to pay a fee. The new act creates opportunity for local governance of watersheds. CVRD will send a letter of intent for local governance. The BC observation well network is on-line. It shows disturbing trends of aquifer levels lowering. Some districts are putting moratoriums on new wells and users. When the Watershed board formed raising the weir was off the table and now it is the number one concern. Shaw Creek has been identified as the most valuable habitat on Lake Cowichan. Hopefully the property owners and CVRD will work to preserve most of it.

Discussion

Lori- the upper governments are not doing their mandated jobs and it is falling on local governments.

Dave- the federal government doesn't have jurisdiction over water and the provincial government doesn't have enough boots on the ground.

Todd-Does the fee structure charge enough to be effective?

Dave – the fees aren't much but maybe over time there is hope that the large users would have to pay more.

Todd- asked about fracking

Dave- Most people hear or know of fracking being used to squeeze hydrocarbons out of the ground. They sometime use hydro flushing where water is injected into the ground to open rock fractures to allow water into a well. Hydro flushing is used to create links between wells and can be a valuable tool in certain situations.

Tim- there is a complex relationship between surface and ground water. We have 7 large wells pumping water out of our aquifer and not returning it. What are these impacts?

Dave- if they were allowed to pump full speed it would take about 1cms from the acquirer.

Kyle- Greywater. BC now allows the use of grey water in new developments. This needs to be used more. It will need more discussion and use in the mainstream.

Dave- the Highlands (Victoria) now allows the use of composting toilets and grey water in their bylaws. These need to be built into the building codes.

Loren-there is a lack of water storage. What are the views on water storage? How do we create bulk water storage? Some areas in California and in Parksville they are taking surface water and then pumping it back in to bring up the aquifers. In Parksville this released arsenic from the groundwater. This could have major effects. We do not have a Regional Growth Strategy. We need one.

Future Plans, discussion on taking minutes at future meetings

Cowichan Land Trust has been taking the minutes and was originally being paid \$100 per meeting for this. With Meg gone there is less capacity at CLT to do this now and \$100 does not cover the wages for taking the minutes. The last payment was March 2015 of \$500 from CVRD and before that Nov 2014 \$500 from Western Forest Products.

Kai suggested rotating minute taking between the partners for example each group or some of the groups take turns once or twice a year. Most people did not want to take

the minutes. A couple thought they could take minutes or have someone from their groups take minutes once or twice a year.

It was discussed that minutes are important and they keep us open and transparent.

Kai to come back with an actual cost of time spent on taking minutes.

Next Meeting

Thursday October 20, 2016