

## COWICHAN STEWARDSHIP ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

**DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2019: 9am to 12 pm**      **Location: Fish Health building,**  
**Freshwater Fisheries Society, 1080 Wharnccliffe Rd, Duncan**      [www.cowichanstewardship.ca](http://www.cowichanstewardship.ca)

**FOLLOWED BY SEASONAL SOCIAL, 12 TO 1:30.**

We meet on the unceded lands of Cowichan Tribes. Everyone is always welcome. Please feel free to arrive and leave whenever is necessary. Please allow enough room in parking lot for Fish Hatchery vehicles and emergency vehicles, **no parking in yellow painted areas**. Please bring a coffee cup and for December meeting dishes, cutlery and finger food. Also, Donations to Christmas in Cowichan event. See covering email for details.

**The Roundtable works together in a kind and respectful manner at all times.** The Round the Table portion of the meeting consists of all attenders having a few minutes each of a report out time. Length of individual's speaking time is determined by how many people are in attendance. Longer presentations have to be booked in advance.

Time	Agenda Item
9:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Welcome and acknowledgement that our meeting is on Unceded Cowichan Tribes territory.</li> <li>● Appreciation to Freshwater Fisheries Society for hosting our meetings.</li> <li>● Regrets. Karen Deck, Bob Crandall, Edmund Duggan, Sheila Paul.</li> <li>● Attendance list to be circulated. Genevieve Singleton, Parker Jefferson, Rick Bryan, Tom Rutherford, Bruce Coates, Eric Marshall, Barry Hetschko, Elodie Roger, Emma Ross, Pam Jorgenson, Jeff Moore, Maeve Maguire, Ian Morrison, Christine Rikley, Jeremy Damborg, Jacquie Taylor, Karen Jarvis, Jane Kilthei, Jamison Atkinson, Danny Swanson, Pamela Williams, Tim Kulchyski (second half), Alastair Macgregor (second half)</li> </ul>
9:10-9:30 CSRT Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recording of meeting notes is done by members taking turns. Thank you to Karen Deck for doing November notes. Pam Jorgenson is taking December notes. Tom Rutherford volunteered for January notes.</li> <li>● Thanks to Edmund for looking after the website in the past. Looking for someone to take this role on moving forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Includes: publishing agendas, minutes, mailing subscription updates, meet occasionally with Chairs, need reliable internet access, no programming skills required, actively involved in Roundtable.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Update from Tim and Genevieve re meeting with Cowichan Tribes chief and council on Nov. 26, Genevieve updated on this during Roundtable</li> <li>● Update re future speakers: Kevin Pellet will be our January speaker. Looking for other groups to offer presentations for future meetings.</li> </ul>

9:45

**Round the Table**, check-ins and updates. Please remember if your report out more than three simple points it **must** be emailed to secretary or co-chairs if you expect it to be recorded in full in the meeting notes.

**Parker Jefferson, Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society** – reviewing plans for next year. Planning more riparian restoration and river cleanup. Did One Cowichan presentation to Lake Cowichan Council – agreed to acknowledge a local climate emergency.

**Jacque Taylor, Cowichan Bring Back Bluebirds, BC Conservation Foundation**– overview of group. Spring will include a Beer and Burger fundraiser to support the organization. Also picked as Charity of the Month at the ‘Return It’ bottle depot – please offer your bottles in support of the group!

**Jeremy Damborg, BC Conservation Foundation** – involved in ~12 projects in the Cowichan watershed.

**Karen Jarvis** – local resident interested in the watershed. Relieved that proposal for large development was opposed (and developers have withdrawn it) in Lake Cowichan (near Hudgrove Road; Race track proposal voted down).

**Jane Kilthei, Estuary Nature Centre** – still looking for someone to cover the coordinator’s maternity leave; please pass along names of people looking for a 0.6 work commitment. Tomorrow evening there will be a party (potluck) at the HUB from 6-10pm – fundraiser for the Nature Centre. Lots of students engaged in various activities. In 2020 BCCF will be helping support various programming/activities related to work parties and watershed education. Please let ENC know if you have ideas for watershed education/restoration work.

**Jamison Atkinson, BCCF** – presenting with **Jeremy**  
**Danny Swanson, BCCF** – observer

**Rick Bryan, Paddlesport BC** – Coming out of a long dry stretch, and underscoring the value of the Cowichan River (it was the only local river that was being used for paddling). Tandem and solo courses coming up in January – let Rick know if you’re interested.

**Maeve Maguire, MLA Furstenau’s Office** – Sonia will sit again in February in the legislature. Re watershed work, Sonia is still advocating for the contaminated soils site in Shawnigan (weekly meetings), as land may turn over to Crown. Forestry is a challenging question right now with the workers/tree cutting on both sides of the discussion, and she’s hearing from both sides. *The CSRT appreciates Sonia’s involvement.*

**Christine Rikley, BC Parks** – Responsible for a large area of Parks, including much of the South Island and the Cowichan area. Working with BCCF staff and volunteers with restoration activities at the Stoltz Group Site. Don Cadden is retiring (regional director for west coast), so leadership change is coming.

**Ian Morrison, Vice Chair of CVRD and Area Director** – Interested to hear more about Weir discussions (recent meeting in Nanaimo). Observing CLRSS is going strong. Spectacular news in Electoral Area F: Mesachie’s septic/sewer system are right next to Bear Lake, so adjacent field gets inundated when water levels rise. New field will be established East of Honeymoon Bay – a legitimate sewage treatment plant that will serve a huge section of Southshore Road (to end of pavement). Exploratory drilling in past years found a very large freshwater well, which will provide future good quality, high volume water (Honeymoon Bay Water Service Area).

**Pam Jorgenson, Mosaic** – Mosaic curtailments are in effect, and likely to be in effect into January. Hard times for a number of forest companies on the Island, and their contractors. Did the Day of Giving in Lake Cowichan and took some donations to local community groups.

**Jeff Moore, CVRD** – Flood Mapping. The CVRD has hired Northwest Hydraulic Consultants (NHC) to update the flood mapping for the Lower Cowichan & Koksilah, plus the Riverbottom Road area. This will update the flood maps to federal and provincial standards, and will take into account climate projections, both in terms of increased rainfall as well as sea level rise. These maps are used to set flood construction levels so development can avoid floodplains or be built to withstand flooding. The project will wrap up in the summer of 2020. As one part of the project, NHC will be doing bathymetric mapping of the Cowichan River in the area of Stoltz Bluffs down past Sandy Pool and the Tzart-Lam Reserve. This will involve up to three days of fieldwork on the river in a jet boat with a depth sounder doing cross-sections of the river. The work is planned for the week of January 6, but this timing may shift depending on flows and availability of crews / equipment. We wanted to give local residents and river users a heads up as to why the boat will be on the river.

Cowichan Lake Weir. Leroy Van Wieren has been hired to manage the weir project. This project is funded by the BC Salmon Restoration and Innovation Fund and involves the detailed design work for a new weir as well as determining the natural boundary of Cowichan Lake.

Drinking Water and Watershed Protection Program. Work continues on developing a strategy for the program. Two workshops have been held with a technical committee

including local, provincial, and federal governments, First Nations, stewardship groups, industry, and others. Parker and Tom are part of the technical committee. Other focused input sessions have been held with different CVRD divisions and a further workshop is planned for January. A strategy will be brought forward to the Board early in 2020.

**Emma Ross, Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (SMWS)** – new with the group as the engagement specialist

**Elodie Roger, Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society** – strong plan in place for 2020. Working hard on parrotfeather issue and building a plan to limit its spread. Building relationships with local residents around Somenos and Quamichan, and working on localized restoration activities. Mapping will be taking place to identify riparian areas from Somenos Lake to Mount Prevost, and to work with local residents to improve riparian quality.

**Barry Hetschko, SMWS** – Declaring a salmon emergency in the Somenos Watershed. Want North Cowichan to consider land use decision making to ensure any changes to land use consider this emergency. New hospital and new high school will be in the Somenos watershed and should find ways to limit impacts to water quality and salmon habitat. *Anecdotally, very few salmon noted near Bings Creek, and eagle presence has been extremely low. Low rain (water) level has presumably affected salmon spawning activity.*

Storm water management – there is technology for filtration prior to runoff from new or renovated builds (like parking lots/other) entering creeks. But this has to be planned for – it is more costly.

**Eric Marshall, Cowichan Valley Naturalist Society (CVNS)** – Wednesday swan, goose, raptor count... weather has been bad so counts very difficult! Trumpeter swan numbers increasing in the past little while, and now remain steady. Canada geese also generally increasing in numbers (~1600 last week), this week down to 700. Eagle numbers are slowly climbing but not quite at the levels that are expected around Christmas. Nature Cowichan blog has additional information. Coastal water bird surveys (Dec 8) - >300 American widgeon, 80 bufflehead and common goldeneye noted. Sealions departed about a week ago – things are quiet in the Bay! Christmas Bird Count will be the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary – January 1, post Count meeting at the Freshwater Fishery Center – all welcome.

**Bruce Coates, CVNS** – enjoyed reading the CIPS report related to herring numbers. Pacific Wild will be speaking to CVN for February Coffee House talk (at Freshwater Fishery Center). Eric M works on the newsletter for the CVN, and may be something

	<p>that is circulated amongst the different organizations at the CSRT table. Reach out to Eric to be put on the list of recipients.</p> <p><b>Tom Rutherford, Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB)</b> – Last time Cowichan Lake was at full storage was Feb 10 2019 (unprecedented). Hoping today’s rain might get things to full. Weir decision making – some at CSRT table are pushing to carefully consider timing of weir water release decisions in spring. Often a very rushed decision in spring. This year, meetings began a few weeks ago amongst various partners. Goal is to build a simple model that creates a defensible approach for decision making. Englishman River may have a model that could be applied. Small working group will report back to the bigger group of partners in February. Lots of values that must be considered in the discussion.</p> <p>Koksilah low flows – no lake storage in this system as a solution for low flows. CWB is working with Cowichan Tribes and FLNRO to explore the possibility of creating a Water Sustainability Plan. Sonia Furstenau and Ian Morrison have helped pitch this idea. Outreach will likely be built to keep all parties informed of process and activities. Currently a scoping process underway via FLNRO staff. Likely several years to get to full completion of Plan.</p> <p>CWB is reinvigorating their various working groups. Thanks to Maeve, Sonia, Ian for their attention to values/issues in the watershed; thanks to BCCF for what they do and their expertise.</p> <p><b>Pamela Williams, Estuary Nature Center</b> - observer</p>
10:30-10:50	Break
10:50- 11:10	<p><b>Genevieve Singleton, Cowichan Valley Naturalists</b> - Christmas meal (all welcome) by Cowichan Tribes. Encouraging donations.</p> <p>Tim and Genevieve went to a Cowichan Tribes meeting on Nov 26: Showed pictures of the Quw’utsun River Day. Lots of support for the next event in 2021, and more relationship building planned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genevieve was a delegate at the last CVRD board meeting where she expressed her deep concern about changes in the Parks Acquisition Fund. This fund was approved by public referendum in 2008. The fund was at ~\$853,000 in 2018 and dropped down to \$150,000 in 2019 as a result of some of the new services being established in the CVRD. The fund will likely be raised back up to \$400,000/year in 2020. It could be at \$1,405,493 max in 2020. Genevieve spoke to her long involvement in Parks in BC and the importance of having funds on hand so as to be nimble for unexpected opportunities. Eagle Heights, the newest BC Provincial Park, which Genevieve and other CSRT members were heavily involved with would not have been possible</li> </ul>

	<p>without the major involvement of the CVRD. Having funds in the Bank showed their commitment. In the end no CVRD funds were used, since their efforts with BCWF led to receiving a \$400,000 grant for the purchase. If CVRD does not look fully committed to future parks it will be harder to save more land for future generations. Canada's target is to have 17 per cent of lands protected by 2020, CVRD has 7.1 per cent.</p> <p>In addition, Regional granting programs have been cancelled at the CVRD Board level. Encouraging people to comment to their Area Directors.</p> <p>Disappointed to hear that Herring fishery back on in 2020.</p> <p>Genevieve generally does salmon walks in the fall, and was disappointed that the opportunities to speak to young students about salmon was vastly diminished due to low salmon abundance in the areas typically visited.</p> <p><b>CSRT Summary for 2019:</b> 11 meetings, over 20 speaker presentations, Quw'utsun River Day, July Field Day, lots of volunteer hours logged by various group members</p>
<p>11:10-12:00</p>	<p><b>Jamison Atkinson and Jeramy Damborg of the Lantzville office of BC Conservation Foundation discussing their many projects in the Cowichan Watershed</b></p> <p>Please request slides for more details.</p> <p>Some current local projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts of Log booms on Seal Predation of Adult Cowichan Chinook. Working with Cowichan Tribes. Had an interesting year because log booms weren't essentially present other than as boom sticks. PSF is funding again in 2020. Collected data in 2017 and 2019. Hypothesis hasn't been tested in other areas.</li> <li>• Sunscreen Contamination in Cowichan River. Results show high values when compared to other systems (but still very low levels in the water). Exploring more opportunities for funding to continue evaluating implications. Volunteer opportunities may be available.</li> <li>• Cowichan River Steelhead Population Assessment. Tagging fish at different life stages, and tracking returns to try to learn more about this stable steelhead population.</li> <li>• Coastal Restoration Fund: Stoltz Bluff (maintenance and monitoring); Riparian Planting in Cowichan and Koksilah Rivers.</li> <li>• Pit Tagging of Chinook and Coho. Hoping these will be ongoing projects. Cowichan Tribes is concerned about the fish fence preventing upstream migration of Chinook during low flows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can tag fish from 60mm and greater in size. Each tag has a coil in it that is associated with a unique serial number (code), which, when it gets close to the antennae (pit array) the code in the tag is recorded within a computer and can be related to the specific fish. A fish needs to be approx. within 1m of a pit array to be recorded. Greatly reduces handling of tagged fish, improves efficiency and reliability of data. Data exchange re tagged fish is happening across Pacific Northwest.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Otolith Microchemistry for Chinook and Steelhead. Hoping for more funding moving forward to continue studies.</li> <li>• Cowichan Lake Lamprey – small study with MOE.</li> <li>• Cowichan Shoreline Stewardship – supporting volunteers doing planting and outreach to reduce shoreline erosion and improve fish habitat.</li> </ul>
12:00 noon	Meeting ALWAYS ends promptly, thank you. Please help with cleanup of room

Meetings are the 3rd Thursday of the month, except August. Please provide speaker suggestions for upcoming meetings. Dec. 19, lunch potluck following meeting.

Upcoming speakers: Jan. 16, 2020, new decade! Kevin Pellett of DFO speaking on Chinook Research Updates