

COWICHAN STEWARDSHIP ROUNDTABLE NOTES www.cowichanstewardship.ca

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2021: 9am to 12:00 pm Zoom meeting, invite will be sent out prior to mtg.

Questions? Write to co-chairs at cowichanstewardshiproundtable@gmail.com

We will be Zoom meeting on the lands of Coast Salish peoples. Everyone is always welcome. Please feel free to arrive and leave Zoom meeting whenever necessary. **The Roundtable works together in a collaborative, kind and respectful manner at all times. Please note the Agenda timing is approximate only!**

- Please set up and be ready for meeting by 8:45 am to allow for glitches.
- Welcome and acknowledgement that we meet on Coast Salish peoples' land
- Appreciation to Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson and the Cowichan Watershed Board for kindly donating the Zoom platform for our meeting.
- Regrets: **Joy Wade: Fundy Aqua Services, Kate Miller: Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), Rick Bryan: Paddlers, Stephanie Cottell: Cowichan Land Trust (CLT) , Alistair MacGregor, MP**
- Attendees: **Genevieve Singleton: Co-Chair Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT), Parker Jefferson: Co-chair CSRT, Karen Deck : Save Our Holmes (SOH), Jim Deck: SOH, Barry Hetschko: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (SMWS) CVNS, Gail Mitchell: Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS), Edmond Duggan: Paddlers , Lyndon Keeping: Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS), Jane Kilthei: Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre (CENC), Ian Morrison: Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) Director, Area I, Sarah Grieves: North Cowichan Municipal District, Bruce Coates: North Cowichan Environmental Committee, CVNS, CLT, Rick Ptolemy: * , Cole Smith: MLA Sonia Furstenau's office, Geoff Strong: Environmental Scientist, Joe Saysell: Friends of the Cowichan, Dave Preikshot: North Cowichan Municipal District, Heather Pritchard: CVRD, , Leroy Van Wieren: Project Manager, Cowichan Weir, Craig Medding: BC Parks liaison officer, Elodie Roger: biologist , Michael Barr: retired conservation biologist, angler, Pam Jorgenson: Mosaic, Richard Lake: Sidney Anglers**

CSRT Business

- River Day, Sept. 25: River Day, Sept. 21 will be in person or on line. Please be in touch with Genevieve or Parker if you would like to assist.
- TOR carried over
- Kate Miller sent regrets that she could not speak today. The CVRD office has been badly damaged by a water leak and will be closed for at least four weeks.

Round the Table

- Lyndon Keeping CLRSS: Leroy Van Wieren spoke at the CLRSS meeting. The weir is on schedule and under budget. CLRSS will promote information on the structure of the weir and the interconnectedness of the watershed. CLRSS is working with the Cowichan Valley Arts Council on watersheds through the lens of the arts. CLRSS is working with Tube Shack as summer comes.
- Barry Hetschko SMWS, CVNS: Gravel work is being done in raised approaches to the board walk at the Open-Air Classroom, Somenos Marsh and viewing tower to provide earlier access in spring. Also improving wheelchair access. Derek's Walk is opened up with picnic tables, benches and a talking circle. At the Somenos management meeting, discussion took place about the idea of turning the old police station into a wetland.

- Sarah Grieves NC: introduced herself. She will be working with Dave Preikshot at NC.
- Cole Smith, Sonia Fursteneau assistant: The Legislature in Victoria has just resumed. Among issues of interest are COVID monitoring, whether the Professional Governance Act is accomplishing its goals, proposed changes to the Forest Range Practices Act. Greens want greater conversations with stakeholders and time lines created around old growth logging. He mentioned questionable logging practices on the south end of the island, but didn't give details.
- Edmond Duggan: The study of a play feature on the river at the weir site is close to its funding goal. Tickets will be on sale soon.
- Geoff Strong: Commented on the "anemic" federal government climate plan. He thinks the North Cowichan climate plan is better thought out.
- Dave Preikshot, NC: Is excited to have Sarah Grieves on board. Among her tasks will be monitoring climate change, and working with Indigenous, federal and provincial governments on the reduction of CO2 emissions, reviewing emissions modeling, carbon tax. Sarah Grieves brings experience in public communications, aquatic management, invasive species. Dave mentioned an environmental protection policy which would address issues such as endangered species and wetland stewardship. Genevieve mentioned how challenging it is to make changes to protocols around cutting near creeks and roads. MOTI has jurisdiction, agriculture on private lands have control, but Water Sustainability Act, riparian protection and RAPP are avenues to follow with concerns. Invasive species are the first to take over after logging. The province sets regulations and consequences. Dave has been instructed to inform North Cowichan internal staff on issues such as this. Ian Morrison added that Encon, who have a contract for mowing, trimming make no accommodations and do not always fulfill their entire contract. He added that utilities also have authority over their areas. Barry Hetschko was very concerned about the lack of awareness and care for the protection of rare native plants such as fawn lilies in parks. Fawn lilies take 7 years to regrow. Genevieve will request a meeting with NC re this.
- Jane Kilthei CENC: Native species on trails in Hecate Park have been decimated three times by CVRD. ENC is changing interpretive signs re: native species. CENC is in the final year of eco-action grant They are hosted a workshop with Dave Polster and Genevieve Singleton on restoration. CENC is looking for opportunities for more education and field work. There was a lot of interest in drip irrigation workshop. Swift water training which provides credentials and skills such as stream monitoring is important for those working in the field.
- Joe Saysell : Joe expressed his strong concerns for the watersheds in second growth forests that are being heavily logged. Cole Smith said that the natural resources ministry is being restructured and that Sonia Furstenau is concerned and active on issues such as this. Joe spoke about the damage done to Stanley Creek riparian area, noting that the developers went ahead without approval. Bird Cage Creek is gone; filled with gravel. You can note the new bench next to the new gas station in Lake Cowichan. The bench is over where Birdcage Creek used to be. Joe spoke about the pressure on the upper river, reminding us that drift boat anchors, and wading on the redds during the months of December, January February and March is harmful to the life cycle of salmon, trout and steelhead.
- Ian Morrison CVRD: Responding to Joe Saysell's concerns, Ian wonders if Lake Cowichan should consider increasing oversight. FLNRORD is looking at how to streamline and increase efficiency.

The Ministry of the Environment has created the Water Sustainability Act, but FLNRORD is the enforcer. There are already provisions for local jurisdiction in the act.

- Richard Lake: Sidney Anglers had a successful Zoom Annual General Meeting. Since some events have been cancelled, they can fund other initiatives. The many members support the idea of protecting redds through the winter months. Pre 1988 the upper river was protected. Richard said his group would support Friends of Cowichan re protection of redds, Genevieve will put Joe and Richard in touch.
- Bruce Coates: The Cowichan Land Trust's project around Somenos clean water action is finished and the report is done. BC Nature and Nature Canada's webinar on nature based solutions to climate change is on April 25. Re: creating a nature corridor on the dike, a dike inspector said it wouldn't obstruct inspection. He asks, "Will there be a clean-up on the lower Cowichan?" Genevieve reported that there will be depending on covid.
- Gail Mitchell: CVNS has a caretaker role in the IBA (Important Bird Area) in Cowichan Bay. Citizen scientists and education are important. CVNS have been out looking at mosses, and flowers will be next. The Facebook page is a success. . Gail is now writing a blog. Education about rain gardens helping with run-off is coming up. Genevieve will speak about Lamprey at an evening programme.
- Michael Barr: expressed his gratitude to the CSRT for their expertise and advocacy.
- Pam Jorgenson, Mosaic: The helicopter logging planned for Hill 60 has been cancelled. Mosaic has spruced up their 12 campgrounds. They are working on ways to support volunteering for clean-up. She will share more at a future meeting.
- Elodie Roger: Expressed concerns about the impacts of human activity on the natural world. She is looking for ways to raise awareness of natural habitats through education. She is looking for the most efficient ways to plant flowers so that pollinators will thrive. Elodie is also looking for ways to raise awareness and increase direct action on the ground. Nature corridors are especially important; seeking to discuss these issues with staff from North Cowichan, CVRD and Duncan.
- Heather Pritchard, CWB: Working on the fish project in Chemainus and Koksilah rivers, assessing riparian health with Cowichan Tribes identifying culturally significant plants.
- Craig Medding: As a BC Parks liaison officer he wants to be aware of needs and concerns from the community, is interested in getting more information about rare plants and trail clearing from Genevieve.
- Genevieve Singleton: Genevieve continues to do Cowichan Lake Lamprey and has 5 DFO signs. and is looking for public boat ramp suggestion to place them. Alistair MacGregor's office has provided \$500 for River Day expenses.

Presentation by Brendan Anderson, Senior Fisheries Biologist, West Coast Region, Ministry of FLNRO and Erin Rechisky, Fisheries Scientist, Kintama Research Services: Fishing and Natural Mortality of Cutthroat Trout in Cowichan Lake Presentation to be sent out by email.

Next meeting: May 20: Heather Pritchard, speaking on "Protecting Land In The Cowichan Valley. A look at tools and approaches".