

## **Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable Meeting Notes**

**June 16, 2022, 9 – 12 on Zoom**

Please address corrections/additions to

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[www.cowichanstewardship.com](http://www.cowichanstewardship.com)

Welcome and acknowledgement that our co-chairs host the meeting from the unceded traditional territory of Cowichan Tribes.

**Regrets:** Parker Jefferson: Co-chair Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT), Jacquie Taylor: Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS) Bluebird Project, Rick Bryan: Recreational Paddlers, Tim Kulchyski: Cowichan Tribes.

**Attendees:** Tom Rutherford: Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB), Genevieve Singleton: Co-chair Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT), Karen Deck: Save Our Holmes Society (SOH), Jim Deck: Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS), Edmond Duggan: Paddling Community, Lisa Fox: Watersheds BC, Cole Smith: representing Sonia Furstenau, Barry Hetschko: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (SMWS), Katy Fulton: BC Parks, Stephanie Cottell: Cowichan Land Trust (CLT), Joe Saysell: Friends of the Cowichan, Bruce Coates: Cowichan Valley Naturalist Society (CVNS), Ian Morrison: Director, Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), Melissa Nottingham: Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Martha Lescher,

### **CSRT Business**

1. We are hosted on Cowichan Tribes unceded territory.
2. Appreciation to Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson and the Cowichan Watershed Board for kindly donating the Zoom platform for our meeting.
3. Note taking: any changes to last month's notes? Karen Deck was glad to help CSRT by taking notes this month. Reminder of request to send in written notes, email preferred.
4. Terms of Reference carried over. Genevieve and Rick working on this.
5. Emma Ross is adding meeting notes to the website.
6. Thursday, July 21 – 9:30 -1 pm at Stoltz Pool Cowichan River Provincial Park annual field meeting. Alexandra Morton is not able to attend. Those interested in helping Genevieve with this event please contact her.
7. River Day Sunday September 25 10:00- 3:00. Grants and donations appear to be enough to fund the scaled back version. Activities planned so far: Lakeview paddling with Rick Bryan, Weir information with Bryan Houle, Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society at Saywell Park, Stoltz with BC Parks, Estuary Nature Centre at Hecate Park. Other booths may share venues with those already locked in. Genevieve has reached out to Cowichan Tribes for their participation.
8. No update as to when we can return to Fish Health Building. Genevieve has investigated the Hub, Cowichan Station and that is a possibility. We will keep you updated,

## **Round the Table:**

**Jennifer Shepherd, Community Researcher, Xwulqw'selu Connections:** (With apologies from Karen for not getting this into the CSRT May 2022 notes on time):

### **Volunteer to Monitor Xwulqw'selu Streamflow July - September 2022**

Are you concerned about how low the water gets in the summer? Join a team of community volunteers to monitor water in the streams and creeks that flow into Xwulqw'selu Sta'lo (Koksilah River), or get involved in other ways.

Salmon are struggling to get upstream and relationships between water and land are strained year after year. To better understand the specific connection of groundwater to streams and creeks that feed into the mainstem.

Our project supports BC's first ever Water Sustainability Plan for the Xwulqw'selu watershed, led by Cowichan Tribes. Community monitoring over time should help to sustain all life in Xwulqw'selu communities, lands, and waters for generations to come.

Each team monitors a few specific sites every other week from July through September. We provide free training and tools while you have fun, learn, and contribute to the project's outcomes. Quw'utsun Mustimuhw and Indigenous relations will be compensated for their time and involvement.

Interested? Have questions?

Please contact Ella at [ellamartindale@uvic.ca](mailto:ellamartindale@uvic.ca) or Jennifer at (236) 800-9011 for more information. Welcoming orientation begins June 13 (evening), with follow-up sessions June 20, 23, 25.

Ask us about other ways to get involved this summer or let us know about what you're doing already in relation to the project.

**Stephanie Cottell, CLT:** Salmonid Enhancement and Habitat Advisory Board (SEHAB) meeting June 26-28. This board of community stewardship groups and community hatcheries liaises with DFO Salmon Enhancement Program management. Email [stephanie@cowichanlandtrust.ca](mailto:stephanie@cowichanlandtrust.ca) to submit input for our area. (Lower Vancouver Island) by Wednesday, June 22. I will be attending as our area alternate rep.

**Katie Fulton, BC Parks:** Katie will replace Peter Woods. She gave a brief bio, including her history in the valley. Welcome back Katie!

**Lisa Fox, Watersheds BC:** Lisa has started a new job with Watersheds BC is currently administering a new Indigenous Watershed Initiative (IWI) in collaboration with MakeWay Charitable Foundation. This IWI received \$15 million for 2 years of funding Indigenous-led watershed projects across the province. The first round of funding is dedicated to the continuation of Indigenous led projects that were previously funded under the Healthy Watersheds Initiative. <https://healthywatersheds.ca/>  
The first round of IWI funding applications closed on June 6<sup>th</sup>, with 23 applications under review with notifications going out to project. The second round of funding will be for new Indigenous-led watershed projects (those not previously funded through HWI) and an announcement will be

made on this in late summer, early fall. This second round is intended to ensure equity (regional and supporting capacity) of Indigenous-led watershed initiatives across BC. For more information: <https://watershedsbc.ca/indigenous-watersheds-initiative/>

**Jacque Taylor, CVNS Bluebird Project:** We are happy to report that the Bring Back the Bluebirds project is having an encouraging start to the season. The first two translocations of the season have resulted in two pairs of bluebirds raising clutches in Cowichan Valley. One of which just fledged 5 young yesterday! The other pair is feeding two young nestlings.

After a slight delay due to the Avian flu, we are back on track to complete more translocations in June. We hope to bring two or three families of bluebirds over.

Three bluebirds from last year's translocation returned this year, one is paired with a female brought over this year. The other two have been a mystery to us, showing up fleetingly and disappearing again, only to show themselves again later.

**Joe Saysell, Friends of the Cowichan:** Joe has heard nothing from the provincial government about closing the upper river in the winter months to prevent harm to redds. Industrial logging in the hills above the Cowichan River and the damage to the riparian area near Stanley Creek remain a huge concern.

**Karen Deck, SOH:** As a large area above the community of Youbou has been deferred from logging by Mosaic, our lens has widened to address our ongoing concerns about logging in the era of climate change and how the Private Managed Forest Lands Act will address the need for a change in forestry practices as warmer, wetter, wilder weather becomes a more concerning reality.

**Cole Smith, representing Sonia Furstenau:** Cole updated the group about Sonia's legislative efforts on budget estimates, concerns about storm drainage infrastructure and hazardous waste handling oversight issues.

**Ian Morrison, CVRD:** Ian's updates include CVRD's search for a new CAO, chum fry release he witnessed, the ongoing concerns riparian area damage.

**Jim Deck, CLRSS:** Our AGM is June 26, 2022 at the Cowichan Lake Curling Lounge. We support the Roundtable and its holding a Rivers Day Celebration on September 25, 2022.

**Tom Rutherford, CWB:** Tom encouraged Katie to go out on the river with Joe Saysell. He expressed his gratitude to those who wished him well and spoke from their heart about his contributions to the natural world and the knowledge he shared so generously with all those he interacted with.

**Genevieve Singleton, Co-Chair Cowichan Stewardship Round Table:** **Genevieve is busy organizing our next meeting and Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Skweyul for Sept. 25. The Knockenback Knotweed Committee consisting of Dave Polster, Dave Lindsay, Cheri Ayers and Genevieve has started another field season. Nature walks have been in high demand this spring due to relaxation of restrictions.**

**Speaker:** Many thanks to Jamieson Atkinson for his sharing his work on the Life History Investigations of Comox Lake Cutthroat Trout via Otolith Microchemistry.

**Future Meetings:**

July 21:

9:30 to 1 pm: Field Day at Stoltz Pool, Cowichan River Provincial Park

August 18, possibly outdoor meeting to plan River Day

September 15- planning River Day

October 20 – Tristan Douglas speaking on Blue Carbon Storage in Cowichan Estuary (not determined yet if in person or on Zoom)

Future presentation, Elodie Roger speaking on removal of Invasive Yellow Flag Iris