

Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable



April 16,
2015

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Paul Rickard at 9 am.

In attendance

Meg Loop (CLT), Shona Smith (DFO), Keith Lawrence, Pricilla Brewer & Kate Millar (CVRD), Paul Rickard & Ted Brookman (BCWF), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Catherine Macey (Jean Crowder MP), Rodger Hunter (CWB), Goetz Shouholz & Jeff Strong (CERCA), Claude Theriault & Ken Clements (Sidney Anglers), Ian Morrison (CVRD Area F), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Tracy Michalski (MLNRO – Fish & Wildlife), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Don Closson (BC Parks), Derek Haupt (Western Forest Products), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Jamie Smith & Nikkie Wright (Sea Change), Elizabeth Bailey (Somenos), Genevieve Singleton (Nature interpreter), Leanne Hodges (Artist), Roger Hart (Environment Commission),

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the March meeting were circulated and approved.

Roundtable updates

One Cowichan - Launch Solar Energy Initiative to draw attention to the use and potential of solar energy within the Valley.

CLRSS - Will have a meeting this Saturday around safe boating.

CERCA - Bridge completed in the Wescan terminal. Small school of chum going through. Completed removal of logs from Mariner's Island, planning another day for garbage clean up, etc. Herring wrapping project was not that successful, no spawn yet. Making plans for a Nature Trail on the Wescan terminal.

BC Parks - Will be going to Broadway Run to see if planting willow stakes took.

Sidney Anglers - Deep Cover and Brentwood Bay had no spawn for herring wrap either.

Cowichan Shipwatch - Main goal is to remove anchorage within Cowichan Bay, meeting 7pm April ___ at the Maritime Centre to look at data, shipping increases, impacts and safety.

Bob Crandall - Lots of work in schools and storm drain marking with the kids. Working on fish trapping and genetic on fish for tributaries.

Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi - The focus of the Liquid Waste Amendment is to relocate the sewage outflow. First info session at the end of March, great representation of local business, commercial fishery, and stewardship group. Upcoming consultation, Saanich Nations and Li'aix'in nation. April 28th Community Meeting, reporting to Cowichan Tribes same Day, May 6th presentation to North Cowichan council.

Area F Director - Saturday April 18 10 am at Sports Arena, "Cowichan Lake Matters" creating family based recreational activities. What enforcement opportunities exist, safe/healthy/alive, boating safety, know the rules and the responsibilities.

Dave Lindsey - Heather Mountain snow pillow nearly complete. Knotweed Control Program on the Cowichan, big cooperative effort, funding has had a snag in regards to herbicide use. Timberwest Pilot Project is going ahead. Beaver Lake has hit a snag, Provincial government is ok with the process but now they want the dam to be lowered (no official note why).

- Is it possible to improve communication with FLNRO? Utilize local MLA's to improve communication.

Cowichan Valley Naturalists - Monthly shorebird count, ducks are down, one osprey is back. Mute swans are up. 26 on the North side, 2 on the South and seem to be disparate groups. naturalists were working on Busy Place Creek to get some interpretive signs.

North Cowichan - Water conservation, looking at revising and harmonizing waterworks policies, such as water restrictions. Change the implementation date for stage 1 restrictions, instead of June 1 bring back to May 1. Focus on promotion of micro-drip and native plantings.

Jean Crowder - Derelict Vessel bill reading April 29, gaining support from all levels of community and governments.

Carol Hartwig - have an article to circulate, it is slightly political.

* How do people feel about receiving information that is embedded within a political framework, put a disclaimer it is for interest and not the views of the roundtable. We agreed to send on pertinent information not more than one or two a week, make it clear in your request to send on information.

Ted Brookeman - Freshwater Fisheries got full funding totally due to recreation fresh/salt water fishing licenses. Lack of access to a traditional fishing spot on the Cowichan, more information required and follow up.

Catalyst Paper - Water Usage Committee now established at the Mill, includes all areas of the Mill. The weir was activated last month, might be changes happen. Hopefully can control the river better this year.

Osprey's aren't back yet. Would like to put up a webcam on an active osprey nest, but that next is too close to activity, may have to move it. 5 or 6 nests in the Mill.

Kerrie Davis - South Cowichan Liquid Waste Management plan as well.

Shona Smith, DFO CA - Still waiting for RFCPP funding allocations, still a couple weeks away. PSF funding will be announced once RFCPP has been announced. Hatchery release is going to happen. Unhatched fry into Somenos, least fed.

Jeff Moore - new staff member with CVRD.

Cheri Ayers - DFO does an enumeration project to release fry to determine survival of hatchery fly as they migrate down the river. Trap went in on the 7th, fish weren't large enough so released a week. So far have not been a lot of chinook, may not be moving down the river yet. The trap is in the thalweg, but chinook like the sides of the river. Catching many coho, little chum. Some peamouth chub (invasive, sticklebacks, sculpins. Working on the Watershed Health and Chinook Initiative, able to finish up. Focusing on volume 2 (status of chinook stocks/overview) and 3 (critical limiting factors), draft on Volume 1 and 4. Strategic pla, develop a table of contents for the Strategic Plan. Pick 6 different stocks that represent the region, plan is to provide a bunch of data that will go into a modeling exercise, to look at different scenarios to determine most beneficial management actions. Timeline is proposed for another 2 years, would like to make a presentation to the CSRT at a later date with Wilfe Ludki.

Genevieve Singleton - Bluebirds, one nest has eggs on the go. Able to go ahead with the transfer of bluebirds from the US. GOERT is unable to raise the money and will be letting staff go. May 31, Cow Bay Pub Beer & Burger fundraiser. Bluebirds were extirpated 1991 and would like to see this program can continue. Eagle Heights, nothing to report. Ladysmith looking to start its own roundtable. Sandy Pools, stakes that went in early spring and fall did really well, late spring did not take. Would like to try own pilot project.

Paul Rickard - Working with Jim Humprey's (Beaver Creek Resort), added costs that he has funded. Did find some additional funds from PSF. Quamichan verified that there was a fish kill this summer and significant time with zero dissolved oxygen. FLNRO concerned with Langford and Quamichan Lake, cormorants eat most of the stocked fish. Blackwater strain of trout are better at evading predators, but are piscivorous. Cowichan chinook have a very high straying rate of 4% versus other

Business

Regional Surface and Ground Water Management and Governance – Keith Lawrence

See presentation.

- any challenges to the region, diverse systems, and various authorities and agencies. Challenge to do something with all of it.
- Collectively across the region that Regional Water Management is important.
- Urban Systems will be brought back for second phase of this project, building on relationships further.
- CVRD is the lead, but it won't necessarily be owned or staffed by the regional district.
- 2016 BC government policies under the Water Sustainability act, should be in place to take advantage of them.

Questions:

- This appears to be an attempt to redo what we did 4 years ago. Then we needed to deal with water issues and all of the impacts. Process was created at high expense, for the Cowichan Water Basin Management 2-year study resulted in about 100 objectives and fed into Cowichan Watershed Management Board. Why not push through to support the Cowichan Watershed Board.
 - this is not an and/or reality. The goal is for a cohesive regional approach. Not to take away from the work of Cowichan Watershed Board, but how to make it broader? The Province is not going to divest authority to each watershed, isn't going to happen. A larger holder of the region that works with all the different watersheds would likely be most successful. Build alliances, relationships and framework.
 - Do not currently have an electoral mandate to manage water storage and levels in the lake, we need to get this. Can get the mechanisms in place to do this, grant and board approval do to the work and move this forward.
- Greater sense of urgency.
 - Work is proceeding right now for drought management and response. Two parallel tracks.
- Jigsaw puzzle that is incomplete and this project seems to be trying to put this puzzle together. Provincial government has a catch-22 with provincial governance and ownership, but then won't do anything. Strong disconnect from who own and administer the water, and the people on the ground experiencing. This may be one of the biggest challenge. How do we build this? They still build the legislation?
 - This is the intention of this project is to close these gaps. There is a higher chance of success to go as a region not an individual watershed. The Province has indicated they would like to divest some authority, but it will not be done on a watershed basis.

Watershed Board Update – Rodger Hunter

As of last night, the 3 members are John Lefybeur, Klaus Kuhn, Ian Morrison, Lori Ianninandinardo, David Anderson, Tim Kulchiyski, and Matthew Louie. Priority #1 for this year is the weir. Work to continue on the water quality, support on riparian work happening within the valley.

Flows working group did a great job working through the summer. Could get involved with the chinook issue. We have a short term issue and a long term issue to ensure enough water flow through the spring and summer. Feel like should have a lake specific tour as there is a lot to highlight and praise the great community. 6 videos of water woman and her origin story and struggle against her brother, Leaky Hoser. Speaker series begins next Wednesday talking about birds.

Water Quality. The Bay still has "right to poop" issue. A farmer is investing in a Bed Master which will reduce manure by 25% and bring the field load to more manageable for his acreage.

Central Sector Liquid Waste Plan – Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi

Liquid plan is from 1998/95, requirement to update every 5- 10 years. Key part is the central sewage treatment plan (JUB) and the outfall currently in the River, includes storm water management and non-point pollution. First priority is to move the outfall.

We will undertake study and pre-design to evaluate routing options. Doesn't say we will move. Will be spending a lot of time involving stakeholder and public meetings for support. The Plan is under the CVRD and CVRD staff is working on the project. Lease land from Cowichan Tribes, run by City of Duncan and North Cowichan. Public and technical committee, has people with technical backgrounds and advise on how to consult with the public and reach all needed groups. When the committee's make recommendations it goes to the Board.

Substantial impact assessment work. Won't be allowed to move forward without demonstrating level of work in impacts. Legal obligation to CT, JUB signed a lease with them for 49 years (began in 2011) stipulated to take all reasonable measures possible to move outfall by 2021. Environmentally, water flows are less predictable and may not be able to meet dilution levels. Once this amendment is finished, follow immediately by a non-point pollution and storm water.

Options:

- Irrigation: use effluent, difficulty to store water in many months when cannot irrigate x) City of Vernon
- Discharge to ground: We are in a very settled areas with many wells, unable to safely discharge to ground.

- Discharge to Other surface water: what is "no go" options in the area. Quamichan and Somenos identified as no go, discharge would still be within the system. Cowichan Bay was presented as an option but requires more information. Satellite channel was deemed as appropriate. Right now investigating community support for outflow. Catalyst suggested, would have to bring effluent up to drinking water standard and volume is minimal.

This is the first of many conversations with the roundtable in this process. What information would the roundtable like to see at future meetings? Are there any other locations within satellite channel that need to be protected?

- Timeline. Funding of this massive scale project. Federal Infrastructure Grant for Small Communities with a deadline of Feb 18th. Working with North Cowichan, so we need to get far enough in this process to be able to make this application. Hope to have this phase of the process completed by June.
- The engineering consultant to investigate the technology that is known or emerging in regards to pharmaceuticals and their treatment.
- Shellfish industry, prawning and crabbing recreationally and commercially. Heavy metals?
- Was there a cost analysis to tertiary treatment to raise it to drinking water standard versus moving it out to the marine environment? What would it cost to upgrade the treatment to drinking water quality?

Next Meeting

May 21, 2015