



Sept 17, 2015

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Genevieve Singleton at 9 am.

In attendance

Meg Loop (CLT), Keith Lawrence & Kate Millar (CVRD), Paul Rickard and Ted Brookman (BCWF), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Ian Morrison (CVRD Area F), Klaus Kuhn (Area I), Eric Marshall & Carol Hartwig (CVNS), Don Closson (BC Parks), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Genevieve Singleton (Nature interpreter), Chris Morley (Friends of the Cowichan), Ray Demarchi, (retired wildlife biologist), Alistair MacGregor, Peter Julian, Joshua Berson, Jennifer Hermary, and Jean Crowder (fed. NDP), Rod Carswell, Jean Atkinson & Di Gunderson (CLRSS), Barry Hetschko and Martha Lescher (SMWS), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), Ken Clements & Claude Theirault (Sidney Anglers), Helen Reid & Natalie Anderson (Cowichan Tribes), Brian Tutty (retired fisheries biologist), Tom Rutherford (DFO), Swarn Leung (HUB committee of concern for Koksilah watershed, Goetz Schuerholz (CERCA), Ron Diederichs (BC-FLNRO), Doug Routley (MLA Nanaimo-N. Cowichan), Brian Houle (Catalyst),
Regrets: Tim Kulchyski, Cheri Ayers, Jill Thompson, Bob Crandall, Morgan Kennah

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the August meeting were circulated and approved.

Roundtable updates

Parker Jefferson, One Cowichan- busy with the “get out the vote” campaign.

Ron Diederichs – Heard from Wooden Boat Society that pier needs repair. Preparing info bulletin, public can provide info to the committee, info session soon. Central Sector Liquid Waste Management Plan, route the outflow through the estuary. WFP renewal of log storage, studies on intertidal invertebrates. Impact of grounding of log booms on the estuary, and look to the cost of moving the storage into deep water.

Ray Demarchi – Wrapped up final meeting on track re septic system, on time. Two options rerouting, through Wescan terminal or overland.

Goetz Schuerholz– Stakeholder meeting for new nature trail along the causeway. Another meeting soon to discuss concerns. Brainstorm session with Bill Heath around kelp recovery, looking at extending kelp beds in our area. Unveiling a plaque at the bridge to show what the project was about. October 9th Dinner Gala fundraiser.

Kate Millar – Regional integrated planning strategy, looking at background document for the watershed and carrying capacity within the communities. South Sector liquid waste

management to be looked at for watershed dynamics and ecosystem based planning. Cowichan & Koksilah two AP's for the Cowichan Flood Management area from the lake down to look at long term flood management and a diking authority.

Ken Clements – Sorting through applications for the Derby Funds, should have decision within 2 weeks.

Tom Rutherford – senior management change, Andy Thompson is leaving and not sure who will be replacing. Position to be filled by end of fiscal year. Community Advisor position vacant, Shona took a full time job in Nanaimo. Hope to have a qualified person by the end of October.

- Pacific Salmon Treaty will be looking at passage for fish between Canada and US. Good to keep track because it has huge impacts on stock management.

Ian Morrison – will be attending the next BC Union Municipality Convention. Plenty of meetings with ministers. Meeting around local government land use bylaws and how they are ignored. Ashburnum Dam refurbishing project in a holding pattern, no major work will be done until Federal Election is over. The 9 electoral areas are focusing on water and watersheds, and an ecological perspective for planning such as zoning and permits.

Helen Reid – Continue to work on the Water Sustainability Act contentions, such as lack of groundwater use.

Eric Marshall – Large flock of common mergansers seen. Ospreys did very well in the Bay, 6-8 babies. Purple martins also did very well this year.

Diana Gunderson – Shoreline project winding up, still have restoration planting and staking to do. Finished planting at Gerald and Caroline's home.

Brian Houle – Have water to November 11, looking at an 18cms pulse to encourage fish up the estuary. Wednesday next week may look at schedule for pulsing.

- Fair to say there were tough decisions made around water, trying to balance interests. There were no good decisions this year, we need more storage.
- Catalyst has been contributing to the financial requirements of knowing what is going on in the river.

Shaun Chadburn – Downgrading watering restrictions to stage 2.

Keith Lawrence – Air shed protection strategy, has been trying to better understand this air quality problem. Studies done in 2014 Particulate Matter 2.5 provincial objectives (annual and daily), emissions inventory to understand particulate emissions. Between 70-80% open burning and wood stoves. Oct 6 Air Quality forum, ask questions about air quality pollutants and the problems going forward. Invasive Plants Bylaw, regulatory and non-regulatory approach (ie education) draft by-law around managing invasive plants.

Meg Loop – Restoration work on Averill Creek, Shoreline Clean up Sept 27th Cowichan Bay.

Genevieve –reported on Somenos Marsh – Wildwings Festival, launch Oct 1. Family Fun Day on Oct 3, Oct 15 Art Exhibition at Just Jakes, Oct 18 Basket Weaving workshop.

Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi- this report was received after our CSRT meeting and has been inserted here for convenience. Updates on the Central Sector Liquid Waste Management Plan, Plan Amendments, A summary of amendments to the plan were presented to the Public & Technical Committee on Sept 16. P&T Committee recommended that the report be approved. The amendments made included adding a section outlining the process undertaken for this amendment that the intent is to relocate the outfall to Satellite Channel and the cost breakdown amongst the contributing communities. All of this information was previously discussed with

stakeholders, public at large and First Nations during the consultation process. The amendments made reflect input provided. Next steps: seek approval from the Steering Committee on Oct 5; seek approval from Regional Engineering Services on Oct 28; seek approval to submit the amended plan to the Minister of Environment, from the CVRD Board on Nov 12. Routing is still discussion, Presented concept involving Wescan terminal causeway to Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Committee (CEEMC) on Sept 9. Key topics included timeline for implementing this routing option (should it be pursued), and strategies for reducing and mitigating impact on wildlife (i.e. routing in less dense eelgrass areas, construction during winter months, eelgrass remediation). If this routing option is pursued, there are several steps before any shovels hit the ground, including detailed design work, obtaining permits and CEEMC approval, tendering construction work, etc. The timeline could be 1-2 years including construction. Routing options discussed with Ministry of Transportation and awaiting feedback. Next steps: Amended CSLWMP plan must be approved by MoE prior to implementing a routing option, If MoE approves amended CSLWMP, the next steps related to routing will be managed by North Cowichan, as co-owners of the infrastructure itself. The CVRD is not an owner/manager of the JUB infrastructure. Consultation::Letter of support received from Cowichan Tribes for pursuing next steps in the outfall relocation. Request for letter of support sent to the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Committee. Report completed on First Nations Consultation activities, presented to the Public & Technical Committee on Sept 16. P&T Committee recommended that the report be approved. Seek approval for the report from the Steering Committee on Oct 5; seek approval from Regional Engineering Services on Oct 28; seek approval to submit this report with the amended plan to the Minister of Environment, from the CVRD Board on Nov 12.

Business: At the last meeting there was some discussion about holding a forum on forestry practices in the Valley. The co-chairs reported that they did not see the RT as the venue for this at this time. Parker wondered if there was some potential for privately held lands to be used for wind farms or solar energy. Timberwest is open to the conversation.

Koksilah Watershed Panel discussion–

Helen – Cowichan Tribes Members are concerned about the low water level and the health of the river. The Cowichan members consider the Koksilah watershed as very important for their cultural practices. What is missing is working on the Cowichan and Koksilah, not just the Cowichan.

Swarn – volunteers at the HUB Centre, Cowichan Station and came to observe today since is interested in forming a HUB based watershed committee, perhaps titled “Friends of the Koksilah”

Brian Tutty – The Koksilah is an interesting watershed. The Culture of DFO largely populated until the early 80s by Sergeant Majors from the war, so major focus was on enforcement and compliance. They thought like a salmon and went where the fish went, did not think in watershed terms. Brian was the first biologist put to the coast, the fisheries officers had tremendous knowledge of where the fish went. Ted Epps died before we could get a lot of his knowledge. SEP went around and put in huge fish way at Marble Falls, and

many other huge engineering projects. How can we use landscape gradient and fish affinity for what gradient to determine where fish could be, or would be. There is a terrific amount of low gradient habitat above barrier. At risk stock below barrier. SHIP, Salmon Habitat Information Report. Since the war they moved fish around with little strategy. The Koksilah used to have tremendous flow with no headwater storage. The kind of watershed assessment thinking is what we ought to be doing, we are losing water and habitats. Need to think more strategically.

Tom Rutherford – Stock status of the Koksilah: 5-ish species of salmonids. We aren't sure about the salmon stocks in the many of the rivers (Cowichan has a lot of money thrown at it to understand stocks). Some level of certainty for chum and coho salmon stable populations. Chinook and pinks thought to be present; for sure they used to be there. Steelhead and cutthroat, see lots of juvenile. Brown trout have been observed as well. Populations have not been closely monitored for 20 years (records that do exist are foot surveys). Be interesting to know if the Koksilah had/has a genetically distinct chinook run from the Cowichan. Steelhead may be rebuilding.

Habitat Status: Koksilah has no real storage and very susceptible to climate change. A shift to warmer, drier winters there is less water available. Land use pressures. Lots of private land, lots of land use that affects fish habitat. The tributaries to main stem have some strong fisheries values. Glenora Creek, Calvin Creek, Nori, and Patrolus Creek; these smaller tributaries are very important for the coho but we lack of recent detailed information.

Moving Forward: The Landscape influences the people who live there. Need to know the stock strength; the senior agencies are sliding downhill. This slide is not likely to change, but with partners we can develop a program to figure out what is going on. We can't make decisions around restoration etc. without knowing this. Raise the funds to do a literature search, get a habitat status report. From this foundation, develop a watershed restoration plan. Step 1) Salmon Stock Assessment, 2) Habitat Status Report, 3) Watershed Restoration plan. We have an engaged community/increased profile.

Dave Lindsey: Upper 2/3s of the watershed is privately owned 30k hectares. IT has about 15, TW has about 5k, Crown Ownership, and the lower reaches are primarily agriculture. Obligations, private land management forest companies do have responsibilities and get audited. Plans for wildlife, biodiversity, fish habitat water quality/quantity, soil conservation, and reforestation. Forest Land Act. Reforestation, selective breeding and seed orchards, 12- 20% healthier and faster growing than what goes onto crown land.

Watershed Management Planning. Timberwest Plan, put into GIS system so we know what stage of development the watershed is in. Before harvest determine the sub basin, risk/rate peak flow events for how much is in non-hydrologically stable areas. Look at the roads and crossings, old roads, deactivation. Look at fisheries values. Timberwest has a full time Resource person who looks at all this. Site specifics, a few pockets of old growth left, small stand of old growth Douglas fir. Working with the CVRD and conservation organizations on a plan to make it a Park or reserve and link it with other areas to get a corridor. Feel confident we will have a good Koksilah corridor for recreation and protection.

Ted Epps – Island Timberlands process mirrors what Timberwest does. Eagle Heights, hired a consultant internally to try and speed up the process, but have stalled at

negotiations with the government. Uphill battle for the many years this has been ongoing. Forest resilience, never seen a summer like this one with the drought and the impact on the trees. Anecdotally, the mortality (red cedar and Douglas firs) are more than Epps have ever seen. 3.5-5 degree increase, most of the species we have won't do well with this and forest will be under tremendous stress. The drought this year occurred during in May and June which is terribly important for the growing season and seeing the stressed trees/mortality. Dough Fir seed stock from Oregon, naturally more drought/heat tolerate than the native trees. Anecdotal, had a helicopter program in the Albern and they weigh significantly less due to not able to hold water.

Wayne Haddow – Agricultural Land Use completed in 2012. In the Cowichan Valley 2,430 ha for the whole regional district. About 6,000 in forage crops, silage and hay. Non-forage is 339. Irrigation demand for 2014 (high demand year). Evapotranspiration since March exceeded precipitation for 2015. 18million cubic meters annually, if everything was to be irrigated it would be 43mil. Most comes from surface water. Water licenses, approximately 1.15mil L of water used by Agriculture, likely underrepresented. Cowichan Valley is about 19% self-sufficient.

Kate Miller: Mirroring the change in philosophy, the local government typically looks at the landscape in terms of political boundary. However, this view is starting to shift to include effective management through a watershed lens rather than political. The Koksilah is conjoined by the Cowichan in the estuary. Analysis has looked at parts of the Koksilah but not the Koksilah itself. Within the regional district the vast majority are on the east coast strip. Most of the Koksilah watershed is under the Forest Lands Management. How can we wrap all of this together in terms of management? Looking to see if the Koksilah gets its own management or fold it into the Cowichan. Many background documents within the region, available on the web and on the CVRD website. Looking at putting this into an ecosystem based approach.

Paul Rickard: The estuary of the Koksilah is almost nonexistent, as one fork has been ditched and above the highway the entire system is ditched and channelized. The river used to braid out into the estuary, which now is re-diked and riprap rock lined ditch. No longer have very much rearing habitat. The other fork branch goes through Clem Clem village. Any plans trying to rebuild fish stocks would have to look at this lower habitat and the fish habitat. Must be looking at the restoration going forward.

This is the start of the conversation. Lots of partners looking ahead with plans to go forward.

Next Meeting Oct. 15, 2015