
Revised Terms of Reference - Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT)

Revised in June 17, 2010, Nov. 2014

This document approved by CSRT on April 20, 2017.

Background:

In the summer of 2003, a so-called “Ad Hoc Committee” consisting of Catalyst Paper Corp. (water licence), government agencies, Cowichan Tribes and Cowichan Valley stewardship organizations was formed to consider and recommend seasonal lake storage and flow management protocols for the Cowichan River. A recommendation by this committee resulted in the Cowichan Valley Regional District becoming the host sponsor of a Cowichan Basin Water Management Plan, which was completed in March 2007. The primary goal of the Water Management Plan was to recommend long term (to the year 2031) water conservation objectives and strategies for the Cowichan Basin.

The Ad Hoc Committee also recognized that an alternative forum was required to deal explicitly with fish and wildlife habitat restoration, enhancement and stewardship issues in the Cowichan Basin. The motivation for this new forum was linked to preparation of a Cowichan Recovery Plan (LGL Ltd. 2005) for the Cowichan Tribes’ Treaty Office. In effect, a new “Cowichan Stewardship Round Table” was needed to inform and help guide the recovery planning process, including setting priorities and schedules for habitat remediation and enhancement. The CSRT works collaboratively with other groups focused on watershed health in the Cowichan Valley (see Appendix I).

Geographic Area:

The primary areas of interest are the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds, given the close proximity and shared resource values of these neighbouring river systems. The term “watershed” is used in its broadest sense, from headlands to estuaries, including all aquatic habitats and the surrounding land base. It is implicit that watershed ecological functions be viewed holistically, ignoring boundaries established by land ownership and tenure.

Vision:

A healthy and biologically rich Cowichan Watershed reflecting the wisdom, stewardship and vision of its informed citizens, organizations and community institutions working closely together.

Purpose:

The Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT) provides a forum to share information, develop partnerships, identify projects, pool intellectual resources, and use collaboration and innovation to solve long-standing problems. It is interdisciplinary and ecosystem based, and blends technical and management working perspectives that reflect a community of interests in watershed sustainability. Membership is open and inclusive of any agency, organization, private sector business or individual with interest in the CSRT’s objectives and collaborative process, and who can add value and promote consensus-building. The CSRT has a broad and flexible mandate and recognizes that the health of the watershed as whole is intricately linked to the health of fish and wildlife populations.

Objectives:

- To help mitigate the challenges that climate change presents.
- To use the CSRT as a model of progressive change in resource management decision-making at the watershed and community level by including grass roots community based thinking.

- To provide a clearing house for ideas and information for anyone interested in stewardship issues. Our meetings are open to everyone.
- To promote a respectful and safe environment for discussion of watershed limiting factors and potential solutions for restoration or enhancement.
- To support members in grant applications.
- As new information or research results become available, utilize speakers to broaden the local knowledge base and help project planning.
- To promote CSRT partnerships and successes through outreach and community education.
- Liaise with the Cowichan Watershed Board, other stewardship round tables and organizations espousing similar principles, objectives and activities, especially where there are important synergies to be gained from close cooperation.
- To encourage educational opportunities to increase the public's knowledge of the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds.

Administration:

The Chair or Co-Chairs and secretary will be reviewed annually. Meetings will be held at community venues in Duncan on the 3rd Thursday of each month, with the possible exceptions of summer months. A monthly agenda will be solicited from members and draft agenda circulated by the Chair (or Co-Chair) if possible, one week in advance before regular CSRT meetings. Input to agenda is welcomed. All efforts will be made to have meeting minutes/action items distributed before the next scheduled monthly meeting.

All positions with CSRT are volunteer.

Acceptances of donations to CSRT are subject to working consensus agreement to avoid conflict of interests. There are very few expenses: website oversight, and insurance. There is no bank account.

Decision Making

- Conduct: All communication at the table will be carried out in a respectful manner.
- Decisions are to be reached by consensus.
 - Consensus is agreement among the representatives of each member organization, agency and individuals. The goal is full consensus.
 - Full consensus – all roundtable members agree and fully support the decision.
 - Working consensus – not all roundtable members fully support the decision but all can agree to abide by it.
- Every effort will be made to explore, understand and accommodate the interests of dissenting viewpoint(s) and a science-based solution or compromise is the objective.
- A full or working consensus is required before a decision/recommendation will be made by the CSRT.
- Working groups can be established for subject matters requiring further investigation and discussion. Recommendations by the WGs will be discussed by the CSRT group.
- A “Common Sense” approach will be taken. The objective of the table is to identify common interests around the Cowichan and Koksilah watersheds and to implement projects and processes to further those interests.

Duration of Terms of Reference:

The length of time these terms of reference will be in effect is for two (2) years following acceptance. At that time, Round Table members will review and, if necessary, revise the terms of reference.