

COWICHAN STEWARDSHIP ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

DATE: THURSDAY, JAN. 18, 9am to 12pm

Location: Fish Health building, Freshwater Fisheries Society, 1080 Wharncliffe Rd, Duncan

The Roundtable works together in a kind and respectful manner.

Time	Agenda Item
9:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and acknowledgement that our meeting is on Cowichan Tribes territory. • Regrets: Rob James, Pam Jorgenson, Jessica Lines, Luke Cross • Agenda changes. yes, add CR annual report • Attendance: Genevieve Singleton (co-chair); Parker Jefferson (co-chair); Bob Crandall (CCSES); Geoff Strong (CERCA); Rick Bryan (BCAFC); Haley Guest (CENC); Harold Joe (Tribes); Nejma Belarbi (Voices for Biodiversity); Anya Williams (Voices for Biodiversity); Loren Duncan; Klaus Kuhn (CVRD); Tim Kulchyski (Tribes); Brian Houle (Catalyst); Ted Brookman (BCWF); Barry Hetschko (SMWS, CVNS); Leanne Finlayson (MP's Office) Tom Rutherford (CWB) Jared Bates; Jacqueline Ronson; James Craig (BCCF); Eric Marshall (CVNS);Christy Brophy (CLRSS); Ian Morrison (CVRD); Debra Toporowski (Tribes); Elizabeth Bailey (SMWS) • Ken Traynor (CLRSS) • Approval of Minutes – approved.
9:10am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSRT business: • Recording of minutes is done by members taking turns. Thanks to Jessica Lines, BC Parks, for December minute taking, Eric Marshall of Cowichan Valley Naturalists for January and Pam Jorgenson of Timberwest for February. • Follow-up from October meeting re GIS Story Map from BC Parks, Genevieve and Chloe – Fraser River going to work on Cowichan as well - • Update re CSRT website, Edmond and Genevieve – photos now up as well as minutes – your comments please. Genevieve thanked Edmond for his work. Cowichanstewardship.com • Update re future meetings • Discussion re Quw'utsun River Celebration for 2018, - help is wanted!! • Also report needed on Cowichan Heritage River for Volker Michelfelder of BC Parks, groups need to send in reports of anything done on river in 2017. – send notes of any work on river to Genevieve by the end of February • Add Geoff Strong to attendance in December minutes.

9:20am

Round-table

Round the table, check-ins and updates.

Parker Jefferson - Co-Chair – attended a meeting of a committee studying the effects of changes in water levels. Reported by DFO that 26000 chinook entered Cowichan this season – he asked why such a big increase? Stoltz Bluffs area has problems making turbidity very high in the river – work done there to mitigate problems stream; some emergency repairs and more work will be needed.

Bob Crandall- CLRSS – eggs have been taken to classrooms. Sutton Creek gravel removal from gravel trap but more funding is needed.

Rick Bryan – will keep us posted on events on river such as CowFest. Navigability on rivers used to be important but is being overlooked – he plans to contact our MP.

Haley Guest – Nature Estuary Centre. planning climate change related events – Work that Reconnects – a workshop at Providence Farm - \$140/person February 10th & 11th. Beer & Burger fund raiser on February 25th at Cow Bay Pub. Donations for silent auction appreciated – Theme: For the Love of Nature – stories will be told during the evening. Movie tonight – Wisdom to Survive.

Christine Brophy – BCCF 10 properties at Lake Cowichan to be targeted for riparian upgrading.

Elizabeth Bailey Somenos Marsh Society - blackberry removal continues with replacement with native plants. Storm water treatment ponds working well but more planting to be done there. February 2nd – World Wetlands Day – native species planting by Somenos Creek.

Nejma Belarbi – Voices for Biodiversity - first time visitor to our meeting, publishes stories from around the world.

Lorne Duncan - concerned citizen– spoke about the number of chinook that arrived this season and he asked what is the capacity of river? Also, are Chinook and Orca linked?

Tom Rutherford CWB – the DFO Chinook target is 6500 adults which he thinks is conservative – would like to see more in the river. Numbers have risen from a low of 500 in 2009. Final estimate for this year should come in at around 10,000 adults – approx..2/3 of returning Chinook this year were jacks. Cowichan has higher proportion of jacks than other rivers – no big increase has been reported in other rivers.

Ian Morrison CVRD director – lamprey work going ahead supervised by Joy Wade. Simple traps are being set at creeks around the Lake and count is being made. More data is needed to protect this endemic species. Heavy rain last evening will soon have an effect on streams.

Tim Kulchyski – Cowichan Tribes biologist. BCCF preparing a planting program. Work is proceeding in the estuary to study the hydrodynamics of N & S arms. Mid-river Ditson counted fish – video is used to identify species but was only in for a short window. It went in late. Early run fish were found. DNA work done on a fish tail showed it possibly came from Puget Sound or the Puntledge River. Koksilah work counted 20 chinooks – 2 above falls – 100 below. There were 200,000 chums in system - \$2M from fishery in Cowichan Bay last year. Orca also eat chum as well as chinook. 90% chinook salmon caught locally and studied by Sidney Anglers come from Puget Sound.

Debra Toporowski–Cowichan Tribes councilor. Genevieve thanked her for working with Tribes at Rivers Day

Brian Houle – Catalyst. 2016 had low flows in Cowichan – 2017 flows were much better. Heather Mt snow pillow working well and measures snow depth – it records continuous via satellite. Currently snow pack is much the same as last year. Weekly reports on river flows will be available on request. A turbidity update was requested – it is very high now.

Ted Brookman – BCWF he had attended three seminars on orca – southern resident group moves far north – these areas may be closed to chinook fishing. All boats now have to be at least 200 meters from orcas to reduce any effect on their feeding. Both seals & sea lions are now showing their highest numbers for many years. Sea lions have been seen in Cowichan river. Seals and sea lions are eating all of the fish in some areas so some will starve. Steelhead in Thompson & Chilcotin Rivers are now SARA listed which will affect fishing regulations. Halibut – a 50% reduction in catch is proposed. With high chinook numbers fishers will want restrictions removed but more data needed. Yellow eye or red snapper – stocks are of concern and anglers are urged return them to where caught using descending devices.

Barry Hetschko – Somenos Marsh Society, Paul Fletcher is now recovering from his recent medical operation.

Leanne Finlayson Alistair McGregor’s asst, MP– Alistair’s 3rd child and his wife are both doing well. Abandoned vessel legislation, Bill C64, is a watered-down version of Sheila Malcolmson’s bill and hopefully amendments can be made to improve it as it passes through both Houses.

Jacqueline Ronson environment journalist– lives in Honeymoon Bay, is journalism student and she has received Discourse Media fellowship to report on water, salmon etc. in Cowichan Valley.

James Craig – BCCF Cowichan Lake shoreline restoration is proceeding for the 5th consecutive year. In an HCTF funded project, Cowichan steelhead juveniles have been PIT tagged to track their movements and survival rates, taking advantage of the modern tag detection equipment purchased by Salish Sea Marine Survival Project and recently installed by BCCF in the lower river. Working with Tribes on their Coastal Restoration Fund projects, a CT/BCCF crew has been working on Stoltz, and has initiated inventory of riparian vegetation in the upper river – sites requiring work are being identified for year 1 restoration before March 31.

Tom Rutherford – CWB- CWB speaker series – Movie “Inconvenient truth” sequel later this month.

Eric Marshall – CVNS - numbers of swans counted have risen in recent weeks. Numbers of bald eagles have dropped this now that all dead salmon in the river are gone. The monthly count of birds in Cowichan Bay last Sunday was hampered by thick fog.

Genevieve Singleton – speaking as warden of Mt Tzuhalem Ecological Reserve reported that the parking lot at the top of Kaspa Road is to be enlarged. 80,000 visitors used the lot last year. A proper inventory of plants on Mt Tzouhalem is needed. She also thanked Haley for some useful suggestions regarding admin of CSRT.

10:30am	Break
10:45am	Harold Joe, documentary film maker, Cowichan Tribes cultural consultant, traditional spear fisherman, teacher and wearer of many other hats showed and discussed his movie Wisdom of the River , a powerful and provocative movie he produced some years ago about the Quw'utsun Cowichan River. Tim introduced Harold. Harold gave short background to his film which started as result of interviewing elders on changes over water levels. Worked with Carol Hartwig & Ray DeMarchi on film. Carol Hartwig was producer. Discussion followed on early run chinook and changes in lower river. New video being made for APTN. 6500 years of First Nations activity in our area.
12:00pm	End of meeting - see you next time! Meetings are always the 3rd Thursday of the month, except possibly in summer months.

Upcoming meeting topics (suggestions always appreciated!)

Feb. Elke Wind, Toads in the Cowichan Valley (Elke had to cancel, she will be presenting at the CWB talk, April 26, 7:00 pm at Duncan VIU campus) so Dave Preikshot will be presenting on Koksilah/Cowichan Water sampling 2017 and Ted Brookman will be presenting on BCWF concerns

March: Chelsea Toth, Timberwest, knotweed treatments and the Koksilah Watershed Knock Back Knotweed Committee