



## **THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2015 MINUTES, 9am-12pm.**

**Freshwater Fisheries Society 1080 Wharncliffe Rd**

**In attendance: Tom Anderson (freelance), Derek Haupt (Western Forest Products), Eric Marshall (Cowichan Valley Naturalist Society), Dennis Popplestone (PPWC local 2, Catalyst Crofton), Ted Brookman (Recreational fisher, BC Wildlife Federation), Joe Saysell (Friends of the Cowichan), Dave Lindsay (Timber West), Craig Wightman (BC Conservation Foundation), Bob Crandall (Cowichan Lake Salmon Enhancement Society), Shona Smith (Department of Fisheries and Oceans), Jean Crowder (MP Nanaimo-Cowichan), Jennifer Hermary (Jean Crowder MP), Elizabeth Bailey (Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society), Goetz Shuerholz (Cowichan Estuary Restoration Conservation Association), Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Leroy Van Wieren (Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society), Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi (Cowichan Valley Regional District), Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), Genevieve Singleton (co-chair), Paul Rickard (co-chair), Colwyn Sunderland (Kerr Woodleidal), Roger Hunter (Cowichan Watershed Board), Tim Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes), Joyce Behnsen (Municipality of North Cowichan), Deb Toporowski**

**Regrets:** Morgan Kenna, Keith Lawrence, Tom Rutherford, Rob James, Dave Preikshot

9:00 Welcome, apologies, agenda changes, Attendance list to be circulated, Paul will be announcing his retirement from co-chair position and will be nominating Parker Jefferson as possible replacement.

-Paul Rickard is retiring from co-chair position, he has enjoyed his time here, impressed with Parker Jefferson's work in the community and has nominated him as a replacement, Parker accepts, any further nominations from group? There were none, Parker is now the new co-chair, Genevieve thanks Paul for many years of service

9:10 Around the Table BRIEF updates as to projects, activities since last meeting

-Parker Jefferson (One Cowichan), poll of voter intentions is being released to media this morning, in our riding NDP leading

-Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi (CVRD), will be leaving CVRD in July, working full steam on projects until then, she has enjoyed her work there, moving into ecosystem based planning; Liquid waste plan amendment: Moving outfall to near cherry point marina 500m offshore seems to be most suitable option, 2 options were investigated thoroughly: 1) satellite channel 2) redirecting to catalyst, option 2 is not viable because the plant at catalyst is too big to process only our wastewater, pulp and paper mill has different permit for discharge and would need significant amendment to permit; 3<sup>rd</sup> and final info session coming up on Tuesday June 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-7pm at Island Savings Centre and will focus on costs associated with project, if group knows any community members who are users of sewage system please invite them; now looking at routing options, 2 ideas so far, not necessarily environmentally sound but a starting point for conversation, lots of issues brought up at last info session, still accepting comments, be in touch with Emily – comments (P. Rickard) purple route goes through last remaining good natural eel grass bed. Question: (J. Benshen) what other options have been explored? Disposing to ground, reusing effluent – huge cost, no benefit, moving discharge has been identified as priority for now.

-Goetz Schuerholz (CERCA), Mariners Island has had 2 cleanups of garbage, participated in low tide day, next week doing a woody debris survey to establish baseline for future monitoring, blue carbon initiative in estuary mudflats in beginning stages as is nature trail project

-Elizabeth Bailey (SMWS), Completed wetland restoration project for stormwater treatment and habitat creation on Beverly St. in March, thanked WFP, Heavy Metal Marine Limited, MOTI, North Cowichan and National Wetland Conservation Fund for their contributions; continuing water quality monitoring in Somenos Lake and stormwater and looking for volunteers; installed purple martin nest boxes on Somenos Lake and will be monitoring; attended a workshop in Halifax on water quality community based monitoring

-Jean Crowder (MP), private member bill on derelict vessels was defeated, if there's enough time legislatively they'll re-table it with some tweaks so it's easy for next gov. to pick it up and run with it

-Tim Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes), Chief Chip Seymour and contingent went to see Minister Thompson about drought issue, positive meeting with potential for movement, visited Cow. River North Fork, situation is very bad already, below 10 CMS, could be one of the worst years ever, have had in-river closure within Tribes to protect early run fish, some adults entered system as early as April, there is a rotary screw trap counting Chinook fry as they leave, significant counts in the Bay, there's been a hatchery release of 450,000 chinook

-Martha Leischer (community member), SMWS water quality monitoring volunteer, wants to become better informed

-Edwin ?, (Falt Towing), tugboat company in Cowichan Bay, here to learn

-Diana Gunderson (CLRSS), dealing with questions about algae bloom on Cow. Lake, extensive, smelly, seems to be waning, involved in water traffic issues, public meeting a month ago, created 'observe, record, report' initiative, ongoing shoreline stewardship project, introduce project manager and assistant

-Jean Atkinson (CLRSS), successful watershed tour couple weeks ago, hiking group, 30 people with Roger Hunter, they were blown away by tour! Positive learning experience

-Ken Clements (Sidney Anglers), they have money for enhancement projects from recent fishing derby

-Shona Smith (DFO) hatchery release update, last of fish released yesterday, rotary screw trap, running out of water to run it; attended a workshop on the long weekend in Port Alberni; was in Bing's Creek catching coho fry for estuary centre last week, within an hour caught 40 coho fry, several cutthroat, 3 lamprey

-Bob Crandall (CLSES), school programs, storm drain marking coming up, keeping an eye on water levels on creeks around lakes, looking for Chinook fry, morphing into more fry salvage, hope to make presentation about it a later date, alarming how fast water level is dropping, thinking about plan for worst case scenario

-Craig Wightman (BCCF), named the algae that's likely in Cowichan Lake, it's fairly common in our lakes when there's been no real snowpack, runoff etc., he will send info to CLRSS; ongoing work with juvenile Chinook pit-tagging, target 10,000 tags in river combined hatchery and wild, financially supported by PSF; James has been working with Tribes doing inventory of riparian habitats and developing prescriptions for improving habitat, also doing inventory and monitoring work at south-side spur dike on Tribes land, passing water into side-channel habitat; following last year's drought, there is a network of temp loggers installed in river corridor, for 9-10 months now, working with CLRSS on shoreline stewardship program

-Dave Lindsay (Timber West), facilitating programs on their land, Beaver Lake, Heather Mountain snow pillow, Broadway run etc.; goshawk monitoring on their land on Vancouver Island, some funding in budget for fisheries project for First Nations

-Joe Saysell, (Friends of Lake Cowichan) drifting on boat every day, trying to salvage fry, all side-channels going dry; knot-weed on upper river is very bad, beaver's eat it, problem no better, killing willows, put up posters in sport shops urging anglers not to fish when river is under 7cms or above 18 degrees C; writing letters to Minister Thompson trying to get river fishery closed, would be helpful if people would write letters to Minister to have fishery closed by June 15 at latest; merganser count ongoing although not funded, they eat a lot of fish

-Ted Brookman (BCWF) inlands fisheries chair, has been inundated with Kootenay Lake system issues; working with Trail's rod and gun club on habitat remediation; got derelict vessels on the paper with Ministry of Transportation, waiting for letter saying

they can remove the vessels; meeting with minister Thompson at BCWF AGM in Fernie, trying to give reasonable solutions to problems

-Dennis Popplestone (Catalyst), graphs of lake level and river flow, Thursday 9.4cms, reducing use by .3 until 7cms in reached then will remain reduced; labels going on weir for information for public interest; have had a water management team in mill for the past month, starting data base of water saving projects, goal of 5% reduction of water usage in mill, ideas coming in from staff involving reusing water for savings, graphs are also on internet and publically available, - R. Hunter comment – Brian Houle will be calling Tim Kulchyski on Friday to talk about the way that things will happen after Friday. Question - have you considered portable desalination? It was brought up at a meeting.

-Eric Marshall (CVNS), waterbird count: 58 common mergansers north side where fry come down, 3 osprey on south side, one nest, 5 osprey on other side, Great Blue Herons are doing well, 16 other day, 20 or 30 on low tide, lots of nests; nature centre had successful lowtide day, beach seine and critter count, anniversary party for land trust; 22 white pelicans were seen on north side of bay, seem to be flying over to Sydney spit; over on Thetis Island and the seastars were in a bad state last year, this year there were some good looking ones

-Joyce Behnsen (MNC), Sits on Somenos Management Committe

-Christina Brophey (CLSS), managing Cowichan Lake shoreline stewardship project

-Mandy Hopcork? (CLSS), assistant project manager

-Barry Bradshaw (farmer), concerned about flooding on his land and fish kills, interested in conservation

-Tom Anderson (community member), watershed user, keeping informed

-Derek Haupt (WFP), regular log patrol and salvage going on as follow up to Mariner's Island Cleanup

-Leeroy Van Wieren (CLSS), Gerald Thom bursary has been added at Lake Cowichan School to support youth in community getting engaged in conservation work

-Genevieve Singleton (co-chair), thanks to groups who do minutes and WFP who donates funds for this, CSRT has no budget so can stay independent; regrets from welcome to first time attenders, everyone is welcome to this group; thanks to Jean Crowder on last meeting as MP, hope she'll join us from retirement; good luck to Emily; report on nature walks; thanks to Shona and others for SEP workshop; attended BC nature AGM on Saltspring, Eric M. was honoured as was Genevieve; knotweed – she will cut at full growth and do repeat cuttings every 2 weeks as citizen science initiative; tour of Somenos with Natural History Society, wetland restoration project benefited

from connections made at roundtable for wood donation etc; Keith Lawrence update: received 2 of 3 draft water quality reports from MOE, providing feedback now, reports expected to be finalized in next month, state of environment by end of august, new website about the 'new normal' re: drought and flooding; celebratory event will be held for sandy pools restoration

-Paul Rickard (co-chair), public access issue Cedar Log Hole, it's locked up, it's a park's area issue, lots of anglers concerned; involved in DFO angler sampling program with Sydney anglers, there was a presentation from DFO at SEP workshop looking at how the data is helping understand dynamics of fish movement; recruiting people for Salish Sea project (people who fish salmon regularly in local waters to keep log book, take DNA samples etc.)

10:30 Break (10 min)

10:40 Farm Water Management Plan, Colwyn Sunderland from Kerr Wood Leidal Consulting Engineers

-Cowichan Farm Water Planning Pilot – Presentation (Power Point)

-partnership between governments to look at how to improve water management on Cowichan farms, in the final throws of the project, looks at most of the farmland on south-east of CVRD area, involves climate impact awareness and local agricultural water issues.

Questions: Emily, seems similar to environmental farm plan, will this be a standalone part of that? Wanted it to be compatible, might be rolled back in but it is a toolkit vs a program with funding.

Roger H., Records vs. reality, are water licenses sometimes over drawn? It's usually the opposite where licenses are way higher than what's physically available. How many surface water licenses? Half.

Joyce B. Is there a way to assess aquifers? Work done by province on aquifer classification and vulnerability assessment, most reliable way of assessing in keeping a long ongoing record to see trends.

11:00 update on Broadway Run project: Craig Wightman

-Remediating slope stability on Cowichan River, Broadway Run (power point presentation): sedimentation from point sources on cowichan, clays and silts can coat bottom causing problems for wildlife, Cowichan recovery plan was created (LGL Ltd. 2005), dealing with sedimentation was set as a high priority target. This area was affecting 27 km of lower river adding a lot of sediment. Restoration by Polster Environmental Services took place to stabilize toe of cliff, dense live staking to mitigate land slide and sedimentation threats. Future - monitor live stakes, more live staking for bald spots, monitor slope stability conditions.

11:20 Cowichan Bay Ship Watch Society: Paul Donahue (power point presentation)

-New group, est. Sept. 2014. Mission to protect cow bay from the negative impacts of anchoring large commercial ships, objective to remove all commercial anchorages from cow bay. Several anchorages exist in Cow. Bay, ships can anchor free, it's deep, muddy bottom. Big increase of ships from 2010. The ships are also getting bigger. Issues: safety, environmental, social. Anchors can drag, close to shore, no help close-by (rescue tug). Scouring, close to community (lights, noise, smell). Demise of Canadian wheat board monopoly is major factor of this problem. Examples of ships running aground or spilling oil elsewhere. Possible solutions: remove anchorages, marine conservation area...have been having meetings with involved groups. Q: what's the alternative? Where do the ships go? There are other bays that are not as small where impact wouldn't be as dire.

11:35 update on Cowichan Watershed Board and other related activities: Rodger Hunter

-Environmental appeal board, haven't heard yet; met with minister, good meeting, seems to want to do something about rule band, provided staff with briefing material, 'why didn't I see this last year was the minister's comment', he wants to get something done; flow modeling, looking at how high do we raise the wier? should be complete soon; communications, dovetailing water conservation efforts, watering restrictions are being coordinated throughout region; good presentation last night about whales, next month Deb Curran will present on water law, July topic will be something on water conservation; riparian Shaw Creek restoration meeting coming soon; moving towards apples to apples in comparison of communities

11:55 New Business / next meeting on June 18, 2015. Brian Riddell (PSF grant person, some discussion about future funding) and Isabel Pearsall of the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project are booked to speak at this.

12:00 sharp: conclusion of meeting