



## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016, 9-12 AM.** Everyone Welcome

**Old Freshwater Ecocentre, Freshwater Fisheries Society, 1080 Wharncliffe Rd**

**In attendance:** Genevieve Singleton (CSRT co-chair), Parker Jefferson (CSRT co-chair), Klaus Kuhn (CVRD), Geoff Strong (CERCA), Leroy Van Wieren (CLRSS), Tom Rutherford (DFO), Alistair MacGregor (MP), Ian Morrison (CVRD), Brian Houle (Catalyst Paper), Tiffany Hooper (PPWC), Dennis Popplestone (PPWC local 2), Carol Milo (CVNS), Eric Marshall (CVNS), Barry Hetschko (CVNS, SMWS), Dave Lindsay (TW), Dave Preikshot (DFO), Chris Morley (Friends of Cowichan), Elizabeth Bailey (CLT), Kerry Davis (CVRD), Jean Atkinson (CLRSS), Diana Gunderson (CLRSS), Shaun Chadburn (North Cowichan), Martha Leischer (SMWS volunteer), Tousilum, Michelle Staples, Rosalie Sawrie (One Cowichan), Rob James (Western Stevedoring), Ken Clements (Sidney Anglers), Brian Nielson (WFP), Claude Theriault (Sidney Anglers), Shawn Kerr (DFO), Loren Duncan, Susan Down

**Regrets:** Joe Saysell (Friends of Cowichan), Swarn Leung, Kate Miller (CVRD), Keith Lawrence (CVRD), Cherie Ayers, Don Closson (BC Parks), Debra Toporowski, Martin Paish

**9:00** Genevieve welcomes group and acknowledges that our meeting is on Cowichan Tribes territory

Approval of Minutes (thank you Meg Loop!), brief update on future meeting  
Meg has been ill; minutes will be circulated as soon as possible

Genevieve leads group through visioning exercise about watershed, to be available on website once it's back up. Thanks to John Scull for working on website.

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

*Geoff Strong, CERCA* – working on building a nature trail in Cowichan Bay estuary, postponing symposium that was planned for Sept. 8, may happen late in fall or early next spring instead.

*Leeroy Van Wieren, CLRSS* – working on lakeshore stewardship project, public education, water quality monitoring.

*Tom Rutherford, DFO* – South Coast has a new area director, Dr. Laura Brown, taking an interest in Cowichan. RFCPP funding round has been announced, deadline for applications is April 22. Money now available to indigenous groups which was not the case in the past. Good year at Cowichan hatchery.

*Alistair MacGregor, MP* – He has tabled a bill to have Shawnigan Lake added under the Navigation Protection Act. It is to bring a voice to the issue and stand in solidarity with provincial and local government. Staff working hard in advance of budget, seeking federal support on raising weir at Lake Cowichan. It would be helpful if people could please provide his office with information that might help that campaign.

*Ian Morrison, CVRD Area Director* – Area outside Honeymoon bay experiencing riparian degradation on private land, number docks may be increasing in subdivision.

Rosalie Sawrie, One Cowichan – Water related campaign coming up this spring. Multiple groups co-hosting Cowichan Sings for Water, for water week. Carols Burdett April 17 (booths for water groups will be available, contact One Cowichan), Rock the Salish Sea with Holly Arntzen and Alex Aitken school on April 21, and Raffi as benefit for Shawnigan water on April 24, more info to be sent out through mailing list.

*Brian Houle, Catalyst* – anyone who wishes to get trends can request to get email directly, March 11 was peak flow, 6 feet more water than same date last year, 140 cubic meters per second now in river, some snow on Heather Mountain and Jump Creek.

*Dennis Popplestone* – introducing Tiffany Hooper who's new to their environmental and forestry committee. Had a big landslide at the mill, Dave Polster getting involved to stabilize, water reduction meetings have started.

*Carol Milo, CVNS* – She is now the co-president of the naturalists with Eric Marshall.

*Eric Marshall, CVNS* - one more swan goose count to go, swans heading north now. They've been doing eagle and hawk counts too. Eagles are breeding. First turkey vulture spotted as well as a few purple martins and swallows. Herons at rookery were being disturbed by shifting of landslide material.

*Barry Hetschko, SMWS and CVNS board members* – Working on CERCA nature trail broom removal, working on blackberry now, 20 swallow boxes have been installed another 20 to come.

*Dave Lindsay, Timberwest* – got a project below catalyst mill, Dave Polster to revegetate a slope under heron colony, removing osprey nesting platforms for relocation to a less industrial site, will have snags to plant in intertidal to create natural nesting cavities for purple martins.

*Dave Preikshot, DFO* – working on project surveying for juvenile fish in estuary at Cowichan Bay and lower estuary which happens annually. Also doing private work

with SMWS which includes monitoring water quality and coho summer habitat in tribs to somenos lake. 3<sup>rd</sup> season upcoming, comprehensive presentation to CSRT coming in the next month or two..

*Chris Morley, Friends of Cowichan* – planning research program on crayfish id in Cowichan River for upcoming summer season

*Kerry Davis, CVRD Area Director* – went to Saanich inlet roundtable meeting a couple of weeks ago, waiting on judges to get back about Shawnigan water issue.

*Diana Gunderson, CLRSS* – cedar fence posts going in at Lake Cowichan First Nation for showcase of restoration

*Joan , CLRSS* – live staking happening Easter weekend

*Genevieve Singleton, CVNS* – Appreciates Dave Preikshot postponing talk on Somenos. Next month Luschiim coming to talk about life on Koksilah River. Gratitude to Sydney anglers for coffee expenses. Eagles Heights protection progress: timber stand surveying happening now. Bluebird project hiring staff soon, 15 birds overwintered this year, more single females being translocated, end of May fundraiser beer and burger at Cow Bay Pub.

*Parker Jefferson, One Cowichan* – Slide show on Greendale Rd issue in Lake Cowichan, destruction of riparian area of coho and chum stream Stanley Creek on covenanted private land - If you'd like to find out more you can contact Tony Green or Curtis Laminski at [greendalecabins@shaw.ca](mailto:greendalecabins@shaw.ca) or 250-749-6570.

**10:15** Tousilum, (Ron George) invitation to a spiritual bathe

Speaks of growing up in Cowichan knowing grandparents and great grandparents. Speaks of the power and importance of water. Invites the CSRT members to a spiritual river bathe. Date: Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Meet at 6am at the Cowichan Green Community building. Everyone bring a dish to share for breakfast. Carpool to site. Info will be sent through Genevieve with these details and protocols.

Sharing of song.

**10:30** Break (10 min)

**10:50:** Dave Preikshot, research on coho salmon and aquatic habitat research in Somenos Basin (postponed to future meeting)

**11:00** Greg Wilson, Ecosystem Section of BC MOE, and Rick Harbo, retired DFO Research Scientist, speaking on their recent research re Freshwater Mussels in the Cowichan and Nanaimo Rivers

Whelks to Whales book passed around, great field guide for our coast.

Power point presentation:

- freshwater mussel shells used to be used for buttons
- publication on mussels available, Freshwater Mussels of the Pacific Northwest
- 11 of 54 species of Canadian freshwater mussels area at risk
- BC has 5-7 species of freshwater mussels
- they are good indicators of long-term health of ecosystems
- need fish gills to complete life cycle, larva travel in gills
- they filter water, can represent a large part of biomass, they are food and their excretions are food for things like lamprey, they function as the earthworms of freshwater systems
- some are long-lived, up to 100 years
- researchers are doing preliminary surveys to determine what species we have here
- western pearl shell and western floater species were found in Cowichan
- next steps are to continue to document distribution of mussels, genetic sequencing, further options would be to do tag, growth and age studies, life cycle sample for glochidia (larva) over time and areas for different rivers and species
- invasive zebra and quagga mussels have different life history, no fish host required, they are prolific to the point they can smother native species
- Alberta now has zebra mussel sniffer dogs for travelling boats

QUESTIONS:

Are they edible? May have been used as starvation food but not palatable or desirable due to possible toxicity.

*What is their connection with crayfish?* It is not studied so unknown.

*Can they survive in a marine environment?* Not known but is possible.

*Where there problems with communities drying out with low river in summer?* None observed.

*How does didymo aka rock snot affect them?* Unknown but some mussels found in Nanaimo river with didymo covering them were surviving.

Researchers are on the search for mussel beds. If you know of any or come across any please report to BC Conservation Data Center website or email Rick or Greg directly. (contact Genevieve for their contact info)

**12:00** Conclusion of meeting