

Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable Meeting Notes

Thursday April 21, 2022 9am to 12pm by Zoom

Please address corrections/additions to

cowichanstewardshiproundtable@gmail.com

www.cowichanstewardship.com

Welcome and acknowledgement that our co-chairs host the meeting from the unceded traditional territory of Cowichan Tribes.

Please feel free to arrive and leave the Zoom meeting whenever necessary. The Roundtable works together in a collaborative, kind and respectful manner at all times.

Regrets: Tom Rutherford: Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB), Joy Wade: Fundy Aqua Services, Jacquie Taylor: Bring Back the Bluebirds Project (BBB), Edmond Duggan: Paddling community, Cole Smith: Sonia Furstenau's representative

Attendees: Genevieve Singleton: Co-chair Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT), Parker Jefferson: Co-chair CSRT, Barry Hetschko: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (SMWS), Martha Lescher: Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS), Rick Bryan, Paddling community, Heidi Grant: Coastal Invasive Species Council (CISC), Bruce Coates: Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS), Joe Saysell: Friends of the Cowichan, Stephanie Cottell: Cowichan Community Land Trust (CCLT), Jane Kilthei: Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre (CENC), Dr. Bethany Coulthard: Cowichan Tribes, Ian Morrison: CVRD Director Area F, Pam Jorgenson: Mosaic, Peter Woods: BC Parks, Karen Deck: Save Our Holmes Society (SOH), Jim Deck: Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS)

CSRT Business:

- Appreciation to Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson and the Cowichan Watershed Board for kindly donating the Zoom platform for our meeting.
- Thank you to Lisa Marie Fox doing March notes.
- **Reminder to send in written notes before or after meeting, also can be done in chat room in meeting. Bullet points fine. If you do not have access to email, please ignore this request.**
- Terms of Reference carried over, Genevieve and Rick working on this.
- Update on Sta'lo' Skweyul, September 25, this is a go. Genevieve has heard from several of our members that they are prepared to go through with stations with limited funding. Genevieve will call a zoom meeting for further discussion. Please save the date.
- Follow up re starting indoor meetings in fall possibly hybrid. Genevieve has been in touch with Tristan Robbins at the Freshwater Fisheries re our possible return to the Fish Health building in the fall. He said the decisions on this are made higher up and he will be in touch as more develops. It may be that they will require vaccinations for using the space. They will consider the request to have WIFI available

- Change in day/time of our meetings. Genevieve discussed with Bethany Coulthard, our speaker today and Cowichan Tribes staff person, re our concerns that Cowichan Tribes staff are no longer able to attend CSRT meetings due to multiple staff meetings on Thursdays. Genevieve suggested two thoughts: change the day of the week we have our monthly meeting on or hold our keynote speaker at the beginning of the meeting instead of the end. Bethany stated her appreciation of how important it is for us all to be together sharing our concerns. She will take this forward to Tribes and get back to us re ideas.
- Field Day for Thursday, July 21 meeting. Peter Woods will take us on a tour of the new and old Group Sites. Breaking news since April 21 meeting is that Alexandra Morton of stopping farmed salmon fame has confirmed that she will be our feature event for the day at Stoltz Pool, Cowichan Provincial Park!

Speaker: Many thanks to Dr. Bethany Coulthard for her presentation “Lulumexun Marine Projects: a snapshot” Please direct questions to her at Bethany.coulthard@cowichantribes.com. We learned that Lulumexun is very very busy with many projects.

Round the Table:

Tom Rutherford: (CWB): Regrets from Tom, Genevieve shared the following information. Jeff Anderson, the principle at Geomorphic, and Cheri Ayers of Bioayers Consultants will be reporting out on the work done on the Koksilah this past summer at the CWB meeting next Monday, April 25. For anyone interested in what's going on in our watersheds and how we can begin to address "whole of watershed restoration" this talk will be really interesting.

Joy Wade: Fundy Aqua Services: Joy Wade and Paul Grant are going to be doing some field work in Bear Lake starting the first week of May. Temperature record loggers will be deployed on the alluvial fan and up Robertson Creek for the next few months, conditions depending. The work is to address knowledge gaps regarding thermal tolerance of the species. The record loggers will be cryptic, tied to cinder blocks so most people will not notice them.

Brian Houle: Catalyst-Paper Excellence: Conditions remain very good with the watershed this spring. Snow pack continues to grow and we are approaching average snow pack for this year. The wet weather is not yet done and that is keeping the lake at 100% full. Ideal river flows at this time of year are 25 cms and currently river flowing at 48 cms, nearly 2x higher. Wet weather continues to be predicted for coming 7 days and that will keep lake near full and river flow high. The weir is currently on control and if predicted rainfall arrives, weir could be going off control again. Current conditions will help secure 7 cms or close to 7 cms through this coming dry season.

Edmond Duggan: Paddling Community: Edmond is busy with preparations for this years' Cowichan River Youth Kayak Festival (CRYKFest) which starts on April 22. With 40+ youth supported by 20 adults it is Canada's largest youth paddling festival. The event is based at the group campsite at Horseshoe Bend and paddling will be on the upper Cowichan (in Lake Cowichan) and Marie Canyon sections of the river. Anyone wishing to watch is encouraged to

hike below the Skutz area Sunday as the festival winds up with a mass paddle estimated to happen around noon approximately. The winter storms have had a significant impact on the river. There are many trees that are now hazardous to river users and should be appropriately addressed before the summer. Likewise, several sections the rapids have changed indicating that sediment has shifted on the riverbed. These changes might have a negative impact on the river wildlife.

Heidi Grant: Coastal Invasive Species Council (CISC): Action teams are confirmed. These teams of 4 crew members that can do chemical and mechanical removal of invasive species on public and First Nations land. Teams will be based in Nanaimo and Campbell River and can travel up to an hour and a half. Please send any potential sites to info@coastalisc.com. Coastal ISC is also continuing treatment and monitoring of Knotweed and Giant Hogweed across the island. We will be attending the upcoming Ladysmith plant sale on May 7. Our survey results are available on our website. <https://www.coastalisc.com/coastal-isc-2022-priority-species-survey-results/>

Pam Jorgenson: Mosaic: Only updates from Pam are to encourage people out on Earth Day! There are lots of illegal dumping, clean-up initiatives (in particular at the Community Center in Shawnigan through local Rotary).

Stephanie Cottell: Cowichan Community Land Trust (CCLT): We'll be at the Mill Bay Nature School for an Earth Day celebration tomorrow from 4-7, planting native species and having fun together in Nature! Also, we are currently taking applications for a summer intern. Please share with those you think might be interested. Here is the link to the details: <https://mailchi.mp/bec55c1dd19a/cclt-is-hiring-8497965>

Bruce Coates: Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS): The AGM will be on May 17th at CENC, the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre. Talks finished for the season. Walks are coming up, especially at NCC Garry Oak Reserve on Wednesday April 27th. The Conservation Committee sent a letter to CVRD Directors and may make a delegation to the CVRD. Last shorebird count on Sunday, May 8. For anything Naturalist related: cvns@naturecowichan.net

Rick Bryan: Paddling Community: As like last summer, I will be confirming that paddlesport will offer no-charge instruction for stewardship summer students hired by local agencies. "All work and no play" isn't very effective for fostering passion for rivers!!

Karen Deck: Save Our Holmes Society (SOH): We had our AGM on April 10. It gave us the opportunity to look back with gratitude for the skills, knowledge and expertise shared by local experts and for the connections that have been made with so many stewardship groups. It also gave us the opportunity to recommit to deepening our knowledge and advocacy for forests and the important role they play as the climate emergency deepens.

Jim Deck: Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS): We are currently reviewing various options for a new annual signature event to replace the River Cleanup Day. Over the past few years, the tubing companies have been cleaning the river on a weekly basis. Therefore, the CLRSS will move to a new event that will help increase our membership by promoting some of our current lake and river activities. We are holding a meeting on April 24 to present our membership with our new plans.

Ian Morrison: Area F CVRD Director: Ian mentioned that a hard decision is coming up at the CVRD re the Railway trail. He mentioned that the HOCP and MOCP are doing community circles. Very concerned re short term rental of housing in the lake area and rental affordability.

Joe Saysell: Friends of the Cowichan: The rainy weather would be good for the fry if there are any. Joe hasn't spotted any. He is concerned about the pressure on the river from development. He sent a letter to Minister Osborne with suggestions for ways to help fish survive in the river, especially closing the upper river for guiding in the critical months. He sent a copy to Genevieve to share with the group.

Barry Hetschko commented as a member of the Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society.

Jane Kilthei reported on behalf of the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre.

Genevieve Singleton reported that the Knocken Back Knotweed Committee of biologists Dave Polster, Cheri Ayers, Dave Lindsay and herself would be starting up their project in May at Bright Angel Park.

Jacquie Taylor Bring Back Bluebird Project was unable to attend and sent regrets. Genevieve read out the following report: Four different Western Bluebirds have been spotted on the Island this season so far, one unbanded and three banded. Two of those have returned to the Cowichan Valley. The first translocations happened on Easter Weekend, two pairs were brought over and settled into aviaries. One female that was fledged in the Cowichan Valley has been spotted nesting on San Juan Island this year. We have plans to bring four more families over this season.

Future Meetings:

May 19th- Cheri Ayers, BC Restoration Fund for Salmon Stocks

June 16th- Jamieson Atkinson, BCCF, Trout in the Comox Watershed

July 21st- approx. 9:30 to 3, Alexandra Morton is confirmed to talk, dependant on covid concerns at our Field Day at Stoltz Pool, Cowichan River Provincial Park