

Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable Meeting Notes **May 19, 2022, 9 – 12 on 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.

Regrets: Melissa Nottingham: Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Pam Jorgenson: Mosaic, Parker Jefferson: Co-chair Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT), Rick Bryan: Paddling Community

Attendees: Tom Rutherford: Cowichan Watershed Board (CWB), Genevieve Singleton: Co-chair Cowichan Stewardship Round Table (CSRT), Karen Deck: Save Our Holmes Society (SOH), Jim Deck: Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRSS), Ken Epps: Mosaic, Jennifer Shepherd: Community Researcher Xwulqw'selu Connections, Lisa Fox, Edmond Duggan: Recreational Paddlers, Martha Lescher, Oliver Brandes: Polis UVic, Barry Hetschko: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society (SMWS), Joe Saysell: Friends of the Cowichan, Bruce Coates: Cowichan Valley Naturalists Society (CVNS), Erik Piikkila, Forest and Watershed Ecologist, Ian Morrison: Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), Peter Woods BC Parks , Bernhard Juurlink, Cheri Ayers: Consulting Biologist BioAyer Consultants, Shalu Mehta: Discourse, Chrissy Czenbor: Department of Fisheries and Oceans

CSRT Business:

1. We are hosted on Cowichan Tribes unceded territory.
2. Appreciation to Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson and the Cowichan Watershed Board for kindly donating the Zoom platform for our meeting.
3. Thank you to Karen Deck for note taking and editing for the last meeting and today's.
4. Terms of Reference carried over. Genevieve and Rick working on this.
5. Genevieve has applied to BC Parks for a \$5,000 grant and is reaching out to CVRD and others for \$500 grants. We will be carrying on with a simple version of our original plan in case we do not get the large grant that Jill Thompson worked on. Genevieve will call a zoom meeting before the end of June for interested parties. Sites confirmed are Lakeveiw Campsite, the weir, Saywell Park, Stoltz Picnic site and Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre. There will be room for anyone wanting to do a booth or activity. Tzinqaw Dancers are booked, decision has not been made for which site yet. Time decided on was 10-3, although we may wish to stagger times at some sites.
6. Emma Ross is adding meeting notes to the website.
7. Genevieve asks us to share the news about the CSRT July 21 annual Field Meeting at Stoltz Picnic site, Cowichan River Provincial Park. Alexandra Morton will be our key speaker. Decisions about lunch have not been decided.
8. Our meeting in August will be in person to finalize plans for River Day.
9. Request from Paul Fletcher to add our October speaker to Wildwings Festival events list was approved.

Round the Table:

Edmond Duggan, Paddling Community: After a two-year hiatus, the Cowichan River Youth Kayak for 2022 was a great success. This year 41 youth and 20+ adult volunteers took to the river on a wonderful weekend. The water and weather were excellent! Participants came from several island schools (Brentwood, Parksville) as well as the Chilliwack Centre of Excellence and some as far away as Quesnel. It continues to be Canada's largest and best youth paddling festival showcasing the Cowichan River. Thanks to all that helped make it happen.

Paddlers are meeting with MP Alistair MacGregor to discuss the weir play feature project next week. Our efforts to provide a new recreation benefit continues; we recognize the benefits of outdoor recreation on physical and mental health and how it connects people with the river and nature.

With the water levels remaining higher than normal for this time, paddling continues as they are ideal conditions for the experienced paddler. We hope for a slow snowpack melt for paddling and the fish/wildlife.

Alistair MacGregor's office is taking meetings in person and Zoom next week during his constituency week May 23-27.

Rick Bryan, Paddlers: Last weekend, 16 paddlers (14 boats) completed the run from Little Beach to Skutz. There were many anglers also recreating on this stretch of the river. It was fantastic to see paddlers give the anglers a wide berth and to see anglers reel in and pause their casting until the paddlers floated by. We are indeed fortunate, on Vancouver Island, that anglers and paddlers can share rivers in a friendly and respectful manner. Sadly, this is not always the case in other locations!

Karen Deck, SOH: At the last CSRT meeting Mosaic announced their carbon credit project and the 40,000 hectares to be deferred from logging for 25 years. Soon afterward, we found out that large parts of Mts. Holmes and Good near Youbou were included in this project. We hope the extended life of the forests above our community will make us less vulnerable to forest fires, restore biodiversity to the hillsides and allow our watersheds to sustain us through the very difficult times ahead as the climate emergency deepens. Our collective future depends on each of us doing the very best we can to make swift and bold decisions to reduce our carbon footprint.

Jim Deck, CLRSS:

- We are holding our 2022 AGM at the Lake Cowichan Curling Lounge on June 26 from 1-4 pm.
- At the AGM we will be approving our Annual Signature Event beginning in 2023. This will replace the annual river clean up.
- We will participate in the Roundtable River Day Celebration on September 25 from 10-3 pm.

Barry Hetschko, SMWS: Barry had nothing to report, but responded to questions Genevieve asked about vandalism at Somenos Marsh.

Bernhard Juurlink Shawnigan Watershed : Spoke about concerns he has raised in letters to the editor and district officials regarding a proposed parking lot in wetlands near Kinsol Trestle. He has forwarded information to the CSRT which has been distributed by email.

Jennifer Shepherd, Community Researcher, Xwulqw'selu Connections: Jennifer introduced herself and mentioned her project on the Koksilah. She invited folks interested in monitoring stream flow to contact her. jshepherd@uvic.ca

Shalu Mehta, The Discourse: Shalu introduced herself and talked briefly about her future reporting. Her contact information is shalu@thediscourse.ca

Peter Wood, BC Parks: He is departing for another job. His replacement has not yet been officially announced.

Ian Morrison, CVRD: reported from Victoria at Advocacy Days where he and others are meeting with ministers.

Joe Saysell, Friends of the Cowichan: The river is high, so he is not gathering fry. When he was gathering, though, population was down by two thirds. He continues to push for the river closure, but faces an uphill battle from the guide lobby. To have input into regulations: <https://apps.nrs.gov.bc.ca/ahte/>

Chrissy Czenbor, DFO: christina.czembor@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Speaker: Many thanks to Cheri Ayers who spoke on the Chemainus-Koksilah Twinned Watersheds Salmon Sustainability Project Update

Future Meetings:

June 16 – Jamieson Atkinson, BCCF Trout in the Comox Watershed

July 21 – approx.. 9:30 to 2, planning River Day details coming. Field day at Stoltz Pool, Cowichan River Provincial Park, Alexandra Morton biologist, whale researcher, fish lice activist will join us in person from Sointula

August 18 – outdoor meeting to plan River Day

September 15- planning River Day

October 20 – Tristan Douglas speaking on Blue Carbon Storage in Cowichan Estuary (not determined yet if in person or on Zoom)