

Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable



September 19, 2013

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by Paul Rickard at 9 am.

In attendance

Craig Wightman (BCCF), Craig Sutherland (KWL), Paul Rickard (BCWF), Gerald Thom (CLRSS) Kai Rietzel (CLT), Keith Lawrence & Kate Miller (CVRD), Wilf Luedke (DFO), Nick Versteg (DV media/DV Cuisine), Parker Jefferson (ONE Cowichan), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), Don Closson (BC Parks), Kerry Davis (Green Party), Brian Tutty (consultant), Nikki Wright (Seachange), Derek Haupt (Western Forest Product), Brain Houle (Catalyst), Ted Brookman (BCWF), Dave Lindsay (Timberwest), Claude Theriault & Richard Lake (Sidney Anglers), Catherine Macey (Jean Crowder M.P), Tim Kulchyski & Helen Reid (Cowichan Tribes), Genevieve Singleton (Nature Interpreter), Tom Rutherford (DFO), Rodger Hunter (CWB), Cheri Ayers (consultant), Bob Crandall (CLSES), Ray Demarchi (CERCA), Norm Olive (CVRD), Nicole Norris (Island Corridor Foundation).

Regrets: Rob Hutchins (CVRD)

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the July meeting were circulated and approved.

Roundtable updates

Nicole Norris – Island Corridor Foundation and the Young Professionals of the Cowichan Valley are sponsoring a Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up on September 27th 2pm at the Halalt First Nation. Gerald – 100 volunteers came out and 1.1 tons of garbage was picked up at the River Clean-up in August. CLRSS is working on watershed/lakeshore management issues and will be presenting to the CVRD on September 25th.

Parker – One Cowichan attended several events throughout the summer.

Genevieve – the 10th anniversary of the Freshwater Fisheries Society Trout Hatchery is September 14th. She will not be organizing a Rivers Day event this year. The blue bird project has been successful this year.

Don – The Parks tender contract has been delayed one year.

Kai – Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up at Hecate Park on Sept 22nd. Also Sept 22nd 5pm to 8pm Beer and Burger fundraiser for the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre, tickets are \$20. CLT is starting some new projects this fall – Wetlands Stewardship and Native Bee Gardens.

Claude/Richard – Sydney Anglers has money from their fishing derby for enhancement projects if you are interested in applying for some talk to either of them after the meeting.

Bob – Hatchery has dome fry salvage over the summer and has had a new intake built.

Ray – CERCA had a busy summer, getting their group organized, cleaning up Mariners Island, want to look at a project to breach the causeway, concerned about eelgrass and log leases.

Ted – BCWF is pushing provincial Water Act changes.

Craig W. – They are identifying compensation projects next month AI Lil will be reporting. Stoltz maintenance has been completed. A flow study downstream from the pump house is being completed.

Keith – The Cowichan water sampling program will be commencing soon. Five weeks of sampling.

Kate – LIDAR work has been completed, and hyper-spectral data looking at Garry Oak trees has been done. They are getting 80 to 90% returns for the hyper-spectral data. They are hoping to look at shorelines and see if the data can pick out individual species.

Tom – They are completing a staffing process to replace Erica. Somebody will be in place next month. The hatchery will start going to get brood stock soon. They are working on creating the Busy Place Creek Outdoor classroom.

Paul – He is pursuing a meeting with Bonnie Atcliff and Al Magnan and is hoping to have them at next month's meeting. The Water Act is being re-written and may allow for more local control. There is a need for a more functional Cowichan Estuary management Committee.

Business

Diking and Fish Habitat Mitigation – Norm Olive

Norm gave a presentation of the diking works completed so far, including maps and photos of works completed this summer. There was 18,000 m³ of gravel removed from CR Site 1. CR Site 4 will hopefully be completed next year. The North Arm CR Site 6 was completed Sept 16th, new channels and 4 new pools were constructed. Sand bag dikes are being left in so that in low flows the water will be diverted 50-50 into both arms of the river.

Weir Update – Brian Houle

The water levels have stayed between the old rule curve and the new rule curve. They had eight extra days of storage this summer. The pulse of 18cms will start on Sunday September 22. Brian is proposing a new pulse regime that is ramped down in steps rather than released and shut-off.

Lake Shore Properties/Cowichan Watershed Board Updates - Rodger Hunter

The objective of the Lakeshore Property project was to show the relationships between lake water levels and property boundaries if the weir was raised by 30cm. The 200 year flood level is 167m above sea level, the mean high water mark in the winter is 164m above sea level, the top of the weir is 162.37 m above sea level. A 30cm rise of the weir would result in the top of the weir to be at 162.67m above sea level, this is still 1.33 m below the mean high water mark. There are 823 parcels of land with lakefront, 634 of these are between Youbou and Honeymoon Bay. Results of the project showed that with the increase 36% would have no extra water on their properties, 34% would have extra water on a piece(s) of their property's waterfront and 30% would have extra water on all waterfront parts of their property.

Target Updates

- City of Duncan is starting to metre its water.
- CWB is hoping to install web cams at the weir and Catalyst pump station.
- 9-10 farmers have signed up for a group area based environmental farm plan.
- CWB is working with the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre to create an interactive watershed display.
- In January 2014 a Watershed Governance Forum will be held in the Cowichan. It will be national in scope and have international speakers.
- The Environmental Appeal Board will meet on September 25th regarding extra storage at Lake Cowichan.

2013 Proposed Flood Works – Kate Miller

Kate clarified that at the last CSRT meeting she was speaking to adaptive management as it pertains to storm water and rainwater management. Some people misunderstood and thought she was speaking in regards to the new Area D OCP.

CVRD is applying for new funding from the Building Canada Fund for more flood works. Kate showed the flood modeling images as if it was a 200 year flood, the new dikes were completed and climate change and tides but no sea level rise factored in as well. The current proposal includes new/upgrades to the dikes behind Sun Valley Mall, Allenby Road, RV Park, Casino and Cowichan Cultural Centre.

Sandy Pool Project – Keith Lawrence

This project will see a restoration of the boat launch. Partners include BCWF, Area I, CVRD Parks and Environmental Initiative Departments. Boats being dragged across the bank have caused erosion that has resulted in changes in the river. This inclusive stakeholder lead project will stabilize the river bank, install a deflector, enhance off-channel habitat and install interpretive elements.

Cowichan Bay Kelp Project – Cheri Ayers

The Cowichan Bay Kelp Project was carried out to determine if juvenile salmonids use kelp beds, do they use kelp beds at the same rate as eelgrass beds and can we grow kelp in Cowichan Bay/Sansum Narrows.

They studied three - 50m paired transects in Cowichan Bay and two – 50 m paired transects in Sansum narrows. Eelgrass beds were paired with kelp beds. The fish observed were recorded and then numbers were extrapolated to 100m transects. They also mapped kelp beds and eelgrass beds, collected kelp spores and propagated with kelp two Cowichan Bay sites and two Sansum Narrows sites.

Results – A difference between density in kelp and eelgrass beds was found. Kelp had more salmonids, kelp had more species richness. In Rusty Sweetings work more salmonids are seen on the kelp bed side of Cowichan Bay. All trial propagation sites had kelp holdfasts and stipes so they were successful.

Conclusions – Kelp habitat is important to juvenile salmonids. Kelp can be propagated successfully. There is a need to look at seasonal variations. Snorkel surveys should be continued. It would be good to have water clarity results especially after the Stoltz remediation.

Broadway Run Slope Stabilization – Craig Wightman, Craig Sutherland

Sediment sources have been identified through a hydrogeological study. In 2008 /2010 reports the toe of the sediment wedge showed high potential for erosion. Areas of potential erosion on the Cowichan main stem were analyzed using eight criteria to judge potential impacts. The Broadway Run site came out on top as having the highest potential for remediation.

The area is 200m long and 20m high with 11m of surficial material over glacial till. There are two options for restoration: 1- Retrain the river using gravel bar material to build benches and a riprap apron or 2- protect the toe of sediment by building a setback toe trench with riprap.

The setback riprap trench option is the best for less environmental impact but may not be as good at reducing the sediment load. A phased approach will be used. First, access will be established, then the toe slope will be constructed and then the access road will be deactivated.

RFCCP Updates – Gerald Thom

Six Cowichan groups were selected for funding. There have been many frustrations over the RFCCP application process. The CLRSS application was lost many times and resubmitted. Then they were told they had funding but later found out that their application was never sent on to Ottawa for review. Other groups also feeling frustrated by the application and contribution agreement process.

ACTION: The co-chairs will draft a letter to DFO regarding the difficulties with the RFCCP application process and our concerns with them.

Next Meeting

October 17th.