

Cowichan Watershed Board Meeting

DRAFT Minutes



June 6, 2013
4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Main Meeting
6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Location: Oceanfront Suites at
Cowichan Bay
1681, Cowichan Bay Road

Participants: Cowichan Watershed Board

Guests: Deb Epps, BC Ministry of Environment, Pat Lapcevic, BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources, Oliver Brandes, Polis Institute.

Co-chair: Co-chair Tim Kulchyski

1. Welcome; Introductions, Invocation; Opening Remarks

Tim Kulchyski called the meeting to order. He noted that since there was no meeting in May meeting the June meeting had an ambitious agenda and as a result he proposed getting on with the meeting without further delay.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

3. Approval of Minutes of April 4, 2013 meeting and Business Arising from Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented. It was noted that following the April Watershed Board last meeting a letter had been sent to the Ministry of Environment expressing the Board's concern about the SIA proposal in Shawnigan; there was a site visit to the Qwu'utsun Cultural and Conference Centre and subsequently it was agreed that it would serve as the venue for January watershed governance forum; the Watershed Board's legal opinion had been shared with the Deputy Comptroller of Water Rights; the Coordinator and others had visited the Heather Mountain snow course site; Board and TAC members had participated in the shoreline habitat workshop at Lake Cowichan as well as a Chinook workshop organized by DFO and the Roundtable; a manure workshop was in the process of being organized for local dairy farmers; and Westcoast Environmental Law had agreed to support the Watershed Boards efforts to become incorporated and to intervene should there be an appeal to Environmental Appeal Board regarding weir operation.

4. Sh-hwuykwsela (Busy Creek Place Story)

Kathy O'Donnell introduced Jade and Savanna and their teacher Jill from Koksilah School told the story of Sh-hwuykwsela (Busy Place Creek) including:

- its naming in 2005;
- the succession of projects to rehabilitate the area;
- the ecological, educational and social benefits of the initiative;
- the diverse group of project supporters;
- the provincial award that it received in 2010.

Kathy also showed a brief video and expressed concern about water quality in the area.

Gerald Thom offered to approach Deb Epps of the Ministry of Environment. Tim Kulchyski and Sean Wong agreed to work with Kathy to explore options for further restoration initiatives in the lower part of Sh-hwuykwsela. It was recommended that the creek be included in part on 2013 water quality sampling.

5. Presentations/Updates

- Water Quality/Shellfish
- Surface Water/Ground Water and Water Budget Study
- Riparian

Rodger Hunter provided an on progress related to water quality and shell fish. A summary can be found at [LINK](#). He also noted that the Technical Advisory Committee had recommended that the Board adopt another indicator under that water quality target. **Decision: The Board approved the Technical Advisory Committee's recommendation that water quality throughout the watershed should be maintained at a standard such that it is safe to swim.**

Pat Lapcevic of the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources provided an update on the project sponsored through the Watershed Board as well as an update on a complementary initiative that is being undertaken through the research capacity within the ministry. Highlights of Pat's presentation can be found at [INSERT LINK](#). A report documenting Phase 1 of this project is near completion. It is also noteworthy that this project is being undertaken in collaboration with the water quality initiative which is also supported by Watershed Board Gas Tax Funding.

Gerald Thom provided a summary of the April 25 -26 Workshop on shoreline habitats that took place at Lake Cowichan and resulted in an action plan for shoreline habitats of Cowichan Lake. He also noted that the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society had recently completed a 5 year strategy and the working group had completed a higher level plan. The respective plans are located at the following links. [INSERT LINKS](#).

Decision: The Board approved a motion to adopt two riparian targets for the lake. These had previously been approved in principle. Those are:

- **Secure protection of 50% of the 70% of the lake's shoreline habitats that are currently considered to be intact; and**
- **Restore 10% of the 30% of the lake's shoreline habitats that are currently negatively impacted.**

The Board also approved making a \$3,000 contribution to the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society to assist with the implementation of a demonstration habitat restoration project at Saywell Park in Lake Cowichan.

Approval of the contribution was subject to an eligibility ruling but the controller of Gas Tax expenditures at the CVRD and since expenditures are related to erosion prevention the source will be erosion related funds.

Attachment 1

Resolution approved by Cowichan Watershed Board regarding a possible application for a water license to store water at Cowichan Lake for conservation purposes.

Whereas a Provincial Order under the Water Act has been granted to amend the operation of Catalyst Paper's weir at Lake Cowichan as requested by the Cowichan Watershed Board and Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) in 2012;

And whereas, that amendment extends the period during which the lake may be held at full storage to July 31st during years when sufficient water is available and based on historical climate data that amendment increases the likelihood of maintaining 7 cubic metres per second (cms) flow throughout the summer from 49% to 61% and the likelihood of having sufficient water for a fish pulse from 52% to 65%;

And whereas, neither the federal nor provincial government has indicated an interest in applying for additional storage of water on Cowichan Lake to ensure adequate river flows for fish habitat including habitat for migrating salmon;

Therefore it be resolved that the Cowichan Watershed Board formally request that the Cowichan Tribes and CVRD jointly apply for a conservation license to store an additional 20cm of water on Cowichan Lake to increase the likelihood of maintaining 7 cms flow throughout the summer to 62% and the likelihood of having sufficient water for a fish pulse to 82% based on historical climate data.

[Historical data referred to above includes inflows to the lake (1962 to 2012). Due to reduced snowmelt and increased temperatures and decreased precipitation late spring and spring and summer inflows are projected to decline. As a result the increased likelihoods of maintaining 7cms and having water available for fish pulses are overstated.]