

**DRAFT  
MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Mon. Sept 30 2019  
9:30-11:45 am  
CVRD Boardroom  
175 Ingram Street, Duncan**



**Co-Chair:** Chief William (Chip) Seymour

**Participants** CVRD Chair Ian Morrison (co-chair), Shannon Waters, David Anderson, David Slade, Tim Kulchyski, Lori Iannidinaro, David Froese, Kristine Sandhu, Darin George, Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson

**Regrets:** Debra Toporowski, Laura Brown, Alison Nicholson

**Guests:** Rick Bryan, Recreational Canoeing Association of B.C., Brian Houle, Catalyst Paper, working group members; general public.

**Minutes:** Jill Thompson

1.	Welcome	Chief Seymour called the meeting to order.	
2.	Approve Agenda	Motion to approve agenda by David F; Seconded by David S. No changes.	Approved.
3.	Review and approve the Minutes of last meeting	Motion to approve agenda by Ian; Seconded by Lori. No changes.	Approved
4.	Correspondence and Announcements - see agenda.	Tom reviewed all announcements and correspondence. Tom acknowledged Genevieve Singleton and Parker Jefferson for an excellent Qwutsun Heritage River Day on the weekend.	Information
5.	Opportunity for public comment.	Jack MacNeil of Sahtlam expressed appreciation on behalf of he and his wife for the work of the CWB to look after our rivers and lakes and acknowledged how many issues that entails. - Genevieve Singleton, co-Chair of the Cowichan Stewardship Round Table, acknowledged all the volunteers and event co-organizer Tim Kulchyski for a successful day. She gave gratitude for Cowichan Tribes providing the salmon and venue. Chef Jared Williams cooked his biggest Piqwun ever – over 200	Information

		<p>people fed on the riverbank.</p> <p>-Tim echoed gratitude for everyone coming together.</p>	
6	<p>Referral RE Zoning Amendment for Vancouver Island Motorsport Circuit</p>	<p>Tom presented a draft response from the CWB to Municipality of North Cowichan's referral on this issue and outlined the process and the value of CWB being formally asked to provide its perspective on a watershed issue for the first time.</p> <p>Board members discussed the draft response. There was a discussion of whether we should comment on the impacts on elk without scientific evidence on that being available on our timeline. Cowichan members spoke about how they know the elk are being impacted, and that with salmon declines, elk are often the only protein source for First Nation families, and the herd is being managed for decline which impacts their rights. An edit was requested to clarify the use of traditional ecological knowledge in the CWB response.</p> <p>Appreciation was expressed for Tom's careful attention to our mandate and providing relevant science and TEK based input reflecting the Board's areas of expertise.</p> <p>Further discussion details below.</p>	<p>David Slade moved that the Board support the letter. Seconded by David Anderson.</p> <p>Tom to make one edit as specified by Shannon to clarify the use of Traditional ecological knowledge and submit to MNC on behalf of the Board.</p> <p>Approved.</p>
7	<p>River Recreation - Presentation and request for consideration in planning restorative works on the river.</p>	<p>Rick Bryan gave a presentation on the paddling community that recreates in the Cowichan / Koksilah. He talked about the thousands of years of indigenous use of the river and how paddling provides a link to that strong heritage, and shared details of the stewardship and educational contributions of the paddling community. Rick asked the Board to consider engaging with the recreational sector in the design phase of the new weir to assess whether there are opportunities to include paddling 'play features' as other communities have done recently to improve recreation and tourism values without impacting aquatic habitats. The Board</p>	<p>Decision – Ian will follow up with Rick to connect him to the weir design team for consideration of whether paddling features could be incorporated.</p>

		expressed support in principal for connecting Rick to the weir design team to consider this. See details below.	
8	<p>Water Supply updates</p> <p>a) overview of Cowichan and Koksilah this summer</p> <p>b) Pumping Lake Cowichan</p> <p>c) Fish count update?</p>	<p>Brian Houle gave an update (see presentation) on the lake and river levels and water pumping. He specified that river flows would be moving to 7cms today, and Catalyst would probably be going off control soon, and he doesn't anticipate further low flow issues for this year. See below for addition comments about the 2019 season.</p> <p>Tim reported on counting fence returns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 916 adult chinook (250 jacks)</li> <li>• 15 coho (5 jack)</li> <li>• 29 pink</li> <li>• 5 chum – early for chum</li> </ul> <p>Looking positive for salmon in general. Tim added that flows in north arm looking great right now but gravel needs to be removed. Works planned at CR3 near JUB and work at black bridge but high water now might make that difficult.</p> <p>Tom encouraged the Board that despite the tough summer, there are good reasons to be in a celebratory mood.</p> <p>In Cowichan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- \$4 million has been received to get “shovel-ready” to build a new weir.</li> <li>- He acknowledged the good work of CLRSS in reaching out to residents at the lake to improve knowledge and support.</li> <li>- He also acknowledged that while our proposal was strong, our success was likely attributable largely to having very strong political support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MLA Sonia for arranging and chairing political meetings to bring the provincial partners together.</li> <li>○ MP Alistair MacGregor rose in the House of Commons more than once and reached out to Minister</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Information / Discussion

		<p>Wilkinson successfully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cowichan Tribes leadership and willingness to partner has been key to this success.</li> <li>- The BC Salmon Restoration and Renovation Fund grant we received is a perfect example of the leadership we enjoy. Huy tseep q'u.</li> </ul> <p>Inn Koksilah:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This river is actually in much worse shape with flows as low as 2% mean annual discharge.</li> <li>- FLNRO enacted Section 88 of the Water Sustainability Act and has received funding to scope a Water Sustainability Plan (possibly the first in the province).</li> <li>- CWB has asked that the WSP start with an agreement of some sort with Cowichan Tribes to lay out a good working process.</li> <li>- This could lead to a change in the way we use our land and our water in the Koksilah which is the only way we can improve things in this watershed.</li> </ul>	
9	Other	<p>Ian shared that at UBCM earlier this month, Dir. Nicholson made an appointment with Ministers about concerns in the Koksilah. It was also attended by Dir. Acton and himself. He acknowledged Dir. Nicholson for a great job and a good meeting.</p> <p>Lori attended the first meeting of the Vancouver Island Adaptation Strategies group. Water use in agriculture was discussed.</p> <p>David A inquired about the timeframe of the watering restrictions in the Koksilah.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implemented late August. Hasn't been officially ended but due to early rain, farmers don't need to irrigate now anyway.</li> </ul> <p>David S acknowledged the successes signaling a coming of age of the CWB. He talked about the vision of the original co-chairs Lydia Hwitsum and Gerry Giles, and of coordinators Rodger and Alison.</p>	Information

		Great work we have done and will continue to do.  Oct 15-17 Cowichan Nation will be travelling to Nicola Nation with water funders RE water policy.	
	Adjourn. Next meeting Oct 28th 9:30am	Ian motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Lori. Carried.	Adjourned.

## Discussion Details RE Agenda Items Above

### 6. Vancouver Island Motor Circuit (VIMC) zoning amendment referral from Municipality of North Cowichan (MNC)

#### Discussion

David F asked for clarification on water sampling, and whether we did water sampling in 2013. Tom clarified that ... (Tom please fill in)

David F asked whether we had enough scientific grounding in the relationship between noise and elk and whether we had the expertise to comment on that.

- Tim replied that he feels he has to speak to what he sees. He acknowledged complaints about human-elk interactions at farms, hwy 18.
- This is the only elk population in the province that is being managed for decline
- Cowichan Tribes doesn't meet its food needs currently. Elk are now the only good protein source for 5000 Cowichan Tribes due to declines in salmon fishing.
- A hay baler (farm tractor) can drive by an elk herd and they won't mind but a single person walking up a hill to watch them can impact them - they react. I know what a revving engine does to me in my backyard. I don't want to negate the impact of sound.
- Elk are the largest mammal in this valley; we do nothing to respect its existence. There has already been such a significant reduction in their territory – range has already been limited. This is an important part of their territory.
- Board members agreed on an edit to clarify the use of indigenous knowledge about elk impacts. Shannon provided wording for an edit on page 5. Agreed.

David A. added that a number of relevant studies were actually done in Sooke Hills on impact on wildlife, and noise has been shown to have an impact on wildlife (infrared studies and photography clearly indicated that noise changes behaviour patterns). It's certainly not unreasonable to say that this has to be properly understood.

Ian thanked staff for work on this and explained that staff met with Co-chairs in advance and the direction was to make sure we stuck to our mandate and gave good input for MNC decision makers. He thanked Cowichan partners and acknowledged that how we operate at the CWB is being worked into other tables. He added that he believes this will be a good contribution to MNC Council's considerations.

Darin commented that he has lived in Sahlam for 30 years and has observed impacts to wildlife and water. He asked "What are our concerns and how can we help? How can we improve? What are our limits? What are we going to do to protect them for once instead of just keep developing?" He said that as a resident he has seen the impacts.

Shannon supported the letter going forward with the edit to clarify indigenous knowledge.

Chief Seymour added that Cowichan Tribes also submitted a letter to MNC that provides input on the effects of fencing and land clearing to their elk. He specified that there were three herds in that area, and only one now, which has moved to the top of Mt. Prevost. There has already been an effect. He added that elders told his staff about the noise effecting the elk, and that two herds have moved elsewhere.

Consensus was reached to submit the letter to MNC with the specified edit.

## **7. River Recreation presentation by Rick Bryan**

- Rick commented that paddlers use watercraft that originated with indigenous cultures. “When you paddle a canoe, you journey with those that have gone before” (Bill Mason quote)
- He referenced Shannon’s talk on the impacts of climate change stress on people and how outdoor recreation is one method to manage stress and improve mental health.
- Paddlers help with public safety by informing authorities when there are hazards.
- Paddlers don’t tear up riparian areas, stir up silt, use oil, create fumes, etc. Paddlers pick up garbage all year round and are “your eyes” in some of the more inaccessible areas of the river.
- Paddlers sit on many local stewardship groups and events and provide letters of support.
- Rick asked whether it might be possible for minor revisions to be made to benefit river recreation users.
- Paddling season is mostly in fall, winter and spring seasons – don’t use it when river is low.
- Dams can be deadly, with people drifting into dangerous currents, or they can be designed to provide recreational “play features” in the river. E.g. waves and holes for surfing, spinning.
- These features can exist naturally, but they appear and disappear depending on daily river flows, which makes it difficult to access them at the time that the feature exists. Some features are too near dangerous things (e.g. log jam nearby) or are not close enough to parking / access to be widely available.
- He clarified that they are not requesting anything extensive (like a white water park, which he provided examples of) but some of the concepts or elements of white water design might be feasible, and good tourism revenue generators (e.g. Reno Nevada, Bend, Harvey Passage (Calgary) for tubers and paddlers. These can include a natural reserve for fish and habitat, and concentrate any impacts in one area.
- He also suggested that when this is available, amenities (e.g. washrooms) can be focused too, addressing the tuber impacts in one area while leaving the rest of the river in better condition.
- Play feature engineers would be needed to prepare a feasibility study. (Rick has a contact if interested)
- He requested an opportunity to talk to project partners to discuss feasibility of incorporating play features to make our weir the best it can be and serve all river users and river uses.
- He also talked about how youth are the future river stewards, and this could be a way to re-connect youth to the river.

## **Discussion**

David F asked about the practicality in terms of the Cowichan River geography, and that there isn’t much drop until the pinch point at the railway bridge, and the limited access through private property.

Ian thanked Rick for the presentation and indicated openness to people coming forward with contributions. He noted that this might be in Town of Lake Cowichan jurisdiction but supported exploring the idea, as long as fish habitat are protected. He added that he’d like to look into a year round porta-potty for paddlers that would support swift water rescue team as well.

Darin thanked Rick for a great presentation and commented that youth need more to do and this could be good for Lake Cowichan which is a growing small town.

Tim added that fatalities on the river are frequent but if we can plan a structure that works and is safe for people that would be good. He added that kids already get around the fences and into the weir areas. Being able to make it safe is first and foremost, and that we look at that differently than in 1955. He thanked Rick for raising the idea.

Chief Seymour added that we do have a lot of work ahead of us, and engineers have not had a look yet, so there is still time. "No opposition here."

## **8 Water Supply –**

Brian Houle commented that

- This was a very difficult year. Since June 11<sup>th</sup> the river was running at 4.5 cms, with 3 weeks of pumping.
- 20 pumps were installed. They went from using 12 pumps to 15 and they know they will need 20 in future.
- Lake level went to 5" negative storage for the first time ever. He acknowledged lot of issues with going to low lake levels.
  - o Lamprey areas were checked – they had moved.
  - o Didn't need the siphon for Lake Cowichan water, but it is all installed. Need a discussion on whether to remove it.
  - o 50 buoys were installed in the lake to indicate hazards. There were no incidents, but lots of unsafe boating. There is a high risk to put people at more risk.
- We learned that we can't bank on a wet Feb, April, May or June anymore.
- Special meetings will be organized to see what we learned his year.