

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Mon. June 29 2020
9:30-11:00 am
Online / Phone Zoom Link



Co-Chair: CVRD Chair Aaron Stone. **Participants:** Chief William (Chip) Seymour (co-Chair), Debra Toporowski, Tim Kulchyski, Alison Nicholson, Lori Iannidinardo, David Froese, David Anderson, David Slade, Kristine Sandhu, Shannon Waters (joined 10:30am), Oliver Brandes, Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson. **Regrets/Absent:** Dale Derochers, Stuart Pagaduan. **Guests:** Elodie Roger, Barry Hetschko (Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society); Eileen Finn and Alan Dolan (Consultants to Mun. North Cowichan RE municipal forest reserve). **Minutes:** Jill Thompson

1	Welcome.		Information
2	Approve agenda.	Motion to approve agenda by David S. 2 nd by Debra.	Approved.
3	Review and approve May meeting minutes.	Motion to approve May minutes by Debra. 2 nd by Tim. Correction needed in item #7 (grammatical).	Approved pending correction.
4	Correspondence and Announcements	Tom reviewed the correspondence and announcements as per the agenda package . Tom added that Pat Lapcevic has been named as the new Director for West Coast Region replacing Larry Barr (retired).	Information
5	Updates from Executive Director.	See update presentation from Tom here .	Information
6	Presentation - Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society	Elodie Roger gave a presentation from Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society about their Green Stream Strategy to connect riparian habitats from summit to sea. Plans included education about the value of natural assets like the marsh, citizen science work with local residents around the marsh, ecologically responsible design for the new hospital (no net loss of habitat), and honouring cultural assets - learning the best way to value the land we live on. They plan to do Level 1 (health/status) and Level 2 (restoration strategy) Riparian Assessments. The Society is looking for support from the CWB to help with fundraising for this program. https://www.somenosmarsh.com/projects2	Information / Discussion
7	Input sought RE North Cowichan Municipal Forest Reserve.	Eileen Finn introduced herself and Alan Dolan. Eileen is contracted to run a public engagement process about the future of the Municipal Forest Reserve (map below).	Roundtable input.

		<p>Alan is contracted to run the parallel government to government indigenous engagement process.</p> <p>Eileen provided some background on the project then sought input from Board members. Many groups have recommended that they seek input from the CWB. Eileen clarified that this is early in the process, and that a technical review is occurring separately.</p> <p>Board members were asked to comment on key issues that need to be considered when considering the future management of the forest lands. (See detailed notes below.)</p>	
8	<p>River Cleanup - review of options:</p> <p>a) Proceed as usual with modifications.</p> <p>b) More dispersed model/ small groups</p> <p>c) Cancel.</p>	<p>Jill presented options for River Cleanup 2020 in light of CoVid 19.</p> <p>Debra spoke about a parallel initiative to engage Cowichan Tribes Councilors in an 'adopt a neighbourhood' village cleanup. This will take longer to organize and is more difficult during CoVid.</p> <p>Motion to pursue a dispersed model of Cowichan River Cleanup with people working in their 'bubble' small groups independently, and reaching out to include the lake residents as well. Alison proposed the motion; 2nd by Kristine. Approved.</p>	<p>Decision to pursue a dispersed model of River Cleanup with people working in their 'bubble' small groups independently, and reaching out to include the lake residents as well.</p>
9	Other	None	
	Adjourn. Next meeting July 27 9:30am	Motion to adjourn by Debra; 2 nd by David S.	Adjourned.

Detailed notes RE Item 7: Roundtable input on the Municipal Forest Reserve.

Comments from CWB members:

- Consider the [CWB's principles](#) – partnership in decision making, transparency with public, whole of watershed – incorporate all watershed values.
- Complexity with Cowichan history, traditional culture uses.
- Consider the modelling work in the Nisqually – shows how drought flow could be improved. People there are trying to purchase as much land as they can to restore values (like flows) so our communities have greater resilience moving forward.
- Concerns about former village sites, midden sites, graves, etc – it doesn't matter where you go in the valley, Cowichan people have been there pre-contact.
- Cowichan elders have commented that we should take all the forest lands back. Haven't discussed this with North Cowichan yet.
- Clear cutting is never an answer for us. Forest practices were unsanctioned without consultation. We shouldn't have to come to extremes like what we are experiencing today (climate, watershed issues).
- Marshes are important.
- Huge opportunity – wish we had this opportunity in Koksilah watershed.

- Ecosystems on east side on Vancouver Island are stressed – easiest way to deal with them is to remove any stresses we can. We can't stop climate change but we can look at how we manage our forests to remove those stresses.
- Objection to the term 'working forests' – all forests are working for us. Value of forest is more than what a raw log export might be. Trees are worth more than just lumber value. If North Cowichan can see that and change that, it would affect the fish, watershed, etc.
- Rather than election cycles, or harvest cycles, can we consider what we want the valley to look like in 150 years? What should the relationship with Cowichan Tribes neighbours look like? What should our relationship with the natural world be as we encounter climate change, biodiversity impacts? Weigh the short term benefit of logging vs long term benefit of restoring old forests in our community.
- Everything is connected. E.g, invasives move in after clear-cuts; traditional medicines can't grow back; have to go further and further away to find traditional medicines; more droughts need to be considered.
- Elders have asked are we going to get our land and river back when everything is dead, which is sad. If we can connect all the good initiatives we can start rebuilding.
- Reconciliation work needs to be done within the territories and with all the nations in the area. MNC has an opportunity to do that having such a huge land mass within unceded territories;
- Take the opportunity to establish a co-management framework at least, or return lands to First Nations at best.

Map of MNC Municipal Forest Reserve.

