


<p>DRAFT BOARD MEETING MINUTES</p>	<p>Mon. May 30th 2022 9:30-11:30 am Zoom / Phone</p>	
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Meeting Chair: CWB co-chair Lori Iannidinardo. **Board Participants:** CWB Co-Chair Lydia Hwitsum, Tim Kulchyski, Alison Nicholson, Linda Higgins, Shannon Waters, David Anderson, David Slade, David Froese, Kristine Sandhu, Cindy Williams, Qwiyahwult-hw/Stuart Pagaduan, Debra Toporowski. **Staff:** Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson, Heather Pritchard.

Regrets:

Guests: Paul Fletcher, Executive Director, Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society; Heather Pritchard, Twinned Watershed Project Riparian Assessment Project Lead, Chris Steeger, Wildlife Biologist.

Audience members: advisors, working group members, volunteers, interested public.

Minutes/Tech support: Jill 250-709-0492

9:00-9:30am – Open conversation/visiting. Meeting began at 9:30am.

1	Welcome from Co-Chairs.	CVRD Chair Lori Iannidinardo provided a welcome.	Information
2	Agenda Review / Revisions	Approved without changes.	Approved.
3	Review minutes of the April Board meeting.	Debra moved that we approve the minutes; seconded by Alison. No changes.	Approved
4	Announcements and Correspondence	<p>Tom quickly reviewed the announcements and correspondence included in the agenda package.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lori sought clarification of the E.D. hiring committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tom confirmed that the CWS members are the hiring committee, plus one CVRD representative, which will be Alison. 	Information
5	Public Input	Jennifer Shepherd provided an introduction to Xwulqw'selu Connections and an invitation to attend a June 13 BBQ at Bright Angel Park for anyone interested in stream flow monitoring. She thanked the CWB for its partnership with the project.	Information

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chief replied that she would like to see a connection with youth in this project. Hilda can include it in outreach. ➤ Alison added that participating last year was fun and easy to do. <p>Edmond Duggan expressed thanks and disappointment in the letter of response from the CWB regarding the recreational paddling park proposal. He was dismayed by the lack of promptness. Paddlers have provided letters of support for the weir, raised funds, met with technical experts, all before the weir engineering was completed in 2021. He also noted that letters of support were provided by MP McGregor and MLA Furstenau. He hopes to continue working towards the project.</p> <p>Rick Bryan added that paddlers are there when “grunt work” needs to be done. Rick stated that he wonders whether the CWB’s letter “dismissing” the proposed project fits with the principle, <i>We come together as a whole to work together to be partners for the watershed.</i></p>	
6	Staff updates	<p>Tom provided updates - See below for detailed presentation and discussion notes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chief Hwitsum acknowledged Tom’s important work as he moves towards retirement. There is no shortage of “big bites” in terms of how we are working together thanks to his contributions. ➤ Lori added that Tom has been our champion and these will be big shoes to fill. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tom replied that he feels “we are at a tipping point. We have had our shoulders to the wheel. We have - all of us - found a way to work together and this is the key to pushing us over the top.” 	Information
7	Presentation: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society	<p>Paul Fletcher provided a verbal presentation to update the CWB members on the activities and plans of the SMWS. Due to technical problems, the slideshow was</p>	Information

		circulated after the meeting. See below for detailed presentation and discussion notes.	
	BREAK	10 min to 10:50	
8	Presentation: Twinned Watershed Project - Riparian Plant Assessment	Heather Pritchard and Chris Steeger presented, and acknowledged the contributions of Elodie Roger who was not able to join them. “This is where we step out of the water and onto the land adjacent to the fish-bearing waters.” See slidedeck here and detailed presentation and discussion notes below.	Information
9	River Cleanup - set date, confirm CWB participants/roles, set organizing team	Discussion and decision that Lower River Cleanup will be held Sun. Aug. 28, pending Cowichan Tribes permission. Jill encouraged everyone to try to be there, either helping on the river or at the headquarters station. Alison, Tim and Barry offered to help organize.	Tentative date is Sun. Aug 28. Jill to follow up with Cowichan Tribes and plan an organizing meeting.
10	Other	(No time)	
11	Adjourn. Next meeting Mon. June 27	June meeting may be in person. Tom will consult with Cowichan Tribes and CVRD RE hybrid meetings. July and August meetings TBD.	Meeting adjourned 11:40am

Meeting materials are available at: <https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/meetings/>

Detailed Notes from agenda items above

6. Tom's Staff Update

Cowichan Weir

- Thursday June 16 - virtual public meeting hosted by the CVRD to present the results of the large study just being completed by Kerr Wood Liedel looking into Shoreline Assessments in relation to the construction of the new Cowichan Lake weir.
- Work progresses by the partners on crafting an MOU regarding the license application and preparing the groundwork necessary for submitting a conservation license application.
- The MOU has reached the final approval stage from Cowichan Tribes and CVRD elected officials and Paper Excellence ownership.

Koksilah Watershed Sustainability Plan

- June 13 steering committee meeting will initiate the secretariat role passing from CWB to the facilitation team – a partnership between Compass Env. Management and Aldherhill - for the next phase of the process. CWB will supervise the facilitation contract, using funds provided from Cowichan Tribes through their Healthy Watersheds Initiative grant.
- The next stages of the work will be developing a workplan/blueprint for the process and the tables (members, scope) in a terms of reference.
- Due to be completed by the end of the calendar year; creation of the plan will begin in the new year.

Other Updates

- CESI Final report has been submitted.
- Waiting to hear from REFBC on a 3 year grant application at 60K per year to help fund our involvement in key watershed issues and to retain someone to take a look at data management in the watershed.
- Jeff Anderson, Cheri Ayers and Tom will meet with Mosaic's technical team to share Jeff's Twinned Watershed research with them. June 6
- Suggesting an in-person meeting for June. Jill and Tom to consult the current protocols in place at Cowichan Tribes, CVRD and the Federal government to make sure this idea works for all our board members and then work to make it so.

7. Presentation: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society

- Paul recognized the roles of Rodger Hunter and Ian McTaggart in the inception of the Marsh Society. Now that the Marsh Conservation area is settled, SMWS work is expanding into the watershed through the Green Streams program. Cowichan Tribes is an important partner to guide the work to make sure we do it properly and respectfully. We are working to create and heal corridors. The group has also been creating a library of resources for other small watersheds to use.
- Paul characterized the CWB as doing "large bites" while the SMWS is doing "small bites".
- He acknowledged the Muni. N.Cowichan and BC Community Gaming grants for funding.
- Ongoing work includes:
 - Water quality testing in Somenos and Quamichan Lakes and streams including temp, oxygen, sediments, phosphates, and occasionally metals. Hoping to one day have a better way of sharing that data and report. The Society now has its own equipment which helps.
 - Algae blooms are an issue; phosphorous inputs from agriculture, residential, roads.
 - Invasive bullfrogs and sunfish (pumpkinfish)
 - 5 year restoration plans for Averill, Richards, Adams and Bings Creeks, with analysis by Dave Clough.
 - "Find a Fish" program – identifying location of spawners and smolts.
 - Bings Creek Restoration project.
 - Identifying freshwater mussels – indicator of salmon habitat.
 - Parrots feather - In Somenos Creek, they believe we lose 1 mo of spawning time due to barriers to fish passage from this invasive plant. They are seeking resources for an aquatic harvester in spring and fall. They tried smothering with pond liner but it didn't work.

- Wild Wings – this year’s theme is the return of salmon. They are looking for an indigenous artist to provide the logo.

- Alison – thanked Paul and suggested connecting with Koksilah WG
- Qwiyahwult-hw suggested connecting with the land-based learning at Cow High to perhaps form a partnership with a class, and asked what salmon species are in the systems.
 - Paul replied that the Cow High outdoor classroom has been helping extensively – lots of planting work, every Wed. Younger classes do bits of work as well.
 - coho, chinook possibly, and chum.
- Tim added these are very important coho systems. Tiny tributaries are the main habitat but these have been impacted by development. Somenos was the best rearing habitat in the entire watershed. That’s why Samuna village was there. Tim lifted his hands with thanks for the work of the SMWS, and working within CT to raise the profile of Averill Creek.
- Debra thanked the Society and acknowledged how long it takes to accomplish this work. Planting a seed for the future.
- Volunteer work parties – Green Streams and Community Stewardship events. On York Road. 9-noon Saturdays; 1-3pm Wednesdays – posted on Instagram page and website.
 - Paul added that Yellow Flag iris is also a huge issue in the fields. Parrots feather has been found by Tim in the Cowichan River which is a concern.
- Tom reflected on a time when the coho fishery was shut down by the Fisheries Minister. Somenos Lake was a prime location for coho.

8. Presentation: Twinned Watershed Project - Riparian Plant Assessment

Heather presented 3 key messages from Jeff’s Flows presentation last month:

- Water table drops when there is a lack of structure and complexity – both of these things come from the riparian forests.
- 77% of Koksilah Study area lacks structure and complexity.
- Slowing down the water in the winter and spring allows aquifers to recharge.

Riparian Plant Assessment Report conclusions included:

- Legislation permits further loss of recovering riparian forest. We can’t depend on legislation to restore health. Example: Conservation property tax incentive.
- Riparian areas must be wide enough to allow the river to move. For structure- 1 tree height is often recommended – 50m in this area.
- Whole of watershed approach is needed – including upper reaches and minor tributaries.
- Cedar ecosystems need attention. Example: Quw’utsun Cultural Connections X’pey project.

- Shannon asked about aligning all legislation with UNDRIP. Legislative reviews underway. Can we build an example where the government can see what this means? Legislation is supposed to protect our relations with the health of the watershed as indigenous peoples.
 - Heather agreed and suggested we need to stop trying to name a number. Muni N. Cowichan showed it is possible to identify riparian areas using a functional approach.
- Tom acknowledged the significant barriers overcome for this project – fires, flood, illness, accidents - and recognized the incredible team of technical experts that worked on the Twinned Watershed project.
- Lydia echoed the need for local data, local decision makers, capacity building, and recognized the cooperative effort, watershed thinking, and local decision making underway.