


<b>DRAFT BOARD MEETING Meeting Minutes</b>	<b>Mon. April 24th, 2023 9:30 AM - NOON Siem Lelum Dining Hall (address below)</b>	
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**Meeting Chair:** CVRD Chair Aaron Stone. **Participants:** Stuart Pagaduan, Alison Nicholson, David Slade, David Froese, Tim Kulchyski, Kristine Sandhu. **Regrets:** Chief Lydia Hwitsum, Shannon Waters, Linda Higgins, Michelle Staples, David Anderson, Oliver Brandes (Advisor). **Staff:** Jill Thompson, Lisa Maria Fox. **Guest Speaker:** Goetz Schuerholz Cowichan Estuary Restoration and Conservation Association (CERCA), and Dr. Leah Bendell, Simon Fraser University.

1	Welcome	Welcome from Aaron Stone, Chair of CVRD	
2	Agenda Review / Revisions	Aaron moved to adopt the agenda, with the addition of (11) a discussion RE the North Cowichan letter regarding the Estuary Management Plan.	Carried with one change.
3	Review March 2023 Minutes	Alison moved to adopt the minutes. Seconded by Kristine	Carried
4	Announcements & Correspondence	Jill pointed Board members to the Announcements at the bottom of their agenda and added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Welcome to Councillor Darin George who has been appointed to the CWB by Cowichan Tribes. (Replacing Cindy Daniels who is now the Cowichan Tribes CAO.) A card was circulated for Darin who is dealing with a medical situation.</li> <li>● Seeking a Board Member to host the CWB Speaker Series May 15<sup>th</sup>.</li> <li>● Congratulations to the CVRD for winning an Engineering Award for the Shoreline Study.</li> </ul>	Information
5	Public Input	N/A	Information

6	Language Lesson	<p>Qwiyahwult-hw Stuart Pagaduan provided an introduction to the word: Lulumexun noting that it is the name of the Cowichan Tribes Lands Building, which contains governance and lands management staff. Lulumexun means guardian, protector, it also implies friendships, learning from each other, and continuity.</p> <p>Stuart noted that this term also implies a need for humility, “we are never finished”, learning is constant with an open mind and an open heart. We come together with common goals, take care of what we have, protect it with policies, and build stronger voices to take care of what we have. The land, the water, our oceans, our creatures.</p> <p>Stuart reflected on the Battle of Maple Bay, a story of the Coast Salish People that reflects how they needed to be powerful to be guardians of the land to protect it.</p> <p>Lulumexun also means “carrying forward the work of the land” and includes being Guardians for everything fisheries related, on and off reserve.</p>	Learning
7	<p><b>Operational Updates</b></p> <p>a) Oliver Brandes MOU official.</p> <p>b) Leadership Team work on Governance Manual updates and other Setting the Course recommendation</p> <p>c) Input submitted to Watershed Security Intentions Paper</p>	<p>a) Oliver Brandes MOU is now official and signed by all parties.</p> <p>b) Lisa spoke to the role of the Leadership Team in reviewing the recommendations of Setting the Course, and the revisions to the Governance Manual. Revisions are anticipated for the June Board Meeting.</p> <p>c) A response was not provided to the province regarding the Watershed Security Intentions Paper before their deadline due to time constraints but we were assured that late submissions were still welcome.</p>	Action: staff to work with Oliver on a WSF strategy submission.
8	<p><b>Project Updates</b></p> <p>a) Xwulqw’selu WSP updates.</p> <p>b) Cowichan weir updates.</p>	<p>Jill provided the following project updates:</p> <p>a) <b>Xwulqw’selu Watershed Planning</b> is progressing, Invitations have been sent by the Chief for May 12<sup>th</sup> for the official launch of the</p>	Action: Heather to work with Tim ,Stuart, Shannon and Chief Hwitsum to develop

<p>c) Fish Health target - update on process.</p> <p>d) Whole of Watershed Target-discussion with PSF.</p> <p>e) Communications and Community Engagement Internship -PSF/Julia Bendtsen.</p> <p>f) Confirming May and June Speaker nights.</p> <p>g) River Cleanup date/ location/ committee?</p>	<p>planning process through a Government to Government Agreement. Minister Nathan Cullen is coming to sign the agreement with Chief Hwitsum. The Cowichan Tribes community is invited to celebrate. A concurrent event for the broader community, is in the planning process, possibly through the Speaker Series or an open-house.</p> <p>b) <b>Cowichan Weir Updates</b> – deferred to next meeting where Tom R. can attend and provide.</p> <p>c) <b>Fish health target-</b> discussion at the last board meeting was very rich and encouraged us to reach higher and incorporate indigenous targets and interpretation. At the last Board Meeting there was a suggestion to strike a committee. Staff sought approval to redirect, at Heather’s request, to work with Tim, Stuart, Shannon and Chief Hwitsum instead for direction on indigenous goals.</p> <p><b>Motion by David Slade for Heather to work with Tim and Stuart and Shannon and Chief Hwitsum and to come back with proposed target and indicators for fish health; seconded by Alison – Carried.</b></p> <p>See Detailed Discussion below.</p> <p>d) <b>Whole of Watershed Target</b> - Staff is engaging with the Pacific Salmon Foundation potential for collaboration on that. Deferred.</p> <p>e) <b>Communications Intern</b> -The Pacific Salmon Foundation is providing funding for Julia Benson as a 25K communications internship, part of which will support Carleen August.</p> <p>f) <b>Speaker Nights</b> - May 15 and June 19 - 3rd Mondays at 7pm at VIU-Cowichan</p> <p>g) <b>River Cleanup date</b> - Cowichan Lake and River Stewards are hosting a new “signature event”, like a river day, annually on the last Saturday of August 26. Tim to explore that with Jill.</p>	<p>proposed target and indicators for fish health.</p> <p>Jill and Tim to finalize River Cleanup date.</p>
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9	<p><b>Presentation:</b> Microplastics study in Estuary.</p>	<p><b>Goertz Schuerholz, CERCA, and Dr. Leah Bendell, SFU.</b> Goertz presented on the progress on their microplastics study in the Cowichan Estuary. See Detailed Discussion notes below.</p>	Information
10	<p><b>Presentation:</b> VIU Community Design projects. Proposals for new logo/brand options, Listening Tent initiative.</p>	<p>Jill provided an update on the VIU student projects.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) branding elements. Jill requested Board volunteers to support a committee to review the logo options.</li> <li>2) listening tents including watershed mapping, and question boxes where there is an intent to have video responses to questions from the public.</li> </ol> <p>Jill requested members to volunteer for a CWB branding committee; deliberate and recommend suggested logo and color choices to the Board.</p> <p>David F. noted that soothing colors didn't represent urgency of the work of the CWB and put forward that fish are an indicator species of watershed health, and we shouldn't be too concerned about being too fish centric in our communications.</p> <p>Stuart suggested that simple is more, go with what is in our heart.</p> <p>Aaron also likes the existing logo (Stuart's design of two fish) and advises to keep it simple. Salmon are the bellwether to the health of the ecosystem.</p> <p>Stuart, Tim, and Alison offered to participate on the Committee. Direction to reach out to other Board Members absent at this meeting to invite participation by email.</p>	<p>Action: Jill and Julia to establish a committee, possibly in the fall. Stuart, Tim, and Alison offered to participate on the Committee. Other Board Members absent at this meeting to be invited by email.</p>
11	<p><b>Other:</b></p>	<p>Letter from North Cowichan – RE: Cowichan Estuary Management Plan</p>	<p>Action: Staff to arrange a guest speaker and broader discussion on the estuary.</p>

		<p>Tim noted concerns around governance and the fact that the committee has not worked well for years.</p> <p>David Froese noted that the problem with the Log Booms was never really addressed, they just moved the problem from the Bay to Chemainus Estuary.</p>	
12	<b>Next CWB meeting</b> - May 29, 2023 CVRD Board room.	*May Meeting may need to be canceled or moved online due to conflicts with a Conference that CVRD members will attend.	Adjourned.

### Detailed Discussion Notes

#### 8c) Targets - Fish Health

David Froese – the indicators for Fish Health need to allow for cultural sensitivities. Great idea to use the definition of abundance as a metaphor for our work. We are searching for the language to wrap our reports around that are both sensitive and meaningful for everyone. I don't think we are really talking about measurement – we are asking ourselves how we are going to word “asking what we want” – what we want and get are two different things.

“Walking across the stream on the back of the salmon” means that the salmon have put us on their back. Maybe we shouldn't worry about the scientific definition – we want something to relate to.

Tim – difficulty is the complexity of historical abundance and defining abundance today. For example - Dave Alcroft has 50 years of bird counts; this experience is different than someone new about the perception of behaviours of Birds. This is the difference between our perspectives today and the experience and perceptions of our Elders who had seen abundance and lived in it. *\*Note - Video – Pink Salmon on the North Coast (ask Tim for link).*

#### 9. Goertz and Dr. Leah Bendell, SFU, Microplastics in the Cowichan Estuary

Goertz noted this is a presentation on the first phase of the study and they have applied for additional funding from DFO For the continuation of this study. The researchers on this project were funded through a post-doc fellowship with oversight by Dr. Bendell, SFU.

The project was initiated because of increased concerns and lack of research around microplastic pollution in marine and coastal environments, impacts on marine life and food webs.

Analysis included microplastic types, size distribution, and origin. Study of mudflat sediments in the water column is essential to understand and to mitigate impacts.

This study will provide baseline data for policy design and decision-making processes on a local level (eg; solid waste, wastewater management, etc.)

Currently there is no standardized protocol for microplastics sediment sampling. This project conducted stratified random sampling of 42 sites collected at low tide – top 5 cm. Five categories of plastics were assessed, with 98% of the plastics are captured within those five categories of plastics.

Highest concentration is typically Polymers – textiles (from clothes, fishing nets, etc. as they are lighter and stay in the water longer) fibers, whereas fragments tend to drop out and deposit.

**\*Goertz is looking to be able to access Cowichan Tribes lands below the outfall to sample. The Board recommends that CERCA write a letter to Larry requesting permission.**

Larger plastics are being digested by seabirds, causing diseases.

It's important to note that the filter on the Sewage Plant may not be up-to-date with regards to new contaminants that are part of the ecosystem.

David F. do we understand the impacts of surface run off?

Twinned approach – comparing the Cowichan and Comox Estuary – to find out the potential sources, such as automobiles and run-off.

Cowichan and Comox have different. Anthropogenic uses and should inform the sources.

Tim – Archeological Analysis (slip tube design) heritage museum used slip tubes to pull material (1 meter 70-80 cm. of materials) near the old dock – big take-home was the incredible amount of deposition. Finding giant barnacle a meter down, deposited.

The higher disturbance – more mixing and less layering.

### **Phase 11 – 2022-2023 –Comox Project**

The study provides the ability to compare the Cowichan Estuary (Highly Industrialized)– salt marshes diked, agricultural, intertidal impacts from log booming to Comox Estuary (no industrial use).

Included in the sampling are varnish clams, sand lance, Chinook Salmon, Ulva Algae, and Scoters

Aggressive varnish clam – deposit feeds and filter feeds; primarily consume fibers. They shovel sediments for consumption. The Dominant Bivalve on our beach. Blue/Purple. Population has exploded. And is now a major food source for seabirds. The Scouter – will have injected the equivalent of 7 plastic cutlery forks over their lifetime.

Caddisfly build nets, they capture everything the size of their nets. They would be a great indicator species.

Assume that the lagoon flushing and the lower summer flows could be magnifying the impacts.

Reference Study: Marine Pollution Bulletin – Microplastics in mudflat sediments of the Cowichan-Koksilah Estuary, Canada.