


DRAFT BOARD MEETING MINUTES	Mon. May 29th 2023 9:30-noon Location: Zoom Online Meeting	
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Chair: Chief Lydia Hwitsum **Participants:** Tim Kulchyski, Alison Nicholson, Kristine Sandhu, Shannon Waters, David Anderson, David Slade, Linda Higgins, Darin George, and Oliver Brandes (Advisor). **Absent:** CVRD Chair Aaron Stone, Stuart Pagaduan, Michelle Staples. **Staff/Project Leaders:** Jill Thompson, Lisa Maria Fox, Tom Rutherford, Heather Pritchard **Guest Speakers:** Paul Fletcher and Paul Gowland, Samuna Marsh Wildlife Society.

1	Welcome	Chief Hwitsum called the meeting to order.	
2	Agenda Review / Revisions /Adoption	Proposed agenda amendment to include Cole Smith for Public Input. Moved by David Slade, seconded by Alison.	Carried with amendment.
3	Review/Approve Last Meeting Minutes	Motion to adopt the minutes as circulated. Moved by David Slade and seconded by Alison Nicolson.	Carried.
4	Announcements & Correspondence	Jill pointed the Board members to the agenda package on the website. In particular she encouraged the members to review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● report by Genevieve Singleton on the Walks with Nature Seekers hosted with remaining funds from the Commemorate Canada Grant. ● 3 events in June. ● River Cleanup is the last Sunday in August. ● Koksilah WSP Agreement between Cowichan Tribes and the Province ● Commission for Environmental Cooperation Council Session and Joint Public Advisory Committee meeting on June 28-29 in Victoria. This event includes content about Climate Adaptation learning from indigenous communities and may be of interest to Board Members. 	Information
5	Public Input	Cole Smith, Assistant to Sonia Furstenau commended the work that the CWB is doing, and noted that Sonia is back in the constituency for an extended period over the summer time and available to meet and discuss local issues. Cole is completing his term in June and will be moving away to New Jersey for his PHD. Cole did his Master’s degree work on the democratic theory of watershed governance and will be focusing PHD studies on interjurisdictional governance. He hopes to connect in the future and continue research on the Watershed Board. It’s a story worth telling and sharing with the world.	Information

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chief Hwitsum congratulated Cole and noted that CWB is still looking for resources from the province to help leverage funding from the federal government for the work on the weir. The weir partners have reached out to WLRS, and Minister Cullen, but haven't had any feedback yet. She noted that this is a significant issue, and that they do need those resources to proceed. Letters have also been sent to other Ministers. Should Sonia have any advice on advocacy, the CWB and the weir partners are looking for the right path to get the work done. 	
6	Language Lesson	Tim and Chief Hwitsum guided the Board through a pronunciation of the word: S-xats-th ut tst – "Agreement" or "We Agree" in Hul'qumi'num	Learning
7	Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning Agreement / S-xats-th ut tst	<p>Tim noted that it was a joy to hear Tom and others using Hul'qumi'num. It really felt like we were sitting together in common dialogue. The biggest respect you can have is with language.</p> <p>Chief Hwitsum reflected on the signing event and noted the importance of getting commitment to this work, and planning for our Xwulqw'selu Stalo. "Having the youth speaking the language and the elders in the space being able to speak in our own language is a turning point for us as a people"</p> <p>Chief Hwitsum noted that the Minister of Forests also signed the Agreement but was unable to attend. She reflected that there were many years and months leading up to this moment. In 2018, we knew that the CWB needed to be clear from a governance perspective regarding our authorities, closing gaps and preparing to have a foundation for the development of the Watershed Sustainability Plan.</p> <p>Chief Hwitsum noted that care had been taken to make sure there is alignment with the way that the Cowichan do things. She also noted the commitment to bring the language in and start bringing forward our principles in this process as an important step.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oliver Brandes commented on the discipline, patience, focus and heart of Chief Hwitsum that helped to make this happen, and noted that as a package it is remarkable. <p>Chief Hwitsum noted the good hearts and helping hands and minds that we continue to rely on to keep this moving forward.</p>	Reflections, discussion.

8	<p>Project Updates</p> <p>A. Weir license..</p>	<p>A. Tom Rutherford provided an update on weir licensing, working towards license ownership, and next steps.</p> <p>On May 18th CVRD hosted a workshop with weir partners at Cowichan Tribes. Attending were (CVRD) Clayton and Danielle, (Cowichan Tribes) Larry George, Rosie Simms (Catalyst) Brian Houle and VP Graham Kissack, (CWB) Tom and facilitator Natasha Overduin. The tone was respectful but there were diverging opinions. Next steps include several meetings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chief Hwitsum, Chair Stone, and the President of Catalyst ● James Mack, senior executive of WRLSS to keep him apprised. <p>Water is now managed in two separate ministries; the Ministry of Forests are handling the water license, and WLRS is the convening ministry helping with funding and processes around licensing as the project moves forward.</p> <p>There are some challenges ahead, but we are confident we are going to get to an outcome. Discussions are not easy. We are looking to govern water in a different way.</p>	Information, discussion.
	<p>B. Koksilah Watershed Planning - next steps</p>	<p>B. Tom remarked that the Koksilah WSP reflects great progress to be where we are. This is what the watershed is all about, working together with our partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A public online “About the Koksilah WSP” event is being hosted on June 6th (link on our website) ● There will also be an in-person event on June 26th. ● The WSP planning team is also coordinating a tour for WSP members and watershed residents, in progress to put this together. Will be visiting the CT salmon research site, a working dairy farm, and a working forest. ● The G2G planning table that is underpinning the planning process is meeting again on June 5th, with the planning team meeting on June 15th. ● Jill has been asked to sit on the Planning Team as a Community Engagement and Communications Liaison. <p>Chief Hwitsum noted the important to the WSP process of understanding the baseline and understanding the risks.</p> <p>David Slade is thankful to Tom for continuing to juggle all these different initiatives and continuing to help.</p> <p>Jill thanked Alison Nicholson for hosting and representing the CWB and her role with the Koksilah Low Flow Working Group the June 6th meeting with landowners.</p>	

C. Targets and Working Groups

Heather provided a short overview of the progress of the Targets Working Groups.

- All of the working groups have met twice and started to confirm direction.
- The Purpose of getting working groups together is to share information and consider collaboration.
- In January, we set a baseline – who does what.
- In May, moved back to in-person meetings. Lots of energy in the room, and shift in the interest of the working groups. Knowledge, understanding of the need to incorporate indigenous law. People are paying attention and looking to including this in their work.

Watershed Connections Working Group: Each targets group is developing a project together to bring back in the fall. This first project is the “water circus” – grade 2-3 curriculum, begins with an elder sharing the creation story. Different hands-on activities championed by partners in the working group to create activities to align with the creation story. These will be brought forward in the Fall.

Fish Health: Interesting work occurring in smaller tributaries. Exploring whole of watershed health (one sub-watershed at a time), determining what tributaries are important to fish – problems, solutions, and ideas for how to work together to solve problems.

Water Quality and Estuarine Health: working to create the Estuarine Health Target, previous target was specific to shellfish. The group is following the Cowichan teaching: “when the tide is out, the table is set”. This is the messaging that we are hoping to build this target on, also considering whole of watershed health.

- Gina Hoar from the Somenos Marsh Society presented to the group noting that there is a way to build capacity, and that the province had information to share.
- The Nature Trust also has a huge data set, and equipment to share. There are ways to improve the water quality monitoring by finding ways to collaborate among the partners.

Riparian Working Group: considering the question: “What do we mean by a protected riparian zone?”

The group recommends doing a pilot, and working with this to come up with definitions for “protected” or “restored”. The discussion is being guided by the question: “How do we

Staff Action: Consider bringing indigenous youth into the Target Working Groups.

Staff Action: Reach out to Oliver to follow up on his offer of Student Support for Targets Visualization, and for a Workshop

		<p>include indigenous law in these discussions for riparian health?”</p> <p>This year we have been working together to confirm targets, and will be reconvening in the Fall to learn about what the Committee is working on.</p> <p>Heather will have a summer student, who will be helping to build a visual product to show the Board or the Community to show the community what work is being done in the watershed.</p> <p>Oliver is offering students and interns to supplement the Targets Work, or to help visualize the work. Oliver offered to do a workshop, take good ideas and lock them in with protections and bringing authorities together.</p> <p>Working groups are about bringing these conversations together at the sub-watershed level to communities and neighborhoods.</p> <p>Chief Hwitsum noted the importance of taking these steps – take the Working Group approach. Science and everything is connected (combining technical with meaningful interpretation at the community level). She encourages and desires to do more engagement with the Cowichan Youth. It’s important to anticipate how we might continue to have more voices. More outreach with young people in the community is important.</p>	
	<p>D. Water Quality attainment sampling.</p> <p>E. Data sharing solutions</p>	<p>Lisa presented an update on the Water Quality Attainment Study and Report for the Lower Cowichan and Koksilah River and Cowichan Bay.</p> <p>The Draft Report has just been completed by the Shawnigan Basin Society and has been shared with the Water Quality and Estuarine Health Working Group. Lisa will also be sending to Cowichan Tribes and CVRD with a request to meet and discuss. We will also be sharing a copy of the draft report with the Province and expect to present the findings with the Board at the June Meeting.</p> <p>WQA Upper Cowichan, Cowichan Lake and Tributaries – we have received confirmation of some additional support from the province to support lab testing for the upper basin and are exploring allocating remaining resources from the 2022 Lower WQA project to support hiring a coordinator to work with us and the Cowichan Lake and River Stewardship Society (CLRRS) for Summer and Fall sampling program.</p>	<p>ACTION – Reach out to Oliver to help access funding for Data Sharing and/or Water quality.</p> <p>Also ask the Working Group to help identify funding opportunities.</p>

		<p>We will need to seek out additional funding for a WQA report for the Upper WQA study which we hope to combine with the Lower, as a complete report.</p> <p>WIKD - The Watershed Information Knowledge and Data (WIKD) project is underway, we have put together a small steering committee and are meeting with this week to review a community survey and finalizing a project plan that will include engagement with Cowichan Tribes Staff, CVRD Staff, and Provincial Staff over the summer with a planned workshop in the fall to identify options and a path forward for sharing and storing WIKD.</p> <p>Chief Hwitsum suggested we look to local government resources that could support the efforts.</p> <p>Tim noted that one of the challenges with designing sampling programs is trying to figure out who is doing what in the watershed. CVRD does quite a bit of sampling, more with regards to public safety. Difficult to know what everyone is doing when and where. We need to coordinate better.</p> <p>There is potential for collaboration with other Nations. It may be tough to pull all these bits and pieces together with the people we have, to know what we have and what we can jostle to bring these into the process.</p> <p>We have both capacity and timing issues.</p> <p>Oliver suggested finding some parallel and local government funds noting there is a \$1B commitment federally to the Community Action Fund that is distributed based on priorities of local government. It's an important avenue to pursue, and if it's a priority for the Watershed Board, he recommends bringing to the CVRD/Local Government and seeking out creating funding projects. Oliver also noted there could be some university resources available. As this work gets more advanced it takes resources, and we need to not just rely on our First Nation partners.</p>	
	<p>F. Communications - review Setting the Course advice.</p>	<p>Jill provided updates on our Community engagement work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● noted that through the Koksilah WSP Planning Team, CWB is busy organizing the events already mentioned. ● June Speaker Night will include Cheri Ayers and Melissa Evans about the work being done for fish counts. ● This July we will have a Summer Student supporting Listening Tents. Shiming Hwang – one of the students that worked with us with the VIU Logo Project will be helping with Listening Tents and a River Clean-Up. 	<p>Information</p>

		<p>Question: Who might want to be involved in the River Clean Up Organizing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volunteers: David Slade and Tim. <p>In the Fall there will be two more speaker nights.</p>	
	G. Funding Security - BC Budget Consultations; CVRD.	<p>CVRD Contribution Update: This past January, Society members requested an increase in funding in a letter to the CVRD. Clayton Postings has been working with us to establish a 5-year agreement, likely still through the DWWP “strategic partnership” budget. There is potential that this could be put through the CVRD’s “100 Function” in their budget which offers flexibility, but it may not be the most sustainable route.</p> <p>Alisson noted that the CVRD Board approved the Staff to work through and develop an agreement that wouldn’t be just an annual agreement. The direction is to ensure the agreement is timely and be addressed before next year.</p> <p>Chief Hwitsum noted that it would be great to see what resources are there.</p>	
8	Presentation: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society	Gina Hoar, Paul Fletcher, Paul Gowland, Philomena Williams, Barry Hetschko presented from the Somenos Marsh office on behalf of the Somenos Marsh Society. Notes below.	Information
9	Operational Updates A. Staffing updates - Lisa, Julia, Shiming B. Koksilah WSP - “Responsible Person” and other support to Cowichan Tribes. C. Presentations to Tumulh and CVRD complete. D. STC/Gov Manual progress	<p>A. Jill presented staffing updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lisa has agreed to stay on and do some work on projects for the watershed. ● Shiming will be helping with the website, helping to categorize. ● Masters student Julia Benson will be working with Heather and working groups to help communicate better about what is happening with the Targets Working Groups. She also brings graphics design and website experience. <p>B. In the Koksilah Watershed Sustainability Planning process, Cowichan Tribes is the “Responsible Person” named to carry forward the financial management of the project. Cowichan Tribes has contracted the Society to support parts of this work, providing the administrative support to Cowichan Tribes. Jill is currently working on financial protocols with Natasha Overduin, the WSP Join E.D.</p>	Information

		<p>C. Jill noted our Governance Manual requires that we present our Business Plan to Cowichan Tribes and CVRD Boards. We presented on April 17th to Cowichan Tribes. Aaron joined Tom and Lisa for the presentation to the Tumuhw Committee. On April 26th Stuart Pagaduan represented Chief Hwitsum for the presentation to CVRD with Tom and Lisa.</p> <p>D. Staff has been working with the Leadership Team to conduct a review of the Governance Manual, as informed by our Setting the Course. Part of this work includes generating a new Mission Statement and revising the language in the Governance Manual to reflect the mandate and role of the Cowichan Watershed Board. Suggested changes/edits to the Governance Manual, and a new Mission Statement will be included in your June Board Package.</p>	
10	Other:	<p>Jill noted that last year, due to the difficulty reaching quorum in the summer, we organized a family picnic in the Estuary. She suggested we consider that again, and invite our Working Groups to join us. Decision to be made at the June Board Meeting.</p> <p>Chief Hwitsum thanked Lisa for her continued commitment to the watershed.</p>	Information
	Adjourned	Next CWB meeting - June 26th, CVRD Boardroom	

The Somenos Marsh Society (SMS) Discussion

- The Somenos Marsh Society (SMS) is Interested in the tire compound in Bings and Averil Creek and are participating in a study to determine if there are tire chemicals entering the creek.
- Concerned that the fire took place and there was no protection of the creek or the waterways that direct to the creek. Straw Bales were used, but there was extensive residue that went into the Ducks Unlimited Pond.
- Concern about lack of clean-up. North Cowichan Does not have a protocol to deal with hazard waste fire, it is the responsibility of property owner. SMS Is engaging North Cowichan and encouraging them to develop the protocol, noting that Duncan may not have one either for the Cowichan River.
- OK Tire is required to do ministry reports, but the burden is on the commercial entities without oversight by local government.
- Tim has been doing some testing with the Conservation Land Trust (?) and there is interest in collaborating on this.
- David Slade is interested to know if beyond the fire, with regards to highways and race track, is there a concern with run off?
- Paul noted that there has been no testing, despite requests, due to lack of funding.
- With regards to water quality, we do a lot of water quality work in the Somenos, including the creek, the lake, and Bings/Avril and Richard's creek, with an interest in protecting fish. WQ means different things to different groups.

- It's important to have the data in a format so all can access. For example, SMS is focused on dissolved oxygen and fish survival rates. They have a lot of data, and are looking to ways to use/share data.
- Somenos Creek is an access route for salmon to move up to spawn in the fall, or for refuge. Problem in the creek is invasive Parrots Feather. Done a lot of riparian planting as a long-term solution. Also proposed a mowing strategy to create an open channel in the creek. Expose surface of water to oxygen – to demonstrate feasibility of the mowing technique. Idea being that if successful, it could open the creek earlier in the season for the watershed (chum).
- Darin George is familiar with the work in Somenos Marsh, and notes that it has always been a process. Back several years ago, there was a plan to plant overhanging shrubs to crowd out the feather. The Cowichan Environment Committee heard about this planting process several years ago, and it is just now being implemented.
- We need to understand where we are at with the data-base initiative and use this to help us plan better and be more pro-active.
- Paul Fletcher noted that he has been pushing the Province to harvest/cut the plant. Because the province has a policy not to cut an invasive weed in the waterbody due to downstream. Letters from the CWB and Cowichan Tribes letters helped to get approval for the cut. The initiative is happening, and there is excitement.
- Paul noted that fragmentation of the Parrots Feather is a big challenge, part of the program is to assure that they can control fragmentation.
- Philomena noted the importance of working as one, support each other we need to further these initiatives.
- Chief Hwitsum confirmed Mena's comment as Natsumat k'saayas tthq'a