



Draft Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 25th, 2024 at Si'em Lelum Dining Hall (5574 River Rd, Duncan)

Meeting Chair: Councillor Christopher Alphonse

Expected Participants: CVRD Chair Kate Segall, Alison Nicholson, Michelle Staples, Shannon Waters, David Slade, Tim Kulchyski, Kristine Sandhu, Jenna Sutherst **Advisor:** Oliver Brandes

Regrets: Chief Cindy Daniels, Calvin Swustus Senior, David Anderson, David Froese, Arlette Malcolm,

Staff/Project Leaders: Danielle Paydli, Heather Pritchard, Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson

Guest Speakers: Natasha Overduin, Joint Executive Director for the Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning Process

Audience members: Working group members, volunteers, interested public. All welcome.

1. Welcome

Welcome to those in the gallery

2. Agenda Review / Revisions

Agenda adopted by consensus with one change (switch agenda items #10 and #11)

3. Review October 28, 2024 Draft Minutes

Minutes adopted by consensus

4. Announcements & Correspondence

CVRD – seeking input on regional parks and trails plan

Dec 2-4 Salmon Recovery and Resilience conference in Vancouver hosted by PSF and FNFC

Somenos Marsh wildlife Society – Salmon walk

Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre : Looking for volunteers, hiring volunteer coordinator

2025 Municipality of North Cowichan Budget

DFO's salmon escapement updates available on our website

CSRT potluck lunch Dec. 17 at VI Trout hatchery fish health building on Wharnccliffe road

No CWB Speakers night in Dec.

Next speakers night in February; Speakers nights no longer on council nights

5. Call for Public Input

No public input

6. Hul'q'umi'num Watershed Lesson (9:10 am)

Cowichan Tribes Councillor Chris Alphonse leads the group through the teachings supporting the Xwulqw'selu Planning Process

7. Presentation

Natasha Overduin, Joint Executive Director for the Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning Process

<https://www.koksilahwater.ca/>

Link to presentation:

https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Copy-of-XWP_Natasha-Overduin-CWB_Presentation_Nov2024.pptx.pdf

Questions and Dialogue

What about Indigenous protected areas. These have been established elsewhere – could this be used in our watershed?

- o Staff are looking into it but haven't gotten too far down the road – staff limited by time and resources. Definitely something that is of interest

How can DFO get involved with a whole of watershed restoration plan

- o WSA act sec 64/65 – speak to this; have never been used
- o Timing is right for DFO engagement

Question regarding private manage forest land: Very significant impacts over the past 50-100 years. How will this project affect things like riparian setbacks, old growth regeneration on private forest lands?

- o A lot of attention to these issues – huge topic at G2G table
- o Difficult to show quick action
- o Huge menu of different pieces need to be analysed
- o We realize process is under the microscope and that there is hope for tangible change
- o Having said that, Watershed has urgent driving summer pressures
- o Need to balance short term vs. medium or long term changes
- o Capacity is significant but limiting – tendency to focus on short term solutions (water management) balanced against longer term driving solutions (land management)

Reference to recent Narwhal article “19 century land grab” referring to E&N land grant legacy

- o “Untangling the colonial knot”
 - Over allocation of water, PMFL, etc lots of issues to address
- o Urgency vs. Patience – stress on all of us but trying to work through this respectfully takes time

8. Updates & Discussion on CWB Projects and Initiatives

Executive Director to provide key updates and questions for consideration and guidance to put before the Board.

1. Minute taking – very detailed vs. briefer and just capturing decisions
 - o Bare bones is good

- o Capture Key discussion points
2. CWB often looked as an example or model of local WS governance
- o A couple groups have requested meetings:
 - Canada Water Agency
 - Visiting Victoria – like to meet with CWB reps
 - Danni planning to meet with interim president Dec 3
 - Would like a rep from the board to join
 - o **Motion** *for co-chairs and/or appropriate rep from board and/or staff to attend Canada Canada Water Agency Meeting with Danni on Dec. 3*
 - Motion passed by consensus
 - Danni will follow up, reach out to see what input the president is looking for that might assist with selection and work with board members to assemble “CWB team”
 - FNFC water caucus and water table
 - Would like to attend our January board meeting – 15-20 attendees including staff, delegates, BC govt. reps
 - Request for co-chairs meeting in Dec to plan for this
 - Chief and council to support staff in appropriate way
 - o **Motion** *CWB staff to follow up with CWB co-chairs to provide guidance on hosting FNFC water caucus.*
 - o Motion passed by consensus
 - o Danni to follow up
3. Danni met with Rick Bryan (Vancouver Island White Water Paddling Society)
- o Request: IF the Board is set on proceeding with the weir design, excluding the VIWWP's proposal, WILL the Board engage in further conversations about an alternative location for a play-feature and consider funding that would match what was invested by the VIWWP (\$10-11K) on scoping out options to incorporate a wave feature in the new weir?

Danni provided a review of the history of engagement with VIPWWS on paddling feature

- o 2019 VIWWP presented to the CWB on incorporating a wave feature into the weir design. Board decision coming out of that was: Ian (former co-chair, CVRD) will follow up with Rick to connect him to the weir design team for consideration of whether paddling features could be incorporated.
- o VIWWP secured a different engineering firm to review how it could be incorporated into Stantec’s design and submitted this to the CVRD project manager and Stantec, with a meeting between all parties happening in August 2021;
- o In Nov 2021, Stantec’s official response after reviewing and meeting with the other engineering team was that it would not be feasible due to “hydraulic, geometric and operational limitations of the project”.

- o In May 2022 the CWB cochairs provided a written response to VIWWP that expresses appreciation for their work but clearly outlines the board does not support a play feature at the wier. However, they did reference exploring other options.

Board discussion:

- o Member comment:
 - o DFO commented on a PSF Community Salmon Program application by VIWPS for this work and was not in favour
 - o If looking for a new site would have to go through DFO permitting process – possibly a DFO authorization – might be uphill battle
- o Member comment: – not opposed – providing causing no harm but...
 - o This is not our mandate – no support of funding towards play feature
- o Member comment: not supportive of funding
- o Member comment: refer to staff and DFO professionals for information
 - o **Motion** – *directed back to staff for provide summary briefing note*
 - Information only, board to make decision

Heather Pritchard

- o Somenos marsh workshop – to be held Wednesday Nov. 27
 - o CWB co-hosting workshop to support work in Somenos watershed associated with fish kill response
- o Dec. 5 – CWB hosting final wrap up 3rd workshop on Cowichan Fish Kill response
 - o lessons learned this year & planning for 2025
 - o designing monitoring and response plan for 2025
- o CVRD parks and trails masterplan
 - o CWB staff like to prepare submission including suggestions around:
 - FN participation in planning and management
 - building protected area networks prioritizing connectivity and estuarine habitats
 - Prioritizing cultural access & educational opportunities
 - o No concerns raised by the Board

9. Introduce and discuss an outline of Draft Impact Plan

Review key elements of work proposed for 2025-2027. Seek approval in principle before meeting with staff partners from Cowichan Tribes and CVRD for their input.

Link:

<https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CWB-First-Draft-2025-2027-Impact-Plan-Outline.pdf>

- o Discussion on draft impact plan as presented:

- o Oliver – constant renewal a key piece of maintaining and healthy and functional board
 - o Danni – how we do things is as important as what we do...
- o Building relationships as a board and exercising our strengths
- o Comments:
 - o Suggests on the land experiences re-invigorate the board
 - Supports creating opportunities for to spend time on the land
 - o Visit to the Koksilah old growth site suggested as field trip
 - o Important to support our wellness as well as that of the collective (our board). Relationships between each other and the water and the land. Good to have opportunities to do that and know they are coming up – good for our health
- o Staff to continue strong relationships with foundational partner staff (Cowichan Tribes and CVRD)
 - o Comment – relationships with provincial and DFO staff also important
 - Cowichan weir, Xwulqw’selu WSP and Fishkill good partnership examples with crown agencies
- o Support the wider stewardship community
 - o Comment – UBCM CWB was provided as an example of functional relationships
 - Other local governments had no relationship with First nations
 - Demonstrates how far ahead we actually are as a Board
 - We have a lot to do but biggest thing is continuing relationships Everytime there are elections – having to work on that constantly
 - This work is important and never done
 - o Comment – we are streamlined as we are working together rather than duplicating effort

Action – Danni asks for board members to provide comments in bullet form on Key elements of work as captured in draft action plan

10. Proposed new strategy for implementing Targets

Staff presentation to seek input on proposed recommendations to pilot a new approach to make progress on our Targets, and to develop a methodology to expand and review Targets over time.

Link to presentation:

<https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Targets-Strategy-Presentation-CWB-Meeting-Nov-2024.pdf>

Discussion:

- o Focus on how we implement targets rather than reviewing them in 2025

- o Reference to the Watershed Plan – distilling down to the things that were strategically important in that larger document
- o Use all the knowledge – Indigenous and western science – not one or the other

Action

- o Requests for CWB members respond to Jill and Heather’s work on targets through email

11. Other Business (11:45 am)

12. Adjourn (12:00 pm)

Motion to adjourn; passed by consensus
Next CWB meeting - January, location TBD

Materials referenced below can be found at: <https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/meetings/>

Announcements/Events

- Holiday closure - all CWB staff will be on holidays from Dec 23rd to Jan 6th.
- CVRD is seeking input on its Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan. Deadline Dec 6th. See the website for dates of Open Houses and how to give input.
<https://www.planyourcowichan.ca/regional-parks-trails-master-plan>
- BC Salmon Recovery and Resilience Conference, Dec 2-4th, including First Nations Salmon Forum on Dec 2nd, Vancouver. <https://bcsalmonrecoveryandresilienceconference.eventify.io/p/#/overview>
- S’amunu Salmon Walks have begun - help count returning salmon in this important sub-watershed of the Quw’utsun Sta’lo’. Find volunteer details here: <https://www.somenosmarsh.com/volunteer-with-us>
- Cowichan Estuary Nature Center is looking for volunteers to host more open hours at the beautiful education center in Cowichan Bay, and to assist educators with programs. No experience necessary. Details here: <https://www.cowichanestuary.ca/volunteer/>
- Cowichan Estuary Nature Center is hiring a volunteer coordinator/educator. Details here: www.cowichanestuary.ca/job-postings/

Correspondence

- Invitation from Municipality of North Cowichan to provide input to 2025 budget review.

Reading

- DFO weekly Salmon Escapement (return) reports.