



Draft Board Meeting NOTES

Monday, May 26, 2025

Location: Si'em Lelum Dining Hall (5574 River Rd, Duncan)

Meeting Chair: Chief Cindy Daniels. **Participants:** Shannon Waters, David Froese, David Slade, Calvin Swustus Senior (9:40), Arlette Malcolm, Kristine Sandhu, Tim Kulchyski. **Regrets:** CoChair Kate Segall, Alison Nicholson, Michelle Staples, Jenna Sutherst, Christopher Alphonse, Oliver Brandes

Staff/Project Leaders: Danielle Paydli, Heather Pritchard, Tom Rutherford, Jill Thompson, Christa George, Katia Bannister

Guest Speakers: Genevieve Singleton, Parker Jefferson, Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable

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

1. Welcome (9:00 am)

No quorum. Informal info only today.

Tim provided an opening prayer.

- resilience - all the respect you need to have to do what we're doing here. Recently at a conference, it hit home how it relates to what the elders teach us. Basic fundamental respects for persons, for river.

2. Agenda Review / Revisions

Agenda accepted with change that this not a formal meeting.

3. Review March 31st, 2025 Draft Minutes

Deferred - no quorum.

4. Announcements and Correspondence (see below agenda)

- We have an office! 55 Station Street, upstairs, end of the hall.
- Intro to summer staff:
 - Katia Bannister, UVic student Ethno-ecology, has worked and volunteered extensively with local environmental organizations. Led Lower River Cleanup last year and will do again this year, in an extended role.
 - KB -Honoured to be asked to come back.
 - Crysta Charlie - Duncan Every Child Matters organizing, going to be attending VIU Child and Youth Program,
 - CC - grateful to be here. New to the role. Graduated in 2021 - appreciate the opportunity.
- See notes at bottom. Shout out to Nature Cowichan for creating and maintaining a calendar to help share and coordinate environmentally related events in the area.
<https://www.naturecowichan.net/>

5. Hul'q'umi'num' Watershed Lesson

- Tim filled in for Chris with an overview of Duncan Street names.
Canada Avenue – Q'lhan (Ahead Of)

Government Street – St s’hwulmuhw (First People)
Station Street – Liloot (Train)
First Street – Yewen (First)
Second Street – Sxwuts’ts’ulii (Hummingbird)
Third Street – Smuyuqw’a (Ladybug)
Fourth Street – Thuthiqut (Forest)

Our new office: 55 Station Street = Lhq’utssulhshe’ ‘i’ lhq’etsus Liloot Shelh (huy ch q’u Shannon!)

6. Quw’utsun Sta’lo’ Skweyul Presentation

Genevieve Singleton shared background and overview of the Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable.
<https://www.cowichanstewardship.com/>

Tom was invited to tell the story of the origin of the roundtable. Mill was going to be shut down. Mill workers were going to walk off the job to save the fish. Cowichan Tribes asserted their rights. Lawyers were hired. Parking lot discussion that we can do things better. Most of those people have moved on; Larry George was there. Bottom up push to find a way to work together across jurisdictional boundaries and cultures.

Parker - regular meetings third Tuesday of every month 9am Fish Health bldg. ENGOs, Governments, First Nations all come and share what they are doing. People can also come to learn and find a way to get involved. All welcome - encouraged people to send people to attend the meetings. July meeting will be at Stolz Park as a picnic. We also have a pre-Christmas pot luck. Working together for the health of the river and the community. No budget or formal entity. Great guest speaker each month after the roundtable. Last month was Alex Morton.

Quw’utsun Sta’lo’ Skweyul is now an annual event, co-hosted with Cowichan Tribes, on Cowichan Tribes land. This year on Sept 21 at black bridge beach. Community coming together as one sharing our love of the river. Genevieve shared a slideshow from previous events. 29 booths last year. Funding is always an issues. In the past, Parks, CVRD, CWB have arranged grants - not sure this year. CVRD is providing staff support. Budget is \$20-\$25k.

All invited to join the meetings when we can. Genevieve will send the dates to Chief.

6.5 Presentation - Cowichan River Clean-up Highlights and Reflections - Katia

- [See sliddeck](#). 1305 kg with about 100 volunteers.
- Proposed this year’s cleanup on Sunday Aug 24 2025 - Board confirmed this date.

7. Annual Report Draft - discussion deferred to next meeting. Report is in package for review.

[Draft 2024 Annual Report](#) - Danni Paydli, ED

No time for discussion — moved to next month.

8. Update from Partners: CVRD and Cowichan Tribes: aligning for impact.

Tim Kulchyski - PSF and BCCF collaboration - seining in Cow Bay and Sansum Narrows. Tim, Bernette and marine team doing pinniped counts (seals); working on rotary screw trap (near Allenby bridge) - temperatures are concerning. Summer - new marine craft, spill response craft, lots of programming, sampling. Long term survival in Cow Bay. Working with Nature Trust on estuary project. Nursery project in estuary - great to see our kids/youth being exceptional helpers, using language, bringing back the teachings. Positive things stemming from negative things that are happening out there - real animosity/racism/negativity. Talk about things as they are and work to change those things.

- Chief asked Tim how damaging are the log booms, as seal hunting platforms?
- A: The season the mill went on strike, there were no booms, and they were able to study before and after. Perfect haul out for seals - sometimes 300 seals. Killer (Biggs) whales can't get the seals when they are on the logs. Whales became transients to get seals for food - changing. Data is solid that in a low flow year 20% or more fish loss by seals while the salmon are transitioning from salt to freshwater. Predation is natural but the log booms are not and they should be moved to deeper water.
- David F - prime example, out of sight out of mind, majority are going to Chemainus and elsewhere, majority of logs are being shipped off-shore. Sea Lions as well as seals in Chemainus. Not financially smart - there are not less log booms, just in Cowichan Bay, there are more elsewhere.
- Tim - took a long time for Cowichan Tribes to bring it up. Chinook brought back with push from Cowichan Tribes
- Shannon- what are things we can measure in terms of whole of watershed health; mentioned the energy in the mental, spiritual energy to prep for Min. Neill meeting - acknowledging Tim's use of the word racism.

Jeff Moore -

DWWP - Galen McMenamin — new Senior Analyst with Environmental Services Division

- better watershed science
- education
- partnership
- Been focusing on the science side over the past years. Sampling spring summer fall. Also building a hydrometric resources (underground resources).
- Hoping to build on education RE how to care for your wells, what are the relationships between surface and groundwater, and how our actions affect that. People don't understand where their water comes from, and what role your actions have on sometimes invisible sources.
- Hoping to partner with CWB and other groups. Look forward to partner with River Cleanup. Booths, rebate programs (rainwater harvesting, irrigation) will roll out next summer.
- Cowichan Climate Gathering last December.
- Groundwater Surface Monitoring.

9. Drought Reporting and Planning for 2025 Season

- a. REPORT: Collaborating for Salmon Resilience: From Crisis to Opportunity – a Cowichan Story
 - i. Tom presented on this item, and the next items. [See slidedeck](#). Tom reflected on the importance of strong relationships, built through CWB and Target Working Groups, that

came together. Workshops (2) brought people together to understand what happened, and what we can do about it.

- better monitoring plan
- response plan - what levers can we pull. Ken Ashley called our collaborative monitoring in 2024 the best in the country.
 - water flow mgmt
 - wastewater diversion
 - fishing closure
 - cold water refugia tracking at 11 sites
- ii. Lessons learned - collaboration is the only way / combining resources; continuous monitoring stations were very important; good monitoring design and what to do if things go sideways. Also, the first responders from government were not the logical people whose job it might be; they were the Tech Working Group members who knew us, had relationships with us, cared about the river and showed up when we needed them.
- b. Summer 2025 Planning and Preparation
 - i. Water Quality Monitoring and Response
 - current condition - see slide “This Year” Flows at summer base flow already 7cms (current recommended EFlow is 15cms) D.O. good, Temp 13-15’ - good, PH fluctuating not good. About 20-25 days of storage in TOLC treatment plant. Need more rain.
 - ii. Cold water refugia:
 - Jenna Sutherst’s crew has resourced a program to further examine sites.
 - more loggers, drones to map the cold areas, field surveys with hand-held meter at different depths.
 - map products to support education and engagement.
 - manipulate habitat to improve access to cold water for fish.
 - explore tools to protect - tools for different land tenures; what can each land manager do? CWB leading this.
 - Community Forest K1K, Khowutzun Forest Services Letter — Tom for Heather Pritchard: [Letter Draft: New Forest Stewardship Plan for Community Forest Agreement K1K](#)
 - Heather drafted letter (see pkg) making a recommendation RE cold water creek protection - meet with us to discuss.
 - David S - letter - can CoChairs make that decision on behalf of the Board without needing a Board decision?
 - Agreed.
 - David S - acknowledged that the mill kept the river running using pumps in 2023 in August/Sept at their expense.
 - Shannon - meetings around Xpey’ - areas that XPeY’ will be able to survive - need to identify and protect refugia. Also for humans - in a heat time, one Nation looked at where they had cool zones in their territory. Refugia.

- Tom- refugia will be increasingly important - this is what climate change looks like. We hoped it wouldn't happen this fast. Changing behaviour is going to be the hardest part. CWB has a role in that.

iii. Communications

- Prepare media release(s) and spokespeople to respond to situations.
- Jill to work with Tara and Jeff on developing media releases and spokespeople protocol for emergency situation this summer.

iv. Board Discussion/Other

- Arlette - this presentation drives home the importance of the province having a partnership and relationship with the CWB.
 - drought prep for this year; drought classification process is going to change. Bring a presentation. Longer term conditions more prominent - current and historic conditions in each region. Opportunity and importance for CWB to feed information into the province. Feeding a provincial approach. Will need other First Nations and governments contributing. Will send drought portal links for uploading. Regional drought meetings on Tuesdays so good timing after Monday meetings.
- David F - There are things we can do - raise weir, add siphon, stop logging the mountainsides.

10. Target Strategy: Updated with Whole of Watershed Next Steps

- a. Danni presented one slide - staff-developed approach/framework: [Target Strategy Framework](#)
 - out of time; shared one slide S'yaay;us (the Work) - Whole of Watershed Thinking.

11. Confirming Event Dates

- a. Next CWB meeting:
 - i. Decision: June 23rd via Zoom
- b. Office Warming, July 18 (11am-2pm) - for information only.
- b. July 28, 2025: 15-Year Celebration
 - During scheduled meeting date - do a celebration instead? Family picnic. Location tentative. Chief mentioned Bright Angel. See what's available.
- c. River Clean Up - August 24, 2025 - confirmed earlier in agenda.

12. Other Business - out of time.

13. Adjourned by the Chief at 12:00 pm.

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

Correspondence

- Community Forest K1K, Khowutzun Forest Services - invitation to review Forestry Plan

Announcements/Events

- Office Warming - July 18 (Tentative)
- 15-year Anniversary Celebration - July 28 (Tentative)
- Lower Cowichan River Clean-up Sun. Aug 24 (Tentative)
- Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Skweyul - Sun. Sept 21 (1 week before River Day)
- Lake Cowichan Town Clean-up - Sept
- Please see Nature Cowichan calendar for more events! <https://www.naturecowichan.net/>

Further Reading

- [Collaborating for Salmon Resilience: From Crisis to Opportunity – a Cowichan Story](#)
- [Koksilah Low Flow Working Group Community Information Night - summary notes](#)