

Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable

Meeting Room, Greenrock Liquor Store at 1860 Dufferin Crescent, Nanaimo

September 16th, 2015 – 1:00 pm

Meeting Notes

In Attendance: Gail Adrienne (NALT), Paul Chapman (NALT), Bob Colclough (LSA), Chris Cole (TW), Deryck Cowling (NALT), Ken Epps (IT), Laurie Gourlay (VICCS), Molly Hudson (TW), Matt Kellow (VIU), Bob Kissinger (IWFF), Rob Lawrance (CoN), Julie Pisani (RDN), June Ross (VIWW), Louise Shuker (Community), Bill Sims (CoN).

1) **Approval of Agenda:** Approved with additions – under New Business:

Watershed governance – June Ross

NMCA – Laurie Gourlay

2) **Review of Notes from Last Meeting, June 3rd, 2015:** Approved as circulated.

N.B. Louise Shuker would like to comment on the section titled *VICCS Heritage and Beautification Project* at the next meeting of the Roundtable.

3) Business Arising from Notes

- **Eel Grass Restoration – Rob Lawrance**

-700 sq. meters of subtidal area adjacent to the south east end of Protection Island was planted with eel grass.

-Initial inspection reports, beginning in 2011, were favourable showing a 136% and 207% increase in two clusters of planted area.

By August of 2015, there was a 95% loss of eel grass in both areas of restoration. Water quality including turbidity or propwash from nearby log booming area were suggested as possible reasons for the decline, but further investigation would be needed to determine if these or some other reason(s) are responsible for decline.

ACTION: -Rob will discuss with participants of the Estuary Committee, including the Port Authority.

-Rob will look into sharing the eel grass reports with the Roundtable.

- **Coal Tenure Update – Paul Chapman**

-Paul has had little luck reaching Kim Stone at Coal Titles.

ACTION: -Bill Sims will contact Kim about the status of the Skyland Resources Coal Tenure application.

- **Haslam Creek Habitat Restoration – Dave Clough**

-Tabled until next meeting.

- **Committee Updates:**

- **Communications Committee – Bob Colclough**
 - Rivers Day links and posters have been added to the website.
 - There is still a need for Roundtable participant content.
 - ACTION:** Bob will have website tracking data for the next meeting.
- **Budget Committee: 2014 Financial Year End Report, 2015 Budget – Gail Adrienne**
 - Gail introduced a 2014 NRWR Financial Report and a 2015 Budget estimate.
 - The Financial Report still requires some fine tuning and will be circulated to the Roundtable when that work is done. In essence, the Report shows that a significant proportion of the funds held in the Roundtable account are allocated to specific items and not available to the Roundtable for operations or general use. Some donor participants may be asked to reconsider allocation of donation.
 - ACTION:** Gail to complete Report and circulate.
 - The 2015 budget shows a slight operating deficit but will be adjusted as true costs of events are revealed. The In-kind portion of the estimate has not yet been completed.
 - ACTION:** Gail to complete In-kind amounts and circulate.
- **Education and Awareness Committee – Deryck Cowling**
 - The committee met on September 10th. Discussions included potential outreach/education initiatives such as a swim with the fish similar to opportunities in Campbell River, or participation in swallow nesting box maintenance and monitoring with The Nature Trust of BC.
 - Details of the Roundtable sponsored tours for Rivers Day were discussed, including: watershed, estuary, rafting, Morden mine, regional park walk and, new this year, Wild Play. As well, promotion of the event is going forward.
 - Deryck attended a meeting of the Co-Chairs of District 68 Professional Development to discuss process for Roundtable presentation at District wide Pro-D day in February.
 - Project WET, a curriculum based water education program presented by the RDN was discussed.
 - ACTION:** Deryck to circulate form for participants to list resources available to teachers and students.

4) New Business

- **Water Supply and Conservation CoN – Bill Sims**
 - As far as the City's reservoir is concerned, following the drought, the last three days of August saw over 200 mm of rain in the Jump Lake watershed (compared to 23 mm in town). This contributed to replenishing the reservoir to normal seasonal levels.
 - Prior to the late August rain events the reservoir was at approximately 66% of capacity, after the rains it was at 75%. The City's water system, being a surface water supply located in the wetter parts of the Island, was able to recover quickly. Other east-coastal systems, especially those that rely on

groundwater have not seen the same recovery. Aquifers are expected to take many months of snowmelt and rainfall infiltration to be able to recharge.

-Stage 2 conservation measures resulted in a 15% - 20% decline in usage. During the restrictions, fisheries base flow in the river was maintained at the minimum level. Fish flows would only be further reduced, by application to Provincial authority, if all water conservation measures were exhausted and a scarcity persisted.

-Water metering and full cost accounting have contributed to a general trend in the reduction of demand on the City's water supply. Since 2010, there has been an annual decrease in water usage.

-The City and RDN and other jurisdictions are looking at harmonizing messaging around water conservation and restrictions to avoid confusion across boundaries.

- **Water Supply and Conservation RDN – Julie Pisani**

-As with the City, due to the dry late winter and spring, water demand spiked earlier than usual.

-Level 3 restrictions were enacted from May – June and then were raised to Level 4 to achieve the desired reduction in usage to ensure supply.

-From July 9 to the end of August, Level 4 restrictions resulted in a 47% reduction in consumption, indicating that nearly 50% of water is regularly used for lawn irrigation and other cosmetic purposes.

-With the conservation measures in place, the water supply is only 12% lower than normal largely due to the high use in May and June.

-Different communities within the RDN have different resources and capacities. Level 4 restrictions will remain in place until the end of September for Nanoose/Parksville to allow for the longer recharge time for groundwater. October 1st the water conservation level will be reduced to Level 3 and Nov 1st all restrictions are lifted.

-The observations of dry conditions, response to restrictions and long range weather forecast are taken into account when planning for water availability and consumption.

- **Groundwater Legislation Update – Julie Pisani**

-The RDN has received an extension to comment on BC's new Water Sustainability Act – groundwater provisions. This will allow for a Board position/comment on proposed regulations.

-The licensing of groundwater use will apply to non-domestic use.

-Non-domestic users will pay an annual water rental for a licensed amount of water.

-Provisions allow for First-in-Time, first-in-Right (FiTFiR) allocation of user rights and scarcity use provisions except in areas with local area sustainability plans.

-RDN Water Budget a first stage in a process to identify groundwater supply and aquifer stresses. Information will be shared with Provincial regulator.

-General opportunity to comment on Act proposals is closed; however, an informal comment platform is available on the blog site.

ACTION: Julie will send the link to Act information and the blog address to be shared with the Roundtable.

- **Trans Jurisdictional Watershed Stewardship – Laurie Gourlay**

-The Vancouver Island and Coast Conservation Society (VICCS) has proposed to the Province a shared management pilot project for the Nanaimo River Watershed.

-this proposal envisions ecosystem based water resource management as a partnership between the various municipal/regional governments and the public.

-Indication from the Province is that any movement in this direction will have to wait until after the implementation of the new groundwater regulations.

- **Watershed Governance – June Ross**

-June asked if the Roundtable is prepared to look at a watershed governance model.

N.B. Due to time constraints, the **Watershed Governance question** and an update on the **National Marine Conservation Area** proposal (Laurie Gourlay) will be reintroduced on the next NRWR meeting Agenda.

5) **Next Meeting – City of Nanaimo host on November 25th.**

6) **Adjourned: 2:50 pm**