

Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable

Harmac Pacific, 1000 Wave Place Nanaimo.

March 4th, 2014 – 1:00 pm

Meeting Notes

In Attendance: Gail Adrienne (NALT), Dave Bramley (Harmac), Paul Chapman (NALT), Dave Clough (RP Bio.), Bob Colclough (WRC, LSA), Deryck Cowling (NALT), Ken Epps (Island Timberlands), Wayne Harling (Nanaimo Stewardship Society), Molly Hudson (TimberWest), Matt Kellow (VIU), Alex King (RDN), Bob Kissinger (IWWF), Rob Lawrance (CoN), Louise Shuker (community), Bill Sims (CoN), Marjorie Stewart (community), Catherine Watson (NALT), Nicolette Watson (DFO).

1) Approval of Agenda – Approved as circulated

2) Review of Notes from Last Meeting, November 26th, 2014 – Approved as circulated

3) Business Arising from Notes

- **Coal Tenure– Update**

- Paul Chapman has tried to contact Kim Stone for an update on the Skyland Resources Coal Tenure Application. Paul will share information when the Roundtable when he receives it.

- **School District 68- update Paul Chapman**

- The letter is not written yet.

- ACTION:** Paul will draft letter

- **Committee Updates:**

- **Communications Committee – Bob Colclough**

- Bob continues to develop the NRWR website. He has made any corrections noted by participants to date and appreciates the feedback.

- Bob needs more photos especially from the upper regions of the watershed.

- He plans to create a page which will highlight cooperation between various participants.

- **Budget Committee – Gail Adrienne**

- ACTION:** the Year-End Financial Report and 2015 Budget for the Roundtable will be presented at the next meeting.

- The Roundtable is solvent with a bank balance in excess of \$3,000.

- If NALT becomes engaged in an acquisition campaign then some sources of NALT fundraising, which have been channeled to Roundtable operations, will be for the acquisition. Therefore, there will be a funding shortfall at current levels.

- **Education and Awareness Committee – Deryck Cowling**
 - The committee met in late February.
 - The y discussed some of the ideas generated from the 2014 River’s Day activities and would like to know if there is support for 2015.
 - General support for River’s Day 2015 planning was expressed by the Roundtable participants
 - Ideas for potential Roundtable projects were discussed including expanded guided activities, a park/river clean-up, developing a presentation for SD 68 District wide Pro D day, and undertaking a climate change study (see Climate Change under New Business).

- **Roundtable Projects**

- **Watershed Guided Activities – NALT**
 - NALT has applied for 5 separate grants to expand the sort of activities presented by the Roundtable for River’s Day. These guided activities would take place throughout the summer and could include the River’s Day tour sites as well as other activity sites in the watershed.
- **River/Park Clean up – Don Cohen**
 - Don suggested offering to hold a clean-up the park event to remove the detritus left behind in the community park adjacent to the TimberWest/Couverdon land for sale.
 - Julie Pisani offered to introduce the idea to her colleagues at RDN Parks.
 - Marjorie Stewart mentioned that a display of items removed from the park can be educational and helpful in changing behaviors.
 - Suggestions were made to possibly tie the clean-up in with the great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up.
- **SD 68 Pro D Day Presentation – Deryck Cowling**
 - A Roundtable presentation could be developed for presentation at a School District wide Professional Development day.
 - The E&A Committee is reminded to communicate with Rountable participants, such as the RDN DWWP, already involved in Pro D presentations to develop complimentary plans and avoid duplication.
- **LWD Installation on Halsam Creek – Dave Clough et al.**
 - Dave gave a Powerpoint presentation on the work done to survey fish habitat and to undertake restoration and enhancement projects in Haslam Creek.
 - Restoration work at this time is concentrated on bank stabilization near the Nanaimo Airport. The cost is roughly \$500/meter of restoration work.
 - The Roundtable could support this work by sharing project activities on its website and other media platforms, and by writing Letters of Support when requested.
 - A question was raised about the possibility of changing the timing of the Harmac maintenance shutdown, and therby the draw on wells adjacent to Haslam Creek, to coincide with likely lowest water conditions in the creek.

○ **Eel Grass Restoration Experiment – Wayne Harling**

-Wayne has suggested a possible eel grass restoration experiment for a sub-tidal area near the log storage area near Protection Island:

1. the harbour authority agree to forego log storage along the inner harbour shoreline of Protection Island at least for the duration of the experiment, assuming that an experiment was even justified.
2. The Roundtable determine the present state of the inter-tidal and sub-tidal areas on the inner harbour shoreline of Protection Island. This assessment need not be extensive as we would be merely verifying (or debunking) the concern expressed by one member of this roundtable. A few core samples (to determine if, or to what extent, the goop has been covered by new “sand”), visual observations using a glass bottom box (to eliminate glare), and perhaps a few dives with scuba gear (to verify the visual observations)
2. that a major portion of the sub-tidal area covered with goop be vacuum dredged to a depth that is consistent with the historic substrate as determined from more extensive core sampling (assuming it is still covered with goop it might have cleaned itself up in the 35 -40 years since I visited the site and the eelgrass may be as abundant as ever). Two minor portions of the area covered with goop would be left undisturbed as controls.
3. That half of the de-gooped sub-tidal area be planted with the most appropriate type of eelgrass and half not be planted at all. The purpose here is to determine (a) if planted eelgrass in “restored” substrate grows better than eelgrass planted in existing substrate and (b) if just restoring the substrate to its’ original condition is sufficient to encourage the natural re-growth of eelgrass.

However, before any field work is undertaken (other than the quick and dirty assessment of the validity of the expression of concern by the author of this proposal) an extensive literature search is strongly recommended.

ACTION: Rob Lawrance will see if the Harbour Authority has any information to share re: eel grass restoration with an emphasis on sub-tidal work.

-It was suggested that Wayne contact Pam Shaw at VIU for information on eel grass restoration.

○ **Spring Chinook Stock Assessment – Nicolette Watson.**

- Monitoring Spring Chinook juvenile and adult populations
 - Spring run chinook DNA samples for DNA baseline mapping
 - Escapement walks above 1st lake (Spring run chinook) or below 1st lake (Summer run chinook) during summer and fall
 - Juvenile density and habitat use sampling..?
- Juvenile fall chinook habitat use (pole seining and/or juvenile beach seining in the lower river below Cedar Road bridge right out to estuary in spring/summer)
- Chinook/Coho spawning/redd surveys (could be done in Haslam creek in the fall, and in other tributaries)
- Look for silt input areas (risk assessment for egg to fry survival – all salmon species) year round, but especially during and after rainfall events

- Potential to review Water plan to address water and flow concerns for years of very little rainfall and snowpack (such as the work done in Cowichan)

-Nicolette needs to hash out the details of each project, what is most important and how much time would be needed to conduct the sampling. Likely, Nicolette would lead any volunteers that may want to get involved, train them and be able to provide sampling equipment and data sheets. The projects that could occur in the near future (before the next NRWR meeting) would be the juvenile habitat use and density sampling, likely just in the lower river but possible other areas as well, including tributaries such as Haslam.

4) New Business

- **Nanaimo River Water Quality Testing – RDN CWMN**

-Julie Pisani and Alex King gave a presentation on water quality testing results for the Nanaimo River.
-The data has been collected by NALT volunteers for four years at a site near the Fish Hatchery and for one year at a site near the Duke Point overpass.

-Previously sampling had been done at a site on Haslam Creek but, as no water quality issues were indicated over a three year period, it was decided to concentrate volunteer efforts on the additional site at the overpass.

-The data collected involves four parameters: temperature, dissolved oxygen, specific conductivity and turbidity. Summer temperatures indicated a potential to exceed salmon rearing guidelines but is likely mitigated by shade a deep pools. Summer dissolved oxygen values were lower than the objectives and is likely the result of reduced flow. Specific conductivity levels spiked on one collection day perhaps as a result of objects immediately upstream of the sample site and it was also suggested that there could be tidal influence at the site. Turbidity results showed no exceedance of expectations with all up-ticks in readings tied to rain events.

-The RDN will present a summation of trends in April.

- **Media Communications – Colin Brown**

-It is suggested that the Roundtable have a mechanism to comment on issues about the watershed.

-Participants are encouraged to mention the Roundtable when presenting about the watershed.

-NALT has agreed to make a presentation to City Council and perhaps the RDN to share information about the Roundtable.

- **Climate Change Information – Bob Colclough**

-Bob suggested it might be informative if participants could share their organization planning for climate change.

-Ken Epps described some changes Island Timberlands has made such as increasing the size of culverts and sourcing more drought resistant seed stock for replanting. Adapting to climate change may involve shorter rotation times to deal with emergent situations.

ACTION: Paul Chapman to identify participants for climate change planning presentation for next meeting.

-Deryck Cowling suggested that climate change predictions and planning in the watershed could be the subject of a future symposium.

- **Watershed Board – Colin Brown**

-See above under Media Communications.

5) Next Meeting – The next meeting will be on June 3rd, 1 – 3 pm at Activity Room #7 Beban Park Social Centre.

6) Adjournment at 3:10 pm