

Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable

Woodbank Primary School

February 20th, 2020 1:00 - 3:00 pm.

Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Paul Chapman (NALT), Kayla Harris (NRWR Coordinator), June Ross (VIWWC), Louise Shuker (Community), Rob Lawrance (City of Nanaimo), Bob Kissinger (IWFF), Julie Pisani (RDN), Mark Potyrala (DFO), Byron Nutton (DFO), Mike Squire (City of Nanaimo), Pam Jorgenson (Mosaic), Matt Kellow (VIU), Honey Nampak (Harmac), David Bramley (Harmac), David Bodaly (Snuneymuxw), Steven Moore (Snuneymuxw), Brain Banks (Nanaimo River Hatchery), Nick Leone (DFO), Deryk Krefting (SFAC-17), Steve Baillie (DFO Stock Assessment), Erica Blake (DFO SEP CA), Jaclyn Boutillier (DFO Stock Assessment), Wilf Luedke (DFO), Andrew McNaughton (c/o Snuneymuxw), Christina Czembor (DFO).

The Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable began the meeting with a recognition Snuneymuxw First Nation Territory in which the Roundtable operates. A welcome was given to the Roundtable members at the start of the meeting by Dave Bodaly of Snuneymuxw First Nation and an acknowledgement of the important work that the Roundtable does for the health of the watershed was addressed.

1) Approval of Agenda

- Some additions to the agenda included discussion of a potential invasive species workshop in Area A
- An item regarding procedure of amendments to previous meeting minutes was added
- An item regarding administrative services of the Roundtable to be discussed at the end of the meeting was added
- Recognition of David Bramley's retirement was added to the agenda

2) Meeting Chair – Paul Chapman was appointed chair of the meeting. It was agreed that Andrew McNaughton may chair the next meeting.

3) Approval of December 12, 2020 meeting minutes with amendments

- Louise Shuker and June Ross have been added to the rotating chair position for future meetings.
- Brief discussion regarding future amendments to previous meeting minutes established that all future amendments from previous minutes will be recorded on the most recent minutes and circulated for all Roundtable members to view prior to the next meeting.
- Amendments put forward regarding previous mention of a Blueway Plan in Area A from minutes at the March 28, 2019 meeting have been approved. Make note that the September 18th meeting approved the removal of this language. For further clarification as per the December 12th, 2019 meeting, during the Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable Strategic Planning Session held on March 28th, 2019, a discussion led to the rejection of the following Nanaimo River Stewardship Symposium 2011 recreational concept: River corridor (Area A OCP outlining Blueway Plan for the Nanaimo River, Active Transportation Plan).

4) Business Arising from Notes

- **Financial Update** – Paul Chapman
 - There is currently \$4,500 in account. \$300 allocated to specific things (e.g. bus rides for watershed tours). Successfully, the recent bottle drive in January 2020 raised \$1,100.
- **Nanaimo Estuary Project Update** – Rob Lawrance
 - Andrew and Rob have been approached by Guardians of Mid-Island Estuaries regarding a ‘ecocultural’ restoration project in the Nanaimo estuary. Canada geese have been eating carex and damaging the *carex* sedge grass beds. The objective of this project is to demonstrate the effectiveness of using enclosures, using natural materials to deter Canada geese from eating the *carex* sedge grass beds and allow it to recover. Fencing and woody debris have shown to help create such enclosures and discourages the birds from landing around that area and benefits fish.

- The City of Nanaimo is currently looking into updating and completing the 2015 Aquaparian Eel Grass report for the Nanaimo Estuary.
- This Ecocultural restoration project is intended to protect the carex beds in the estuary. The purpose of the project is habitat protection rather than population control.
- **Strategic Plan**
 - i. **NRWR Vision/mission update – Kayla**
 1. provided a brief update on the work that has been done by Paul, Kayla, and Julie. Some initial drafting work has been done but there is more to do
 2. The wordsmithing and discussions around the mission and vision will once again be opened up to the entire Roundtable for contribution
 3. Discussion at the meeting included concerns that the Terms of Reference would be or haven't been considered in the vision and mission drafting
 4. It was agreed upon at the meeting that the Terms of Reference are not reviewed. It was previously decided among that Roundtable that the mission and vision were to be reviewed every few years to ensure that they still meet the purpose and direction of the Roundtable.
 - ii. **Data sharing/communication platform check-in – Kayla Harris**
 1. Kayla provided a brief update and check in with the Roundtable regarding the recent use of the Slack Communication Platform.
 2. Other than a few comments regarding which web browser to use, the majority of Roundtable members found Slack to be helpful a useful way to quickly and efficiently share data.
 3. It was stated during the meeting that the web browser Internet Explorer does not work with Slack; however, the Google Chrome Browser does work.
 4. Most computers should be able to download a free Slack app directly to their desktop from their computer App Store. There is also a free mobile phone app that can be downloaded for Slack if anyone wishes to use that.
 5. Kayla will continue to troubleshoot any issues as they arise among the group and will continue to communicate through email and relay important information as fit.

iii. Revised Watershed Map – Julie Pisani

1. Julie printed and displayed a copy of the revised watershed map that the RDN GIS department created. The map is available on Slack and had been emailed to members prior to the meeting.
2. GIS department at the RDN has said they can do an interactive map. The interactive map would not show details such as parcels or property lines but would be at an approximate 1:3,000 scale. Information that could be relayed in the map could include groundwater monitoring locations, aquifer data, etc.
3. It is important to note that the interactive map, if the Roundtable would like to proceed, would be through ARC GIS Online and all data would be public.
4. The revised map shows that Chase River in purple and the Holden Creek watershed. Aquifers are shown that they extend beyond those boundaries.
5. City of Nanaimo contributed shape files that show the water supply boundary for the City.

iv. Summary of 2nd Strategic Planning Session

1. Some members did not receive the second Strategic Planning Summary from November 21st. **Action Item:** Kayla will send the second Strategic Planning Session Summary out to all members.
 2. The work with the Risk Assessment may help inform this work for the strategic plan.
 3. There was some discussion about who would be completing the Strategic Plan. Initially Kayla and selected working groups were established at the November 21st. As a starting point to continue with the work being done, Kayla will continue to work through this and contact these groups as needed.
 4. **Action Item:** Nick Leone state that he will provide a document to Paul and Kayla regarding the fisheries component. An example of implementation plan. Will provide a copy to Kayla to share with the group.
- **Salmon Habitat Risk Assessment Workshop update**– Erica Blake, Jaclyn Boutillier, and Steve Baillie

- i. An interim habitat status report was presented at the RAMS meeting and provided input into this work. Any comments about this document can be directed to Steve Baillie
- ii. Some data gaps being addressed by the Nanaimo estuary committee 2015 report update
- iii. The effects of seals on the logs. Concerns raised that seals are having a negative impact on fish stocks. More seals than fish has been witnessed by Dave Bodaly. This has been a growing concern for Snuneymuxw.
- iv. A strategic plan will be developed that will provide direction for the recovery of the Nanaimo River Watershed and ecosystem.
- v. To date, COSEWIC has listed the Nanaimo River Spring run as Endangered which DFO has found to be a second population of the Summer run; results from COSEWIC for summer population will be out this spring.
- vi. Species at Risk Act discussed at the meeting seemed that salmon may not be listed but recovery processes will still be put in place

5) New Business

- **Fisheries Act Update- (Bill C68) -Byron Nutton**
 - Additional resources on updates to the *Fisheries Act* provided by Byron Nutton. The following is a list of websites with additional information that can be of use and interest to the Roundtable Members.
 - The main page for Changes to the *Fisheries Act* <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/fisheries-act-loi-sur-les-peches/index-eng.html> includes some high-level information on the modernized *Fisheries Act* as well as links to sub-pages with a bit more information on specific topics, including Fish and Fish Habitat <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/fisheries-act-loi-sur-les-peches/protection-eng.html> and Restoring and Rebuilding <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/fisheries-act-loi-sur-les-peches/habitat-eng.html>
 - The main page for the new Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP) is called Projects Near Water <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html> - it provides some high-level information as well as links to sub-

pages, one that is likely of particular interest: Engagement and Partnerships <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/partnerships-partenaires-eng.html>

- Information of Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Restoration Funding <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ecosystems/habitat/index-eng.html>
- DFO National Home Page – you can navigate to any of the links above from here, and just in case anyone is interested in other topics. <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/index-eng.htm>
- Additional Notes on Fisheries Act Discussion
- Fisheries Act aims to:
 - restore protections for fish and fish habitat
 - enhance marine protection and habitat restoration
 - improve management of projects
 - preserve independent inshore fisheries
 - strengthen Indigenous role in project reviews, monitoring and policy development
- Some changes that have occurred include:
 - Fisheries Act changes in 2013 and 2015 and is now called the modernized act and came into force last year and habitat components as of August 2019.
 - Restoring lost protections and monitoring safeguards
 - Providing better certainty for industry
 - Protection of fish and fish habitat.
 - Stock rebuilding provision in current version. Allows minister to direct restoration of habitat.
 - Identifying specific threats
 - Shift from what was known as fish protection program to fish and fish habitat program.
- 5 themes of work:
 - Regulatory and enforcement

- Integrated planning
 - Restoration
 - Off setting
 - Important ecological areas
 - Planning
 - Reporting to Canadians
 - Mandate and obligation to report back on the effectiveness of the work they are doing
 - Have a public registry
 - Find better ways to share data
 - Engagement
 - Partnerships to deliver on funding and grants—coastal restoration fund, BC salmon and innovative restoration initiative
 - There are potentially opportunities for groups like NRWR to apply for those funds.
 - Reconciliation with First Nations
- **Invasive Species Workshop** –Louise Shuker
 - Invasive species workshop coordinating with Nanaimo Cedar Farmers Institute.
 - They would like to have it in the cedar area.
 - Rob Lawrence has volunteered to assist with an itinerary for an invasive species workshop
 - The workshop would be specific to invasive plants
 - Through Team WaterSmart, the RDN could put some funds towards this workshop for venue, refreshments, etc.
 - RDN and NALT have volunteered to help as well and SFN. Coordinating some speakers. Coastal invasive species committee.
- **A great thank you to David Bramley for his contributions to the Nanaimo River Watershed Roundtable!** David is retiring and will be replaced on the RT by Honey Nampak.

- **Administration of the Roundtable**

- Kayla has obtained a position as Planning Technician with the Regional District of Nanaimo starting March 2, 2020.
- Roundtable members agreed that that there is not a conflict of interest. If a topic that may be considered a conflict of interest arises, Kayla will not vote on the matter. Kayla's role with the Roundtable is primarily administrative.
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6) Next Meeting: May 7th, 2020. 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm at Woodbank Primary School, Cedar

7) Adjourned: 3:05 pm