

Watershed Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 24 April 2002 in the Ridgeview Motel Hospitality Room

Present:

Paul Smith- WCVI AMB; Jon Banas- Resident; Cameron Forbes- Resident; Jim Mitchell- Village of Gold River; Dick Dennison- G.R. Resident; Roger Dunlop-NTC Fisheries Biologist; Maureen Plecas- G.R. Resident.

1.0 Paul (chair) called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

2.0 Introductions around the table

3.0 The agenda was approved by consensus

4.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

There were no changes or additions.

5.0 Old business arising from the minutes

Jim asked Roger about exotic mussels. Roger stated there are 3 types thought to be a cline of gradient between original species elements separated by plate tectonics. Species are often defined by ability to reproduce and the three species can interbreed to produce hybrids. The three *M. edulis* - Atlantic, *M. galloprovincialis*- Mediterranean, and *M. trossulus*- Pacific. There are a number of concerns identified in an MSc. Thesis by Jenia Yannick around the unavailability to ducks because of their large size, ability to interbreed and in one instance represented 20% of mussel biomass near Ladysmith. There is data that shows these mussels will inter breed with our local mussels.

Introduction have been approved by the Transplant Committee although their evaluation process was based on old data that showed lower representation in the biomass. The province sees no risks but benefits for aquaculture. Roger reiterated his concerns that we don't know the impacts of introducing these mussels. Jim asked about the disease issues surrounding exporting mussels. Roger stated that the possibility exists but unknown. Jim asked if the beaches would ever recover in the future. Roger commented that we just don't know.

Jon asked why they couldn't lower the local mussels down to a depth where they won't die off in the summer to make growing them viable. Roger stated that there is recent work that showed summer die-off as our mussels (*M. trossulus*) are intertidal and die in summer when continuously submerged unlike *M. galloprovincialis*, and *M. edulis*. Roger then updated everyone on the shellfish tenure application process by stating that BCALC has only Okayed one application to date, but others may be approved. Mowachaht/Muchalaht recommended a site in addition to the Nesook applications to LWBC, but the proponent withdrew the application.

Jim asked Paul about the letter to Doug Swift concerning the wood waste on the foreshore in front of the mill site. Paul responded that Doug has informed him that the letter should be addressed to the province, as that is their territory. Jim asked about the Storm Drain Marking exercise with the local elementary school. Paul stated that the Gold River Stream Keepers would be coordinating this along with Dave Davies sometime in the end of May or early June. Paul updated everyone on the status of both Coho indicator fences. Dick stated that

the Rod and Gun executive is requesting a letter from DFO for liability reasons documenting permission to have the fence on Hutchinson Creek. Paul will pass along this request to DFO.

Roger asked if Coho stock assessment section of DFO would continue to monitor summer Coho fry population densities on Dunlop Creek like they have done in the past. Paul will look into this.

6.0 Minutes of previous meeting approved by consensus

7.0 Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

8.0 New Business

Roger stated the Muchalaht River Weir is a go again this year. Jim asked if the weir would be in the same location as last year. Roger commented that it would be 10 meters lower downstream, but yes. He went on to say that for every fish caught nine would be released to make its way to the lake. Last year they kept 10 and tagged/released 50 Sockeye. Dick asked if the maintenance would be a lot better this year. Roger replied yes. He stated that the weir would be opened in July. He also stated that there might be opportunities to leave it in next fall for the Gold River Chinook Project to help take brood stock from upriver Oktivanch/Klaanch Chinook, the overlooked most potentially productive run-timing element in the Gold. Roger talked about ZZ Creek and the changes that have been recommended because of a resting/feeding area for Elk and location of tailrace. Moving it upstream to base of falls would protect elk area (If they acclimate to the disturbance) and not require reduced flows in the short anadromous fish section adjacent to the lake. Also they originally proposed leaving only 2% of Mean Annual Discharge in the bypassed section of the creek, which is way too low to support drift production in this section to increase the water flow from 2% to a higher number. Roger talked about the Watershed Restoration Plans from Western Forest Products for the Oktivanch and Zeballos Rivers. He stated that we should contact Canfor about the upper Oktivanch and what their plans are for the area. Jon asked Roger about the data from the screw trap and whether this could be used by stock assessment. Roger replied yes. Jim stated that John Frame informed him that the new site for the hatchery has been nixed because of poor water recovery (sand).

9.0 Action Items

1. Paul will re-address wood waste letter to Province and send out.
2. Paul will ask for a letter of permission from Dfo for the Rod and Gun Club on indicator fence for Hutchinson Creek.
3. Paul will ask stock assessment if they still have plans to monitor fry population densities in Dunlop Creek.
4. Paul will contact Canfor (Charlie Jancsik) about their plans in Upper Oktivanch in relation to WFP's WRP.

10.0 Presentations

There were no presentations.

11.0 Open Discussion

There was some discussion on where the hatchery might end up and whether we would loose the enhancement program for the Gold River.

12.0 Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday, May 29/02 same time, same place.

