

# Nootka Sound Watershed Society

## Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 28 April, 2004 in the Western Forest Products Meeting Room

### **Present:**

Jim Mitchell (D)- Village of Gold River/Stream Keepers; Paul Smith (D)- Stream Keepers; Stewart Adams (D)- Stream Keepers; Jamie James (D)- Mowachaht/Muchalaht; Dick Dennison (D)- Gold River Rod and Gun; Dave Davies- DFO; Roger Dunlop- NTC Fisheries; Chris Erikson- Gold River Resident; Jay McCool- Grieg Seafoods, Jim Murphy- Grieg Seafoods; Pat Dennison- Gold River Resident;

### **1.0 Paul called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.**

Paul asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet.

### **2.0 Introductions around the table**

### **3.0 Changes/additions/approval of agenda**

Roger Dunlop added Gold River escapement goals under new business. Jim Mitchell added an update on the Gold River Chinook Project status under new business. Stewart Adams moved to accept agenda, Jim Murphy seconded, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved.

### **4.0 Changes or additions to minutes of the previous meeting**

Roger commented that under section 6.0 in the sentence that reads "Dick Dennison asked if" the word rose should read increased. Jim Mitchell stated that under section 8.0 the sentence "Jim Mitchell talked about" the words Campbell River should read Nanaimo. Also in the sentence that reads "Jim replied that the 9 hour" the words hour presentation should read "hours of consultation for the whole province" also the words and stewardship should be added to the end of the same sentence.

### **5.0 Approval of Minutes**

Jim Mitchell moved to accept previous minutes, seconded by Jim Murphy, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved.

### **6.0 Old business arising from the minutes**

Jim Mitchell updated everyone on the final day preparations for the stewardship education class with the Gold River Secondary School students. The day will start off with a trip to Big Bend Creek to view the work completed and then move to Cougar Creek like last year to give a hands on training exercise with a beach seine net and species id. This will be the sixth class this year and the school is looking at creating a credit process towards the student's grades if they participate in the education classes. May 14, 2004 is the tentative date for the field trips. Good work Jim! Jim also commented that in June sometime there would be a streamkeepers training workshop with Dave Clough. We are just waiting for a reply from Dave to determine the exact dates. Paul Smith updated everyone on the Big Bend Creek culvert/instream projects. He commented that Dave Clough and Sean Wong have taken the lead on this project and we will be hearing very shortly on the details of the project. Jim Mitchell stated that once again there is money available from the Forest Investment Account through the Nootka Sound Economic Development Corporation to the tune of \$3900. Jim is currently

completing the application/proposal process. Roger Dunlop commented that another idea might be to look at the previous side channel work on the east side of the Oktwanch River as the river has altered course and the side channel isn't functioning properly. The fish are trapped in the channel and this should be looked into. Roger went on to say that they have been unsuccessful in finding funding for the rotary screw trap so that project has been scrapped. Dave Davies talked about collecting DNA samples from Gold River juveniles to determine the stocks present and the locations of where the Gold River stocks might be coming from. He stated that it was great to have the three high school students along during this exercise and hopes that it continues in the future. Roger Dunlop stated that the Mowachaht/Muchalaht will be putting in the weir again this year on the Muchalat River, so could the members please pass along the importance of this weir and remind everyone that damaging the weir does no any good. Jim Mitchell updated everyone on the progress of the Dunlop Creek Coho indicator fence. The fence is now set up and over 100 smolts have already been counted on the first two days. If anyone from the stewardship groups or other members of the community wants to get involved they should contact Jim Mitchell, Paul Smith or Chris Erikson. Chris Erikson is the lead on this project. On a sadder note, Jim Mitchell stated that four days after the streamkeepers spent money to repair the fence and install it, Dfo cut the budget for the indicator fences in half on all of Vancouver Island. Jim stated that he immediately sent out an email voicing his concerns and received an email back from the Mowachaht/Muchalaht Fisheries program stating that they would donate \$500 towards the project. Jim went on to state that this generous donation is a sample of the partnerships that have been created by this process and that words cannot describe the importance of this commitment. Jamie James replied that the donation request has been put forward to council and he is waiting for their reply. Dave Davies commented that this might all change after Jim's email ruffled a few feathers. Dave Davies sent the raw data for the dendrogram (DNA), but Paul Smith didn't have the time to print it out for this meeting. Dave will look into the Sockeye stray data again as he forgot. Paul Smith stated that Craig Whiteman or his technicians will be here at our next meeting to give us a presentation on the status of the Steelhead stocks in Nootka Sound specifically the Gold River stocks. Paul Smith commented on the IPP power point presentation by Brian Tutty (DFO) and Sigma Engineering and how it was a great way to learn about the process. He went on to say that the presentation is on the web site and he can mail it out to those who want it.

## **7.0 Correspondence**

There were two emails under correspondence from Tom Pater and Dave Davies. The first was from Tom Pater on a documentary broadcast called "Leaving the Lights" which is based on the Kidders and their stay at the Nootka Lighthouse over the last twenty or so years. Dave Davies sent an email from the PFRCC requesting more information on examples of successful hatchery programs in BC. Consensus here was too little too late, as the damage has been done. Jim Mitchell commented that he has sent off a letter about the success of the Conuma Hatchery and smaller projects in our area. Dave Davies commented that most stewardship groups that he works with are shocked by the PFRCC's request for data on hatchery successes.

Roger Dunlop said that the Mowachaht/Muchalaht have received funding from BC Hydro for the Elk River Riparian Project. The contractors will contact Paul with the details when the project will commence.

## **8.0 New Business**

Roger Dunlop talked about Chuck Parkins' data on escapement into the Gold River stating the carrying capacity of the Gold River watershed is 5400+ or 25%. Based on this data and the last two years escapement counts, there was a surplus of 6000 Chinook in the system. Roger explained that this is a gradient-based model to determine the escapement carrying capacity. It isn't official yet, but is in front of PSARC for validation. Jim Mitchell voiced his frustration concerning DFO giving the Gold River Chinook Project the licensed tenure to run the enhancement again on the Gold and Burman Rivers without proper public consultation. He was under the impression based on previous minutes of the watershed society that the public would be given the opportunity to help provide a solution to the previous closure of the public hatchery facility. The Gold River Chinook Project through this forum has kept us updated as to their progress in securing a site for the hatchery's future, it has never been clear however, whether they had confirmed access to a site in time for this falls brood collection. It was the volunteers of this community who stepped up to the plate to mitigate the closure of the hatchery by working with the Gold River Chinook Project to collect brood stock, which would be reared in net pens and at the Conuma River Enhancement Facility. Volunteers of this community also collected valuable scientific data on Gold River Chinook. He stated that he finds it disturbing that DFO has circumvented the public consultation process in place regarding a public facility. Especially after all the work he has done and costs incurred to secure a site and funding, with a proposal to be submitted to DFO, which now he won't get the chance to present on behalf of the community as the decision has been made. This proposal has been reflected in previous minutes and for competitive reasons he did not provide the details of his proposal to DFO. Jim added that he wants to wish the Gold River Chinook Project all the best and reiterates that he doesn't blame them (nor should this society), but the blame lies solely on the DFO. Dave Davies replied that the decision was based on 22 years of experience by the Gold River Chinook Project in salmon enhancement. He felt this was done with the "fish first" concept. Jim Mitchell stated that this is a direct contravention of DFO's policy regarding privatization. Jim went on to say that if the public/stewardship groups were restricted from participating/partnering in the enhancement as has been in the past, he would resign from every one of his roles in stewardship. Jim Murphy stated that he was under the impression that this forum was structured to deal with this process not be excluded from it. Pat Dennison said that it has been made clear from day one that this was supposed to be the umbrella from which all stewardship groups operated under including the Gold River Chinook Project. Is DFO now saying that they will only listen to the process that they created through the HCSP, when it is beneficial to them to listen? Paul Smith commented that although he has no problem with the Gold River Chinook Project running the hatchery, he is however disappointed that DFO didn't use the very process that it hired him to set up four years ago as the stewardship coordinator to address these concerns. What does this say to all the communities of Nootka Sound, build it, but we won't come. Based on

previous experience, the hatchery staff of the Gold River Chinook Project (through no fault of theirs) hasn't been allowed to provide access to the facility without permission from the property owner because of liability issues. Will this be the case again, and if so, then what's the point of having a Pip project in this area if the general public has to gain permission before entering their own public facility? Permission isn't required to enter the Conuma River Enhancement Facility as a member of the general public during regular hours so why should this be any different? Dave Davies stated that his goal is to ensure access to the site by all stewardship groups and the general public and has assurances from the Gold River Chinook Project that this will occur. Paul Smith commented that making a tourist or local phone for permission to view the site isn't his concept of public access. Dave replied that this is standard for all Pip projects across BC. Roger Dunlop stated that there is no partnership with the Mowachaht/Muchalaht on this hatchery proposal and Jamie James confirmed this. From here the meeting got ugly with order taking a while to return.

#### **9.0 Action Items**

1. Dave Davies will try and find data on Sockeye strays into Muchalat Lake and the numbers to go with the DNA dendrogram.
2. Dave Davies will contact Mel Sheng about the side channel issues with the east side of the Oktwanch River.
3. Paul Smith will contact Ken Hall (WFP) on the FIA funding issues.
4. Paul will print out the raw data from the DNA dendrogram and bring to next meeting.

#### **10.0 Presentations**

##### **Open Discussion**

Lot's of discussion on the tenure granted to the Gold River Chinook Project and the future of salmon enhancement in Nootka Sound.

#### **11.0 Adjournment**

Stewart Adams moved to adjourn at 9:00 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday, May 26, 2004 same time, same place.