

Watershed Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 30 April, 2003 in the Aquatic Centre Meeting Room #1

Present:

Paul Smith- Gold River Stream Keepers; Dave Davies- FOC; Rick Axsford- WLAP; Roger Dunlop- NTC; Chris Erikson- FOC; Dick Dennison- G.R. Resident/GRCC; Pat Dennison- WFP; Richard Schmidt- GR Rod and Gun; Maureen Ritter- Marine Harvest Canada; Darrel Glass- GR Stream Keepers

1.0 Paul called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

2.0 Introductions around the table

Paul thanked WFP for the use of the meeting room

3.0 The agenda was approved by consensus

with the following additions: Roger will update everyone on the Crest/Heber status under unfinished business and under new business Roger will discuss his Nootka Sound Stock Assessment Study.

4.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

No changes or omissions.

5.0 Old business arising from the minutes

Paul updated everyone as to the status of the office equipment. Legal possession will be transferred to the Gold River Stream Keepers Society. Thanks to the WCVI Aquatic Management Society. Dave asked how long the funding would last to secure the office. Paul replied that the stream keepers have enough funding for about a year. Paul stated that to date he has not heard back from Aleria Ladwick or Brenda Bauer on the Nimpkish Watershed Plan. Rick commented on the document being very thick and probably hard to come by. Pat handed out some documents from her research over the Internet on the plan. Some discussions followed on how much money is being allocated through the Forest Investment Account (FIA) and whether Western has enough to help fund part of the Gold River Watershed Plan. Paul commented that at previous meetings Murray Watkinson had stated that Western's budget was used up for this year. There was some disagreement to this and it was stated that we should have put in a proposal anyways. Paul and Roger will work over the summer on a proposal for next years budget. Roger commented that would like to see the establishment of old growth calibre trees next to the small streams and rivers to be implemented into the watershed plan. Rick updated everyone on the Steelhead strays into the Gold River based on coded wire tags from 1978-1983. Rick handed out a series of documents and charts to show this. Rick also discussed the systems that were enhanced: Big Qualicum, Campbell, Cowichan, Englishman, Little Qualicum, Quinsam and Stamp/Somass. Rick talked about the strays into the Heber River being very low. Dave asked if the province has seen hatchery strays on other systems other than on the west coast of the island. Reply was no. There was a brief discussion on the drift boat efforts on the Gold River during the month of April and the spawning timing etc. Concerns were that there was no control over the amount of drift boats being allowed on the system towards the latter

end of the spawning cycle. Some discussion followed on the Zeballos River and why Steelhead retention was banned. The question was asked why some one wasn't monitoring the sediment deposition into the river from logging and road maintenance if the Steelhead population was in dire straits. Rick commented that it is being looked into. Roger stated that the Community Forest designation was lifted in return for the village being allowed to drill a new well. This allows the door to open for more harvesting in the watershed. Dick asked how the east coast Steelhead populations were fairing. Rick replied that there were few fish other than the Quinsam River. Dave asked if the province has looked at using volunteers to help with the river swims. Rick responded that it has been looked at, but there are problems with liability, WCB etc. Dave commented that the volunteers he's used to working with have all the necessary training and probably more. There was some discussion on whether volunteers have the required experience in identifying salmonids properly and the data bias if not done correctly. Not everyone agreed in this debate. Paul updated everyone on previous discussions to change the status of the watershed committee to a registered society and the associated costs. Dick commented that a member from every group in the region should have a seat at the table representing their group. Everyone agreed to this, but how will we set up the membership structure? Where will we get the funds? What will we call it? Dick volunteered to pay the associated costs in registering the society. Paul and Roger will work on a draft template of the constitution, bylaws, terms of reference and vision statement. These will then be presented to the committee for fine-tuning at later meetings. Pat stated that the committee should represent all of Nootka Sound and not just Gold River to allow for more participation and recognition. The province will participate through Craig Whiteman and Rick Axsford and Paul will keep them in the loop. Roger talked about the Crest Creek rehabilitation under the Campbell River Water Use Plan. There is a new structure called the Crest Creek Committee (C4) to deal with this. In the past 20% of the Crest was diverted by digging out Crest Lake. The plan is to re-establish the Creek to its original state. Paul asked what would happen to the fish that have established themselves in the new system. Roger said that hopefully the fish would be taken care of. Right now Roger and Jamie James are doing studies to determine the effects on the lower Heber flood plain when the Crest is re-established. Roger commented that the Mowachaht/Muchalat wouldn't be putting in the fish weir on the Muchalat River this year due to a lack of funding. They will however be putting in a Fyke net to determine if there are Sockeye smolts coming out of the Gold River watershed. Chris asked Roger to let him know when and he will help him.

6.0 Minutes of previous meeting approved by consensus

7.0 Correspondence

Two letters were on the agenda. One from Chris Hilliar by Richard Bocking on NAFTA, Privatization and the Future of Canada's Water. The other from the Habitat Enhancement Branch on a workshop for stewardship groups on how to structure them for accepting large corporate donations and planned gifts. Dave commented that this is more for the larger groups than it is for the smaller ones.

8.0 New Business

Roger talked about a study that he is doing for the Nu Chah Nulthaht/West

Coast Vancouver Island Aquatic Management Board on salmon stocks in areas 23-26. He will need groups to help assess some of these systems. There was some discussion on the difference between river reared Sockeye and lake reared Sockeye.

9.0 Action Items

1. Paul and Roger will work together to create a template for the constitution/bylaws/terms of reference and vision statement.
2. Paul and Roger will put together a proposal for funding from the FIA for the Gold River Watershed Plan over the summer.
3. Dick will pay the associated costs of registering the new society.
4. Paul will make sure to keep the province in the loop for future participation at our meetings.
5. Roger will contact Chris and let him know when he will be placing Fyke net in the Gold River.
6. Paul will remind Roger to give a power point presentation on his stock assessment study of Nootka Sound for the next meeting.
7. Paul will write a letter from the committee requesting a meeting concerning the future of Gold River brood stock collection.

10.0 Presentations

There were no presentations.

11.0 Open Discussion

Dick talked about the sea pen program at Nesook Bay again this year. Roger asked about the status of last falls strays. Chris commented that they would be 100% marked and reared in net pens in the Gold River estuary. Roger stated that next fall we should look at installing the weir in the Oktwanch to aid in collecting brood stock from the upper system. Dick commented that the enhancement in the past included releasing Chinook into the upper Oktwanch River. Consensus was that by taking DNA and Otilith samples from the brood stock in the upper Oktwanch would determine the ration of wild to enhanced. Some discussions followed on the status of the summer run Chinook population in the Gold River and how to ensure their survival.

12.0 Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday, May 28, 2003 same time, same place.