

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN

NOTES of a meeting of the Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan RECREATION WORKING GROUP held in the Board Room at the Regional District Office on March 9, 2012
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Members: ~~Brad Clements~~
Cathy MacPherson
Dale Fennell
Herman Bruns
Janice Lacko
Jean Clark
Jim Crichley
~~Judy Stewart~~
Madison Giesbrecht
Rick Smith
~~Shelley Verlaan~~
Terri Deuling

Staff: Anna Page Sustainability Coordinator
Laura Frank Sustainability Coordinator and Planning

PART 1 – CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1.1 Welcome by RDNO staff, Anna Page and Laura Frank

PART 2 – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

PART 3 – INTRODUCTIONS

3.1 Brief introduction by all participants.

Anna Page and Laura Frank introduced themselves and welcomed all attendees to the first meeting of the Recreation Working Group. A round table introduction followed.

PART 4 – ADOPTION OF MINUTES

PART 5 – BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

PART 6 – NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.2 Review of the Working Groups Terms of Reference

Anna Page went over some of the key components of the Working Group Terms of Reference including the purpose of the working groups, participant conduct, decision making process and media interaction.

6.3 Overview of Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan Development Process

Laura Frank went over the purpose of the SRWSP process, the draft vision statement, guiding principles, planning framework and communication flow diagram.

Following the presentation on the Working Group Terms of Reference and Plan Development there were some questions raised regarding the Technical Advisory Committee.

TAC members:

Conrad Pryce – FLNRO	Stuart Lee – Splatsin, or alternate
Neil Goeller – FLNRO	Rob Birtles - IHA
Mike Sokal – MOE	Roberta Dight – Transport Canada
Bob Harding – DFO	Greg Tegart - Ministry of Agriculture
Shayla Lawrence – ONAFD, or alternate	Tom Kadla - Village of Lumby
Pat Hickerson - City of Armstrong	Tate Bengtson - City of Enderby
Ed Forslund – Township of Spallumcheen	

A request was also made of staff to forward on some examples of other Watershed Plans.

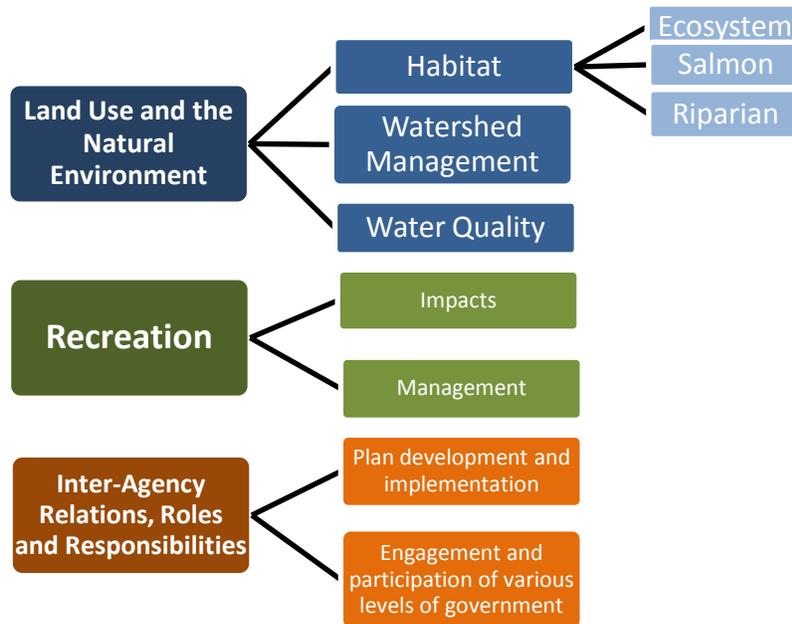
- Kiskatinaw River Watershed Management Plan
<http://www.dawsoncreek.ca/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/WatershedManagementPlan.pdf>
- Nicola Water Use Management Plan http://www.nwcr.org/wump_overview.htm
- Process - Coquitlam Watershed www.coquitlamriverwatershed.ca
- Shuswap Lake Integrated Planning Process
http://slippbc.com/images/pdf/SLIPP_Strategic_Plan_for_Shuswap_and_Mara_Lakes.pdf
- Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan <http://nisquallyriver.org/who-we-are/the-nisqually-river-management-plan/>
- Rethinking Our Water Ways, Fraser Basin Council, www.rethinkingwater.ca of particular relevance Chapter 7: Integrating Water, Land and Watersheds.

6.4 Technical Assessments

A brief overview was provided of the Technical Assessment of the Shuswap River and the Lower Shuswap and Mabel Lake Inventory, Mapping and Aquatic Habitat Index and specifically how they relate to Recreation.

6.5 Discussion of Phase I Issue Identification

An overview was provided of the comments received during the issue identification phase from the workshops and survey. The comments were organised into three themes as shown in the diagram below.



The Recreation themes can be organised further into the following;

Impacts

- On the natural environment:
 - e.g. impacts of motorized watercraft on streambank stability, water quality, fish and aquatic habitat.
- On landowners:
 - e.g. erosion of landbase and deterioration of water intakes.
- Conflict between users
 - specifically between motor boats and swimmers, tubers, canoeists and kayakers

Management

- Recommendations for management activities to reduce or eliminate impacts
- Maintenance of access for recreational activities

6.6 Development of Recreation Recommendations for Goals, Objectives and Strategies

In advance of developing goals, objective and strategies the group began working through the comments received during Phase I of the planning process to gain a common understanding of the issues raised and to identify if anything was missing. The discussion that came from this part of the meeting resulted in the following points.

Boating Representation on Working Group

Initial discussion focused on the need for representation from the boating/motorized recreational user group on the Working Group.

- The group wondered why the boating industry is not at the table.
- It was noted that this discussion and forum might be uncomfortable for them to participate in.
- Overall everyone agreed that there is a need for better education on the river
- As well as a need for the boating industry to change their stance/marketing on the appeal of motorized watercraft (they tend to promote and display ways in which you can enjoy the river all of which are detrimental to the environment).
- The working group has decided to reach out to the boating community and try and get a representative at the table. (everyone agreed that ideally we have a rep who is a part of the user group and not associated with the boating industry (specific business))
- Each WG member is going to identify people who might be interested in participating (these names will be forwarded on to RDNO staff to contact; unless the WG member was able to reach out to the individual)
- It was noted that as a working group we may need to be adaptive to the motorized boating user group if they can't participate in the working group meetings. We can look at reaching out to them within the community at a later date.
- The working group as a whole felt we at least need to try and consult with this group to legitimize the process and recommendations going forward.

Tubing

- Pollution/garbage & noise
- Safety
- trespassing
- destruction of water lines and the environment

Access throughout the watershed.

- Both maintaining access points and maintaining launch sites (well marked)
- Concern over how little enforcement there was on the river. Zero from Mara to Mabel in 2011. There was some enforcement on Mara and Mabel lake but not enough
- Concerns over drunk boaters/sea-dooers
- Currently it is legal to go at any speed on any watercraft within the watershed
- Concern over illegal access to the lakes (Mabel Lake)
- There needs to be maintenance of current access points. Clearly defining where the launch sites are would benefit the riparian areas which are currently being damaged from people launching at a variety of locations.
- Significant impacts to the environment from people launching at unofficial sites.
- Boats launching at Mabel Lake Hall (just below Wilsey Dam)
- Eliminate illegal launching sites
- Issues of launching during low-water damage to draw-down zone e.g. Sugar Lake in spring

Moorage

- Moorage issues at Mabel Lake (proliferation of buoys)

- Docks along the river issues (the majority of docks are not technically legal)
- Concern over the design of the legal dock that was constructed more recently.
- Suggestion that there should be discussion over what standards of docks are acceptable.
Look at zoning the foreshore and water where there could be controls of dock:
 - Sizes
 - Locations
 - Materials used
 - Whether the dock can stay in the water over winter
 - Access to the docks through the riparian area. Pathway 2m wide might be acceptable.
 - Overhead structure is out of character for the area
 - Aesthetics are a big deal (no one likes the look of the new legal dock)
- It was noted that education around Riparian Areas Regulations needs to occur (people don't know what they can and can't do).

Motorized vehicles in watershed

- Concerns over quads and snowmobiles
- There should be provisions for non-motorized recreation without motorized recreation interfering.
- Concerns over the sound-scape (impact of motorized rec vehicles)
- May be a need for areas where specific uses/rec opportunities are permitted and others are excluded.
- Establish trails for ATV's
 - Currently they off-road in riparian areas and waterways (mud bogging)
 - Use of ATVs more acceptable when on established roads (forestry roads) but not when it's on creeks, reservoirs and sensitive habitats.
 - No enforcement
 - Less enforcement on the ground (there may be a few high profile cases but overall not enough is being done).
 - No way of identifying rec vehicles
 - With licensing we could actually identify those destroying the environment
 - Deputizing other people for enforcement, e.g. bylaw offices
 - Notion that the provincial gov. supports multiuse areas, the working group is looking at more separation of uses.
 - Community watersheds and impacts other users are having

Carbon emissions associated with motorized recreational vehicles

- Broader issue of the carbon impact on the atmosphere of motorized vehicles and impacts on the environment.
- Should public money be spent on facilities supporting motorized recreation infrastructure?
- Should we be discouraging motorized recreation to help lessen carbon emissions.
- Where are public monies being spent? We should be investing in ways we can reduce carbon impacts

- Comment was made that it is not realistic to think that we can eliminate motorized recreational vehicles.
- Don't invest in new opportunities for motorized rec vehicles, but we should maintain current access points

SRWSP Timescale

- The GHG discussion raised the question of what the time frame for the plan is; is it a 30 year plan or a 5 year plan? The time frame will impact what kinds of recommendations are made.
- Could be recommendations for different timescales
- A good way to broach the long term plan is to ask the following “are you really thinking about your grandchildren?”
- Noted that there is a social consciousness theme with a number of the comments

Garbage

- Real problem of garbage in the river and on roadsides
- Sense that there is no longer an emphasis in the schools on the impacts of litter; there needs to be more education
- Noted that there are a large number of golf balls in Mabel Lake.
- Definite conflict between users
- Noise pollution (swearing loud music)
- Land owners vs tubers (tubers are not open to feedback when approached by river ambassador group)
- They don't want to be regulated; education and persuasion is often better in these types of situations.
- However there is the potential to look into regulating the number and type of users on the river at certain times of the year (this was in relation to concerns over salmon refuge and holding ponds; these habitats are more susceptible to human activities).

Boating

- Half of the issues identified by the community are surrounding power boats
- If we could get a lot of the existing regulations enforced it might solve a number of the issues.
- There was a request to review the Transport Canada restrictions process – **see below**.
- Discussion as to why Transport Canada has a rule that on larger rivers boats must travel 30 m from shoreline but on small rivers there is no direction on where boats should travel (Navigable Water Act).
- In the end these rules are not enforceable (kind of a useless regulation)

Users

- Concept of respect by some users
- Complete lack of respect for the ecosystem/ living systems
- It's an insult the way people behave within the watershed

Erosion

- Erosion is a big concern
- Erosion on clay banks is higher when at mid point, under cutting when most heavily recreated
- Results in high turbidity
- Erosion could be used as a justification for boating regs

Other

- Impacts of boats on fish and wildlife
- Pre-spawning mortality potentially due to boating
- Increased impacts of Salmon fisherman (wider impacts, garbage, pollution, fires).
- Cattle in waterways detracting from recreational users enjoyment (canoe & kayakers)

7.4 SRWSP Field Trip

Initial discussion regarding field trip opportunities for the summer.

- Canoe trip (Rick Smith is willing to help organize this).

PART 7 – WORKING GROUP MATTERS

7.1 Membership/Appointments

Discussion regarding whether the group would like to elect a chair or have a revolving chair. It was decided that the format used during the first meeting where a RDNO staff member facilitates the discussion worked well and to continue with this format for now.

7.2 Mileage Reimbursement

Working group members will be reimbursed for mileage to meetings at \$0.52 per km. A mileage record sheet will be circulated at each meeting and members will be paid at the end of the meeting period.

7.3 Future Meeting Dates and Locations

Next meeting will be April 13, 9:00am to 12:00pm at the RDNO offices.

7.4 Working Group “Homework”

- Send in photo's of the river and tributaries and issues they have witnessed on the river.
- Identify people from boating community who might be interested in participating in the working group (these names will be forwarded to RDNO staff to contact; unless the WG member was able to reach out to the individual)

PART 8 – ADJOURNMENT

Transport Canada Boating Regulations Information

Information for applying for boating restrictions can be found in **The Local Authorities' Guide to Boating Restriction Regulations**, <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-resources-publications-restriction-menu-245.htm>

Below are some extracts from a report that went to the RDNO Board in 2009.

RDNO can apply to Transport Canada-Boating Safety for restrictions affecting watercraft use on the river. In essence, this would be the means to have restrictions on speed or horsepower imposed on the lower Shuswap River.

- Local Government can make applications for boating restrictions on waterways.
- This requires a one year non-regulatory alternative first (for example, the “River Watch” Project currently underway).
- Local governments have a role in enforcement and signage (financial support required).

The steps required by Transport Canada are:

- Public consultation with all users, land owners, stakeholders, First Nations and the General Public.
- Establishing and documenting why regulation is the only alternative.
- Carrying out impact assessments and cost/benefit analysis of developing vessel restriction regulations.
- Establishing that enforcement is practical, identifying the appropriate enforcement authority and ensuring such authority accepts responsibility for carrying-out enforcement.
- Preparation of the submission.

The submission itself must include a detailed description and map of the waterway and its characteristics (users, access points, population and vessel types etc). It should also document all of the steps outlined above with a detailed analyses of the perceived problem(s), analysis of probable causes and identification of potential solutions outlining the pros and cons.

Existing initiatives and programs in the Watershed

- Cherryville Water Stewards – water quality monitoring on Cherry Creek, Ferry Creek, Reiter Creek and the Shuswap main stem in the Cherryville area as well as riparian restoration projects on Cherry Creek
- Lower Shuswap Stewardship Society – Water quality monitoring on the Lower Shuswap from Mabel Lake to Mara Lake. Riparian restoration project on Blurton creek.
- Ministry for Environment water quality monitoring on Sugar and Mabel Lakes
- RDNO tests raw water for a limited suite of parameters at the water treatment facilities at both Grindrod and Mabel Lake.

- City of Enderby monitors Shuswap River water at the water treatment plant intake and they also monitor effluent quality.
- River Watch Program that spans the entire river from the Lower Shuswap to Sugar Lake. This initiative falls within the Safe Communities Program with the local RCMP. This program works on the basis that when citizens see a reckless boater they can copy down the vessels registration number and report the incident to the RCMP who will follow up on the complaint.
- Okanagan Conservation Collaboration Partnership – Mid Shuswap Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory – Sugar Lake to Wilsey Dam
- Modified sensitive habitat inventory and mapping has been completed on the Lower Shuswap and foreshore inventory and mapping has been carried out on Mabel Lake.
- River Ambassadors Program is run by the Enderby and District Chamber of Commerce on the Lower Shuswap River which entails educating recreational users on how to be respectful within the waterways.
- Environmental Farm Plans <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/EnviroFarmPlanning/index.htm>
- Whitevalley Community Resource Centre has undertaken a number of projects on tributaries of the Shuswap River as listed below.

Ireland Side Channel	1999
Ireland Side Channel 2	2000
Smolt Pond	2001
Ireland Channel Planting	2002
Procter Channel	2002
Huwer Groundwater Channel Feasibility Study	2004
Wilsey Dam Fishway Feasibility Study	2004
Creighton Creek Stream Flow Recovery	2004
Creighton Creek Stream Flow Recovery 2	2005
Huwer Groundwater Complex	2005
Smolt Count	2005
Middle Shuswap SHIM and Preliminary SEI	2006
Bessette/Shuswap Riparian Planting & Protection	2006
Huwer Bank Stabilization	2006
Ruechel Weir	2007
Creighton Creek Pool Creation	2009
Bessette Creek Pool Creation, Phase 1	2010
Bessette Creek Pool Creation, Phase 2	2011
Bessette Creek Pool Creation, Phase 3	2012

- Salmon Safe
- Wilsey Dam Fish Passage Committee
- Coho Enhancement Projects on the Lower Shuswap River – Forest Renewal BC program
- Shuswap River Water Use Plan - BC Hydro (2005)
- Water Survey of Canada sites - www.wateroffice.ec.gc.ca
- Shuswap River Salmon Hatchery

- School District 83 riparian planting program – collaborative project with SD 83, Kingfisher Interpretive Centre, DFO – collection and planting of trees/shrubs for riparian planting projects on private land. Funded through RBC Blue Water Project.