



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 April 13, 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 second meeting of the Recreation Working Group. A round table introduction followed.

PART 4 – ADOPTION OF MINUTES

There were a few edits that have been made to the minutes of the March 9 2012 meeting. They included;

- Changes to 6.5 to reflect concerns regarding impacts of boats on the environment and the land base

- Changes to 6.6
 - Access throughout the watershed, enforcement on the river, zero from Mara to Mabel *in 2011* as opposed to *this year*.
 - Motorised vehicles in the watershed – establish *trials* for ATVs changed to *trails*.
- Some additional items were added to the list of existing initiatives within the watershed and the minutes of the March 9, 2012 meeting have been updated to reflect this. The updated list is also replicated at the end of these minutes.

PART 5 – BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

PART 6 – NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 General Review of other Watershed Plan examples

Laura provided a brief overview of other watershed plan examples:

- **Kiskatinaw River Watershed Management plan** is very much focused on Drinking Water Quality as the river is the sole source of community water for the City of Dawson Creek. The plan revolves around how to best manage activities within the watershed to ensure water quality is not compromised.
 - Watershed activities that were focused on include:
 - Land ownership
 - Timber harvesting
 - Crop production
 - Cattle grazing
 - Oil and gas
 - Recreation
 - The plan has some good examples of tables which break out the specific issues, responsible agency, policies, and actions.
 - Section 4.3 Action and Implementation Plan outlines the action/goal statements, identifies the objective and strategies and presents tasks that need to be undertaken.
- **Nicola Water Use Management Plan**
 - **Section 6** outlines a total of 37 policies which fall into five categories:
 - Water quantity
 - Water quality
 - Environment
 - Learning
 - Management

Look here to find a number of good examples of specific strategies and actions.

- **Coquitlam River Watershed Roundtable**

- Information on this site is focused on the process. It outlines the Vision, Values and Mission of the group. Under Library (Reports and Documents) Click on the Phase III- Governance Strategy and Development document for a full review of where they are at within the process.
- To date they have established the following Vision “A healthy watershed supported and enjoyed by the community in a manner that respects our common values through:
 - Partnerships and Collaboration;
 - Education, Stewardship, and monitoring;
 - Conservation and green economics; and
 - Responsible decision-making.

In perpetuity.”

- Their values for the watershed were developed in Phases II (Community Engagement and Visioning) and include:
 - Spiritual qualities;
 - Ecosystem integrity;
 - Natural beauty;
 - Native bio-diversity;
 - Natural resources;
 - Public access;
 - Home/Heritage/Culture;
 - Responsibility to protect;
 - Recreation;
 - Protected areas; and
 - Sustainability.

- **Shuswap Lakes Integrated Planning Process**

- Provides a number of good overarching goal examples. Some examples include: “development that respects the environment, as well as economic and social interests”; “water quality that supports public and environmental health”; and “Desirable recreational experiences that are safe and sustainable”.
- The remainder of the document outlines specific strategies and actions.

- **Nisqually Watershed Stewardship Plan**

- Long Range Plan with a Vision looking towards 2055.
- It outlines goals for 2030 and works back with objectives and actions that are to be achieved by 2020, 2015 & 2010.

- **Fraser Basin Council Rethinking Our Waterways**

- **Section 4** “Who Does What in Water?” provides a good background and breakdown on the different areas of jurisdiction and which ministries and levels of government are responsible for what.

6.2 Review of Current Initiatives underway within the Watershed

Anna provided an up-date on the current initiatives underway within the watershed which are listed at the end of these minutes.

6.2.1 Photos of the Watershed

Jean shared some photos of the proliferation of moorage buoys on Mabel Lake near the mouth of the Shuswap River. The concerns associated with the buoys include congestion in a high traffic area, crowding of swimming areas; shortage of moorage, and impacts of boat traffic on the natural environment. The lake has high fish values in this area, there are mussel beds and it is shallow and sandy. When boats move through they disturb the sand and sediments.

Rick shared a series of photos predominantly from the water of the Shuswap River. The photos included images of shoreline modification, extensive spring flooding, changing nature of the river above and below the Islands, bank erosion. Comments made regarding the importance of the Shuswap River as a Salmon fishery, 2.6 million sockeye in 2010. However over 700 000 sockeye died before they spawned due to stresses.

6.3 Discussion of Phase I Issue Identification

General Discussion Points

- Nisqually Watershed Plan seems to be most similar to ours.
- Discussion regarding DFO jet boats on the river (hypocritical in their actions), complaints every year. Use the Technical Advisory Committee to address this issue and the SRWSP planning process.
- DFO and Kingfisher Interpretive centre use boats to herd fish into nets.
- Discussion of differences between lakes and rivers in terms of ability to “absorb” wave action (some natural wave action on lakes) and noise.
- Discussion of no motorized boats at all
 - The question was raised as to whether or not there is a river within BC that prohibits motorized boats.
 - Suggestion was made to prohibit motorized boats during spawning season.
 - Found that signs “stay right” in critical spawning habitat areas are not always adhered to (some boaters don’t care)
- Noted that the Ministry of Environment drafted its own legislation for boating restrictions on the Columbia River but it did not hold up in court as it is Transport Canada who has jurisdiction.
 - It was pointed out that Transport Canada who has the legislative ability for boating restrictions is generally focused on safety and not necessarily the environment.
- Noted that if looking at speed restrictions on the river, current already moving at up to 15 km/hr, doesn’t matter how slow a boat is moving it is going to create a wake.

- Comment that if the forestry industry caused as much sedimentation as boats do there would be significant repercussions.
- Need for additional education on the River Watch Program
 - Greater awareness
 - Up-date the communities on the program.
 - Noted that 90% of what you would like to report is currently legal.
- We need to recognize that everyone is at a different level of understanding within the watershed (as to how their actions impact the environment).
- Still concern regarding the need for boaters to be represented on the working group. Dale did contact a neighbour who is a boater but they were not interested. Also contacted one of the retailers, but they indicated they were too busy.
- Jan also contacted a possible boating representative who wants to speak with staff first.
- It was also discussed that the SRWSP process is a public process and has been for its duration and that we shouldn't have to "hold people's hands" to get them there.
- Suggested that a communications plan be developed
 - Provide up-dates in the local papers
 - There is a need for more specific messaging on what the working groups are focusing on.
 - Could include concern that boating community not involved in process at this point.
 - Could identify working group members who are happy to receive input from wider community.
- Suggested that there be signage at the boat launch "no motorized boats, hand launch only".
 - This type of sign is in place at the Riverside Hall but someone keeps taking it down every year.
 - May be more effective to have educational signage at the boat launches.

Rick mentioned that he knows person who is in charge of Compliance and Enforcement for the region (Ministry Forests Lands and Natural Resources???) and they had already indicated that they would be happy to come and present to the group. Patrick Tobin and under the new Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations his staff are responsible for C&E under the Water Act, some environmental legislation, the Forest and Range Act and something else I can't remember. If we reach a point where it would be helpful to have someone answer questions about most, if not all of the relevant natural resource legislation, Patrick would be happy to come to one of our meetings and bring along someone from the Conservation Officer group, DFO and Chris Marrie from Transport Canada.

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Opportunities / Access

- Mara Lake boat launch needs repairs (not a suitable design)- current state means people are launching from the beach.

- Importance of watershed for connection to the natural world.
 - People need to be in touch with the resource to respect and protect it.
- There will always be two different kinds of users low impact (non motorized) vs. high impact (motorized vehicles).
- Watershed is a great resource for family oriented recreation.
 - The river provides a variety of opportunities for canoe and more experienced kayakers.
- Discussion of whether snowmobile club in Hunters Range should be a part of the process , as well as ATV clubs.
 - Noted that if clubs become educated on best practices they can be the eyes and ears as to what is going on within the watershed. As well as educate and spread the word on what are acceptable uses.
- Opportunity to increase the trail network for non-motorized users (some existing trails cross the creeks) these trails could be expanded upon and potentially increase users respect / appreciation for the watershed. (Shuswap Trail Alliance is a great resource). Isobelle Falls / Falls Ck was mentioned as a potential site for a new trail.
- Encourage a different type of recreation- non-motorized sport.
 - Mountain Biking
 - Snow shoeing (currently experiencing a revival)
 - Trail hiking in the fall with cleats
 - Not only is non-motorized sport good for your health but is also has less of an impact on the environment.
- Encourage appropriate use of trails (potentially eliminate motorized users).
 - Trail management
 - Signage “stay on the trail” “this is what lives here”; “this is why you should stay on the trail” or “these are the impacts of walking outside of the trail” eg. Arizona, if you go off the trail this is what you are damaging (images of species and their habitat).
- Larch hills experienced damage (mud boggers).
 - Some work has been carried out to limit their impacts (gates, fences)
- Concern with trapping up in hills (not marked and dogs have been caught up in these traps and one died).
- Encourage sustainable recreational practices
 - could become a model for sustainable recreation / and a teaching tool
 - Need to look at the carbon footprint of activities
 - Noise
 - Erosion
 - We need to think long term “the river is the ecological heart of the watershed”
- Should promote / glamorize / facilitate non motorized activities
 - Bird watching (eg comox bird watching platforms)
 - Kingfisher Interpretive Centre inventories / birding circle
 - Stand Up Paddle Boarding
 - Kayak / canoe race events
 - Orienteering

- Adventure racing
- No wake events
 - Demos in Enderby
 - e.g. Stand Up Paddle Board demo at Mara Beach
- Invest in hand launch sites make them user friendly
- Produce a good map that has insets for recreational uses and outlines what activities or uses are encouraged in specific areas
- eg. Promotional information from Salmon Arm
- Allan Brooks Nature Centre has birding information
- Promote festivals / concerts around unique aspects & species within the watershed
 - Painted turtles
 - Birds
 - Salmon
 - Frogs
- Snowmobiles
 - Conflict between users (back country skiers)
 - Impacts on wildlife e.g caribou
 - Noise
 - Carbon footprint
 - Users littering
 - Larch Hills occasional conflicts but generally accepted as off limits to snowmobiles
 - Need areas zoned for non motorized winter use too (no snowmobiles- identify sites for non-motorized areas). The LRMP may have identified non-motorized areas.

PART 7 – WORKING GROUP MATTERS

7.1 Membership/Appointments

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 May 11, 2012 9:00am to 12:00pm at the RDNO offices.

7.4 Working Group “Homework”

- Think about what themes or areas you want addressed in the goal statements.
- Bring any additional photo's to the next meeting.

PART 8 – ADJOURNMENT

Existing initiatives and programs in the Watershed (updated list)

- 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

- 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.