



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN

NOTES of a meeting of the Shuswap River Watershed Sustainability Plan LAND USE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WORKING GROUP held in the Board Room at the Regional District Office on May 1, 2012, 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

Members: Aline Piche
 Bob Whitley
 Dale Kerr
 Doug Clark
 Erika Davidson
~~Jim Davidson~~
~~Giles Shearing~~
~~Herman Gerrits~~
 Neil Brooks
 Ralph van Daltsen
 Susan Everatt
 Tom Minor

Observer: Jackie Pearase

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.

A round table of introductions ensued.

PART 4 – ADOPTION OF MINUTES

No concerns were raised with the April 3rd, 2012 meeting minutes. The minutes were adopted as presented and will be posted on the RDNO SRWSP website.

PART 5 – BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

PART 6 – NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 Review of the SRWSP Goal Formulation Document & 6.2 Development of Land Use and Natural Environment Goals, Objectives & Strategies

- It was noted that within the Water Quality Section - impacts from agriculture, that cattle grazing in range / crown lands was missing.

Water Quality – Objectives & Strategies

- -Need to ensure that existing rules & regulations are being followed & enforced.
 - There needs to be a better partnership/relationship between rule makers and enforcers.
 - The SRWSP should speak to the need for various agencies to commit to coordination & collaboration on existing regulations.
 - They should share information eg. Ministry of Forests water quality program is not coordinated with Ministry of Environment water quality program.
 - Look to the Shuswap Lakes Integrated Planning Process to maximize what is in existence.
- Noted that Water Quality testing is needed between Wilsey Dam and Mabel Lake
- Should also be looking at groundwater contamination by faulty septic systems
- Carry out a groundwater inventory and identify springs / spring fed areas and aquifers (these springs are important habitat for Coho and other fish).

Riparian Areas

- Prioritize high value/risk sites- Lower Shuswap inventory and mapping.
- Look at the Mid Shuswap SEI work to see if that can lend to some priority sites for the Mid Shu.

Objective- Preserve & protect riparian areas of high value and restore disturbed areas.

- Issue of “commercial” fishing guides – no tenure but take “friends” fishing. Not popular.
 - Need to determine if any current commercial activities (fishing, water skiing etc) have tenure / business licences.
- The wakes of boats in high water disturb birds too, especially when nesting or when there are young.
 - eg. Maligne River in Alberta prohibits boating during times of nesting.
- Noted that geese can have an impact on water quality (this is covered off in the previous meeting notes with the impact of dogs and wildlife with regard to faecal matter).
- Wildlife Issues?
 - Wildlife management has changed over the years (it’s not done much anymore).

- Beaver's are a real problem they cause an amazing amount of damage to the riparian area (which impacts water quality) but they also do good in that they contribute large woody debris.
- Beaver's are a problem for landowners; those working on the river & side channels see numerous dams which have the potential to cause erosion if the dams burst.
- Solutions: Include planting conifers not deciduous trees (conifers are not a food source for beavers). If deciduous are planted they could be wrapped with chicken wire. When it comes to riparian restoration we should be planting native species that beaver's don't eat.
 - When it comes to removing dams two permits are required except if its an emergency

Riparian Protection

- Environmental Farm plans do have funding available
- Fisheries and Oceans looking for possible restoration sites
- Can access both DFO & Environmental Farm Plan dollars; works can almost be completely covered by these programs.
 - Farm Plan pays labour
 - DFO often pays for materials
- People can go to Front Counter BC to find out what they are able to do on their properties when it comes to works within riparian areas.
- One of the biggest barriers of people trying to rectify or change their practices is the fear that agencies will step straight to enforcement (what will happen then).
 - There needs to be good working relationships. Encourage existing landowners and educate new landowners of Best Management Practices.
- Feedback to the Technical Advisory Committee that they should change their strategies- work with landowners to resolve problems; not just jump straight to enforcement.

Objective Areas

It was identified that there are five landuses that impact water quality and that objectives should be formulated around these categories:

Agriculture- Through education and engagement minimize the impacts / effects of agriculture on the watershed.

Forestry

Residential Development

Recreation

Industrial Activities

Agriculture Discussion:

- Encourage farmers to educate other farmers
- Use existing programs
- Promote Best Management Practices
- Develop a strategy regarding communication with realtors dealing with rural properties (there are specific realtors that focus on large acreages).
 - Livestock & waterways
 - Water licenses
 - Riparian management
 - Living by Water brochure
 - Some kind of information package for new landowners “Thinking of buying a rural property”.
 - This will educate new buyers but what about existing owners??
- Issues of leased land (no interest from land owner to protect & no interest from leasee)

Range Management

- Need to address impacts from cattle in alpine & headwater areas. Range management is an issue.
- Cattle are not looked after properly / not managed
- Need to look at what appropriate levels of grazing are / number of livestock (is it currently too high?) (look at setting limits within the watershed, specific to our region)
 - This is often determined by the condition of cattle when they return; are they healthy / is there sufficient grazing opportunities / feed? (some what self regulated; ranchers don't want unhealthy cows).
 - eg. of better management is off-watering & fencing of specific areas
 - noted that there seems to be better management of stock in the Thompson area.
 - Working group members felt that often the Ministry of Forests has opposing goals than the Ministry of Environment.
 - Need for more communication within the ministries
 - Need to communicate with range staff regarding options
 - Is funding available to remove corals etc.
- We don't realize the impacts the cattle could be having on the watershed.
 - Once tenure is given its hard to get it back.
- Action may be to contact the Cattleman's association and make them aware of the problems but also solutions (opportunities for funding etc).

6.3 Discussion on Reporting out to the Public re: Working Group Dialogue and Recommendations

- Potential to use Social Media
- Nice to have a comment board on the website
- The group was supportive of a Newspaper article detailing the Working Group topics and key discussions (we may possibly get feedback from user groups this way)

- Community workshops at later date.

6.4 Discussion on Proposed Field Trips

- Generally people preferred to have the field trips on Saturdays
- People liked the idea of two different field trips; one for the Lower Shuswap and one for the Middle Shuswap.
- Preference was for the Middle Shuswap field trip to occur mid June (most likely June 16th) and the Lower Shuswap field trip in early July (most likely July 7th)
 - Sites for the middle Shuswap included: Wilsey Dam, Fish hatchery, Community Forest, Riparian Restoration Site (only if water levels aren't too high) and Sugar Lake.
 - Site locations for the lower Shuswap included: a dairy farm, Kingfisher Interpretive Centre, a wood lot, Enderby effluent plant, plantings at Rosemond Lake, Vegetable Farm (Mara).

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 June 5th, 2012, 4:00 – 7:00 pm at the RDNO offices.

7.4 Community Events

Kingfisher Interpretive Centre – Month of May on weekdays, open for public to observe programs with school groups.

Cherryville Days and 150th celebration of Monashee Park, June 2nd, 2012

No Wake Flotilla (Lower Shuswap)– July 29th, 2012

Heritage Tea & Duck Race (Mara) 12:00 – 4:00 pm July 22nd, 2012

PART 8 - ADJOURNMENT