

**MINUTES CLRSS Meeting, Monday, March 04, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.  
Via Zoom thanks to the Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable**

**Chair:** President, Jim Deck

**Attendance:**

**CLRSS Board Members:** Jean Atkinson, Judy Brayden, Rosemary Danaher, Jim Deck, Dave DePape, Diana Gunderson, Beverley Nimmo, Don Prescott and Maureen Qusted

**Members:** Dianne Flood, Bee Greenway, Joe Saysell, Jay White

**Guests:** CWB Representative, Jill Thompson

**Absent with Regrets:** ToLC Councillor, Kristine Sandhu, CVRD Area F Director, Ian Morrison, Ts'uubaa-asatx Executive Director, Robert Martin, CLRSS Directors, Cam McCauley, Rodger Hunter and member, Jacqueline Sherk

**PREAMBLE**

a. **Acknowledgement:** We acknowledge that this virtual meeting takes place on the unceded territories of the Quw'utsun, Pauquachin, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Malahat, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, Lyackson, Ditidaht, and Pacheedaht Peoples, who have stewarded this land for time immemorial. We hope our work here today will make a positive contribution to our shared future in the Cowichan Valley.

**b. Fourfold Way:**

- Respect each other by having just one speaker at a time.
- Expect people to speak from the heart with passion.
- Expect people to show up to solve problems.
- Expect people to speak without blame.

c. CLRSS member, Dianne Flood, was introduced to the assembled. Later in the meeting, Jay White, was also introduced to the assembled.

d. Volunteer Hours were recorded with thanks.

**ITEMS**

1. The agenda was accepted as amended: Maureen Qusted/Don Prescott CARRIED

2. The minutes of February 05, 2024, were accepted as distributed: Maureen Qusted/Don Prescott CARRIED

3. The Treasurer's Report was accepted as presented after a brief comment from the Treasurer about the amount of cash in hand and the current balance in the Scholarship line: Beverley Nimmo/Maureen Qusted CARRIED

4. There was no President's Report

**5. Guest Remarks:**

a. Cowichan Watershed Board Representative, Jill Thompson reported that:

- i)** BC Provincial Budget 2024 included \$14Mil for the weir! Way to go everyone, and especially CLRSS letter writers and long-time relentless advocates. Weir Getting Closer! Details  
here: <https://cowichanwatershedboard.ca/content/joint-news-release-cowichan-weir-replacement-project-receives-14-million-from-province-of-bc/>
- ii)** Following the budget announcement, Deputy Minister (WLRS) Lori Halls met with the partners on Friday: CWB takeaway is that the Province is committed to move quite quickly towards resolving the ownership and licensing and liability, and providing the funding to Cowichan Tribes to match their Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Funds. There is movement at last on finding ways to innovate and 'think outside the box' on those 'sticky' issues that have been a barrier.
- iii.)** CWB staff informed the weir partners (Cowichan Tribes, CVRD, Catalyst) at a meeting this morning that CLRSS intends to host a watershed celebration in July that is weir focussed. There was some discussion about potentially doing a Cowichan Tribes Council 'watershed tour' that day, or another day, as many Cowichan Tribes councillors will be new after this Thursday, based on who is running. Good reception from those in attendance!
- iv)** CWB will host the first Fish Kill workshop next week among subject matter experts (including CLRSS members Dave DePape and Joe Saysell). The first workshop is about getting a monitoring system organized before this summer, so we have advanced warning of potential issues. 2nd workshop will focus on the response plan to avoid another fish kill. We are working on a Speaker Night date where more people can be involved in hearing what is being considered, with Q&A and input to the process.
- v)** Speaker Night at VIU Cowichan Monday March 18th, 7-8:30pm - Becoming a Friend of the Watershed: the value that every single person has!  
Hosted by Tim Kulchyski (Cowichan Tribes Biologist). Featuring slides and stories with Barry Hetschko (Photographer/Naturalist/Volunteer).
- vi)** Xwulqw'selu Watershed Planning progress. See Newsletter Vol. 2  
here. <https://www.koksilahwater.ca/resources> CWB is assisting the project with newsletters, a website revamp, and advising. We are looking forward to seeing the Quw'utsun community guidance table form, in parallel with the Collaborative Community Advisory Table.
- vii)** POLIS is excited to be co-hosting a screening of the film "Changing Course: A River's Journey of Reconnection" on the evening of March 21, 2024, UVic campus. After the film, interview/talk-show style conversation with three guests: Mark Thomas (Councillor, Shuswap Band and he's involved with the Columbia River Salmon Reintroduction Initiative), Larry George (Director Land & Governance, Cowichan Tribes), and Katrina Adams (Senior Aquatic Ecologist, Peninsula Streams Society).

## 6. Business Arising

- a. Play wave recommendation: The Executive apologized for the confusion and Secretary, Maureen Quested, agreed to circulate an email outlining two possible wordings, the outcome of which was preferred will be reported back at the next CLRSS Board meeting.

New Membership Forms: Maureen Quested reviewed the revised membership form and asked that each Board member and attendee complete their renewal process and the membership volunteer form asap, returning it to her; and that there is a generous, prize draw of a T shirt, ball cap, a copy of *Witnessing the Water*, available to those non Board members who resubscribe and complete their volunteer forms by April 26<sup>th</sup>.

7. **BCCF Workshop on UV Filters report:** Jean Atkinson submitted a written report, and it was received with thanks. All the attendees felt that the experience was very worthwhile and that they learned a great deal.

## 8. New Business

- a. LCSS – Health Fair April 4: Diana Gunderson reported that she and Jean Atkinson would once again attend this very worthwhile event; she asked that if anyone else wished to attend, they were to contact her.
- b. CLRSS Historic Background on the issue of political neutrality on community issues - Judy Brayden reviewed the several times in our history that CLRSS has made a conscious decision to remain neutral on a community issue. The exception was in two cases: the raising of the water levels in the lake via a weir, and the issue of the artificial structure (play wave) in the river. She reiterated that in every occasion, the Board looked at issues individually, appraising each as a separate issue.
- c. Saywell Park Garden & Riparian – Jean Atkinson has submitted a comprehensive report, outlining the upcoming Work Parties: March 11 and March 22 (10:00 – 2:00) and the maintenance goals for the spring.

**It was moved by Maureen Quested and seconded by Dave DePape that up to \$300 be allocated for the purchase of gloves and tools, including eye protection, for future work in the garden being undertaken with the students from LCS.**

**CARRIED**

It was noted that the school would oversee the return of any equipment to Diana Gunderson.

- d. Witnessing the Water Phase Two – committee call out: Judy Brayden emphasized that the Second Phase Team was not needed until we reach our 75% sales goal but that a Marketing Committee meeting would be convened shortly to discuss upcoming sales opportunities. She reminded us that our goal was to sell all the books in a two-year window

and that one year since the launch is not until June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. At this time, 65% of books have been sold, but she would like to engage two more salespeople as soon as possible.

- e. Letter to Minister of Forests: Jim Deck agreed to send the letter template to members, with a request that members write to the Minister Ralston about the urgent need to close the Cowichan Quw'utsun Sta'lo' to angling between Lake Cowichan weir and 70.2 Mile Trestle, from December 1 to April 1 each year.
- f. Celebrating Water Festival – Maureen Quested reported that a very successful meeting was convened on February 24<sup>th</sup>. The next organizational meeting is on March 09. A potential conflict with the Islands Folk Festival, a 3 day event at Providence Farm, might impact attendance so the final date is yet to be determined.

**g.** Project 84,000: Judy Brayden outlined the goals of the project:

- To create a visual image representing the magnitude of the ecological loss incurred in this one, climate-related, ecological disaster,
- To acknowledge that this disaster that was so very *close to home* will have contributed to unspoken environmental grief in our community,
- To raise awareness of the factors that contribute to this kind of ecological disaster,
- To encourage dialogue about the importance of individual or collective, positive stewardship actions.

She addressed concerns about whether this project was within our purview. While the project was supported, a larger discussion about the emergent issues of invasive species reduction and prevention were raised as a priority for future work. The important need for a project “lead” on such a project was discussed. Dave DePape has since suggested that the Board investigate this link: [https://www.linkedin.com/posts/trout-unlimited-canada\\_invsspwk-conservation-tucanada-activity-7169753704932237312-wi8l?utm\\_source=share&utm\\_medium=member\\_android](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/trout-unlimited-canada_invsspwk-conservation-tucanada-activity-7169753704932237312-wi8l?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android)

He will be bringing forth some information about possible programs to the Executive Committee in the near future.

**It was moved by Judy Brayden and seconded by Maureen Quested that CLRSS support the project as outlined in the submission. CARRIED with one dissenting vote.**

- h. Social – April Brunch: Maureen Quested suggested that instead of a July Bar-b-que social this year that we have a Spring Brunch at her home. She very generously offered to provide all of the food. Judy is reminded that she has been storing some wine for CLRSS and that could be provided as well. Maureen will advise us of the date as she is able.
- i. Other: Joe Saysell shared an update on Exeter Creek (as written up in the latest newsletter). Further work by the DFO has been approved, allowing more gravel to be removed from the creek mouth. He also shared a picture of the water tower that had stood near the creek for years. It supplied the railroad with all the water for the steam engines that left the lake loaded with logs. Judy agreed to include this in the next newsletter.