

Minutes for CLRSS Board Meeting

Date: Thursday, March 6, 2025

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: By Zoom



Land Acknowledgement: We acknowledge that this meeting takes place on the unceded territories of the Quw'utsun

((Cow-ut-zun), Pauquachin (Pak-quw-chin), Ts'uubaa-asatx (Tsoo-bah-seht), Malahat (Malah-hat), Halalt (Ha-lalt), Penelakut (Pen-EL-ah-kut), Stz'uminus (Stuh-mee-nus), Lyackson (Lay-ik-sen), Dit idahat (Dee-tee-dat) and Pacheedaht (Pah-chee- dat) 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.

Meeting Protocol: 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.

Note: CLRSS Board Meetings are open to the membership and guests, who are encouraged to participate in the business of the meeting. However, only Board members may move, second or vote on motions. All formal business of the Board is to be authorized or reflected in a formal motion.

Volunteer hours reported: 267 Hours

Meeting Chair: President: Judy Brayden

Recording Secretary: Dianne Flood

Board Members present: Jean Atkinson, Diana Gunderson, Rodger Hunter, Cam MacCauley, Maureen Quested, Jacqueline Sterk, Christoph Steeger

Board Members sending regrets: Dave DePape, Jay White

CLRSS members in attendance: Jim Deck

Interested guests in attendance: Genevieve Singleton, Jill Thompson, Robert Martin

Other regrets: Ian Morrison

Minutes

1.) Adoption of the meeting agenda, as amended to add 4(d) as set out below

Moved: Dianne Flood

Seconded: Cam MacCauley

Carried

2.) Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting

Moved: Dianne Flood

Seconded: Christoph Steeger

Carried

3.) Executive Privilege – Judy Brayden is still waiting for input from some Board members. This item will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

4.) Presentations from invited guests:

- a. Ian Morrison, CVRD Area F Director, regrets sent
- b. Kristine Sandhu, Councillor Town of Lake Cowichan, did not attend. – Judy will follow up with her about the sewage treatment plant upgrades and Jay White's information on alternative measures that he shared with Public Works.
- c. Cowichan Watershed Board: CWB staff, Jill Thompson advised that the CWB is looking at developing a whole watershed plan and intends to work with all their partners on that. The initiative will be a multi-year project, building on the earlier basin plan (which do not look at the whole of the watershed), to go beyond a state of the watershed and identify targets and what needs to be done to ensure watershed health.
Jill also reported that cameras are now in place, recording the lake water levels on a daily basis at three different locations on the lake. Jill expressed thanks to Jean Atkinson and Maureen Quested for their support on this. Also, the door-to-door conversations about weir construction are still on hold until more information is confirmed. Robert Martin noted he is working on a print article for the weir partners on the importance of the weir project.
- d. CSRT: Genevieve Singleton reported that Little Beach is becoming a regional park for the CVRD. There may be some infrastructure development for access and for tubers, with washrooms and parking, and to secure the riverbank. She expressed concerns about freshwater mussels, the elk crossing, rainbow and trout spawning, and two coldwater refugia in the immediate area. However, she noted some very good biologists are being involved and the CVRD has been good partners and construction is still very preliminary, so she suggests not to get too worried and encourages a soft approach as the best approach. Judy noted the CLRSS has advocated for measures to address the issues raised caused by tubers. Christoph Steeger volunteered to be the point person on this for the CLRSS.

Christoph also reported about the federal program for local governments to do a natural asset inventory and disclosure, with some BC local governments involved but that the CVRD is not (yet).

Sa-seen-os Point – Genevieve is concerned whether the riparian contraventions in that area have been remedied as promised, but to confirm that needs to be determined from the water. Jean Atkinson and Genevieve will follow up on this when weather permits.

Annual Signature Event Cycle – Genevieve reported that the Round Table is looking at holding an annual event to celebrate River Days (instead of the current biennial cycle). This may work better for the Cowichan Tribes in terms of permissions etc.

5.) Acceptance of the Treasurer’s Report (See attached)

Moved: Maureen Quested

Seconded: Cam MacCauley

Carried

6.) Project/Committee Reports

- a. Executive Committee February 24 meeting– Judy Brayden (See attached minutes)
- b. Invasive Species Committee – Cam McCauley reported the committee has not met since the last Board meeting. On Yellow Flag Iris Jacqueline Sterk reported that mats are needed to smother the plants, which must be immersed in the water. She will take on doing some research on Yellow Flag Iris generally for the newsletter and the Valley Voice, and also suggested writing to the local nurseries about the problem. Judy suggested that the costs of suppression be included in the article and she and Jacqueline will work on this together.
- c. Water Sampling - Cam McCauley reported that the water sampling is completed but the work on testing for tire toxins (6PPD-quinone) in streams is on-going. This testing takes place prior to big rains and then during and after the rains. More on this testing will be discussed as part of the strategic plan discussions.
- d. Terrestrial (Bat) Project – Christoph Steeger had nothing new to report but advised the Species At Risk has applied for funding for sampling of endangered species. Also, to go onto some of the indigenous lands where these species may be located, will need permission from those owners.
- e. Gerald Thom Memorial Garden – Jacqueline Sterk reported that some pruning would be done when the weather improves.
- f. Bursary/Award Program – Maureen Quested reported that she, Dianna Gunderson and Jean Atkinson had met with Lake Cowichan School and they may be tweaking some of the criteria and goals for the scholarship, but not much from last year. They also talked about a new award that would not be awarded as a scholarship but would be awarded instead at grad night for students that involve themselves in environmental concerns in the community but who may not be going on to post- secondary school. Jean explained that it would be different from a scholarship in that it would not be applied for but awarded on recognition by the teachers, with a plaque to be kept at the school. Cam asked if this might involve younger students (grade 9 on), noting that this may be

a way to keep more youth involved in the environment. Maureen is going to come back to the April meeting with a more fully developed proposal.

- g. Witnessing the Water – Judy Brayden reported that the marketing team will be meeting March 7 to brainstorm how it will take the WTW concept into another venture, for the strategic plan. Judy invited all to attend the meeting.

7.) Business Arising or Referred from Previous Meetings

- a. Follow up on Strategic Planning Session August 23, 2024 – Judy Brayden –deferred to the April Board meeting
- b. CLRSS Communication plan - deferred to April Board meeting as part of the Strategic Plan.
- c. Insurance coverage: Maureen Quested requested leads to keep better records of who is participating. Forms are being developed by Maureen for this purpose and will be brought forward at the May Board meeting.
- d. Projector and screen – Cam MacCauley is picking that up from Jay
- e. Cloud storage of CLRSS documents – Dianne Flood reported that is underway.
- f. Chamber of Commerce AGM - Judy Brayden was not able to attend as it is being held tonight.
- g. 2025 AGM Planning – Judy Brayden/Dianne Flood. The Curling Lounge is booked for **Sunday May 25 between 12 and 4:00 p.m.** Judy has reached out to Kelly Loch about being the guest speaker. Judy noted Bee Greenaway was to be awarded an Honorary Lifetime membership last year but it was not able to be presented so it will be presented at the 2025 AGM. Maureen agreed to prepare comments for that.
- h. Bald Mountain Park additional land acquisition – Judy Brayden reported these lands are water access only. Judy and others noted that parklands are more for people’s recreational use and not for wildlife preservation or ecological preserves. Jean noted that an initial CLRSS position was that it is possible for **both** recreational activities and preservation of the lakeshore.
- i. BlueCon Wastewater Treatment – Jay White/Judy Brayden will follow up with a call to Kristine, as noted above. Jean Atkinson queried about an Okanagan Falls water treatment approach and its potential applicability to Lake Cowichan, and if it is the same as the BlueCon approach.

8.) New Business

- a. World Water Day March 22 – Walk the Weir: (see attached one-pager) Dianne Flood reviewed the one-pager and the plans for the day including the Walk the Weir Tours and thanked the Board members who are committed to participating. Jean inquired if it would be ok/appropriate for the Riparian group to cut blackberries (only using loppers and snips) along the riparian area that day, and it was agreed that would be a good idea and may prompt some good conversations. All Board and CLRSS members to participate on the day of the event.
Moved: Dianne Flood: That the Board approve expenditures of up to \$175.00 in cash or “swag” to support this event

Seconded: Maureen Quested
Carried

- b. The Nitty Gritty Climate Conference Planning Group: (see attached one pager) Cam assumed the chair and Judy reported that she had already attended a meeting of like-minded groups to plan a similar conference and reported on the discussions as per the one pager.

Moved: Judy Brayden: That the Board approve the CLRSS, represented by Judy Brayden, to participate in the Nitty Gritty Climate Conference Planning Group

Seconded: Christoph Steeger
Carried

c. Signature Event: Judy Brayden/Maureen Quested (see attached one pager) Given Genevieve’s report about a proposed annual CSRT and Cowichan Tribes event, this proposal for a bi-annual CLRSS event is being withdrawn. Maureen then raised the possibility of a town clean up as an event, with the goal of keeping debris and litter out of the river, given people had responded well to the river clean up. Jill noted World Clean-up Day is September 20, with Rivers Day September 28, 2025. Some concerns were raised about health and safety of a clean up event, especially for any highway clean up. Rodger suggested perhaps doing dedicated riparian area clean up. Judy suggested doing a creekside clean up where the CLRSS signs are posted. Dianne suggested including re-painting the fish signs at town drains, which used to be done by the school. All present were in favour of the event. being held The concept will go back to the Executive for further consideration.

d. Firesmart Planning at Friendship Forest (see attached one pager) Judy introduced this item and Maureen is prepared to discuss with the Firesmart folks and see what might be requested from the CLRSS participation. Others raised questions about what Firesmart is about and thought further information would be helpful.

9.) Announcements

- a. Newsletter deadline to Judy Brayden, Saturday, March 15, 2025. Please send Judy any articles you may wish to have included.

10.) Adjournment at 8:45 p.m.

Moved: Dianne Flood

**NEXT BOARD MEETING:
THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025, 6:30 PM,
IN PERSON AT THE COUNTRY GROCER BOARDROOM**