

CLRSS Board Meeting Minutes (draft until approved)

Date: Thursday, November 7, 2024

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, 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.

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.

The volunteer hours collected from all those members in attendance were 160. Any members who were not present are asked to send their volunteer hours to the Board Secretary.

Meeting Chair: President, Judy Brayden

Recording Secretary: Dianne Flood

Present: Dave DePape, Christoph Steeger, Jean Atkinson, Jaqueline Sherk, Jim Deck, Tom Rutherford, Ian Morrison,

Regrets: Di Gundersun, Cam McCauley, Maureen Quested, Jay White, Kristine Sandhu,

1.) Adoption of the meeting agenda as amended to add under new business – 7(d) Chamber of Commerce dinner

Moved: Dianne Flood

Seconded: Christoph Steeger

Carried.

2.) Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting

Moved: Dianne Flood

Seconded: Dave DePape
Carried.

3.) Presentations from Invited guests:

Ian Morrison: Ian advised he did not have much watershed related news to report, but of note, new single family dwellings starts are down so there may be less impact on/disturbance of riparian areas. Also the annual election for the CVRD Board Chair and Vice Chair will be on November 13. The current Acting Chair from Mill Bay may be running and others may also; Ian is not. With a new Chair and Vice Chair that may mean some changes as the Chair and Vice may change appointments to committees, including to the Watershed Board.

Christoph Steeger asked about the CVRD's support to external agencies' grant funding requests, having been advised that was not possible when he inquired for the Bat Habitat initiative. Ian said that there may in fact be opportunities for support and encouraged Christoph to follow that up further.

Judy Brayden asked about the issues around the local fundraising requirements for Decibel Coalition enforcement which is a federal law and that she is looking for the CVRD to support a response to that requirement. Ian invited Judy to reach out to him for further discussion

Tom Rutherford: Tom expressed his pleasure at attending the meeting and highlighted the Watershed Board's speakers series – the next one is on the Estuary, partnering with the local groups in that area. The last speakers series presentation was about the fish die off in 2023, and Tom noted the Town of Lake Cowichan council were in attendance, which was good to see. Tom also advised that the water quality testing is proceeding,

Respecting the weir, Tom advised that:

- The technical working group is meeting every two weeks, with lots of members participating in that group.
- The Cowichan Tribes and the Province are holding bilateral meetings regarding ownership of and responsibility for the weir, where they are trying to forge a new model for the two governments to work together.
- The parties are also working on funding – one-time construction funding and compensation costs (if any) -and the on-going operational funding currently paid by Domtar (formerly Paper Excellence), which is facing an uncertain future. The construction costs have gone up substantially – the planned 40% contingency is not enough. The Deputy Minister's message at a September meeting is that the weir project "cannot fail", but we still have some work to do to resolve the shortfall.
- Licensing is an issue, with multiple licenses – Domtar (for the mill) and Cowichan Tribes – being highly unusual. Plus there are permitting requirements under both Federal and provincial environmental legislation. While the Provincial EA and Federal CEAA are not being triggered, there is still some work needed on permitting including Fisheries Act authorizations and addressing the lamprey as an endangered species, neither of which should be a significant hurdle.
- With respect to operational costs, a maintenance costing plan is being undertaken, with the cost of liability insurance being investigated through a broker that operates

with a broad range of First Nations including some who operate dams, so that the Province, which is being asked to contribute, will know what those costs will be.

- No new income sources have currently been identified from the operation of the new weir. The additional water storage is for the river and conservation purposes, not for any new or additional existing use. The mill does pay for its water use and it is Tom's understanding that the local governments do not pay a significant amount for effluent release into the river.
- Communications reinforcing with property owners and others the importance of this work is being undertaken, with a professional communications plan being developed.
- The current costs include a weir design set up to accommodate a cold water pipe, but not the pipe itself which will be a major infrastructure project itself; the walkway is being costed separately, so it can be assessed whether to include. Judy Brayden emphasized how the walkway is a very important element, with Tom acknowledged that the walkway may have some significant social currency, and also suggesting there might be a role for the local government to engage as a funding partner on the walkway.

Overall, the weir and the Cowichan watershed is going to be a great example of the Province and local entities working together to address climate change.

4.) Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report - deferred as Treasurer Maureen Quested is not available, possibly for over a longer term. Jim Deck is prepared to step up to help up with some of Maureen's commitments.

5.) Acceptance of Committee reports (see attached)

a. Executive Committee – Judy Brayden

Included:

- i. Gerald Thom Memorial Native Plant Garden- Judy reported a meeting on the October 29, 2024 considered the future maintenance of the Garden and the riparian area of Saywell Park. A new fern garden will be an important new aspect of the garden under the leadership of Lois Atchison and Jacqueline Sherk. (See attached)
- ii. Volunteer partnership opportunity with the CVRD - Maureen Quested had reported the Broom clearing and native planting in Honeymoon Bay on Sunday, October 27 was successful, especially given the poor weather.
- iii. Walk the Weir Tours – Dianne Flood reported that in conjunction with Di Gundersun and others, and with the support from Tom Rutherford and Brian Houle, spring tours will be arranged for local students and possibly other groups.
- iv. December Board social event (in lieu of a Board meeting) – Judy suggested the social event initially to be scheduled for Sunday December 8 may have to be postponed until January. Watch for an update from Judy.

b. Invasive Species Committee – Jay White – no report

c. Water Sampling: Dave DePape –This program requires testing be undertaken five weeks consecutively in the summer and in the fall following the start of the rain and it is

now at week three. This is very much a volunteer-driven effort, with Cam McCauley having stepped up and has taken on a lead on this.

6.) Business Arising or Referred from Previous Meetings

- a. Salmon Fry Rescue funds: Maureen Quested has completed a review of the source of these funds, how they were spent, what funds are still available and how they may be used. She determined that in October, 2015 Sidney Anglers donated \$2,000 to support fry monitoring and rescue programs, but that was not specific to salmon fry retrieval. That money went into general revenue, with some of it spent on nets, with the balance incorrectly then earmarked specifically for salmon rescue. Given that many of the CLRSS's activities, such as riparian rehabilitation and our general advocacy activities support the general purpose of the funding and no report is required.

The Executive recommended the Board approve that the funds no longer be specifically earmarked to salmon fry retrieval and be returned for general revenue purposes.

Moved by Dave DePape – That the designation of these funds specifically for salmon fry rescue be removed so that the funds may be used for the general activities of the CLRSS.

Seconded: Jacqueline Sherk

Carried.

- a. Insurance coverage: Maureen Quested to confirm that the insurance will cover all Society members when carrying out activities on behalf of the CLRSS - deferred.
- a. Strategic Planning Session August 23, 2024 – The Executive will be discussing next steps at a one-time special Executive Committee meeting, in December.
- b. Purchase of a Zoom subscription: On further investigation Cam MacCauley determined the best option would be to obtain our own Zoom account, which can then be available for committee chairs and others as may be required. Cam has purchased an account and it is now available for CLRSS use.

Moved by Christoph Steeger: That the Motion, passed on October 3, 2024: *“That instead of purchasing our own Zoom account at a cost of \$240 annually, we continue our arrangement with the CSRT co-chair Genevieve Singleton to use the CSRT’s Zoom account and to pay the CSRT \$120 for the use of the account.”* be rescinded and in its place the Board approve the purchase of a CLRSS-dedicated Zoom account for \$240 annually and, as a contribution to the Cowichan Stewardship Round Table Roundtable for its very good work, the CLRSS agree to share the use of the account with the Roundtable for their monthly meetings.

Seconded: Dianne Flood

Carried.

- c. Projector and screen – Jay White to provide an update on the purchase of a projector and screen – deferred.
- d. Decibel Limits Regulation – Judy Brayden reported the regulation was not adopted in the fall as originally planned. The Coalition reached out to request publication be moved back to the fall. Judy and Karen Deck to meet with Ian Morrison about the funding issues and will report back at the next Board meeting.

- e. Cloud storage of CLRSS documents – On further investigation a free membership may meet our needs so Dianne Flood will arrange for a free membership in the name of CLRSS, with access to all Executive Committee members and ultimately to all committee chairs. Maureen Quested and Dianne will meet re file organization and document uploads.

7.) New Business

- a. Membership Purchases – The Executive recommends the Board approve allowing members to purchase gift memberships for others. Some expressed surprise this was not already allowed.
 Moved by Christoph Steeger: That CLRSS members be allowed to purchase memberships for other persons as gifts.
 Seconded: Jacqueline Sherk
 Carried.
 Maureen Quested will work with Mike Patrick to address how this can be managed administratively.
- b. CLRSS and Project 84,000 has been invited to an invite-only Climate Conference being held December 9 and 10 for 150 local climate change/stewardship groups. The conference is based on a successful conference in Nanaimo. To Judy's knowledge, there is no registration fee. Tom Rutherford advised that the Watershed Board has been asked to speak at the conference, with Tom and a Board member (Tim) likely speaking about the fish die-off in 2023 and how the strong, respectful, and knowledgeable working relationships developed in the Cowichan Valley being an important element of the ability to respond effectively and quickly to environmental issues. Judy Brayden reported that the conference organizer has offered a table to CLRSS for sale of books and a table for Project 84,000. Jim Deck has volunteered to assist Judy as needed on these two days.
- c. Volunteer Week: Motion by Maureen Quested: the Executive recommends the Board approve providing volunteer acknowledgment during Volunteer week in Spring, 2025. If approved, Maureen has volunteered to take the lead on this. This was deferred to when Maureen is back.
- d. Chamber of Commerce Dinner: Judy Brayden has been invited to attend. The cost is \$40. Discussion: Relationship building is important and the Chamber is a partnership we should be developing.
 Moved by Jacqueline Sherk: That the CLRSS buy one ticket to the Chamber of Commerce dinner.
 Seconded: Christoph Steeger
 Carried.

8.) Announcements

- a. Newsletter deadline to Judy Brayden is Saturday, November 16, 2025. Please send Judy any articles you may wish to have included. Tom Rutherford will write a brief

article on where the building of the new weir is at. Jacqueline Sherk will do a short piece about the GTMNG, with input from Rosemary Danaher and Lois.

9.) Adjournment: Christoph Steeger

Next meeting will be Thursday, January 9 at 6:30, by Zoom.