

CRWS Project Team Meeting Notes



Chilliwack River
Watershed Strategy

Date: Aug 22, 2007
Time: 9:00 pm – 1:00 pm
Location: FVRD, Cheam Boardroom

Present: Lance Lilley, Fraser Valley Regional District /FVR Watersheds Coalition
Mark Johnson, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
David Barnes, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Tom Cadieux, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Bob Stanton, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Jack Mussell, Skwah/Ch-ihl-kway-uhk First Nation
David Lamson, Area E Director
Kevin Walter, Integrated Land Management Bureau
Marion Robinson, Fraser Basin Council (facilitator)
Tareq Islam, Fraser Valley Regional District Engineering (until 9:45am)

The meeting commenced at 9:05 pm.

1.0 Acceptance of Agenda

The Agenda for the meeting was reviewed and accepted as written.

2.0 Review of May 30 meeting notes and ACTION ITEMS

The minutes from the May 30, 2007 CRWS meeting were accepted as written.

Update of May 30 meeting ACTION ITEMS:

Summary of Action Items:

- **ACTION ITEM 1:** Lance to discuss the MOFR Invasive Plant workshop with Ann Wong, Stewardship Forester, when she returns.
 - Lance has not been able to discuss details with Ann yet, but feels that by the sounds of things, this workshop is/was primarily intended for forest licensees, and would not be very useful for Project Team or community members at-large.
- **ACTION ITEM 2:** Lance to send out previously-discussed Issues and Alternatives Reports to Francis and Jessica for them to review and comment if desired.
 - Lance emailed them shortly after the last meeting.

3.0 Business Agenda

3.1 Wilson Road Dyke Update:

- Tareq discussed the ongoing and proposed dyke works along Wilson Road, as well as the different options, challenges, and expected compensation requirements. The total project has a budget of \$3 million, with \$0.9M already spent on emergency actions. A CEAA process is triggered, but it is hoped that the project can move ahead quick enough to be in place for high autumn flows.
- It is expected that 7,000 m² of habitat could be disturbed through the project construction, requiring between 14,000 – 21,000 m² for compensation to occur within the Chilliwack River Watershed. Pierce Ponds was discussed as a potential place for riparian works.
- The Project Team discussed the role of dykes in the river system, and although they recognize the urgency of the current situation, they would prefer the problem of flooding to be dealt with at a watershed scale through other more proactive and strategic methods, such as opening up surge channels, moving dykes back, or buying back select properties if feasible. This would allow the river to ‘breathe’ back and forth as is natural, and not be further constrained by dykes, which leads to further downstream concerns. It was recommended to include this recommendation within the CRWS River Hazard Report, if it is not already addressed as such. (ACTION ITEM 1 – Lance to insert this suggestion into report if needed). David Lamson noted his objection to property buy-backs as a solution in the Chilliwack – the costs, political challenges, and impacts to the community are substantial and result in this option as one that is not locally supported.
- Dave Lamson noted the importance of constructing dykes in a fish-friendly manner using groynes, etc., that protect fish habitat.

3.2 Cultus Lake Milfoil Update:

- David Barnes described upcoming meeting on Thursday, Sept 20, 2007 at the Cultus Lake Parks Board office to discuss the issue of milfoil and other water quality concerns in the region. Marion will be facilitating this meeting. David emphasized the importance of finding a champion for this cause, noting that DFO will support any efforts, but will not champion them.

3.3 Fishing Behaviour Update:

- Lance discussed the recent media attention regarding the Fishing Behaviour report, and the concerns expressed to him by Doug Wilson about the issue being more appropriately discussed by the Sport Fish Advisory Board as opposed to CRWS, and the lack of sport fishing representation on CRWS or the working group.
- The Project Team recognized Doug’s concerns, and agreed it was a sensitive issue, but unanimously agreed that the issue is a watershed issue that belongs within the Chilliwack River Watershed Strategy, and that every effort was made to include sport fishing interests on the Working Group but they chose not to participate.
- Many felt that the issue was one of definition, and of people’s differing motives for fishing (fishing for meat versus fishing for sport). We should not discuss one as more ‘ethical’ than the other, but should recognize in CRWS that this is a growing source of conflict in the watershed and address the issue as it pertains to fish and the watershed. It was felt that this was accomplished with the report as it is written currently.
- Mark Johnson, the Project Lead for the working group, stated that although there were different opinions expressed through the planning process, the entire working group

came to consensus about the report's recommendations, reiterating the significance and confidence of the report.

- It was mentioned that this report serves as an example to all Project Team members the importance of reviewing the documents when they are distributed. The Project Team is ultimately responsible for all reports and the recommendations made within them.
- Jack mentioned that fish have many challenges they face, including disease, seals, etc., and that they have more problems to deal with besides how we fish.
- A number of Project Team members felt that the controversy about this issue and CRWS emanates from the prior decision to not allow new members to the Project Team who represent specific interests. The group remained divided on this point, but felt that the past decision to not allow new members should stand given the lateness of proceedings on this stage. It was unanimous that further community and interests NEED to be involved at the next phase, and any required meetings or communications should be conducted to convey this desire and to ensure their buy-in for this next phase. Tom suggested Brad Whittaker, as Chair, should be involved in these communications, and that the Coalition should play a more dominant role in the next phase of CRWS.
- It was agreed by all that the following disclosure be added to the acknowledgement section of all reports so that it does not appear as if they are responsible for the report:

“This acknowledgement is solely intended to recognize the numerous individuals who contributed to the preparation of this document. These individuals are not responsible for the information or the recommendations made within the document, and the document does not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of all of these individuals. The report is a product of the CRWS Project Team, and it is the Project Team that is ultimately responsible for this document. All feedback should be directed at them and not to the individuals acknowledged above.”

3.4 Remaining Questions/Issues/Concerns from Project Team:

- **Website:**
 - Tom suggested that CRWS should have a higher (more visible) profile on the FVRD website. Currently the link is quite hard to find.
 - Coalition members should be emailed with an update of the CRWS website, which includes the 7 approved and ‘completed’ Issues and Alternatives Reports. (ACTION ITEM 2 – for Lance)
- **Next Steps:**
 - Given the number of remaining reports still to be written, it was suggested that we should not wait for ‘completion’ of all of these before we move forward with the Strategy. They can remain incomplete for the time being. For the glossy publication, we can prepare just a one or two page overview of the issue that will suffice for the time being.

- It was recommended that we develop timelines for completion to serve as targets. These can be put on to the websites (CRWS and Coalition) to inform the public about next steps. A media release can also be prepared when appropriate.
- It was recommended that a day-long Think Tank be planned to discuss implementation and next phases.
- Mark, Tom, and Marion volunteered to serve on a Working Group or committee to discuss.

3.5 Review of Issues & Alternatives Report: Forestry and Forest Management

- Lance reviewed the progress, content, and recommendations made so far on the Forestry chapter. The following comments were received:
 - Map of tenures should include white space in legend
 - Describe somewhere what a “Forest Management Area” is
 - Add shade/daylighting to temperature impacts
 - Table of impacts is confusing to read because it reads across, not down.
 - Add flash flooding (note: Steve Litke, FBC recently did new study on this)
 - Reference HayCo study
 - Add idea of carbon dioxide loss (climate change) to deforestation impacts
 - Water is stored in trees as well as soil
 - Riparian widths and blowdown are also worth mentioning
 - Make sure really flag issue of logging on steep slopes
 - Also is a concern about logging resulting in ‘poking through’ of aquifers – drying creek beds
 - Mention importance of fish for returning nitrogen to trees (stresses the importance of interconnections, and specifically, of preserving salmon habitat for the benefit of forest growth)
 - Issue of impacts of forestry on First Nation use of forests (e.g., Vision Quests)
 - We can note the importance of information exchange between First Nation and Ministry of Forests to help protect their important heritage and cultural sites, but we (CRWS) do not need to be involved in these discussions.
 - Slide of community concerns is misleading regarding the placement of Very High Concern bullet
 - Do NOT add quote from Joe Foy about spotted owl habitat in report
 - Under FRPA Objectives, rewrite to say ‘Cultural Practices and Heritage’
 - It was noted that currently, the community is very frustrated with their lack of input into forestry decision-making and that they are not provided the adequate tools to voice their opinions. This should be noted in the recommendations. We need to provide tools for the community to influence decisions, not just provide comments.
 - The max cutblock size is usually 40ha – need to look into whether a special provision for Chilliwack was actually made of 30ha.
 - To Vision: add CRWS to support or enable
 - Goals: To (1) add ‘transparent’ and ‘accessible’
 - Goals: To (2) add dissemination of collected information, not just collect info.
 - Goals: To (4) add reference to CRWS Habitat Restoration Report.

- It was recommended Lance contact Matt Wealick and Jack Paradise for additional information and review.

3.6 Update on Remaining Reports:

- No updates on remaining reports were provided.

4.0 Next Meeting, Action Items, & Adjournment

The next meeting was tentatively set for:

- Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2007
- Time: 9:00am-2:00pm
- Location: FVRD Cheam Boardroom
- Tentative topics:
 - Remaining Issues and Alternatives Documents:
 - Recreational Use
 - Cultural Resource Management
 - Biodiversity/Species-at-Risk
 - Crown Land Management
 - Agency & Public Communication
 - Interpersonal Approaches (Conflict Resolution)
 - “Final” Strategy Product
 - Next Steps/Implementation

Summary of Action Items:

- **ACTION ITEM 1:** Lance to update/edit River Hazard Issues and Alternative Report to reflect the comments expressed about dyking in the Chilliwack River Watershed.
- **ACTION ITEM 2:** Lance to email Coalition members about CRWS website and available Issues and Alternative Reports.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.
