



CHILLIWACK RIVER WATERSHED STRATEGY

Meeting Minutes

Date: May 16th, 2005 **1:15 p.m.**
Location: Fraser Valley Regional District, Cheam Boardroom

Facilitator: Meeri Durand, Fraser Valley Regional District

Present: Tom Cadieux, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Dave Lamson, Chilliwack River Action Committee
Frank Sobkowich, Electoral Area E Director
Brad Mason, DFO, Community Mapping Network
Doug Wilson, Fraser Valley Regional District Parks
Steve Marsh, University College of the Fraser Valley
Mark Johnson, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Tara Friesen, City of Chilliwack

The Meeting Commenced at 1:15 p.m.

1.0 Introductions and Roundtable

Meeri Durand introduced herself as the facilitator for the meeting and a roundtable of introductions took place.

2.0 Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was changed to allow Steve Marsh of the University College of the Fraser Valley to present prior to Doug Wilson of the Regional Parks Committee. A short discussion on future field trips was also added as an agenda item. The agenda was adopted with aforementioned changes. Minutes from the April meeting were distributed.

3.0 Presentation

3.1 *University College of the Fraser Valley*

Steve Marsh of the University College of the Fraser Valley provided the group with some background on the programs currently under development at the University College.

- Students are currently involved in collecting water samples for the Abbotsford Aquifer Project in partnership with Environment Canada

- Students have also been involved in surface water sampling at Ferguson Creek
- Last year DFO provided the school with a plotter and GPS unit
- This had been used for development of a ditch classification model
- Program also includes work in Matsqui and Sumas Creek for Abbotsford
- The school is looking into expanding their GIS capabilities

Discussion:

- There is a funding request going forward to enlist two students to undertake mapping for Ryder Creek, as was discussed at last month's meeting
- Other priorities for mapping need to be identified
- It was discussed that current SHIM mapping is difficult for people to access and that a 'google' site provides users with up-to-date mapping and satellite photos
- Imagery on the Community Mapping Network is superior to this satellite imagery if accessed
- The site has been improved and now has video instruction available for users
- The University College is looking into providing a continuing education course in GPS and GIS
- On an average year, there are approximately 120 students involved in applied research and at least 20 students with an interest in this work-through course credit or work study – work study requires \$9.00/hr.
- UCFV has ortho-photos and a plotter to meet community mapping needs – Brad Mason or Steve Marsh can be contacted

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Action Item: A demonstration of how to map using the Community Mapping Network will be provided at the next meeting

3.2 *Regional Parks Committee*

Doug Wilson provided the group with some background on the Chilliwack-Vedder Recreational Corridor Initiative.

- This initiative began in 2001 as a result of issues raised by the Chilliwack River Valley Ratepayers Association
- Initial discussions were in regards to the development of a community park
- In 2002 a Steering Committee comprised of various agencies was developed to look at recreational management
- Primary concern addressed was issue of overnight camping on unregulated sites along the valley
- In 2002 a Draft Recreational Plan was submitted to the Steering Committee and was widely supported by those involved
- The plan addressed the corridor in three parts – Chilliwack Lake to Tamihi Bridge, Tamihi to Vedder Crossing and from Vedder Crossing to the Vedder Canal
- In 2002 the Ratepayers donated land to FVRD for the creation of Thompson Park
- The concept was for the park to act as an information destination in the valley – it was opened in September 2004
- Previous to April of 2004 Land and Water BC was approached regarding the management of the Crown Land sites and policy direction was that Crown land was open to the public and management required purchase of the lands
- In April 2004, Crown land policy was amended to allow an occupancy agreement to be used to manage sites
- Land and Water BC has now been approached for a 6 month agreement for FVRD to act as management authority in the valley to start in June 2005
- There has been no budget for this work to date and has been volunteer effort by staff

Discussion:

- There is a concern expressed by residents that access is not to be restricted
- There is support from the critical players to control overnight use
- Visitation is largely from the Greater Vancouver Regional District – squatters have already started to settle in with no sanitary or garbage

facilities – this also restricts access by the public due to campers blocking trails and access points

- Thompson Park Kiosks are now open and road signage has been approved – locations will be Teskey Rock and before entrance to the park
- Squatters have been a long term issue, due to tree removal, vehicle access into the streams and river and fisheries and wildlife issues
- A Parks By-law will be written to allow authority to be shared with the RCMP, Conservation Officers and Municipal Police – authority is needed to provide adequate enforcement
- The Cultural Heritage Tour highlighted some of these issues and conflicts between recreational users and cultural sites with Water, Land and Air Protection and other agencies
- At forest recreational sites, operators or managers are limited to the area under contract and have little authority
- 95% of visitors in the Chilliwack River Valley are from other areas, primarily the GVRD, this number is expected to increase as gas prices continue to rise to avoid the costs of long distance travel
- Demand is exceeding capacity at this time
- Other agencies, such as DFO, have authority but would require a strong case to implement that authority on a case by case basis
- Fire bans can be implemented by the Ministry of Forests, RCMP and volunteer fire department
- Ministry of Transportation has been approached regarding a gatehouse or road block in the area and statistics are being collected on the number of vehicles – traffic counter
- Ministry of Transportation has some authority over the Right of Way for overnight parking
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada counted 1420 people on the river during the Coho run – huge impact
- 362 tire tubes were counted in the river on one day last season
- There is political sensitivities regarding restricting access to the river
- City of Chilliwack consulted with fisheries organizations in regards to restricting vehicle access on a portion of the river – there has been a marked difference in garbage and other use of the area

4.0 Correspondence and Project Updates

4.1 *Frank Kwak, Fraser Valley Salmon Society*

A letter requesting representation on the Project Team was received by Frank Kwak of the Fraser Valley Salmon Society. The Terms of Reference for the project and a letter outlining the scope of the project was sent in response to this request.

4.2 Gary Wickham, City of Chilliwack

Gary Wickham and Tara Freisen have been informed of the project and have voiced they will participate as issues of interest and concern to the City of Chilliwack and the Vedder River Management Committee are identified.

4.3 Lovely Pond

A meeting was recently held between several of the partners involved, including David Lamson, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, BC Parks, FVRD Parks and Dave Sheape of the Sto:lo Nation. Several concerns relating to non-fisheries values were discussed. The project plan has been scaled back from the original to reflect these discussions. BC Parks have forwarded their approval pending concerns were addressed as they relate to flooding and public safety, impacts on amphibian populations and heritage values.

Wetland habitat would be linked to restrict fish access to Lovely Pond. Clarification is required regarding the flooding issue, as a hydrologist report has indicated that this should not be a concern. There is limited information available on the species present in Lovely Pond and a bio-inventory is required

Action Item: A request that the signatories to the BC Parks approval be asked to speak to the group at the next meeting

4.4 Hope Slough

Mike Watson of the Sto:lo Community Futures and Roy Mussell have been contacted in regards to the works and have been sent a copy of the site plans for the project.

The Chilliwack Canoe and Kayak have also been notified of the project and have voiced their support. Members will be notified to use the Cultus Lake training facilities during in-stream works.

4.5 Project Display for the Leading the Way Stewardship Event

A project display has been developed for use at the upcoming Leading the Way Stewardship Event in Squamish over the May long weekend. The display will be changed to provide photo credits and information on the Tolmie Slide. It will also reflect the said changes to the Lovely Pond project to include works on Pierce Creek, Ryder Creek and Wingfield Creek. Agencies and partners are welcome to bring forward any materials they wish to have at the table for this project.

Action Item: The Project Display will be changed to reflect the comments received

5.0 Review of Stakeholder Participation

A roundtable discussion regarding how to frame stakeholder and public participation resulted in the following options:

- a.) To retain the Project Team as it is currently and to incorporate further representation from key identified interests, such as forest licensees, mineral or mining interests, recreational user groups and the community. This would include:
 - a. Soliciting for membership from these stakeholder groups, or
 - b. Reviewing membership as interest is indicated on a case by case basis
- b.) To retain the Project Team as it is currently and develop a plan to incorporate stakeholder involvement through the following methods:
 - a. Development of a parallel stakeholder table
 - b. Community and stakeholder forums to review and provide comments during:
 - i. The Background Information Stage
 - ii. The Issues and Alternatives Stage
 - iii. The Preliminary StrategyInterested parties would be referred to the website for information and draft documents and would be permitted to send delegations to meetings by request
- c.) Public Open Houses would be held to educate the public and stakeholders of this initiative and be asked on what level they wish to participate
 - a. This advice would then be reviewed by the Project Team and revised based on the capacity to accommodate the recommendations received

Action Item: Members are asked to forward a list of contacts they feel should be identified as stakeholders for this project.

Action Item: Members are asked to review the options as listed above and provide their input by June 1st. The Draft Stakeholder Consultation Plan will be revised to reflect these comments for tentative approval at the June 13th meeting.

6.0 Field Trip Discussion

A slide show presentation of the field trip held Wednesday, May 12th will be provided at the June 13th meeting for those that were unable to attend.

It was suggested that another field trip be arranged to visit various forestry sites in the Chilliwack River Valley to show historical logging patterns and practices.

Next Meeting

**June 13th at 1:15pm
Cheam Boardroom, 4th Floor
Fraser Valley Regional District
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