

# Nootka Sound Watershed Society

## Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 27 April, 2005 in the Western Forest Products Meeting Room

### **Present:**

Michel Rabu (P)- Gold River Fishing Lodge; Roger Dunlop (VP)- NTC Fisheries; Paul Smith (S)- G.R. Stream Keepers; Pat Dennison (T)- Gold River Resources Ltd.; Jamie James (D)- Mowachaht/Muchalaht FN Fisheries; Deb Clemenson (D)- Village of Tahsis; Jim Mitchell (D)- Village of Gold River/GRSK; Dick Dennison (D)- Gold River Rod and Gun; Steve Shelley (D)- The Lodge Tahsis Harbour; Bruce Adkins-DFO; Dave Davies- DFO Community Advisor; Tim Davies- Grieg Seafood; Jim Murphy- Grieg Seafood; Temple McPherson- Lodge at Gold River; Randy Musfelt-Rugged Mountain Rod and Gun; Kim Black- Gold River Fishing Lodge;

### **1. Michel Rabu called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.**

Michel stated that the meeting will be taped to aid in the taking of minutes.

Anyone who objects may leave if they so choose. Michel asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet.

### **2. Introductions around the table**

### **3. Changes/additions/approval of agenda**

Michel Rabu asked for changes or additions to the agenda. Tim Davies asked to table the “mitigation plan for Atlantic escapements” until the next meeting. Steve Shelley asked for the recent “Steelhead issues” to be placed under unfinished business. Paul Smith asked for the “RCH/RCH dna issues” under unfinished business also. Tim Davies asked for “marine mammal regulation changes” to be placed under new business. Jim Murphy moved to accept agenda, seconded by Deb Clemenson, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved.

### **4. Changes or additions to minutes of the previous meeting**

Michel Rabu asked everyone to read over the previous minutes. Roger Dunlop commented one business item has been left off this time and that is the friendly amendment to the motion in the February minutes that was tabled until this meeting. Paul Smith apologized for not including the amendment in this package. Amendment was tabled once again until the next meeting. Pat Dennison stated that Marc Charettes name is spelled incorrectly again.

### **5. Approval of Minutes**

Deb Clemenson moved to accept minutes, Pat Dennison seconded, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved

### **6. Old business arising from the minutes**

Roger Dunlop commented that his boss has given him permission to sit on this board representing the NTC Fisheries. Paul Smith updated everyone on the friendly amendment issue and the production letter to DFO and seeing how Bruce Adkins is here; he can talk to it if he wishes. Bruce Adkins replied that there has been a letter of receipt issued. Jim Murphy and Michel Rabu talked about research for a net pen. Michel Rabu stated that he has found a 50x50 pen with a full walk around for \$3200 without the net. We may get the net at discounted price. Jim Murphy stated that the mesh would be too large and that we'll need a finer mesh for smolts. Some discussion followed on mesh sizes and potential markets. Jim Mitchell commented that a walk around is a necessary item for

safety concerns. We should also be acquiring a copy of the Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines he said. Maureen asked how many smolts at what size were going into the net. Dave Davies replied that they will be about 3-4 grams, but he didn't have the release number on hand. Roger Dunlop asked if we would be rearing them in the net pens for a year. Dick Dennison replied that it was his understanding that it was being done this way to help create capacity at the Conuma Hatchery. Roger Dunlop added that he is only concerned with speeding up the cycle. Locally Coho fry leave the rivers immediately after they hatch only a few stay in the rivers. So why not just release them into the estuary. Dick Dennison commented that he wasn't sure, but that we should find out. Jim Mitchell stated that Steve Emmonds could answer this if he was here tonight or maybe Dave Davies or Bruce Adkins will. Jim went on to say that he was under the understanding that the Conuma Hatchery 2/3 of their fry and only keep a few thousand reared in the raceways for a year to allow them to achieve the smolt stage. Paul Smith added that they used to release a few hundred in the upper Conuma River as smolts also. Lot's of discussion on where we should go with this. Bruce Adkins commented on the costs associated with rearing the Coho like labour, food, gas, etc. Roger Dunlop said there is also the issue of tenure for the site where the net pen will be placed. Bruce Adkins concurred. Michel Rabu commented that as a group we have lived up to our end by finding a net pen and working to resolve this issue that is so important to the communities and now it is time for DFO to step up to the plate with some sort of financial support. Bruce Adkins stated that he is merely pointing out the associated costs and that DFO is committed to working with us to resolve this issue. Paul Smith stated that he has sent in the PIP application for funding and received confirmation back that our application has been accepted. He has a purchase order to be signed by the president and sent in. Once they receive the purchase order we will be sent a check for \$4500 and be expected to provide a final report before March 1/06. Paul Smith stated that he has created a directors list and everyone should have a copy. If he has missed anyone or has the wrong information please contact Paul with the information. Michel Rabu commented on not having heard from Marc Charette yet on the lodge/charter operation contacts. He is getting concerned that we are not getting the interest from lodge owners and guides and that they have the most to loose. We have to find a way to impress upon them that what we are doing at this table is for their benefit, their future and their survival. Pretty soon they will be into their busy season and then in the fall they will all take off and the cycle will start over again. Somehow we have to get their support and participation at this table and financially and frankly he is frustrated at the lack of interest. Lots of discussion on ways to get the charter operators/lodge owners support followed. Jim Mitchell stated that there are some lodges represented at every meeting so we can't paint everyone with the same brush. What about the Sports Fish Advisory Committee? Paul Smith stated that the SFAC is set up to deal with fisheries management issues only and the newly appointed chair who is Cathy Daynes regularly attends our meetings and has only missed a few. Some ideas were to create a regular newsletter, news release to the Record/Ha-Shilthsa or a brochure etc to promote our goals and accomplishments. Dave Davies commented that we need to appoint a media person. Everyone agreed, but who? Roger Dunlop commented that maybe we can move onto the next item on the agenda while Pat Dennison makes copies of the TOR for everyone. Steve Shelley talked about the dismal returns of Steelhead to the Gold River this year and that as a watershed

society we should be getting the province to explain this to us. Dick Dennison commented that two years ago Craig Whitman gave the Rod and Gun club a presentation. Craig had told the club members that in the fall they would be swimming the river again to count summer runs and this would give them an indication on whether they would have to close the river to angling in 2005. This wasn't done and the run is smaller than the year before. Dave Davies said we should ask the province to attend the next meeting to explain why no closures were in place this winter. Steve Shelley that he is concerned that we don't have the appropriate data to determine whether they should be enhanced or not. He went on to say that the Steelhead seem to be getting smaller over all and that this isn't just an issue on the Gold River, but most of the rivers in Nootka Sound are experiencing smaller returns and sizes. Roger Dunlop talked about the RCH issues also affecting the steelhead, as guides will tell you they catch hatchery steelhead on the Gold River system. Jim Mitchell stated that the Gold Rive Stream Keepers Society is also concerned over this and his directors have authorized Jim (president) to write the province requesting management changes for next year unless they can prove that the returns will be substantially better. Jim went on to say the GRSK is also interested in volunteering in any way they can to help with this situation like collecting data etc. Jim Mitchell would like to move that the Nootka Sound Watershed Society invite Craig Whitman to come to our next meeting to talk to us on this issue. Steve Shelley seconded, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved. Roger Dunlop talked about the last sub committee meeting to fine tune the Terms of Reference. The precautionary approach principle seems to be the tough one. Roger Dunlop asked if there were any comment on the TOR. Roger talked about the structure starting with the vision then the goals followed by the principles defining the goals. Roger then talked about each goal and principle individually explaining why we came up with them. Some discussion on the dispute resolution and quorum principles. Michel Rabu stated that there should be another sub committee meeting to finalize these results and members are encouraged to provide input. Paul Smith asked if we should set a date now for the sub committee meeting. May 11 at 7:00 pm was chosen as the next TOR sub committee meeting. Michel Rabu asked all members to take home the TOR and read them, then provide input back to the sub committee chair Roger Dunlop. Jim Mitchell talked about the Gold River Streamkeepers and their commitment to enhancing/restoring the native Gold River stocks and our disappointment when we learned the Robertson Creek fish were not released unfed as per our original agreement. This has happened two years in a row and we want to know why. We want to see enhancement on the Gold, but not at the expense of native Gold stocks. The Gold River Streamkeepers would like to see this put to bed once and for all so we can move forward in defining the stocks and finding the native Gold stocks to enhance. Paul Smith commented that the original agreement called for them to be destroyed and then we came to consensus to release them unfed so this doesn't improve our credibility. Roger Dunlop commented that the Mowachaht/Muchalaht have spent 250 k developing a Chinook index system for three years because it is a Pacific Salmon Commission indicator stock for Canada/US. We bought an \$18k rotary trap and found out that we didn't have single population of Chinook, but a bastardized population of ongoing strays. We then asked stock assessment to look at the scales back to 1980 and the genetic dendrogram shows that they had escaped into the Gold in the late 70's. We then started checking otoliths from the brood stock collection and

determined that more than 50% on average of the lower Gold has been Robertson Creek migrants. The Muchalat River also showed that ¼ of the Chinook brood collection were also of Robertson Creek origin. Roger believes there is no reason to believe that the straying isn't occurring with Steelhead and Sockeye as well. Roger's solution would be to mark every single Chinook at the Robertson Creek hatchery. Dave Davies talked about the production numbers at Robertson Creek being in the millions and the last time he checked the cost of marking a Chinook was .15 per fish. This makes the cost of marking every fish very expensive. If you mark every fish and have a selective mark fishery how do you determine which fish are Robertson and which are from another hatchery that clips the adipose fin also. Roger Dunlop commented that you have the selective mark fishery in the river where it should be. Bruce Adkins stated that it seems we should be looking at what if any native Gold River stocks exist and how we enhance them without enhancing RCH stocks. This is something that the Conuma River Enhancement Facility should be more focused on as this is what they're here for. Lots of discussion on where the money would come from as the last thing we want is to jeopardize the salmon production numbers at Conuma any further. Bruce Adkins said again this is a conservation issue and the reasons why hatcheries exist not to produce surplus fish. So we shift our attention from producing surplus fish to focusing on conservation. We've already talked about the surplus fish situation and the Coho issue is a good example of it. You wanted Coho and were willing to do something to achieve it by locating the funding necessary. The key point is that the conservation issues need to become more of a DFO responsibility and not a community responsibility. Roger Dunlop suggested using the weir in the Oktwanch River to aid in collecting Chinook broodstock. The discussion shifted to was responsible for making the decision to feed the RCH Chinook before release. Dave Davies took the responsibility for the decision. Dave commented that unless we have a plan next year he doesn't want to be involved in it. Paul Smith stated that is in the past and let's move on to make sure it doesn't occur again. We can only do this by communicating at this table. There was some discussion on the net pen and the need for a tenure. Roger Dunlop talked about the Mowachaht/Muchalaht chiefs not wanting any net pens in their traditional territory. Dave Davies replied that if that was true then he doesn't see any enhancement being done as the whole reason for enhancing salmon and feeding them to a certain size is to give them an advantage over the wild stocks. This society needs to determine whether they want to see enhancement of Gold River stocks before we can continue. Roger Dunlop why not use the existing facility that DFO paid for on the old mill site to rear them instead of planning to use net pens, which the chiefs will oppose. Dick Dennison stated that there is more to it than meets the eye and the bottom line is if we collect eggs from the Gold River watershed will we be able to do something with them. Roger Dunlop replied yes just not in net pens. Michel Rabu stated it is obvious that there are differing opinions on how to create a plan and stick with it. Whatever plan we decide on it will be difficult for volunteers to collect fish because of problems in finding them. Discussion on ways to find the native stocks and when we look for them in the Oktwanch.

## **7. Correspondence**

All correspondence has been forwarded to members via email. Contact Paul Smith if you haven't been receiving correspondence.

## **8. New Business**

Under new business Tim Davies talked about the marine mammal regulation changes from DFO and how it affects the operations of Grieg. Grieg doesn't shoot predators.

## **9. Reports**

Financial Report- Pat Dennison

Adoption of Financial Report- Tim Davies moved to accept the financial report, seconded by Dick Dennison, called to question, -Pat Dennison talked about the rent being charged at the Jack Christenson building and whether the NSWS should be paying it when all the assets belong to the GRSK. Discussion followed on the GRSK paying all the costs in the past to run the stewardship office on behalf of the Gold River Watershed Committee and that at a previous meeting it was agreed that the rent would be taken over by the NSWS. Now that seems to have changed. Deb Clemenson moved to write a letter to the council of Gold River requesting waiving the rent up to the end of June 2005. Tim Davies seconded, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved. Pat Dennison asked for a motion to pay the Telus and Internet invoices. Michel Rabu moved, seconded by Dick Dennison, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved. - all in favour of accepting financial report, none opposed, so moved.

## **10. Presentations**

Roger Dunlop gave a presentation on Luna and the effects of sonar from the transducers used by anglers in Nootka Sound. He will be asking all anglers to abstain from using their sounders and fish finders, as they don't need them in Nootka Sound to catch fish anyways.

## **11. Action Items**

1. Paul Smith will attach friendly amendment to February's minutes and send out to members.
2. Michel Rabu will continue to try and get the lodge/charter operator contact info.
3. Jim Mitchell will contact the high school to see if a student would be interested in writing our newsletter and/or developing a brochure about the NSWS.
4. Paul Smith will send out email reminding everyone of the sub committee meeting on the TOR in May.
5. Roger Dunlop will send out an email to volunteers requesting help with the radio-tagging program.
6. Roger Dunlop, Jim Murphy and a representative from DFO will take on the task of developing a working plan for next falls Chinook brood collection.
7. Paul Smith will write a letter requesting waiving the office rent until the end of June.
8. Paul Smith will write a letter requesting free moorage at the government wharf while the volunteers feed the Burman fish.
9. Jamie James will find office space on the reserve for the GRSK to run the stewardship office.
10. Bruce Adkins will come up with Health and Safety Occupational guidelines for DFO.

## **12. Open Discussion**

Under open discussion there was lots of talk about the changes occurring at Cougar Creek Forestry site this summer. The province will be cracking down on illegal parking by some of the lodge owners. This raised the ire of a few members.

**13. Adjournment**

Jim Murphy moved to adjourn at 9:35 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday, June 29, 2005 same time, same place.