

# Watershed Committee

## Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 30 January 2002 in the Ridgeview Motel Hospitality Room

### **Present:**

Paul Smith- R.A.M.S.; Jim Mitchell-Village of Gold River; Steve Emmonds-DFO; Chris Erikson-Conuma Hatchery; Murray Watkinson-WFP; Jaime James-Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nations; Roger Dunlop-NTC Biologist; John Frame-Gold River Chinook Project; Maureen Plecas- G.R. Resident; Dick Dennison- G.R. Resident.

**1.0 Paul called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.**

**2.0 Introductions around the table**

**3.0 The agenda was approved by consensus**

**4.0 Minutes of the previous meeting**

Roger asked that the previous minutes be changed to reflect his being an observer on the Chinook Technical Committee. Previous minutes approved by consensus.

**5.0 Old business arising from the minutes**

Paul talked about the South Coast Sports Fish Advisory Committee meeting he attended and his discussions around cutting Chinook production rumours at Conuma Hatchery. He was assured that no cuts would be implemented this year. Jim asked about the upper Conuma Adult Coho transplant and expressed concerns over skewed data due to the out planting program at Conuma for over 15 years. If there were concerns over competition between resident Trout and other salmonids then this would have shown up a long time ago. It was agreed to talk about finding funding to initiate a study through the Gold River Stream Keepers Society at their next meeting. Murray asked if Steelhead make it up to the upper Conuma. Chris replied that the hatchery in partnership with the province has out planted Steelhead fry every spring, but there are barriers, which prohibit Steelhead migration into the upper Conuma. Steve clarified that there is two out plants for Coho into the upper Conuma, adults and fry. It is the adults that everyone is concerned about. Roger talked about a report on Allopatric and Sympatric Cutthroat Trout and their ability to share habitat with Coho. Paul brought up discussions about the letter to Doug Swift over ZZ Creek as he thought it was appropriate at this time. Roger stated that he had sent a letter to BCALC with concerns over Coho and Sockeye habitat and the relationship to the outflow. Jim stated that the only place he could see where the outflow could be placed is roughly 350 meters from the mouth where there is road access in his opinion. Paul asked for more input or if the letter is satisfactory to the members. Dick stated that we should be asking for clarification as to whether these two sites are the only ones being looked at in our area. Jim talked about the need for Vancouver Island to generate its own power in the future and how we should have a process in place to review these proposals. Steve commented that he received a reply from Kim Hyatt about previous request to give a presentation on lake fertilization to our committee

sometime after March. Paul asked about the sea pen idea for the Gold River Chinook Project brought up by Steve at the last meeting. John replied that Dave Davies informed him the Conuma Hatchery and Gold River Chinook Project would work together to identify ways to improve Gold and Burman River Chinook stocks. Roger commented that First Nations would volunteer their time to help collect brood stock in the upper Gold River watershed. Steve talked about the possibility of net pen rearing in Muchalaht Lake and asked if anyone had the temperature profile data for the lake. Roger replied that Kim Hyatt should have the data. Paul asked Steve about the volunteer liabilities he talked about at the last meeting. Steve responded by saying that there is a new direction within DFO to deal with volunteer/visitor liability at DFO projects. There is a form to be filled out which he will send to Paul to be distributed to all concerned. Dick asked about Hutchinson Creek and whether the liability is now over as the project funded by DFO is also finished.

## **6.0 Minutes of previous meeting approved by consensus**

### **7.0 Correspondence**

Letter to Doug Swift was dealt with in old business. Roger talked about the article titled "Salmon as Nutrient Pumps" and its relation to the workshop he attended in Oregon.

### **8.0 New Business**

John stated that they've been told that they couldn't smolt as many Coho this year due to conflicts with wild stocks. Steve replied that he had received the same information but that might change as the minister wouldn't sign off on it. John stated that this year should see better returns to the Gold and Burman Rivers based on their data. Roger talked about the data collected from the radio-tagging program on the Gold River. This was the worst year to date for Chinook escapements that he's seen. The area under the curve estimate was 183 pieces. Resident times were 6.1 days. The index site estimate was 204. Escapements dropped from 11,000 to 198, which clearly indicates a serious problem. John commented that in 1983 the Burman River had 156 Chinook compared to 300 this year and 5000 in 1998. Roger talked about the Chinook Technical Review process and he will try and find out what the escapement goals should be for wild systems in our area to aid in decision-making. Jim expressed his concern over the lack of representation from the Nootka/Kyuquot area on the West Coast Aquatic Management Board. He commented that it is heavily weighted with Alberni/Clayoquot reps and he doubts that our area will be properly represented at the table. As he is the Village representative he hasn't even been informed of the first meeting dates. Paul stated that he would try and find out the dates for Jim and anyone else that is interested. Paul commented that at the first meeting it might be appropriate for Jim to bring forward his concerns. Discussion revolved around the chair of the meetings and Paul's difficulty with taking minutes and chairing the meetings. Consensus was reached to choose a chair at the beginning of each meeting and for Paul to continue to take minutes. Paul will send out previous minutes and agenda well in advance of meeting to allow for additions to the agenda for the next meeting.

### **9.0 Action Items**

1. Paul will make changes to letter on ZZ Creek and forward to Doug Swift.
2. Paul will summarize data from CWAP and Fisheries Inventories on upper Conuma River for next meeting.

3. Steve will forward forms and information package on volunteers/visitors liability on DFO projects.
4. Paul will find out when the next meeting is for the WCAMB and forward to all.

**10.0 Presentations**

The presentation by the Puntledge Hatchery on Pink enhancement was cancelled due to weather concerns. Consensus was reached to postpone the presentation until the Gold River Chinook Project and Bowater resolved their issues.

**11.0 Open Discussion**

There was some discussion on the CWAP and Fisheries Inventories for WFP in the upper Conuma River watershed.

**12.0 Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:24 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday, February 28/02 same time, same place.