

MINUTES FOR WATERSHED COMMITTEE MEETING ON MARCH 29/2000

CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:45 PM.
11 IN ATTENDANCE

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES:

FOC-JOY HILLIER, CHRIS ERIKSON

REGIONAL AQUATIC MANAGEMENT SOCIETY-PAUL SMITH

COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES:

WFP-NELS NIELSEN, ROD MARCH

GOLD RIVER CHINOOK PROJECT-JOHN FRAME

GOLD RIVER ROD AND GUN-JIM FIDDICK

GOLD RIVER RESIDENTS- DICK DENNISON, BOB VOLK, CAMERON FORBES, CAM FORBES

The meeting started off with introductions, followed by Bob Volk's motion for approval of the agenda, and apologies from Paul Smith for those who couldn't make the meeting. Paul then asked if anyone had any changes or additions to the previous minutes. Hearing none Paul went on to discuss business arising from previous minutes. Tahsis has decided to form their own watershed committee after discussions about travel and concerns over one community making decisions on watershed issues from another community. The ongoing and future projects were added to the last meeting minutes as requested at the last meeting and some of the funding sources that were discussed. The action item of local council coming back with a direction on their level of support has been tabled because Dave Stewart (Gold River Council) was not in attendance. Paul asked for a motion to accept the previous minutes. So moved by Joy Hillier. Under new business there was some discussion on the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nations request for support from the committee on restoring the Crest and Heber diversions by BC Hydro. They will be trying to have BC Hydro look at costs/benefits of status quo and relocation to see if it's feasible. Discussion surrounded the lack of information on the pros and cons of putting it back to its original state. Joy Hillier stated she would get FOC's input and report back to the next meeting. It was decided by consensus that the committee ask all parties involved for more details on the effects of restoring back to original state. Action item: Paul Smith will ask Moelp, BC Hydro and Mowachaht/Muchalaht for more details. Also under new business it was brought up by Paul Smith that Forestry Renewal BC has changed their funding guidelines and ranking criteria so that most of the funding goes to larger populated areas. Paul was asked if the committee could write a letter objecting to funding being taken away from small communities and placed into larger communities. Rod March discussed the long-term agreement that Western Forest Products has with FRBC. The agreement allows for \$62 million pacific wide with \$3 million allotted for this fiscal year in our area. This money (\$3 million) will be for everything (ie:

silverculture) and not just watershed restoration. Rod went on to say that, as we all know FRBC funds are dwindling and they are trying to get the best bang for their buck. Rod stated that because of the success of the Oktwanch River Side Channel Project, WFP is looking at doing the same kind of project on the other side of the Oktwanch. Chris Erikson mentioned that FOC would be doing some fry trapping in April on the Oktwanch. Joy Hillier asked Rod March who the consultant for the Oktwanch project was. Rod replied that his name is Shawn Hamilton and Ralph Hanult is doing the monitoring. Rod talked about upcoming road deactivation in the Conuma, Twaddle, Ucona and Upana watersheds. The Zeballos River Side Channel Project has been approved. John Frame asked if we as a committee could lobby to stop cross ditching when it's not necessary as it takes away from recreation. Nels Nielsen replied that anyone or group can look over the 5 year plans and give feedback. Joy Hillier stated that the Cowichan Watershed Council has prioritized their own watersheds that need restoration and have created a plan to begin efforts to restore them in order of priority. This might be something that our committee could look at doing in the future. Everyone agreed. There was some discussion about appointing a chair and secretary/treasurer. It was decided that Paul would temporarily chair the meetings until the committee was running smoothly and a regular attendance was achieved. Paul will look into funding a part time secretary from his budget. Paul mentioned that a concerned resident asking about a small stream that crosses the Peppercorn Trail and runs into the Gold had approached him. He was told there was a large amount of rust on the creek bed. Paul went down and had a look and confirmed the presence of rust. He followed the creek up to a cement culvert behind the pool. After some questions to a village employee, Paul was told that it was the storm drain from Nimpkish Drive. The committee decided that Paul would write a letter to the council asking for information on the creek. There was some discussion on when FOC was going to test the Hart Lake dumpsite for leachate. Paul responded that March Klaver (Water Quality Biologist) would be coming up on April 19/00 to test the site and test the crabs in the bay in front of the mill site. Joy Hillier confirmed this and added that she will be doing some habitat surveys in the Gold River area and had been asked if she would like to coordinate with March for the day. Jim Fiddick asked if the committee could look at the section of the Gold River where the small creek behind the mini storage runs into it. Apparently the erosion of the bank is extreme. Paul will try and get some more information and some pictures for future discussion. John Frame asked if we had any information on Bowater's technique for removal of contaminated soil from the mill site. Joy Hillier stated that she would give a presentation on this at the next meeting, as she will receive a report from Bowater. Joy said that the committee could ask Bowater for an update on the clean up. The discussion then centered on the name of the watershed committee. All decided that the name would be the Gold River Watershed Committee. Chris Erikson asked about the upcoming stream keeper's course. Paul responded that the course begins on May 5 and ends on May 7/00. So far there has been a good response to the ads from local people interested in participating. Paul and George Bates have compiled a short list of urban streams for the newly formed group to assess to get them started. Nels Neilson questioned the need to assess streams that Western Forest Products has already assessed. Joy Hillier stated that it's a program to promote the conservation ethic by giving communities a "hands on" approach. The discussion then turned to drafting a terms of reference for the committee.

Paul stated that this is something we can change or update as the need arises down the road. There was a handout of the Alberni Watershed Committee's terms of reference to give everyone a sample of what we should be looking at. Paul then used a flip chart to record suggestions and examples to be put into document form for the next meeting. The committee agreed to use the Alberni terms of reference as a base point to be changed to fit our needs and concerns in the future. There was some discussion around the boundaries of the Gold River Watershed Committee and where they should be set. Sucwoa River watershed was defined as a possible boundary line in conjunction with height of land to the coast. Paul will bring a map to the next meeting so the members can define the boundaries for the committee. The members of the committee decided to continue to meet once a month (last Wednesday of every month) to keep the process moving along. There was a question as to whether First Nations were going to participate in the committee. Paul responded that yes they expressed their support. The question was then where are they? The next meeting was set for April 26/00 at 7:30 pm. Place to be determined at a later date. Dick Dennison moved to adjourn at 9:08 pm.