

Watershed Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 28th March 2001 in the Ridgeview Motel Hospitality Room

Present:

Paul Smith- R.A.M.S.; Chris Erikson, DFO/ Conuma Hatchery; Steve Emmonds, DFO/Conuma Hatchery; Roger Dunlop, Nuu-chah-nulth; John Frame, Gold River Chinook Project; Dale Frame, Gold River Chinook Project; Kevin Somerville, WFP; Murray Watkinson, WFP; Bob Craven, WFP; Maureen Plecas, G.R. Smolt Co. Ltd.; Dick Dennison, G.R. Resident.

1.0 Paul called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

2.0 Introductions around the table

3.0 The agenda was approved by consensus

4.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

No changes or omissions

5.0 Old business arising from the minutes

Paul talked about the nomination process for the newly formed West Coast Aquatic Management Board and the contact names for more information. They are Tom Pater-334-8838 and Archie Little-720-7955. Roger talked about the number of seats available and a little more on the nomination process. Steve mentioned that seats would be hard to get although there will **probably** be sub committees ie: watershed committees, clam board, etc. Paul talked about his conversation with Craig Whiteman of Moelp about possible restoration projects for Heber/Crest/Elk systems. Craig had stated that the three systems were in great shape as far as Moelp was concerned with only the lower Elk River needing some riparian work. Craig stated that Moelp would most likely support any stream fertilization project where steelhead and trout were concerned and the need for fertilization is justified. Roger mentioned that he will be attending a "Restoring Nutrients to Salmon Ecosystems" workshop in the states and will give us an overview when he returns. Dick asked about the fertilizing of trees and how does it affect salmon production. Murray replied that it usually doesn't make its way into streams as the spraying is stopped short of the riparian zones. Steve mentioned that DFO has been doing lake fertilization by plane with good success. Steve said if it's possible to link the fertilizers with the forestry program it should be looked at. Murray asked if Steve could find out more about DFO's program ie: type of fertilizer, amount used, etc. Some discussion followed on the types of fertilizers that are used and their effects. Chris says he talked to Rick Axsford and he was interested in doing the Conuma River after some water quality testing. Roger talked about the systems in Kyuquot that have been done ie: Malksope, Easy Creek and Jansen Creek. Murray stated that there is a program ongoing in the Keough River. Roger commented that's the system that is being used as the example to further the "silver bullet" cure. Roger has some concerns on whether the fertilization program is actually the "silver bullet" that everyone thinks it will become. He will address these concerns at

the upcoming workshop and report his findings at the following meeting. Dick asked about the progress of the Hutchinson Creek project. Paul replied that the ranking by Hrsep was high and the rumour is it will receive funding to begin work on the side channel work. WFP has expressed an interest in partnering in the project as soon as they receive a copy of the prescription report by Dave Clough RpBio. Roger said that he too heard the ranking was high for Hutchinson Creek. Mooyah River, Oktwanch River and the Gold River Chinook Project also received a high ranking.

6.0 Minutes of previous meeting approved by consensus

7.0 Correspondence

There was no new correspondence.

8.0 New Business

Paul talked about the “notional allocation” of FsRBC funds to the four regions of NTC territory. The total funds allocated are 583k minus 70k for administration costs and minus a hold back of 113k. The remaining 400k will be divided between the four regions. This means that the northern region (ours) will receive no less than 100k. Roger added that there is some controversy around the decision process to determine the allocation to each area. Paul went on to say that in the next two weeks he would be calling a meeting in the four communities to announce the call for proposals and explain the process to them. All proposals will be sent to the Stewardship Coordinator (Paul) before being passed on to the technical review committee. Roger talked about the technical review process and how they review the proposals and rank them based on criteria they have set out. The highest-ranking proposals will then go to the West Coast Aquatic Management Board and the final decision will be made there. Roger also talked about the new conflict of interest policy for the technical committee that allows for control over staff having to leave the room when ranking occurs in a project where that person or persons are involved in the project in some way through support or labour. This was lacking in the past and has been addressed. Paul talked about the Guise Creek Slide Assessment prescriptions and how he is trying to form a partnership between Weyerhaeuser and WFP to fund the prescriptions so FsRBC and partners can concentrate on in stream work, which is their focus (SRP not WRP).

9.0 Action Items

1. Paul to set up presentation from WFP on Nootka Island FDP for next meeting.
2. Steve to find out about DFO’s lake/stream fertilization program and report back to the committee.
3. Paul will work with Dale and Kevin to put together a proposal to build a net pen on Muchalaht Lake to hold adult spawners to use for brood stock.
4. Roger will talk to Doug Swift about permits, etc. for net pen idea.

10.0 Presentations

Kevin gave a presentation on the Forest Development Plan for 2001-2005. He talked about Leigh Creek having a hydro station in place to monitor the system. The watershed won’t be logged for another three years. Kevin mentioned that they have assessments for the Conuma River Watershed available if we’re interested. He also talked about the SMZ at the top of the Gold River watershed by Twaddle Lake. This will be logged similar to the cut block above Hutchinson Creek. Kevin invited everyone to come down to

view the plan at WFP's office. He commented that they are willing to discuss issues around the plan and any serious concerns will be looked at. He went on to say that it's great to have someone pointing out the things that sometimes get overlooked like BMP's and brow logs over culverts. Maureen asked when the 60 day period for viewing the plan is over. Kevin replied April 15th. Chris mentioned his concerns over the cut block proposed next to the slough across from the hatchery. Kevin stated that they would be using a seed tree silver culture system to eliminate some of the visual concerns. Paul asked what the buffer zone from the slough would be. Kevin replied that it would meet FPC standards (75ft); he went on to say that it is also a Potential Undulate Winter Range for Elk. Steve commented that once the road is in place it would be a good idea to look at a possible side channel project. Kevin responded that the road would be left at the top of the hill and the logs would be yarded up to the landing. Dale asked how much more logging would be taking place at Big Bend Creek. Kevin replied that there would be no further development in that cut block. Bob suggested that someone from WFP might come and give a presentation to the committee on the Nootka Island Forest Development Plan. Everyone agreed. Bob stated this would include Burman, Jacklah and Silverado watersheds. Steve commented that he had concerns over the Leigh Creek plan with two cut blocks that go around the hill and is it possible to heli log these instead of building roads. Kevin stated that this would definitely be looked at. Steve gave a presentation on the role of the Conuma Hatchery and spoke on his handouts. Steve mentioned the focus of Salmon Enhancement Program (SEP) is changing to satelliting smaller systems ie: Sucwoa, Tlupana Rivers etc. Steve talked about the small volunteer group comprised of Sports Fish Advisory members and Rod and Gun Club members that helps to take brood stock from these systems every fall. He talked about using a sea pen system in front of the Sucwoa River similar to the one in the Conuma Estuary. Steve has been focusing on Chinook because all SRP work usually benefits Coho/Chum. There are still discussions in DFO whether the Tsowwin River has ever had substantial escapements. Dick asked if funding for the hatchery would continue to be cut. Steve replied, yes they want to cut back on production and do conservation stuff. Chris stated that the Conuma also provides fry to the Zeballos Hatchery and the hope is they will start taking their own brood stock this fall once a new well is in place. Roger asked if Sucwoa River Coho were still a concern as identified in the document "Blueprint for living Salmon Habitat". Chris replied that there were no concerns for this year or last. Dick asked when Chinook would be put into the sea pens. Chris replied in two weeks. Kevin asked about the fish getting through the canyon. Steve replied that they've been transplanting fry into the upper Conuma for years and last fall for the first time they along with volunteers transplanted adult Coho above the barriers to spawn thereby increasing survival and fertilization through dead carcasses. Hopefully this will continue when abundance permits. Dale and John gave their presentation on the Gold River Chinook Project and stated they've been doing enhancement on the Gold River for 20 years. Dale talked about the partnership between the mill and Saga Seafood's. He stated that they're ongoing problem is with funding. Dale stated that another big problem is the target numbers for brood stock from the systems they enhance ie: 500k from the Burman and 500k from the Gold. Three years ago they had one female

from the Gold. Kevin asked what the budget was when the mill was running. Dale replied about 150k. John added that it is about half of that now. WFP supports them by flying fry into systems for release. John commented that the main reason they take their brood stock from the bottom end of the system is cost. Dale would like to see a sea pen system in Muchalaht Lake where they can hold adults from the upper reaches and then transport them back to the hatchery by truck. There was some talk around developing a volunteer effort around to help use the Oktwanch River system for Coho brood stock. Kevin stated that if John and Dale put together a proposal and get the necessary approvals in place WFP will help with transport. Paul, Roger and Dale will work with Doug Swift (June) to get the process moving. Chris commented that the Conuma Hatchery has old sea pen frames and nets that could be used once permission is approved.

11.0 Open Discussion

Steve talked about the process changing in the New Year. Instead of the Community Advisors getting the funding for enhancement activities it will go through Steve. Everyone was pleased with this move. Paul talked about the newly formed Nootka Sound River Stewards Society comprised of sports fishing lodges and operators in the area. Their objectives are to solicit funds from their clients and other sources to be used in restoring important fish bearing systems that are critical to the sports fishery. It is set up as a charitable society to accept donations and issue tax receipts.

12.0 Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday April 25/01 same time, same place.