

Nootka Sound Watershed Society

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 26 May, 2004 in the Western Forest Products Meeting Room

Present:

Jim Mitchell (D)- Village of Gold River/Stream Keepers; Paul Smith (D)- Stream Keepers; Dick Dennison (D)- Gold River Rod and Gun; Dave Davies- DFO; Craig Wightman- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection; Paul Bavis- Western Forest Products; Chris Erikson- Gold River Resident; Jay McCool- Grieg Seafoods, Jim Murphy- Grieg Seafoods; Richard Schmidt- Gold River Rod and Gun; Morris McNally- Gold River Rod and Gun; John Bruce- Gold River Rod and Gun; Kent O'Neil- Lodge at Gold River; Temple McPherson- Lodge at Gold River; Scott Silvestri- B.C. Conservation Foundation; Brad Smith- B.C. Conservation Foundation

1.0 Paul called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.

Paul asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet.

2.0 Introductions around the table

3.0 Changes/additions/approval of agenda

Craig Wightman's name spelled incorrectly. Jim Murphy moved to accept agenda, seconded by Dick Dennison, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved.

4.0 Changes or additions to minutes of the previous meeting

Paul asked everyone to read over the previous minutes. Craig Wightman's name spelled incorrectly again. Jim Mitchell updated everyone that the field trip for the stewardship education has been changed to a trip and bbq to Dunlop Creek Coho Indicator Fence this Friday for half a day. Jim also asked that the previous minutes be changed to reflect the sensitive nature of the last meeting. Starting at the sentence that reads " Jim Mitchell voiced" Discussion followed and it was decided to leave the minutes as is, as they reflect the exact nature of the discussion and although it got a little messy we should be open and honest with all our discussions to keep an even playing field.

5.0 Approval of Minutes

Jim Mitchell moved to accept minutes, Dick Dennison seconded, called to question, all in favour, none opposed, so moved.

6.0 Old business arising from the minutes

Jim Mitchell talked about stewardship activities and Forest Investment Account funding for Big Bend Creek. He talked about the difficulties understanding where the project fits into the criteria for funding. He is presently working with Sean Wong (Moth), Dave Clough (DR Clough Consulting) and Ken Hall (WFP) on this and other funding for the project. The plan calls for Newbury Rock Weirs instream, baffles in the culvert and large woody debris placed instream. There will also be some riparian planting next to the stream where needed. Stage three will incorporate an interpretive trail for education purposes and to hopefully tie into the stewardship education classes already in place. Jim also stated that the shorekeepers assessment would recommence this year at Tuta Marina to pick up where we left off two years ago. Jim hopes to set up another storm drain marking exercise to finish off those drains that couldn't be painted last year. Dave Davies asked Kim

Hyatt about the Sockeye strays into the area and Kim stated that it is highly unlikely because Sockeye strays the least of all species of salmon, however given the presence of Robertson Creek Chinook it is possible. Dick Dennison replied that he remembers DFO being in the area when the majority of the straying occurred in the eighties and thought this fall into the same issue as the Robertson Creek Chinook strays. There was some discussion on the timing issues to get into the Gold River system. Dave Davies also commented that he mentioned the Oktwanch River issues of the river meandering away from the previous side channel trapping Coho to Mel Sheng and hasn't had a reply as of yet. Paul Smith updated everyone on the dendrogram data.

7.0 Correspondence

Paul Smith talked about an email from Kent Simpson (DFO) on the workshop for salmon enumeration this fall on local streams. An email from Warren Warttig with a link to an article about salmon recovery in the US generated some discussion on the credibility of the document as most BC hatcheries use ground water that originates from the watershed that the fish came from. Lots of discussions followed on the pros and cons of hatcheries. There was an email from Jerry West (The Record) about the news release from the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund. There was an email from Dave Davies on the upcoming public meetings to discuss upcoming 2004/05 priorities and work plans for the Greater Georgia Basin Steelhead Recovery Plan.

8.0 New Business

No new business.

9.0 Presentations

Craig Wightman started his presentation by explaining the workshops with the Greater Georgia Basin Recovery Plan (GGBRP) in the email correspondence we received from Dave Davies. It all started in 1977 when Steelhead returns were almost draconian. Since then the annual fishing closures have increased substantially. Other recent changes have come into effect also i.e. bait bans. The province has only 4 fisheries staff left in Nanaimo. They use the Keough River as the indicator stream. It has gone from thousands of Steelhead to just hundreds. He talked about Gold River stocks being healthy and it is hoped that this years dismal returns are a blip in escapement. Paul Smith asked what if it isn't as last year wasn't so great either. Craig replied then there would be management changes taking place, but that they will get a better idea of next years returns after looking at the summer run returns because they are a good indicator of the winter runs. Craig will be sure to send us the data of their summer river swims so we are kept in the loop. Brad Smith talked about the B.C. Conservation Council's work in the GGBRP started in 1998. In 2002 the program was expanded to tackle the whole basin. A big part of their work is snorkel surveys. Brad gave his power point presentation on the GGBRP. At this time Paul Smith asked for copies of both presentations for our records. Dave Davies asked how they account for the differences between the Heber River and Gold River systems. Craig Wightman replied that they really don't know, but it could be a reflection of the conditions of the watersheds. Dick Dennison asked about the effects of seal predation in Georgia Strait. Craig replied that the Puntledge River is a good example of where this is a factor. Dick then asked if the returns increased after a seal cull. Craig responded yes. Dave Davies asked what the threshold was for extirpation. Craig stated that there is no number yet. Each system is looked at individually. Chris Erikson

asked if 100% of the Robertson Creek Steelhead were marked. The answer was yes. Paul Smith asked if DNA sampling was done on Steelhead in the Gold and Heber River systems. No was the reply, but it is going on in the Keough River. Chris Erikson asked if the returns next winter are the same or worse what kind of management changes will take place. Craig Wightman replied that it is too early to tell, but there would be serious changes occurring.

10.0 Action Items

1. Jim Mitchell and Dave Davies will coordinate the shorekeepers assessment of Tuta Marina beach.
2. Jim Mitchell and Dave Davies will coordinate the storm drain marking exercise.
3. Paul Smith will go out and take pictures and collect more information on the Oktwanch River meandering away from the exit of the side channel.
4. Craig Wightman will provide Paul Smith a copy of the power point presentation for our records.

11.0 Open Discussion

Very little discussion took place, but most was on the future of Steelhead in the Nootka Sound area.

12.0 Adjournment

Jim Murphy moved to adjourn at 9:27 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday, June 30, 2004 same time, same place.