

Watershed Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 30th October 2001 in the Ridgeview Motel Hospitality Room

Present:

Paul Smith- R.A.M.S.; Doug Swift-DFO; Steve Emmonds-DFO; Roger Dunlop-NTC; Chris Erikson DFO/Conuma Hatchery; Dick Dennison, G.R. Resident.

1.0 Paul called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m.

2.0 Introductions around the table

3.0 The agenda was approved by consensus

4.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

Sentence reading, "Fertilization workshop he attend" be changed to read " he attended".

5.0 Old business arising from the minutes

Dick asked Doug if the DFO office was up and running yet. Doug replied that it is real close. Doug stated that they should be here four days a week when the office is up and running. Roger talked about the fertilization workshop he attended in Oregon. He talked about the distance salmon travel to spawn stating that there used to be an incredible delivery of nutrients to the ecosystem. The nitrogen isotope of 15 only occurs in a marine environment. Tests were completed by UBC to determine the nitrogen concentrations in lakes from the past to determine salmon escapements ie: before commercial fishing. Nitrogen and Phosphorus are rare in the world today. Fertilization is supposed to mimic the carcasses in systems. Every organism in streams benefits from carcasses. Tests with Coho fry density shows 150 grams of dead flesh per square meter. Steve asked if this was all year round? Roger replied yes. Tom Rankin studied the carcasses that were hauled off by bears in Queen Charlotte Islands to be 16,000. This showed that bears are using carcasses to fertilize trees. Chris Parrin of BC Hydro introduced sterile Cutthroat Trout into Alouette Lake to get rid of Stickleback and improve Sockeye stocks. Cutthroat then disappeared because of sterility now allowing them to spawn. The lack of nitrogen/phosphorus coincides with the beginning of the commercial fishery. Some discussions around the pros and cons of forestry fertilization followed. Some systems have major algae blooms afterwards. This can be harmful to fish due to excessive oxygen use. Steve talked about Kim Hyatt and Ron Kadawaki's past interest in Muchalaht Lake nutrient levels and he had some information he would give to Paul for the next meeting on this. Doug asked how the meeting at the Rod and Gun Club on the Muchalaht Weir went? Paul stated that he thought it went well although not everyone who express concern from the last meeting attended. Kent Simpson and Frank Crabbe attended from DFO. Paul stated that Frank Crabbe stated that he would look into our concerns of poor maintenance and get back to the club. Kent Simpson said that you want some build up on the weir and that we should be looking at the potential benefits of the weir to the recreational fishery and try to improve the project not reject it because of some minor

issues that can be dealt with and improved. Roger explained some of the reasons for poor maintenance. Dick asked why it couldn't be located at the mouth of the lake (out of sight out of mind). Roger replied that the water flow is too slow. Roger talked about the possibility of putting the weir on the Oktwanch River to help the G.R. Chinook Project in getting Chinook brood stock. Paul responded that Dale Frame informed him that the reason there was no Chinook brood stock taken from the Gold River, is that there wasn't enough fish to justify taking brood stock. Paul gave an update on the Lord Creek barrier that he and Mike Thurber (Stream Keeper) assessed for Doug. He handed out a document with the data. Steve asked about the possibility of installing a portable fish way. Paul replied that it would be very costly in his view. Dick asked if there was road access in the area. Paul replied that he did see a clear cut, which indicates road access. Doug suggested going back in June to assess remaining stretch of creek above the dam. Check fry density etc. Dick suggested taking a slope reading below dam to above dam to determine historical slope.

6.0 Minutes of previous meeting approved by consensus

7.0 Correspondence

No correspondence.

8.0 New Business

Discussion moved on to the charts of Pink/Sockeye escapement data for the area. Roger mentioned that there was a commercial seine fishery in 1975 that clearly shows up on the charts. Paul stated that the early eighties also show a defined interception of escapements. Chris said he would like to see data on Chum enhancement to determine if there is a correlation between the two. Chum and Pinks use the same habitat he said. Steve mentioned that the Gold River Sockeye seems to be booming and wondered if the systems (Gold, Muchalaht and Oktwanch) were combined. Doug talked about the old methods of counting not being that accurate. Steve wondered if the Sockeye escapement into the Gold is what Wilf wanted for a target or is it higher or lower? Paul asked where do we go from here? Roger commented that we should prioritise to start identifying systems for enhancement. Doug stated that we should also look at gravel quality. The Burman and Conuma were mentioned that had substantial historical Pink returns. Steve added that the substrate in the Conuma River has changed to a larger size and might not be a suitable candidate for enhancement. Roger asked where we get the technical expertise to help out? Doug replied that Wilf would know. Roger added that in 1975 there was a huge flood event that could have affected substrate compositions. Steve mentioned that there could be ocean survival conditions and logging pressures that contributed as well. Discussion followed on the way we approach this to establish a nutrient improvement instead of creating a fishery. Paul asked whether we should focus on one system or more than one. Chris stated that he thought we should focus on the Burman River Pinks. Everyone agreed to determine whether stock assessment of DFO was interested and if they had a river of preference. Chris mentioned putting smolts in sea pen in front of estuary instead of releasing into river. Paul gave an update on the salmon enumeration with the Gold River Stream Keepers. He stated that Big Bend Creek, Hutchinson Creek and Dunlop Creek were being enumerated this year and he should have some escapement numbers in January. Paul talked about the Stream Keepers course put on locally and the

good turnout. Dave Clough (RPBIO) donated his instruction time in kind. The Stream Keepers should be a registered society by December. Paul updated the progress on purchasing Stream Keepers supplies with the FsRBC and PSF funding. Paul asked Steve and Chris if the adult Coho transplant was still a go for the upper Conuma. Both stated yes. Chris talked about the Conuma Off Channel Assessment and Canton Creek Side Channel Assessment being done on October 27 & 28. Dick asked whether there is a cost to putting water from the hatchery into the off channel. Steve replied that's a possibility if they have to use well water. Dick asked about the Hutchinson Creek Side Channel and rumours of its banks collapsing. Paul replied that when Dave Clough taught the Stream Keepers course he had concerns over the steepness of the banks at the far end of the channel. The Rod and Gun and Stream Keepers are working together to solve the concerns.

9.0 Action Items

1. Paul, Chris and Roger will draft a letter to DFO stock assessment to ask for theories or data on lack of Pink returns to the Burman River. Also ask for their input in a fix.
2. Paul will organize another trip into Lord Creek to complete assessment above barrier.

10.0 Presentations

There were no presentations.

11.0 Open Discussion

There was some discussion on the excellent Coho returns over the last two years and their nutrient value.

12.0 Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 9:14 pm. Next meeting is on Wednesday, November 28/01 same time, same place.