

Minutes of the first meeting to construct a working group of citizens wishing to participate on a Shawnigan Lake Watershed Roundtable on Saturday, March 3, 2012 from 2 – 4 pm in the Round Room of the Shawnigan Lake Community Centre., BC

PRESENT:

Dr. Bruce Fraser
Kelly Musselwhite
Grant Price, SRA
Graham Ross-Smith, SRA and APC
Grant Treloar, APC
Frank Limshue, Couverdon, TimberWest Forrest Corp.
Bill Savage, Parks and Recreation
Carolyn Dowell, Citizen
Keith Granbois, Local Woodlot Owner
Domenico Iannidinardo, TimberWest Forrest Corp.
Tom Hobby, Mill Bay Resident, Sustaining Creation Management
Dave Hutchinson, APC, Focus News
Brent Beach, Resident, Focus News
Cori Barraclough, Freshwater Ecologist, Aqua-Tex
Patrick Lucey, Sr. Aquatic Ecologist, Aqua-Tex

Overview of introduction as presented by Bruce:

- This is a multi-jurisdictional issue making it highly complex
- If we collaborate energy progress will be made instead of assuming what needs doing will get done
- Grant, Graham, Dave, and Bill are members of the launch core group, which will now be extended to a wider net of people at grassroots levels before inviting authorities and businesses to participate
- The idea is taken from a similar initiative developed over time in Cowichan Lake, which took several years to compile before moving ahead
- The different agencies often have not worked together and this will require time to achieve and smooth out rough edges
- Water basin planning can be complicated but it does not have to be
- Shawnigan Lake is a rural/residential region NOT its original industrial basin
- There is almost no place in basin that has not been impacted by commercial/residential/industrial implications
- The basin is also fragmented in many ways in terms of perspectives, goals, and levels of participation
- Our declining water quality is highly controversial within this community
- It is apparently essential that a management plan is developed and managed by the community and at all jurisdictional levels
- Dr. Mazunder claims that if we maintain status quo we will have a green lake in 12-15 years
- We need to establish proactive not reactive behaviour in terms of our current water issues

Overview of Concerns of Lake Use and Condition, in random order (Group):

- Flooding/fluxuating lake levels
- Development impact and responsible management
- Declining water quality, which is directly related to human imposition
- Land use ie pesticides, herbicides, and other household chemicals
- Aging septic tanks and fields
- Recreation
- The need to separate perception from reality in the public's eye
- Educating public re uses and alternatives
- Access to lake and road ends remaining in majority (72/74) with Min. of Highways
- Disbursement of public use

- Discrepancy of zoning of the lake's surface ie who does one deal with for any violation
- Enforcement and issues of multiple jurisdictions
- Lakeshore use
- Docks
- Clear cutting – forestry/logging practices
- TimberWest owns 25% of watershed
- Appropriate respect for water in general
- Appropriate development density
- Climate change and changing patterns of rainfall
- Governance at CVRD ie limited staff and resources
- Summer playground
- Increasing population given location to south of island
- Invasive species
- Attitude of public in terms of sense of historical entitlement
- Fragmentation in mindsets ie need to find common ground and create a shift in thinking
- Changing definitions of lakeshore ie recent surveyor general's decision in relation to Cullin Rd.
- Determining a common language of water levels and property ownership
- Lack of standardization

Overview of Solutions (Group):

- Proceeds from development can be used to refurbish infrastructure issues
- Requires collaborative approach
- High level of forestry ownership is a positive as they desire to be ecologically minded
- Local developers are getting involved by consulting Aqua –Tex re their projects

Other Considerations:

- It is imperative to determine the needs of the environment first before the needs of people
- The water supplier for the village (Lidstick) is attempting to double their license entitlement of water extraction
- The basin is close to being maxed out for volume regardless of quality issue
- Our reality is that there are not a lot of freedoms in which we have any control ie snowfall and rainfall (Global Warming) before it is too late
- While the issues at hand increase, government funding to pay to fix them decreases
- There are only three sources of funding:
 - 1) development charges – yet a large group does not want development to occur although they can pay for both restoration and management programs
 - 2) taxation – no one wants
 - 3) government grants – which for the large part do not exist
- “bringing up the bridge” and not allowing further population intake only allows the seeds of our current community to be sown without a means of correction or even improvement

Contributions from Patrick Lucey of Aqua-Tex:

- The challenges of the basin are universal while individual cultures are the only difference
- Using a defragmented planning process is how we have always done things but we do not need to continue in this fashion – this requires a mindset change
- We need to manage the entire ecology of the watershed
- We can do this by shifting from an open context to a closed context whereby the context is water
- This requires a radically different way of thinking
- 100% of the time, the change and positive outcome of a healthy ecological approach are lucrative!
- We must change our thinking and our design process to make this possible
- We need to think of water as an organism
- One will never find healthy land where streams are “trashed”
- Historically our thinking has always been about the money

- Money has been our philosophical concept, which is a social construct
- We must design with nature in the approach by integrating ecological, environmental, and social factors
- This can all be done and has been supported by a successful business case
- Vancouver and Vancouver Island lead the world by being on the cutting edge of improvement
- These places are likely to set the standard for other similar international projects given the same problems

Contributions by Grant Price, SRA, responsible for acquiring current water quality issues:

- Dr. Mazunder is currently working in a 5 year contract with the CVRD
- He is conducting a South Cowichan water study ie water quality of Shawnigan, aquifers in Cobble Hill
- He is also considering the effects of climate change and water basin changes
- Dr. Mazunder has been studying the lake for many years
- His reports and findings can be located on the CVRD website
- **NOTE: the Director's Meeting on April 11, 2012 will have Dr. Mazunder reporting to the CVRD where he will focus on the watershed**

Task List:

- Obtain a City of Colwood OCP (they integrated ecologically sound bylaws) and use to construct Similar bylaws for Shawnigan Lake, which must go to public hearing in a few months
- Determine venue and date for Patrick and Cory to give a workshop whereby community is invited
- Communications – develop a web presence
- Link all sites so the contiguous information is available
- Spread awareness with wider public re level of complexity of issue
- Create an “inviting agency list”
- Determine a venue and date for a presentation by Dr. Mazunder who has offered to do so
- Create a collecting library of information
- Cory suggested watching a short video: livingbywater.ca (also comes in book format)
- Create organizational workshops/terms of reference/where/when/frequency of them
- Create subgroups who are willing to work
- Schedule next meeting within the month
- Include the Cowichan Tribes and Malahat First Nations
- Talk to CVRD re putting forward staff time
- Put in application for workstudy or co-op students – create a job(s)
- Look at functional condition of streams and determine the current condition
- Three possibilities:
 - 1) healthy – in which case we protect
 - 2) function is at risk – in which we work to restore and protect
 - 3) unhealthy – in which case nature can only fix over time
- Use amenity costs from development, which are usually offered as parkland, toward necessary environmental contributions