

Colquitz Coalition Annual Meeting – February 8th, 2018

Hosted by Peninsula Streams Society at Pearkes Recreation Centre, 7-10pm

Attendees (28)

Bruce Bevan, Esquimalt Anglers
Wayne Zaccarelli, Victoria Fish & Game Protective Assoc., Amalgamated Conservation Society
Julian Anderson, Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park
Jamie Disbrow, Friends of Colquitz Mainstem
Erin Greeves, Haliburton Farms
Renee Cenerini, Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary
Rick Hatch, District of Saanich Parks - Natural Areas
George Harper, Peninsula Streams Society & Friends of Colquitz Mainstem
Les Desfosses, Friends of Colquitz Mainstem, Videographer
Jeff Skinner, Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary
Craig Elder, Friends of Swan Creek Watershed
Dorothy Chambers, Salmon in the City
Dave Lock, Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association
Meaghan McDonald, World Fisheries Trust
Mary Scobie, Friends of Colquitz Mainstem
Paul Boughen, Friends of Colquitz Mainstem
Val McDonald, Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association
Lynn Husted, Goward Springs Watershed Stewards
Jody Watson, CRD Harbours (Elk Lake)
Gordie May, Volunteer
John Coates, Friends of Swan Creek Watershed
Ben Kerr, Friends of Swan Creek Watershed
Robert McConnell, Victoria Golden Rods and Reels
Brian Koval, Peninsula Streams Society
Ian Bruce, Peninsula Streams Society
Haji Charania, North Quadra Community Association
Ben Bowker, District of Saanich, Manager Storm and Waste Water
Bob MacDonald, Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association

1) Welcome, Background of Colquitz Coalition and Introductions – Ian Bruce

- Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.
- Round room introductions made (name and group)
- Reminder that one function of Colquitz Coalition website <http://colquitzcoalition.com/> is to serve as archive for reports and data on Colquitz Watershed. So much research, project-work, etc. has been done (and is at risk of being lost or forgotten) in the watershed, so this is our effort to preserve and log it for the benefit of the community and our own groups. If you have reports, etc. to archive, please send to PeninsulaStreams@gmail.com and PSS will add to website.

2) Presentations by Groups

Victoria Fish & Game Protective Association, Amalgamated Conservation Society - Wayne Zaccarelli

- Showed projector slides from 1975-76
- Slides included photos of Swan Lake, Blenkinsop, Pendray Farm, Helmcken Falls and other areas of the Colquitz Watershed

Friends of Cuthbert Holmes Park – Julian Anderson

- The McKenzie Interchange Project (Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure - MoTI) continues construction which is causing damage to Cuthbert Holmes Park
- The project has destroyed Garry Oak and Aspen areas.
- These areas were valued so that they could be compensated for in areas within 20 km of the TCH project. The Garry Oak woodland is valued at ~ \$766,000 and Aspen area at ~ \$477,000
- MoTI promised a 30 meter buffer from their berm to the creek but this distance has been breached on multiple occasions.

- To Dos: keep on MoTI to keep the berm back; Plant 600 plants along the berm (it was pointed out that this is about 1 plant per meter); Dave Polster recommends a rough and loose slope design (we have not heard back on whether they will do this); Obtain proper compensation for buffer breaches; obtain a comprehensive mitigation plan.

Esquimalt Anglers – Bruce Bevan

- Bruce is also a key Streamkeeper for Craigflower Creek
- Craigflower salmon returns were down in 2017: 131 females and 109 males (compared to 1400 salmon last year). This was likely due to poor ocean survival. Late rains caused fish to have to wait to swim upstream, and otters and seals took their toll then.
- Our focus should be on maintaining water flow.
- Fish spawned in lower areas due to low flow
- Should install flowmeter at CRD dam to monitor flow.
- Is there a procedure in place by the CRD to know how much water to hold back for the year?
- Ian Bruce – ‘Predation was a big problem this year, in other creeks as well.’

Victoria Golden Rod and Reels - Robert McConnell

- The group has not been overly busy
- Member Clive Lane passed away this year, the group is putting together a memorial to recognize his contributions.
- Goldstream Hatchery had a poor year. Lower water levels, predation (human and other) and bycatch at sea all contributed to low fish returns. The hatchery has very few eggs this year (~5,000), may be hard to keep open. Also not getting support from the DFO, in fact they are being discouraged.
- John Coates – ‘Is there historical documentation to keep track of (school) fish released in Colquitz?’
- Yes – Don Lowen has this information and shares it.

Goward Springs Watershed Stewards – Lynn Husted

- fish still can't get through Quick's Bottom Park
- Workparty with PSS support undertook staking of the riparian area at Viaduct to control reed canary grass and improve vegetation cover
- bullfrogs are an issue in the area, working on plan to help local red-legged frogs
- PSS will work with the group to evaluate resident Cutthroat population in the area

Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association – Dave Lock

- the group helps improve fish populations in the Colquitz and monitor fish
- need more pressure on government authorities to control invasive species

Haliburton Watershed UBER Project – Erin Greeves

- Haliburton Brook runs along the organic community farm
- want to better connect with Elk/Beaver Lake and restore to create better connectivity
- want to promote amphibian populations
- early in planning phase
- Erin is building a Haliburton watershed model
- they will be monitoring salamanders (western red-back and long toed salamanders)

Peninsula Streams Society – Ian Bruce

- PSS has attended Music in the Park and Farmers Markets in Colquitz watershed this past year
- We provide Grade 3 (Watershed Model and Salmon Lifecycle Games), Gr. 5 (Carbon Cycle) and Gr. 6/7 (Creatures of Habitat) environmental education programs
- Elk/Beaver – CRD fish survey caught no native fish
- O'Donnell Creek – Golden Rods and Reels have done work
- Goward Springs – staking work party was held at Viaduct
- Blenkinsop – PSS and partners will be completing the Lochside Garry Oak project to build a meadow after BC Hydro took down some trees. They have donated \$10,000 to this project.
- Perhaps we could get some compensation funds from MoTI for the destruction of the Garry Oak woodland system near by Cuthbert Holmes. Julian will look into this.
- Swan Creek – 3 new riffles were build and 3 refurbished in 2017. FoSCW helped plant at Tree Appreciation Day at Columbine

- Colquitz – Saanich was busy with Wilkinson Road Project. Ian showed the riffle plan at Copley Park (3 new riffles to be built). The Friends of Colquitz Mainstem had an ivy removal work party
- Gabo – Ben Bowker said the “wattling” at Gabo looks great. There are still good stewardship opportunities at Gabo to do creek work
- Swan AGM – March 8;
- PSS AGM – May 12;
- Creatures of Habitat @ Colquitz Middle School – April 30. PSS will need volunteers for this!

Salmon in the City – Dorothy Chambers

- if you see a problem in the Colquitz, tell her and she will report it
- it was a lousy year for salmon (315 adults in 2017 compared to 1300 in 2016)
- no water in creek until late this year, need water from Elk/Beaver weir
- salmon left stranded after initial flush of water with no rain afterwards (mid-October)
- There was an oil spill in Swan in October as well
- Seals were reported eating salmon in the Gorge

Friends of Swan Creek Watershed – Craig Elder

- lots of work done in Swan Forest by FoSCW, the Green Team and local students. They cleared ivy and planted native vegetation in December
- planted the Allotment Gardens two years ago and removed invasive species
- completed stream work by Daisy Ave. this year (3 new riffles). The FoSCW have moved ~50 tonnes of rock in 4 years!
- rebuilt riffles by the Bob Cox Bridge (near CRD pump station). Also planted the riparian area in December
- Saanich restoration project at Carey Road – removed invasive grass and sediment from creek. They also removed invasive plants from the banks and replanted with native species on Tree Appreciation Day
- John Coates continues to monitor water quality in Swan Creek. Ben Kerr puts data together and has ~3-4 years of data now
- Swan AGM is March 8

World Fisheries Trust - Meaghan McDonald

- Meaghan also works for WWF
- She monitors herring in the Gorge. Surveys occur daily with volunteers.
- She interviews fisherman to hear what they’ve seen
- She also takes DNA for analysis

Friends of Colquitz Mainstem – George Harper

- George’s background is in Forestry and Agriculture
- After staking at Goward, thought it would be good to have a better source of stakes.
- he proposed we create stool beds. We would plant willow or red-osier dogwood here so that we could harvest them for restoration work in the future.
- we could do this at Panama Flats, good soils and water level for this. Need to build in location that has easy access with less dense vegetation. He proposed this be done in an area off Carey (easy access, good soil, free of established vegetation, above water at the moment, and there are species on-site to cut and plant
- Ian ‘we used to and could get donor materials from Rithet’s Bog’

District of Saanich – Ben Bowker and Rick Hatch

- Ben works with storm and wastewater to ensure proper function and to maintain water quality. He works with PSS and other groups to achieve this
- Saanich has full time staff responsible for waterways which includes ditches
- the Saanich Spill Response Program helps mitigate spill events as quickly as possible
- Saanich wants to replace spill signs to have their direct number
- Since 2012, Saanich has responded to 64 calls regarding spill events
- Creek assessment reports have been completed on Swan, Colquitz, O’Donnell and Normandy
- Saanich has mapped out waterways and storm drain locations to improve response time
- Saanich has completed instream work on many creeks including Durrell, Gabo, Swan and Colquitz
- Saanich Parks Natural Areas has 12 staff

- Parks actively removes invasive plants throughout the watershed including at Mahon Brook, Viaduct Pond, Lindsay Trail, etc.
- Did a great job reducing width of Lindsay trail and giving it more natural look
- In 2018, will continue Swan Creek restoration at Columbine Way
- Rick with work with Julian Anderson to improve and mitigate damage to Cuthbert Holmes Park from McKenzie Interchange Project
- Pulling Together is a great program and still going strong, working with members of the Saanich community

Capital Regional District – Jodi Watson

- Presented on CRD activities in Elk/Beaver Lake and the Colquitz River
- The Elk Beaver Lake Initiative objectives are to Coordinate IWG, liaise/engage community and stakeholders, get funding to remediate lake, reduce internal phosphorous, pre/post water quality and cyanobacteria monitoring, implement actions to reduce external phosphorus loading, develop IWMP, and public education and awareness.
- Baseline water quality monitoring and a fish survey have been completed on the lakes. No native fish were caught during the survey
- Lisa Rogers was hired as an Elk/Beaver Lake part-time coordinator to research remedial options, complete invasive veg surveys, water quality, stormwater, cyanobacteria sampling, fish survey. Lisa has since moved on to another position.
- Milfoil is a huge issue in Elk/Beaver Lake
- Cyanobacteria are a recurring problem at the lakes with differing windows of bloom and toxicity
- Lake solutions include aeration and phoslock (binds to phosphate and settles in bottom of lake) has been phased out do to uncertainties of outcome versus price
- CRD completed Colquitz Watershed water quality monitoring. WQ in Blenkinsop was very poor.

3) Website Updates

- Peninsula Streams continues to maintain the website. Please send us contact and content updates as with event notices, and also WQ data, fish count data etc. <http://colquitzcoalition.com/>

4) New/Other Business

All business discussed during meeting

5) Next Steps

Continue to hold annual meetings.

6) Date for next meeting

To be determined via email.

Meeting adjourned at 10pm.