



**Present:** Julian Anderson, Christopher Bos, Caren Cameron, Mary Vasey, Terry Eckstein, Vicki Blogg, George Blogg, Bob Cox, Craig Elder, Mike Besler, Don Monroe, Dorothy Chambers, Yogi Carolsfeld, Sara Stallard, Tricia DeMacedo, Kitty Lloyd, Jody Watson

**Guest:** Piatta Marcus (UVic student)

DECISIONS			
1	GWI will submit a letter to DFO regarding the Cohen Commission		
2	GWI welcomed two new groups to the initiative – the Friends of Swan Creek Watershed and the Coquitiz Salmonid Stewardship and Education Society		
<b>Next Meeting: Wednesday, 19 March 2014</b>			
ACTIONS		ACTION BY	DUE
1	Meet to discuss 508 Selkirk Ave site (restored site on Gorge formerly managed by The Land Conservancy)	Jody/Leigh/Julian	ASAP
2	Talk to Malcolm Cowley (CRD engineer) to see if there is any funding available for the Shoreline School restoration project	Jody	ASAP
3	Craig, Sara, Kitty, Dorothy, Tricia will work with Kim Strom at Shoreline School; will tour the property and come up with a plan for restoration and chip trail along waterfront	Craig, Sara, Kitty, Dorothy, Tricia	As project proceeds
4	Send your comments regarding the Cohen commission by next Wednesday	All	Jan 22
5	Draft a letter from the GWI regarding the Cohen Commission, copy to the Auditor General	Kitty	February
6	Send acceptance letters to the new groups	Kitty	ASAP
7	Provide a bar chart showing the timing of fish usage in the Gorge Waterway (including ingoing and outgoing migration) for posting on the GWI website	Chris Bos	Next meeting
8	Send PISCES newsletter to Kitty	George and Vicki	When published
9	Send Nancy Wilkin’s contact to Bloggs regarding the “smart” storm drain technology	Kitty	ASAP

**INFORMATION**

**Pacific Capital Commission lands along the waterway:**

- Maps pf PCC lands around the Gorge were distributed; the properties owned by PCC in GWI area of interest are in Portage Park and Cuthbert Holmes Park
- PISCES has requested that Saanich zone the PCC portion of the Portage Park as parkland, this is what View Royal has done on their portion of Portage Park

**Cohen Commission Report**

- End of October 2012 Cohen Commission submitted their final report on the 2009 collapse of the Fraser River sockeye. The report had many recommendations regarding Pacific salmon stocks, it appears no action has been taken by DFO or other federal agencies
- Concern with the fact that so much money was spent (\$26 million) but no action taken by DFO
- Decision made that GWI submit a letter to the Fisheries Minister regarding the commission’s report

- Ensure that we list all of the groups that are part of the GWI in the letter
- PIPS will be writing a letter
- If others have some wording please send to Kitty to assist with drafting the letter

**New GWI members:**

- Friends of Swan Creek Watershed (FoSC) and the Colquitz Salmonid Stewardship and Education Society (CSSES) are interested in joining the GWI
- Bob Cox (alternate Mike Besler) of FoSC - provided the GWI with a letter outlining their society's desire to become part of the GWI
- Goals and purpose of the FoSC are:
  - a. "Re-establishing healthy aquatic and riparian ecosystems
  - b. Facilitating public education and awareness of issues affecting the Swan Creek watershed
  - c. Maintaining relationships with key agencies and groups with the common goal of improving the ecological health of the Swan Creek watershed
  - d. Developing and implementing a plan of action that sets short-term, mid-term and long-term goals, and
  - e. Raising funds to support the activities of the organization"
- FoSC has an ambitious work plan for the year, they have trapped fry and observed at least 4 salmon spawning sites last fall, doing lots of monitoring and information gathering, working on setting up a website
- Chris Bos (alternate Barrie Goodwin) of Colquitz Salmonid Stewardship and Education Society – interested in joining the GWI. The group installed and maintain the fish counting fence behind the Tillicum Mall, have been doing fish counts since 2001; in 2006 Dorothy joined and has incorporated an educational component to the fence (hundreds of school kids and general public visit the fence each fall during spawning season). In summer 2013 they registered as a new society (CSSES). The purposes are:
  - "To operate a volunteer program that provides fish enumeration and guardianship for the Colquitz River watershed ...
  - To educate school children, at no cost, about the importance of healthy ecosystems and sustaining fish in urban watersheds;
  - To support enhancement and restoration initiatives aimed at rebuilding and maintaining the native fish and wildlife of the Colquitz watershed;
  - To foster cooperation between governments, landowners, businesses and associations toward long term protection of the Colquitz; and
  - To advocate for the health and sustainability of fish and wildlife in the Colquitz River"
- Another group is just forming – Goward Springs – fairly large watershed, historically had Coho, currently has cutthroat, working with VITP to enhance the creek just before it reaches Quick's Bottom; they are hosting a public walkabout on Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>, tried to re-establish the connection between Colquitz and Quick's Bottom – choked out with reed canary grass and there's a weir in the way
- Also have interest from the Esquimalt Residents Association – they are discussing it at their meeting tonight and will get in touch with us. (PS Kitty had a message next day that ERA is moving their meeting dates to accommodate GWI dates, and will send two representatives to our next meeting.)

**Craigflower Bridge Interpretive Signs update**

- Met with Saanich and View Royal staff and representatives from Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. Had a very good conversation, group agreed that all of the large three-sided sign will be dedicated to First Nations
- Having a meeting again Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> at the new Songhees Wellness Centre
- Saanich archivist is bringing albums of archival photos to share with Esquimalt and Songhees Nation
- Suggest that there be consideration of involving the students from Craigflower School
- GWAS has a lot of great photos from the photo contest, many of the Craigflower Bridge
- Pacific Peoples Partnership are going to do a canoe trip of the Gorge

## Partner updates

- **WFT** – have been subsidizing local work with international work, but that source is drying up, so they are planning how to keep the Nature House going; Mary has been running the Nature House, working with GWAS and hope to get other partners to keep the Nature House open more often, show different opportunities to get involved with Gorge stewardship presented by different groups, lots of educational opportunities, need more information about the Colquitz and Cuthbert Holmes Park to start building into programming, will likely run it with summer students again in 2014, looking for other corporate donors, participation is building quite a bit, have lots of volunteers from UVic; involved in moving the Olympia oysters from under the bridge, built reefs by the Nature House and also at Christie Point using Pacific oyster shells as substrate, the site by the Nature House silted in entirely and smothered the colony, they may put another reef up in Portage Inlet; editorial in the TC highlights WFT's work, planning to respond to the editorial to emphasize all the other group who work on the Gorge
- **Saanich** – open house for Gorge Park community gardens was tonight, another one on Saturday at Cedar Shores; no update on Panama Flats – very good turnout to the open house; starting the Craigflower bridge deck next week, hoping to be open to traffic on May 22<sup>nd</sup>; lots of complaints on Gorge Road - it will be re-paved this summer; 3.5 storey seniors' centre project on the corner of Gorge and Admirals, Saanich environmental awards are coming up soon – send in nominations
- **GTCA** – very involved in the Gorge Park community gardens, hopefully they will be ready for planting next year; planning their annual clean-up in Gorge Park and Canada Day picnic on the Gorge
- **FoSC** – proposing smolt counts on the creek, try to get info about the tributaries, put 4000 fin-clipped coho fry from Goldstream into Swan Lake last year to see if they get any survival out of the lake; will try to have a stock assessment workshop; temporary counting fences on smaller systems; looked at the 3 riffles that need to be fixed; have funding from community steward program to make them better, DFO had a look and in-stream work will likely occur in the late summer – only have a 1 month window; trying to bring all the groups together who have an interest in Colquitz (Colquitz River Conservation Coalition), hope to use the leverage of an umbrella group to help provide support and backing, AGM coming up in the next month, riparian enhancement downstream of Mackenzie Ave. (terracing invasive removal and replanting), regular water quality monitoring for past 5-6 months, putting an interactive map together with all the data they are collecting, have been focusing on the lower part of the creek, want to work closely with Blenkinsop group and Swan Lake as well
- **PISCES** – trying to protect the Portage linear park, they have done lots of planting, want to ensure it is protected as a greenway, these are part of the PCC lands that could be sold, lots of highway run off through there with no filtration, annual clean up, continuing the Christmas bird count. ACTION: Kitty will forward information about a "smart drain" system that is being piloted at Royal Roads University. Maybe one could be installed there to prevent pollutants from entering Portage Inlet
- **BGCA** – no update
- **VCKC** – club's major clean-up of the Gorge scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> annual cleanup
- **GWAS** – compliment the richness of ideas and expertise at the GWJ table, look at groups that use the waterway, linking with UVic for the rowing event this year to see if they can identify ways to give back to the Gorge; want to continue to link with the Nature House and will continue to support it financially, rich collection of visuals about the water from their photo contest and other images
- **CSSS** – Fuel oil spill (600 L) into the Colquitz about 4 weeks ago right across from BC Hydro spill site, did not appear to make it into the river; counting fence volunteers, designed to do multiple species and different age categories, increased activity at this area, bigger pool of volunteers, total of 1404 fish through the fence (all adults) about 650 were jacks (small males), 50-50 split of adults, no clipped fins; one day counted 450 fish, there was a huge rain event and all the fish came up en masse, incredible run this year, also a family of otters in the area, harbour seal was a constant visitor to the fence, cutthroat total was 6, attended presentation of Golden Rods and Reels – many members are retired DFO staff, very concerned about the water quality in Elk Lake, fishing quality has collapsed in the lake, concern for human health, detailed collection of data for the lake, just applied for a grant to work on that, hope it will be a citizen science project, approached the government

agencies directly; Dorothy attended a GTCA meeting , and they are interested in helping to fund educational signage at the fish fence, Shona Smith is the new DFO community advisor for the south island

- **FoCHP** – continue with invasive removal, large work party in fall, working on restoration and invasive species management, trying to get the PCC lands in the park into Saanich’s hands

#### **CRD Update**

- Finished all the new websites before Christmas, GWI has an events section so all groups can send links to events, photo gallery can also be created, videos can be posted (e.g. Voices of the Gorge)
- Back to analyzing data from the harbours survey – hope to have it finished by the middle of February
- Water quality work has been continuing, all sampling completed and waiting for the data to come in, hope to do the open houses now in the spring will also report out on the harbour survey data at that time as well
- King Tide Photo Initiative – Next dates for taking photos of annual highest tides are: January 28<sup>th</sup> (10:40 am) and 29<sup>th</sup> (11:40am). Link to upload photos: <http://www.livesmartbc.ca/connect/kingtidephotos/index.html>

#### **Point Ellice Restoration**

- Got the Boy Scouts involved and set up to do work parties over the next four months, but now we’re told that can’t be onsite until April. This will compromise ability to complete project by July 2014. Planning to meet with the Pt Ellice board in February to sort this out.

**Meeting adjourned 9:40pm**