

Southwest Island Public Advisory Group (SIPAG) Meeting Minutes

1. Call to order

Chris Harvey, Environmental Programs Advisor, welcomed members of the Southwest Island Public Advisory Group at the Teal office in Honeymoon Bay on the 24th of September at 12:15.

2. Members

Present:

- Shawn Wolansky, Terra Tree Forestry
- Helen Reed, Cowichan Tribes
- Jim Humphrey, Chamber of Commerce
- Dennis Martel, Wilderness Watch Committee
- Sandy Peters, Valley Fish & Game Club
- Tom Jones, Pacheedaht First Nation

Support (TJG):

- Mark Carter, Operations Planner
- Chris Harvey, Environmental Programs Advisor

Regrets:

- Jack Smith, Lake Cowichan First Nation
- George Williams, Ditidaht Band
- Tim McGonigle, TFL 46 Worker
- Pat Weaver, Lake Cowichan Town Council, Cowichan Lake Community Forest Co-operative
- Vince Callander, Local Business

Guests:

- Hellen Dunn fisheries Pacheedaht
- Stan Jones CMT Pacheedaht
- Jeff Jones fisheries Pacheedaht
- Tracy Charlie Pacheedaht

3. Documents Distributed to Members:

1. Southwest Island Meeting #20 Agenda

Documents available & reviewed:

2. Copy of the map of the DFA
3. Copy of the SFM Plan

4. Review Agenda, Map and Route

Chris reviewed the agenda for the field trip. Mark noted the route on the map posted in the office.

5. Introductions

The group met at 9 mile junction in the DFA. Introductions were made – each person stated their names and their interests, explaining their role or representation at the meetings.

6. Harris Creek Side Channel Tour

The group walked along the Harris Creek side channel and stopped at the bridge across the Harris Creek. Hellen Dunn presented the channel including the following points

- Harris Creek rearing coho, rainbow and cutthroat trout
- Funding and history of the project, (combined efforts of Pacheedaht, The Teal Jones Group, DFO and Ministry of Transportation)
- Current status: water level too low so that channel is not at full potential (intake valve is open to the maximum); need for more large woody debris in the channel; used for overwintering and spawning
- Coho run is VERY important to the Pacheedaht community
- 800m of channel excavated and joined to an existing natural 800m channel
- Side channel also created habitat for other species such as red legged frog
- Future is to maintain walking access (alder on road is going to grow up soon which is a good thing to stabilize the banks)
- Helen and Jeff swim the Harris Creek route annually they have noticed a huge increase in sediment over the years (pictures to come in the slide show). Infilling of pools is a natural process but it seems to be accelerated.
- Pools are very important salmon holding areas. Past projects on the river excavated pools but these pools have now filled in again. Chris asked if this type of project would work again in the future? Hellen said yes it would.
- Tom clarified that what we are seeing today is largely a result of practices of 25 years ago. So we have to keep the future in mind when
- There are three runs in the Harris: August, September and October/ November. The early run in August is the most endangered due to low water levels
- Sandy asked what the work window is in and around the stream? Hellen replied July or early August. Sandy asked if there is a demand for gravel? Mark commented that Ministry of Transport may be looking for gravel but it depends on the quality and quantity.

7. Pacheedaht Office

The group re-introduced themselves at the Pacheedaht office where we were joined by Tracy Charlie from the council. Chris thanked the hosts for the opportunity to meet with them and share information and ideas.

Chris reviewed the agenda and then presented a summary of the goals of SIPAG; the contents of the Sustainable Forest Management Plan; an overview and examples of the Values, Objectives, Indicators and Targets that SIPAG has developed; and reviewed the audit results that brought the group to the Pacheedaht office; why the group is interested in hearing the Pacheedaht concerns.

Stan Jones summarized what he does looking for Culturally modified trees.

Hellen Dunn presented a slide show showing photos of a recent swim she and Jeff did in the Harris and San Juan Creeks. Following is a summary of the content and some of the comments made during the slide show:

- Map of the location of the swims (8-12km sections) with photographs

- Looking at fish abundance, species, habitat changes including stream side changes with photographic evidence
- Definite trend is the increase in the amount of fine sediment in the streams, with accumulative effects; flowing sand deposits (increase in mortality of the eggs); decreasing depth of pools; instream gravel bars
- One concern is maintaining the pool depth through canyons as they are critical for chute jumping, otherwise these areas can form barriers; they have noticed gravel bars in the canyons
- Jeff commented on the starting point – a coho holding pool where the fines are building up
- A tributary was blocked off with fines; temporary it will wash away as the water gets higher
- GPS locations for several stream side slides adding sediment and large woody debris into the stream system. Several failures associated with cutblocks adjacent to the stream. Tom and Mark clarified the location of some of the cutblocks
- Sandy asked if the trees themselves are a problem; isn't large woody debris a good thing? Tom commented that the trees aren't the problem, it's the opening up of the soil which takes so long to heal and contributes so much sediment that is the problem.
- Examples of blowdown causing slides and sediment input. Jim asked do we need more regulations governing how close you can log to the streams? It seems like they log as close as possible. Mark, Tom and Chris reviewed the legal requirements for reserves on streams and in particular streams with steep banks. Sandy noted that maybe the reserves should be taken back from the edges? The group had a discussion on other creeks and some of the environmental problems encountered, in particular in urban settings. Helen Reed commented there is a lot of politics involved between different branches of the government.
- What can be done in the future to avoid these problems? Hellen commented we can't have any more sediment input. Tom noted that the last 5 years will feed the next 20
- Lens Creek survey route was reviewed and pictures of that survey were shown.
- Sandy pointed out that the bank collapsed below standing trees in one of the examples
- Mark requested the coordinates of the slide locations from Hellen. Hellen agreed to provide them

Action Item 20-1: Provide coordinates for stream side failures to Teal

Hellen Dunn, December 31, 2008

Tom asked how the Cultural Cedar Conservation Strategy could be brought into the Sustainable Forest Management Plan? Or how to provide the Pacheedaht community with some long term stability to ensure that this 400 year plan is implemented?

Chris commented that the strategy is addressed to a degree in the Forest Stewardship Plan and there are some indicators related to cultural cedar that exist now in the Sustainable Forest Management Plan. The stability that Teal can provide will only be held as long as Teal holds the licence. If a new licensee takes over then they are not necessarily held to existing plans or agreements. Chris asked Tom if he could provide more information on the Cultural Cedar Conservation Strategy at the next meeting? Tom agreed and maintained that the Pacheedaht would like to see the Cultural Cedar Conservation Strategy guarded somewhere. It was agreed that the discussion would continue at the next meeting.

Action Item 20-2a: Present information on the Pacheedaht Cultural Cedar Conservation Strategy to SIPAG

Tom Jones, December 31, 2008 (or next meeting)

Action Item 20-2b: add a discussion on a potential indicator relating to the Cultural Cedar Conservation Strategy to the agenda

Chris Harvey, December 31, 2008 (or next meeting)

Chris thanked the host again for the meeting and they thanked the SIPAG members for coming to visit them.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will need to be scheduled in the near future (late October or November). Members will be contacted with dates and location.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. Minutes recorded by Chris Harvey