

Nicola Lake Steering Committee - February 7, 2014 Meeting Notes

Attendance - Harry Sandur, Kim Poupard, Jo-Ann Fox, Evelyn & Dick Patterson (Vern and Lorna Latremouille alternates), Michael McDonald, Tracy Wimbush, Mike Ohata, Stuart Murray, Allison Guichon, Tracy Thomas

Regrets - Jenny Ohata, Susan Roline, Matt Williams, Ian Gordon, Frank Rizado, Norman Hansen, Pearl Hewitt, Aaron Sam, Donna Gallagher, Len Joe, Lee Spahan, Christine Saddleman, David Lawrence

Guests - Doug Edwards, Patrick Tobin, Patti Heisler (NVIT Student)

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide status update on Nicola Lake Action Plan action items
- Provide financial update
- Outline next steps

1. **Welcome & Introductions** – The meeting opened at 10:15 AM. Tracy Thomas welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.
2. **Guest Speaker** Doug Edwards, Fisheries and Oceans Canada - Fish Water Management Tool (FWMT) and Nicola Lake – Doug showed a video on the Fish Water Management Tool (see the video at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xTF7xMm-UY see the website at: www.ok.fwmt.net) The FWMT was developed as a result of the Fish Settlement Agreement in 1990. The Tool is a computer model that uses data including snow pack, temperature to determine when to hold water and when to release water in the engineered Okanagan Lake system. It is designed to take into consideration the water needs of the Okanagan including irrigation, agriculture, municipal supply, and recreation, the prevention of flooding and the needs of Okanagan sockeye and kokanee fisheries. The use of the FWMT in the Okanagan system has been successful and Okanagan sockeye returns have increased greatly.

Doug explained that there may be interest in developing a FWMT for Nicola Lake. Currently there is a technical team being established between the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) to discuss the possibility. He also explained that there may be available funding sources that Fraser Basin could apply for to fund the project. Another peripheral benefit may be raising the profile of Nicola Lake and the work that is being done and that may help in future fund development for the Nicola Lake planning process.

3. **Guest Speaker** Pat Tobin, MFLNRO - Update on foreshore compliance on Nicola Lake in 2014 – A member of the NLSC asked if the group could have an update from MFLNRO

regarding the plan for foreshore compliance at Nicola Lake in 2014. In response to that request, Pat Tobin presented to the NLSC.

The Ministry of Natural Resource Operations is comprised of several ministries. One result of the amalgamation was a greater availability of Natural Resource Officers that had previously been working on forestry related issues. As forest licensees were largely compliant and the direction shifted to the high proportion of noncompliance on lakes. Primarily, the ministry would like to see that all lake/water front owners be in compliance or have tenure for structures or developments along the foreshore. To see the rules for developing private moorage in BC, go to:

www.for.gov.bc.ca/land_tenures/tenure_programs/programs/privatemoorage/private_moorage_general_permission.pdf

In 2014, the goal at Nicola Lake is to address dock structures that are not in compliance, those that do not have tenure (permission from the Crown to develop on Crown land) and those structures that do not meet the standards as laid out in the private moorage permission document noted above.

Pat welcomed questions from the room and encouraged NLSC members to contact him directly if they have questions. Patrick.Tobin@gov.bc.ca

4. Old Business

- The notes from the October 7th, 2013 meeting were approved
- Tracy Thomas provided an update of the lead committee members as follows:

Beaver Point Estates	Lorna & Vern Latremouille
City of Merritt	Susan Roline
Douglas Lake Cattle Company	Stewart Murray
Guichon Ranch	Allison Guichon
Harmon Estates	Mike and Jenny Ohata
Nicola Lake Ranch	Matt Williams
Nicola Lake Stewardship Society	Ian Gordon
Nicola Lakeshore Estates	Frank Rizado
Nicola Naturalist Society	Norman Hansen
Nicola Tribal Association	Tracy Wimbush
Nicola Watershed Community Round Table	Allison Guichon
Nlaka'pamux - Cook's Ferry	Pearl Hewitt
Nlaka'pamux - Lower Nicola Band	Chief Aaron Sam
Nlaka'pamux - Nicomen Band	Chief Donna Gallagher
Nlaka'pamux - Shackan Band	Len Joe
Quilchena on the Lake	Michael McDonald

Quilchena Ranch	Guy Rose
Recreation (hunting/fishing)	Tom Wilms
SIWMC	Jo-Ann Fox
TNRD	Randy Murray
Nlaka'pamux - Coldwater Band	Lee Spahan
Syilix - Upper Nicola Band	Christine Saddleman
Nlaka'pamux - Nooaitch Band	David Lawrence

- Kim Poupard is moving away and will no longer be the recreation representative on the NLSC; Tom Wilms will fill the recreation space from the hunting/fishing perspective. It was raised that there should be a member from the local rod and gun club.
- **ACTION – Tracy Thomas will contact the rod and gun club regarding representation on the NLSC**
- There have been several emails received regarding the NLSC and the work that is being done by the committee. The messages indicate that there is a lack of understanding about the planning process and the steps that are required to put a milfoil control program in place
- **ACTION - Tracy Thomas will respond to received email correspondence and include the some background information on the Nicola Lake planning process**
- The group reviewed the terms of reference regarding NLSC membership – specifically, members are meant to bring information from the planning process back to their respective groups

5. Eurasian watermilfoil update

- EWM inventory – Kim Poupard reviewed the key findings of the milfoil inventory including:
 - i. Given the depth of Nicola Lake and the level of the outflow outlet of the dam, the lake cannot be lowered to expose and freeze EWM as less than 50% of the EWM would be exposed in most areas
 - ii. There are other macrophytes in and around Nicola Lake aside from EWM
 - iii. There will likely need to be several EWM management techniques used for management as will be determined by the fisheries utilization assessment
- Fisheries utilization assessment – a request for proposals was sent to five consulting organizations before Christmas. Three proposals were received and reviewed by FBC and DFO. Based on the criteria listed in the RFP and on the reviews, the contract was awarded to Triton Environmental; contract negotiations will proceed on February 14, 2014.
- Boat wash station – a mobile boat wash station will be purchased and moved around to different locations throughout the summer months. FBC in

cooperation with the SIWMC are looking for a suitable unit. Summer students will operate the boat wash station throughout the summer as a pilot project. The station will also be used for other events where terrestrial invasive plant spread is likely to occur in and around the Nicola Lake area. The station will move between Monck Park, Nicola Ranch Store, Quilchena Store, and Kamloops Sailing Club and tentatively at the Highway 97C Info Center.

- **ACTION - Tracy T. will confirm permission to have the boat wash station at the Highway 97C Info Center**
- Signage styles– The NLSC agreed to have a large sign at either end of Highway 5A. There was discussion around whether it would be useful to have smaller signs at all existing boat launch locations or if unauthorized boat launch areas could be deactivated
- Signage messaging – Tracy T. and Jo-Ann Fox are working with MoTI staff and other invasive species committees to develop messaging for EWM signage. NLSC members liked the idea of having a general message on large signs on Highway 5A ie. “Eurasian Watermilfoil Control Zone” and having more specific information on smaller signs. The Committee also felt that having a humorous campaign is a good idea.
- **ACTION - Tracy T. and Jo-Ann Fox will meet with MoTI representatives to discuss permission, sign messaging, sign locations and the possibility of boat launch deactivation or signage**
- Summer EWM removal - The fisheries utilization assessment will likely happen during the biological windows for EWM removal. Given that the primary goal of this planning process is to manage milfoil, Tracy T. researched the possibility and asked the committee if they were open to having some prioritized sites slated for hand pulling by divers. Not all of the committee members were comfortable with going ahead with a section 9 application for diver removal given the absence of the fisheries assessment.
- **ACTION – Tracy T. will research the possibility of conducting a small research project involving diver removal of EWM at sites on Nicola Lake where spread is likely (busy boat launches) that considers benthic invertebrates.**

6. **Water Quality Update** – Mike Ohata, Jenny Ohata, and Ian Gordon (Nicola Lake Stewardship Society) continue to work in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) to collect water samples at Nicola Lake. There is funding from the planning process for an expansion of the current sampling regime to help determine the sources of sediment and nutrients entering Nicola Lake from primary tributaries. Tracy T. and Mike Ohata are working with MoE staff to determine the best way to spend the funds and expand the water quality program.

- Shoreline erosion control – the shoreline erosion control will be complete at Monck Park by the end of February. The trees were felled and the rocks are being brought in to the site this week and will continue next week!! Tracy T. will take pictures of all of the action and prepare a media release.

- **ACTION - Tracy T. will contact NLSC members when the exact dates of the final control work are known.**
7. **Education & Outreach Update** – The results of the 2013 recreation survey show that visitors and locals enjoy coming to the area for the water and the beach. The attractions include safety, quiet surroundings and relaxation. FBC is sharing the recreation data with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association as well as the Economic Development Officer at the City of Merritt.
- Hiring students – the goal is to provide 2 – 4 students to provide education and outreach in the Nicola Lake area for the summer of 2014. Students will also be tasked with operating the boat wash station, attending public events and presenting to private groups
 - **ACTION - Tracy T. to post a job description for summer students in March 2014**
 - Student/youth group participation – There has not been any interest from the Merritt schools (elementary, secondary, post-secondary) to have a class or group champion the Nicola Lake planning process. Allison raised the possibility of the local guides/pathfinders planting willows at Monck Park when the erosion control work is complete.
 - **ACTION – NLSC members contact Tracy T. if they have any ideas for youth involvement in the Nicola planning process**
 - **ACTION – Tracy T. to contact NVIT regarding inviting a youth representative to the NLSC**
 - Public meeting – the NLSC agreed that a fall public meeting would be best
8. **Financial Update** – Tracy T. reviewed the funding sources and the expense summary in the Nicola Lake Planning Process Q3 Report. Mike Simpson and Tracy T. met with the funders to discuss existing funds being carried forward to the 2014/15 fiscal year. The funds will be allowed to be carried forward and the funders, Susan Roline, Randy Murray, Herb Graham and Steve Rice have committed to providing gas tax funds to the Nicola Lake planning process for the 2014/15 fiscal year.
- Tracy T. has applied to Canada Jobs for \$26,240 and to the World Wildlife Fund for \$25,000.
 - **ACTION – Tracy Wimbush to send Tracy T. ISETS Fund application form for student funding**
9. Next steps and focus in next quarter – the focus of Q4 is as follows:
- Complete the fisheries assessment and milfoil management plan for Nicola Lake
 - Hire students to deliver education and outreach in the Nicola Lake area
 - Purchase and have students operate a boat wash station in the Nicola Lake area

- Determine whether a small research project can be conducted at Nicola Lake in priority areas using diver EWM removal and considering the effects on benthic invertebrates
- Complete the erosion control work at Monck Park

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