

Round table Report
02/2024 SEHAB meeting
CA: Heather Wright, Southern Vancouver Island (8)
Steph Cottell

Summary

- 1. Any issues that are affecting groups and their projects that are directly related to DFO**
 - lack of salmon eggs
 - changes to DFO representatives ie: stewardship directorate Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative taking on some of the liaison work for Community Advisors. Community Advisors to focus more on Hatcheries. How is this rolling out?
 - Sport fishing in the Cowichan, letter campaign to close upper river
- 2. Any positive things that are directly related to DFO**
 - CA doing great work, very supportive
- 3. Any things coming up that DFO should know about**
 - Groups will be consulting CA's re: instream works and habitat improvement activities in various communities (see below for details)
- 4. Any issues that are affecting groups and their projects that are related to other agencies.**
 - Provincial housing density changes and impact on watersheds/salmon

Group reports

Friends of Bowker Creek

1. The lack of Chum salmon eggs for incubation this year—beyond DFO's control—is a setback for our Chum salmon recovery program, but...
2. We appreciate that our Community Advisor is helping us prepare for next winter, putting us in contact with a technician to help us design, site and test a set of new incubation boxes that we hope will be well suited to Bowker Creek conditions. Our Community Advisor has also helped us to apply for a grant to cover some of the costs related to the new boxes we are building. We have adapted a design now in use by a Streamkeepers group on Cortes Island will soon test the prototype in the creek.
 - a. We are glad that the classroom programs that incubate Chum eggs within Bowker Creek's catchment area have eggs this winter and will release the fry into the creek. It provides some continuity for our project and allows the very important education to carry on.
3. We will consult with our Community Advisor about our plans for small alterations to instream habitat, such as manually shifting some boulders to adjust flow for

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the incubation box and anchoring Christmas tree bundles to create habitat for the Chum fry. We are discussing the possibility also of a project to improve fish passage at a culvert downstream from our incubation sites.

4. Friends of Bowker Creek foresees possible negative effects to stream hydrology related to Provincial requirements for housing densification in the municipalities of Bowker Creek's catchment area. One of the municipalities has revealed plans that will greatly increase impervious surface along the creek corridor and that suggest decreasing priority for preserving or improving its level hydrological wellbeing. We mention the issue in this report because the sudden densification may impact other urban and suburban streams and need input from DFO on behalf of respecting the hydrological integrity of the streams.

Cowichan Region:

(Salmon related input gleaned from Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable (CSRT), a consortium of community stewardship groups)

CSRT:

- plans are under way for Quw'utsun Sta'lo Skweyul (River's Day 2024)

Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre

- Strategic Planning session this past weekend
- 3 main focus areas – community connections, capacity building, programs and services
- Potential public event around moving viewing tower from Dinsdale dike to new location, would work with Tom Reid and Nature Conservancy on this project

Heather Wright

- DFO Community Advisor for South Island.
- Egg deliveries to schools happen next week for "Salmon in the Classroom" program.
- Expecting new DFO representative – Sunny Mizushima – stewardship directorate Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative – take on some of the liaison work for Community Advisors. Community Advisors to focus more on Hatcheries.
- Approx. 15 classrooms in the school district have classroom incubators

Friends of the Cowichan

- Letter writing campaign to close upper river for sports fishing.

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- Currently closed from 70M to Skutz but upstream of 70M to the weir still open
- Should be closed to fishing over the redds (anchor impacts)

Cowichan Community Land Trust

- DFO has provided funding for interpretive signage at Cowichan Hatchery and three Salmon and the Forest Nature Programme events in March, thank you!