

**Cheakamus Ecosystem Restoration Stakeholder Team  
Meeting #1  
Saturday March 25, 2006  
1:30 to 4:30 pm  
Squamish Valley Golf and Country Club  
Meeting Summary**

**Background**

The Cheakamus Ecosystem Restoration Stakeholder Team (Stakeholder Team) is a public advisory group comprised of representatives from interested organizations and individuals with local knowledge of and experience with the Cheakamus River. The Stakeholder Team was established by the Cheakamus Ecosystem Restoration Technical Committee (CERTC), which was formed in response to the August 2005 train derailment and subsequent spill of sodium hydroxide into the Cheakamus River. The Stakeholder Team will provide input into the development and implementation of monitoring and restoration programs for the Cheakamus ecosystem.

**Participants**

<b>Representative/Individual</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Bob Baker	B.C. Wildlife Federation
Kristi Bane-Allen	Squamish Environmental Conservation Society
Dave Brown	Squamish/Whistler Sport Fishery Advisory
Beverly Cochrane	Independent
Jack Cooley	Squamish Streamkeepers
Victor Elderton	North Vancouver Outdoor School
Meg Fellows	Squamish Environmental Conservation Society
Carl Halvorson	North Vancouver Outdoor School
Julianne Knoll	Squamish Anglers Association
Josh Korman	Independent
Roman Lehocky	Independent
Randy Marchant	Independent
Deb McBride	Independent
Doug Morrison	Independent
Dan O'Kane	Independent
Pete Plathaw	Independent
Ana Santos	Squamish Environmental Conservation Society
Dave Steele	Seymour Salmonid Society
Edith Tobe	Squamish River Watershed Society
Tony Toth	B.C. Wildlife Federation
Trevor Welton	Steelhead Society of B.C.

Members of Cheakamus Ecosystem Restoration Technical Committee (CERTC) present:

- Matt Foy - Department of Fisheries and Oceans
- Chessy Langford - District of Squamish

Resource persons

- Josh Korman - UBC

Media present:

- Heidi Vanlith - *Squamish Chief, Whistler Question* (freelance reporter)

Meeting Facilitator: Tom Sadleir - Cornerstone Planning Group

Note-taker: Erika Johnson - Cornerstone Planning Group

### **Introductions**

Team members introduced themselves, briefly stating their interest in the Cheakamus River and its recovery. All members present who had not previously signed up for the Stakeholder Team indicated they wished to be full participants.

### **Communications**

The following communications materials were included in an information package provided to all participants:

- Meeting Agenda
- Stakeholder Team list (to March 24, 2006)
- February 8, 2006 Open House Summary
- Verbatim comments received via February 8, 2006 Open House comment form
- Summaries of e-mails to CERTC website (February 3 - March 9, 2006)
- Draft Terms of Reference for Stakeholder Team

Team members were encouraged to direct comments and input regarding any of these materials to [comments@certc.ca](mailto:comments@certc.ca) by April 13, 2006.

### **Draft Terms of Reference**

The Stakeholder Team noted they would like to see comments and questions submitted by individual team members (as well as responses) to be circulated via e-mail to all team members. Confirmation was also sought that these meetings were the appropriate venue to bring forward specific proposals for funding consideration.

### **CERTC Activity Update**

The following documents regarding impact assessment, monitoring and restoration programs were included in the information package provided to all participants:

- Mark/Re-capture Program (draft)
- Non-anadromous Fish Sampling Program (draft)
- Screening Level Assessment of Ecological Effects (draft)
- Cheakamus Fish Enhancement Proposed and Contemplated Projects – 2006 (CN document)
- March 6, 2006 Ministry of Environment information bulletin (“Cheakamus River Restoration Update”)

Team members were encouraged to direct comments and input regarding any of these documents to [comments@certc.ca](mailto:comments@certc.ca) by April 13, 2006.

## **Stakeholder Team Input**

### ***Motions***

The Stakeholder Team passed the following motions unanimously:

1. The Stakeholder Team, as part of a multi-level Cheakamus ecosystem restoration strategy, demands the B.C. Minister of Environment, as recommended by accredited biologists and community stakeholders immediately implement the collection of adult steelhead brood stock from the Cheakamus River towards a potential short-term fish culture program. Without this supplementation, and based on Ministry of Environment estimates of returning adults, the Stakeholder Team believes the steelhead population will be put at undue risk. Further, the Stakeholder Team suggests 22 – 30 pairs of adult steelhead be collected before the end of April 2006.
2. The Stakeholder Team demands the B.C. Minister of Environment meet, at his earliest convenience, with representatives of the Stakeholder Team to discuss the perspectives of community stakeholders and accredited biologists regarding Cheakamus ecosystem restoration.

*Moved by Deb McBride*

*Seconded by Tony Toth*

*Moved by Deb McBride*

*Seconded by Bob Baker*

### ***Other Priorities***

Stakeholder Team members identified the following priorities for future discussion and action:

- August 2006 steelhead fry collection for hatchery rearing
- Capture and release of adult steelhead into Brohm Creek
- Dedication of \$25 to \$30 million for steelhead recovery, to be paid for by CN
- Ecosystem/watershed enhancement programs
- Foreshore restoration program, including enhancement of eelgrass (salmon spawning habitat)
- Improved access for adult steelhead into Brohm Creek (critical steelhead habitat) including clearing of bridge apron
- Independent assessment of the entire Cheakamus River
- Raising Cheakamus River salmon population to capacity
- Recovery goals to be in line with recovery achievements on the Sacramento River
- Study of the impact of invertebrates and other microorganisms on the health of a river (conducted by the North Vancouver Outdoor School)
- Upgrades to Tenderfoot and North Vancouver Outdoor School hatcheries
- Use of very large rock and or concrete formations in place of LWD structures, where appropriate

Comments and suggestions were raised regarding restoration strategies and programs, including:

- Desire to see more emphasis on a total ecosystem recovery, not only for the Cheakamus River
- Strong concern regarding possible failure of natural recovery option for steelhead
- Concern that if natural recovery is not effective, the river could face the possibility of steelhead extinction
- Discussion regarding the role of scientific research in deciding which recovery options to implement
- Support for combinations of recovery strategies in order to minimize risk of failure
- Strong support for a short-term fish culture program for steelhead
- Concern that habitat enhancement, nutrient supplement regimes, and LWD structures are insufficient rehabilitation strategies unless they are coupled with seeding of the habitat
- Concern that broodstock collection is a time-sensitive issue and that the last date for gathering of adult steelhead is early May
- Noted that anglers on Stakeholder Team are capable of broodstock collection, with approval from Ministry of Environment
- Noted that fish culture program must include close monitoring
- Noted that further delay in gathering broodstock imposes serious risk on returning steelhead population
- Desire for balance in returning wild and hatchery spawners
- Interest in the success rates of past steelhead recovery projects
- Concern for serious impacts to invertebrates and other microorganisms that are necessary for the health of a river.

#### ***Other Issues***

- March 31, 2006 Press Conference by UBC Scientists protesting Ministry of Environment recover plan for steelhead was announced and discussed
- Efforts to lobby Minister of Environment to support short-term fish culture program were discussed
- BC Hydro Water Use Plan was raised; interest in how the reduced flow of water affects steelhead and high-velocity fish
- Interest in whether First Nation concerns regarding Cheakamus River viability be directed to Ministry of Environment or CN
- Concern that government responses are taking too long
- Concern that the CERTC has no obligation to listen to Stakeholder Team suggestions.

#### ***Next Meeting***

The Stakeholder Team indicated a preference for meeting monthly given the time sensitivity surrounding some of the issues raised.

The next meeting of the Stakeholder Team is scheduled for:  
April 27, 2006, 6:00pm - 9:00pm, Squamish City Hall - to be confirmed