

Shuswap Trails Roundtable Working Group

Meeting Summary as of June 17, 2023

Meeting date: June 16, 2023 9:00AM to 12:00PM

Location: Tappen Hall, Skwlax te Secwepemc

Present (in person):

Jen Bellhouse, Shuswap Trail Alliance (STA)
Jess Booth, Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
Gordon Bose, Gorge Ski Touring Association
Adrian Bostock, Shuswap Trail Alliance
Linda Buchanan, Backcountry Horsemen of BC - Shuswap Chapter
Keith Cox, Shuswap Outdoors
Dave Crowfoot, Shuswap Backcountry Riders and ATV Association of BC
Anita Ely, Interior Health
Patrick Frank, White Lake Residents' Association (WLRA)
Robyn Hooper, Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society
Sue Hunt, Backcountry Horsemen of BC - Shuswap Chapter
Chris Lynd, Solstice Adventures
Eleanor Marshall, Mallory Ridge Community Trails Society
Carmen Massey, Watershed Stewardship Coordinator, Skwlax te Secwepemc
Morgen Matheson, Shuswap Tourism
Phil McIntyre-Paul, Shuswap Trail Alliance
Brian Pratt, Four Wheel Drive Association of BC
Debbie Seymour, North Shuswap Chamber of Commerce
Mike Simpson, consultant (facilitator, recorder)
Louis Thomas, Elder, Neskonlith
Ron Tomma, Spiritual Advisor, Sklwax te Secwepemc
Fred Torbohm, Village of Chase

Present (online) (at least a portion of the meeting):

Marshall Kroenwitt, Carl Kuster Mountain Park
Ryan Nitchie, Columbia Shuswap Regional District
Carly Procyshyn, District of Sicamous Development Corporation
Natalie Sorkilmo, Eagle Valley Snowmobile Club

1. Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda and Objectives

Carmen Massey thanked everyone for attending and introduced Ron Tomma, elder and spiritual advisor, who welcomed everyone, acknowledged territory and made opening comments. Mike Simpson led a round of introductions and noted several regrets. The agenda was reviewed and accepted as presented. Note that quorum was not met as there were no provincial government representatives present.

2. Secwepemc Learning Opportunity

Ron Tomma spoke of the Skwlax Guardians Program and taught us the word “wetsmé” which means guardians, or policemen.

3. Responsible Recreation Pathways, Practices and Possibilities Conference

Jen and Adrian described their impressions and take aways from this conference hosted by the Columbia Mountains Institute for Applied Ecology (CMIAE) in Revelstoke May 9-10, 2023. While many of the initiatives were focussed in the Columbia basin, there was participation from around BC with 140 people attending. There was also a community event in the evening for those in Revelstoke not registered to attend.

Key takeaways were noted as follows: our challenges are not unique to the Shuswap; many others look to the collaboration we're doing here in the Shuswap; lots of opportunities for connection and collaboration.

4. Previous Meeting Summary

The meeting summary from April 21, 2023 was approved. Many action items are related to trails initiatives and will be covered later in the agenda. Many are standing items; see table of action items at end of this summary for an updated version.

5. Trails Authorization Requests, Trail Planning and Sub-regional Planning Updates

White Lake Parks Enhancement Fund

- STA has partnered with WLRA to submit a grant to the Parks Enhancement fund to do a preliminary field reconnaissance (PFR) west from the campground, and then do a trail plan, advise motorized to move elsewhere (low elevation, at lake level), signage, and re-locate the sign.
- Adrian noted that MOF is working with BC Parks to move the forest service road out of the park. Carmen would like to see an updated management plan for BC Parks. Wet section of trail is inappropriate for all trail use, non-motorized too. Not an authorized trail; it's in the provincial park. Part of the bigger picture of the South Shuswap Destination Trails Plan. Patrick suggests that CO's or park rangers are the enforcement part; signs don't always work, and they could put in some big rocks to prevent access.
- History is important here to understand the past use; this was originally a recreation site, that became a provincial park about 2011. It's a Class C park so there is not a lot of money available.
- Carmen noted that Skwlax guardians record and report at White Lake Provincial Park.
- Patrick noted this is preliminary with the PFR, to open up dialogue with Skwlax, and then work together on plans and initiatives.
- Carmen noted that Skwlax is working with BC Parks on a sign strategy for the larger territory and this could be a pilot location.

South Shuswap Destination Trails Plan

- Phil will be re-initiating this, there's a lot of input so far. He suggests next step is Secwepemc engagement – could we have a meal with the Secwepemc communities to engage on this? Yes agree we should do this. Consider ALIB gym as a bigger venue. Invite all Secwepemc communities. There is some funding to support this. Jen noted that Shuswap Community Foundation has \$500 grants for small meetings.

Reinecker

- Jen noted that CSRD applied to provincial funds to re-route and fix the bridge, it was for over \$100K and not successful in December. Invited to apply again in stage 2; STA is doing the application and CSRD will submit it. Challenge is there is currently no recreation officer in place to support the application.

- Bottom of west side of trail is private property and a MOTI gravel pit.
- Any involvement of Secwepemc history or knowledge? No PFR was requested last year (it was noted that just because there was no response doesn't mean there's no interest, it could be a capacity issue).

Rubberhead

- Adrian noted that Shuswap Cycling Club applied for same funding as Reinnecker above; 1km trail to have large jumps on it. Applying through STA and partnering with Shuswap Cycling Club. Working through PFR. Kevin Eskelin has suggested to proceed with the application, as it is an already established recreation site.
- Keith asked – any consideration with cross ditching and access? Will talk with Canoe Forest Products it's in their operating area.

Glenemma

- Adrian noted that s.57 was issued once the Agricultural Land Commission granted the exemption with overlap on agricultural land reserve. Some local landowners were upset by signs installed this spring, a meeting was held June 14 to address concerns.
- Proceeding with parking lot development and signing of existing trails this summer. There are 3 range licensees in the area. Will work with CSISS on invasive species signage (was guidance from ALC on what had to be included in signage). Phil noted there is a lot of collaboration of different groups and the signage will be key (motorized, non-motorized, invasive plants).
- Rush skeleton weed is the invasive species of concern, it's spreading in the area. CSISS can provide whatever STA and partners want.
- Overlap with Syilx territory in this area and working with Splatšin. If exploring Indigenous trail names, would have to work with both Syilx and Secwepemc. Jen noted that some of the anonymous funds donated to STA have been allocated to help with signage.

West Bay Connector

- Jen reported that the City of Salmon Arm and ALIB are working to use existing funds for linework and assessments. City has written up project scope and description, will get confirmed by 3 communities. Looking to have archaeological work done this year. Goal is to have level C costing and a proposed line for the trail and then apply for infrastructure funding to build it. There is a working group that meets, and also a steering committee. Mayor Harrison is also involved.
- It was suggested that with the current twinning of Hwy 1, there is a critical pinchpoint at Kalt Hill due to slope, highway, railway, whereby options for the connector trail may be eliminated if the twinning is done in isolation of the future connector trail.
- **ACTION** – Jen Bellhouse contact Tara Knight at MOTI, to raise this concern and encourage a collective voice with Skwłax, Neskonlith, and ALIB.
- Anita noted that there are conversations between Interior Health and MOTI and she offered to help coordinate with Jen and bring this up as an example.

Mallory Ridge

- Date for a meeting with CSRD board, July 20. Presentation by Wayne McCrory, and Area D director of CSRD Dean Trumbley who is a biologist.
- Phil arranged a tour with Louis recently.
- Draft inventory of trails Phil has drafted. Working on environmental screening. Then community trail group will take that with direction from Jen, Adrian and then send out to Secwepemc communities and shared at STR WG.

Larch Hills Link trail

- Keith noted that this is a slow moving project to connect two trails, non-track set to track set; rerouted intersection to improve safety; want to reroute some of non track set trails as well.
- No referrals yet. Craig looking to get s.57 going on that this fall. Will also discuss summer motorized vs. non-motorized use.

Rail Trail update

- Rock scaling at north end is finishing up, south end will start soon.
- Award of first construction phase in Enderby-Splatsin will be announced soon.
- Splatsin leadership finalizing federal grant.
- Things are happening, just slow. Splatsin cultural work as well.
- Invasive species – working with CSISS on an invasive management plan for the corridor of the trail.
- Looking for grant funding with Splatsin, RDNO and CSRD to do restoration along the corridor.

Crowfoot Recreation Access Plan

- Came up at annual roundtable in Nov 2022, discussed in January and April WG meetings. Skwlax noted significant interest in the area. Bit of a free for all, not a lot of planning in this area. Ron noted Bigfoot and Little People experienced in these areas. Skwlax would like to see these areas used for recreation only; will get boots on the ground soon. Concerned with lack of capacity at RSTBC. Debbie would like to see everyone brought together on respectful backcountry use. No meetings have taken place since our April meeting, haven't got Crowfoot Snowmobile Club engaged.
- What's the path forward? Lots of interested parties. Don't wait for RSTBC, Skwlax could invite MOF and all other groups.
- Adrian noted that John Hawkings is hosting meetings around BC to reimagine how we do recreation planning – there will be one in Kamloops in the fall.
- **ACTION** – Debbie and Carmen convene a meeting and invite key parties, lean on STA for support but the initiative has to come from the communities (North Shuswap, Skwlax).

Skimikin

- Chris noted future trails authorizations, some wet spots in some years, a re-route, and new trails flagged and mapped. Talk to RSTBC. In the works!
- Linda and Sue spearheading the Secwepemc names piece for trailheads.

Salmon Arm Active Transportation

- Anita noted that City of Salmon Arm completed their Active Transportation Plan, force under City Council has now finished and disbanded. City looking to implementation and putting together a new committee to go to Council in June with a new terms of reference, and proposed community groups. May combine Greenways Liaison Committee into one with new Active Trans Cttee in the future but they will remain separate for now.

North Shuswap Parallel Trail

- No update from Ryan since last WG meeting in April. Community working on community engagement and fundraising through STA to get funding. There is a pilot stretch underway. Carmen will follow up with leadership.

Rose Swanson

- Armstrong Spall Trails Society engaged STA to do an inventory in the area of trails. Report will come in future.

Kela7scen (Mt Ida)

- Working Group postponed to Friday June 23, Pespesellkwe te Secwepemc also formed a working group, created a report for consideration on how management should proceed. Neskonlith is helping to move things forward.

Blind Bay Bluff Trail

- Patrick noted that BC Timber Sales got back to White Lake Residents Association on their submission, looking for site plans, visuals, wildlife corridors. Engage with Patrick on that information if you want to coordinate responses and reviews.

Blueways

- Paddle guide was well received, need to print more, Morgan noted updates have been made and going to print next week. Skwlax guardians will go out with BC parks at least once a month to talk about this and learn from them.

6. Planning for the Annual Meeting

Based on discussions at the April meeting and today, this is what's taking shape for format, location, dates:

Format and content

- Extend by an hour, make it 9AM to 4PM to enable more networking
- Keep full round of introductions of everyone
- Mornings are for presentations:
 - Celebration – 10 years (first meeting was Nov 2014) and where we're at and successes; make it interactive (stickies etc.), brief review of terms of reference, purpose
 - BC government update – John Hawkings, structural changes and what's coming.
 - First Nations update – maybe guardians?
 - Build in some networking or structured conversations
- Aim for 30min coffee break for networking in the morning and a full hour for lunch
- Afternoon – keep subregional planning in breakout groups
- Possible updates to strategy - Jen to contact Kevin, Tennessee re: BC gov signing LOU; updates in terms of priorities; housekeeping edits (remove Fraser Basin Council reference in Appx 9, 10; update STS Lakes Division)
- Evening – either evening before or evening of the meeting day, consider an optional evening social event or dinner (noting people would be on their own dime)

Funds

- Jen noted we have funds to do this in person and feed people
- Ron suggested Sklwax has funds to support this

Location

- Quaoout or Splatsin Centre? Like idea of being in a FN community.
- Barbara suggests Shuswap Lake Estates (but not a FN community)
- Seniors Centre in Salmon Arm?

Dates

- mid November to early December. Aim to finalize date by early September.
- Wednesdays? We've always done Wednesdays. Don't work for Sicamous Council.
- Tuesdays and Thursdays generally don't work for Chiefs and Councils.
- **ACTION:** Mike to either do some research on council schedules and/or do a doodle poll. Which day of the week. To entire 250 people.
- Avoid Nov 23, try for earlier.

7. Roundtable of New Information, and Other Updates

Invasive Species Updates

- Federal aquatic invasive species prevention fund – CSISS interested in aquatic invasive species monitoring/management/outreach fund application – looking for partners and letters of support and project ideas!
- CSISS Parks Enhancement Fund application BC Parks inventories and weed pulls – several Shuswap parks; application for bioblitzes/volunteer events with 25x25 BC Parks sparks fund too
- Little White Lake weed pull June 29 (3163 White Lake Rd – Carmen's house 9am) – Skwlax guardians will also be present.
- SABNES foreshore weed pull (August 14/15)
- Skimikin Lake Backcountry Horsemen presentation (June 17 at Rec Site), please be in touch with any questions/if you'd like to join!
- Work with STA on yellow flag iris – last year of funding, looking at some volunteer events and work with Invasive Species Council of BC (they have some aquatic funding for invasives this year 2 staff in Okanagan/Shuswap region)
- Ecosystem restoration funding – ties to invasive species management
- CSISS staff are available for info booths, training, workshops, presentations, weed pulls, restoration projects and more – be in touch to request!
- Report any new invasive species you see on the trail/water/land that you are concerned about
- CSISS turns 10 this year! We are hosting a few celebration events through the year and held an anniversary party on June 15th – thank you to all the roundtable for the long-standing support

National Indigenous Day June 21

- Splotsin hosting an event
- Skwlax hosting an event for their community

Wildsafe BC

- Barbara noted that their coordinator Olivia is back
- Program is running in Electoral Areas E, G and City of Salmon Arm

Indigenous Protected and Cultural Areas (IPCA)

- Carmen noted that there is preliminary work on IPCA Indigenous protected and cultural areas in Skwlax area. Will bring this up again. Looking at a symposium in 2024.

RDNO Area D and E Parks and Trails Plan

- Phil noted that RDNO is working on a parks and trails plan for Electoral Areas D and E

8. Next Steps

Working Group: future meeting dates, from 9AM-12PM:

- Friday October 20 – possibly in person, if not fully online

The following ACTION items were agreed to (contact Mike, Jen or Phil if any clarification is needed):

Task or activity	Responsibility	Timeframe
Start hut to hut opportunities , overnight stays. Build on history. Larger areas, not just Owlhead, Blue Lake, Hunter's Range.	Louis, others	Future meeting
Work with Shuswap Tourism or current organization to publish and advertise authorized trails	Everyone	Ongoing
Organizations to sign the LOU if they haven't already done so – original copy if possible (Phil or Jen have it)	Any groups that haven't signed LOU	Ongoing
Send any GPS/GIS linework on trails to Adrian at Shuswap Trail Alliance, adrian@shuswaptrails.com	Everyone	Ongoing
Trails groups – send suitable berry picking sites, locations of cultural plants of interest (highbush cranberry, hazelnut, yellow avalanche lily, spring beauty/Indian potatoes, soopalalie, saskatoon) as trail reports to trailreport@shuswaptrails.com – intent is that Secwepemc governments are seeking this information, it will be shared only with them	Everyone	Ongoing
Send any reports of erosion or trail damage from heavy rains to trailreport@shuswaptrails.com	Everyone	Ongoing
Seek support letters for funding applications from each other	Everyone	Ongoing
Consider opportunities for funds to do cumulative effects assessment on a complex project	Everyone	Ongoing
Secwepemc Plant Knowledge cards - order from Georgia Jules at Neskonlith Education Centre by email educationassistant@neskonlithec.net	Everyone	Ongoing
Download the Secwepemc language app for your smart phone	Everyone	Ongoing
Seek an exemption for motorized vehicle closures in areas of 2021 wildfires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The areas are closed for 18 months, generally, due to safety concerns ▪ Applications for exemptions to the closure can be sought to allow access for disabled access, for activities required for assessment, maintenance and public safety, or for activities that otherwise support the goals of wildfire recovery ▪ More information about applying for an exemption is here ▪ Please contact staff at 2021Wildlife.closures@gov.bc.ca prior to applying, and see this link for a frequently asked questions document related to these closures 	Any trails groups that need access to wildfire closure areas	Ongoing
Consider doing media releases when projects are complete (e.g., South Canoe Parking lot, Sorrento Blind Bay perimeter trail, Skimikin)	Jen, everyone	Ongoing
If doing a clean-up event , contact Ben van Nostrand at CSRD about up to \$500 in support for meals, supplies and waiving of tipping fees	Trail stewardship groups	Ongoing
Consider joint applications/working collaboratively if future big funding calls come out . Need time to be strategic.	Everyone	Ongoing
Secwepemc Landmarks – sentinel structures: contact Jen or Adrian if your group wants to undertake this for one or more in their areas	Everyone	Ongoing
Plan and prepare for Annual Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See actions noted above under next steps (April 21 meeting) ▪ Consider the right balance of networking vs. presentations 	Mike, Jen, others	Before annual meeting