

Slocan Lake Stewardship Society

Annual General Meeting - November 16, 2014

President's Annual Report

Members, Friends and Colleagues:

In the spring of 2013, the Slocan Lake Stewardship Society (SLSS) Board prepared a Strategic Plan, under the very capable Presidency of Therese DesCamp. It provided clear direction for your Board that was elected about this time last year. In 2014, the Board reviewed that plan including the related activities and accomplishments throughout its term. And though a number of detailed objectives were updated, essentially the Mission, Values, Focal Areas and broad Goals remain the same in 2014-2015 (subject of course to your further guidance and the discretion of the Board you will be electing during this AGM today.)

As a practical way forward within the Society's purposes, we have focused our work in accordance with the Strategic Plan and organized our monthly meeting agendas in the four areas outlined; namely, Science, Education, Watershed Protection and Advocacy, and Operations. Thus my report today will essentially follow that format as well.

Focal Areas, Goals, Activities and Accomplishments

Science: Our overall science goal is *to protect, enhance and restore the Slocan Lake watershed by supporting research into its ecosystems, its cultural history and ongoing human impacts*. I will briefly highlight some of the science related work the Board has undertaken under the very knowledgeable and capable guidance of Margaret Hartley and her team. Margaret will be making a presentation following the AGM business agenda that will provide more information about our science work as well as plans for the coming year.

The 3-year Slocan Lake Water Quality Monitoring Program was finished over the past year with the completion of Phase III. The data analysis and report writing consultant, Moraia Grau, did a commendable job preparing the peer reviewed final report based on the data recorded by the research firm, *Galena Environmental*. The complete report including findings, recommendations and appendices can be found on the SLSS website. While the quality of the water is very good, there are concerns with high cadmium and zinc levels, a decline in zooplankton and an increase in E-coli around some of the nearshore sites. There are also high metal concentrations found in Carpenter Creek. The report recommends areas for further study.

SLSS continued its collaboration and participation with the Slocan River Streamkeepers Society (SRSS), Slocan Solutions Society, BC Wildlife Federation and the Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program on the Slocan Wetlands Assessment and Monitoring Project (SWAMP). SWAMP is a "think like a watershed" initiative that takes a science-based approach to identifying and classifying wetlands throughout the Slocan watershed to inform conservation and restoration activities. SWAMP relies on provincial data collection protocols while working with Environment Canada to establish Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) protocols for wetlands. An important

result of SWAMP will be a comprehensive database for mapping and analysing wetlands throughout the Slocan watershed. Phase 2 of the project was completed this summer and we anticipate the 20 page report will be uploaded to the SLSS website shortly.

Plans for the future include baseline CABIN work on Silverton, Bonanza and Carpenter Creeks in collaboration with SRSS and Lucerne School through the “Know Your Watershed Program”. And Margaret will later also explain her work with the SLSS Science Advisory Committee and our plans to develop a *Science-based Framework* for future research in and around Slocan Lake.

Education: Our overall education goal is *to protect, enhance and restore the Slocan Lake watershed by creating a culture of support and stewardship through educational programs and services.* Again, I will simply highlight some of the related work the Board has undertaken under the guidance of Therese DesCamp and her team, including the very capable and diligent Sally Hammond. They will be providing more information along with their exciting plans for the coming year following the AGM business agenda.

In addition to our occasional explanatory stewardship articles in *The Valley Voice*, we continue to insert ecosystem “factettes” (small facts) in each publication. We have also partnered with other agencies to provide workshop opportunities in the field, enabling local people to engage in “citizen scientist” learning activities such as wetlands exploration and mapping. Your society also co-sponsors the “Know Your Watershed” program at the Lucerne School in New Denver.

In the summer of 2014, the SLSS team designed and launched a more comprehensive *Creating a Culture of Stewardship* program with the assistance of Marcy Mahr of *Eco Mosaic Consulting*. It was designed to engage people through a variety of place-based volunteer opportunities to encourage observation, teach about watershed ecology, and inspire ecologically informed behaviors. A key objective of this engagement was to actively build and share knowledge about the biodiversity of the Slocan Lake watershed through photography, mapping, campground storytelling and citizen science. The program was very successful and you will be hearing more about it later this afternoon. The final report will be uploaded to the website as soon as practically possible.

Thanks to all of you who continue to upload your nature photographs to the Stewardship Society’s *i Naturalist* “Eyes on the Lake” mapping project.

Incidentally, the Society itself benefitted directly through its participation in the Friday Markets and various Festivals. We received 80 memberships (30 single adult and 50 family) through the summer program of which 64% were new members. As well, \$900.00 was raised through the sale of Toadfest T-shirts.

Watershed Protection and Advocacy: Our overall watershed protection and advocacy goal is *to protect, enhance and restore the Slocan Lake watershed through advocacy taken in accordance with this principle: all advocacy decisions must reflect the SLSS mission, values and purposes.* Within the Board, I have been charged with heading up our work in this area along with Therese DesCamp.

Our primary monitoring and protection concerns and activities on a continuing basis are currently:

- a. Any potential environmental impacts of mining exploration, development and operations within the Slocan Lake watershed;

- b. Impacts of logging and recreational ski cat operations on the spawning habitat of the *blue listed* Bull Trout in Silverton Creek;
- c. Sedimentation in Carpenter Creek;
- d. Impacts of logging activities within the Summit Lake/Bonanza Creek watershed on the *blue listed* Western Toad as well as the benthic invertebrates in Summit Lake.

In each case, we have addressed our concerns in letters to project proponents and those within government who have a related responsibility. We have emphasized that SLSS is not automatically against such development activities; however, we insist that environmental and industry *best practices* be implemented with such due care and attention that any associated impacts are negligible in perpetuity.

Regarding Carpenter Creek, Gary Parkstrom has agreed to represent SLSS in the ongoing discussions about the sedimentation challenges. He has been provided with all the names and contacts of people concerned. Planning for restoration is awaiting the outcome of our strategic Science-based Framework noted above, the recruitment of multiple partners for this task and a professional restoration evaluation. We feel that the Carpenter Creek issues are of such common concern that the project has the potential to bring together a cross-section of community stakeholders in a positive working relationship.

And of course our major advocacy project remains the development and implementation of a Slocan Lake Management Plan (LMP) and appropriate related by-laws. The development process is, however, exceedingly slow and full of complexities. In short, we are only a third-party advocate, though a respected and reputable one, on the fringe of an intra-government negotiation process including First Nations, the RDCK and senior government agencies. And their lock-step LMP approach is still primarily focused on Kootenay Lake. But at least we have passed the first benchmark, a completed, though much maligned, Guidance Document.

Given the situation, we are taking a two-pronged approach forward: firstly to continue our process advocacy work with the RDCK and local governments as well as begin reaching out to the First Nation stakeholders; and, secondly to synthesize the research and conceptual planning completed within the watershed to date, fill in the gaps, and develop the principles and policies that the Society deems necessary to advocate for within, or without, an LMP. And further, once we establish those principles and policies in pragmatic detail, we can advocate specifics on a sound foundation in any forum with any stakeholder regardless of what governments may or may not do. We can also outline the complementary constructive actions stakeholders can take as we invite them to join in the stewardship challenges and opportunities within the Slocan Lake watershed. Your Board plans to have such a foundation document produced for the Society in 2015.

Operations: Our overall operational goal is *to develop and sustain a viable, efficient and effective organization to support the Society's mission*. We are all engaged in this work in various ways from time to time throughout the year, whether it be through: the Treasurer ensuring our finances are in order; our Secretary maintaining our minutes and records; our fund raising, grant writing and reporting activities; our operational policy development; or, our continuous learning activities through participating in workshops and conferences along with self-directed learning.

All these myriad of activities are necessary to achieve our operational goal on an ongoing basis as it is these basic functions that underlie the achievement of the Society's mission, though it's all very challenging and time consuming.

As of last spring we now sublet a small office space in New Denver across the hall from *Garden Graces* on 6th Avenue. This at least provides a centralized storage and occasional work space. It was a particularly useful support for our summer program activities. To date, however, we have not been successful in acquiring the funds to engage a part-time administrative assistant. And this is an area where your Board and organization could certainly use further support.

In this regard, you will notice there is a poster here today advertising for volunteers to take on a number of tasks that actually only require a very few hours of work per month. But with such further volunteer support from time to time, your Board members will be able to more fully engage in fulfilling the Society's science, education and watershed protection and advocacy goals.

With Gratitude: Financial and In-kind Support from Partnering Agencies

The *Columbia Basin Trust* (CBT) was the major funder of the Water Studies –Phase III completion project.

Financial assistance for the 2014 *Culture of Stewardship* projects was gratefully received from: *Columbia Basin Trust* and *Slocan Solutions Society*. *Mountain Equipment Co-op* and the *BC Wildlife Federation* also made In-kind donations. As well, SLSS especially appreciates the financial donations from our local merchants for the Campground Storytelling Theatre project, namely: *New Denver Home Hardware*, *Sen Much More*, *Rutabaga's Whole Foods*, *Silverton Building Supplies*, *New Market Foods*, *What's In Store?*, and *Valhalla Pure*.

The *BC Hydro Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program* contributed the Toadfest T-Shirts to SLSS at very little cost enabling SLSS to realize a financial benefit to the Society.

SWAMP received financial assistance from the *Columbia Basin Trust* and the *BC Wildlife Foundation*. The latter also donated pamphlets, logo, technician time, equipment and gear for the project.

The Invasive Species Monitoring Project that SLSS participated in with its sponsoring partner Central Kootenay Invasive Plant Committee was largely funded by *Columbia Basin Trust* and the *Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program*.

The *Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre* and the *Columbia Basin Watershed Network* generously donated time and expertise to the *Culture of Stewardship iNaturalist* project.

Thanks To Our Many Volunteers

Your Society would not be able to accomplish the amount and quality of work it does without volunteers donating their expertise and time as well as making In-kind contributions, such as equipment use. Following is a summary of the many volunteers who assisted the Society in some way over the past year. Your Board of Directors also each contributed their time and expertise to a multiple of volunteer projects and activities totaling roughly 690 hours.

Volunteers	Donation of Time and Expertise	In-Kind Donation
Science Advisory Committee		
Jeremy Baxter, Hank Hastings, Marcy Mahr, Richard Johnson, David DeRosa, Margaret Hartley		
Science Projects		
Richard Johnson	Water sampling activities/Support	Use of boat
Brad Raymond	Water sampling/ Invasive plant monitoring	Use of boat/canoe
Dianna DeGroot	Water sampling	
Moraia Grau	Water Studies: some donated consulting time	
Peter Roulston	Water sampling/ Secchi Dips	Use of boat
Lane Haywood	Water sampling	
Ron Provan	Invasive mussel monitoring	Use of boat
Hank Hastings	Invasive mussel monitoring/ Carpenter Creek assessment	
Jim (Moonbow) Rutkowski	Invasive mussel monitoring	
George Meier	Invasive mussel monitoring	
Dekker Butzner	SWAMP canoe trip/wetlands assessment /data	Use of canoe
Marcy Mahr	Wetlands assessment / data	
Chole Hartley	Galena Trail assessment	
Gary Parkstrom	Carpenter Creek sedimentation	
Education Projects		
Marcy Mahr	Culture of Stewardship: some donated consulting time	Use of display tent
Randy Cofer	General set-up support/construction	Use of tools/odds and ends
Burgin Jacobs	Construction of display sturgeon	Artistic materials & supplies
Lorna Visser	PR materials editing	
Dale Caton	PR / Booth attendant	
Richard Johnson	PR / Booth attendant / Know Your Watershed education	
Brendan Lindsay	PR /Booth attendant	
Leah Main	PR /Booth attendant	
Nonie Jackson	Local fundraising	
Dekker Butzner	PR/ Booth attendant	
Deborah Sword	PR/ Booth attendant	
Ana Bokstrom	Videoing storytelling	
Mike Koolen	PR/ Booth attendant	
Michelle Connolly	Campground support	
Hank Hastings	PR / Wetlands model	
Gregoire Lamoreaux	PR / Wetlands model	
Lynn Betts	Public relations input	
Protection and Advocacy		
Jeremy Baxter	Interpretation of fish studies	
Wayne McCrory	Watershed assessment activities	

Volunteers	Donation of Time and Expertise	In-Kind Donation
Craig Petitt	Watershed assessment activities	
Lee Hesketh	Carpenter Creek assessment	
Hank Hastings	Watershed monitoring activities	
Operations		
Andrea Kosling	Financial spreadsheet assistance	
Ellen Kinsel	Accounting and financial statements	
Mark Adams	Financial statement advice	
Richard Johnson	Funding reports	
Randy Cofer	General set-up support	Use of tools/odds and ends
Margaret Raymond	Website maintenance	
Clarence denBok	Membership list maintenance	

Further Gratitude

We also wish to thank all those individuals and families who, each in their own way, continue to contribute to the stewardship of Slocan Lake and its surrounding watershed.

As well, the Board appreciates the best efforts being made by the Regional District Area H Director, Walter Popoff and the Mayors and Councils of New Denver, Silverton and Slocan who continue to advocate for responsible Slocan Lake stewardship and related management planning mechanisms.

And finally, thank you for the privilege of being President of the Slocan Lake Stewardship Society over the past year and for the confidence and trust you have placed in me along with the other very capable, hard working and very gracious members of the Board. I do hope that I, and we, have lived up to your expectations.

Respectfully submitted,



Bruce Cottingham
President