

Slocan Lake Stewardship Society

Annual General Meeting - November 15, 2015

President's Annual Report

Members, Friends and Colleagues:

I will begin by presenting a brief overview of the current state of affairs and the Board's thinking on behalf of your Society, as well as some of the challenges it faces.

Firstly, as noted in the Treasurer's report, the Society is solvent.

Secondly, the Board has evolved a comprehensive understanding that the way forward to protect and enhance the health of Slocan Lake for future generations is to protect and enhance its watershed ecology, and that in the long term, this can only be assured by local communities expressly acting, quite naturally, from within a culture of stewardship. It also understands, however, that in at least the foreseeable future, there is still a need for protective mechanisms and a significant role for strong advocates. The Board also understands that the strength and the credibility of its views and work must stem from sound principles of ecology and applied scientific research.

Your Board therefore, has taken steps to found its work upon a strong interlocking conceptual and pragmatic tripod:

- i) a Science-based Strategic Research Framework;
- ii) a Culture of Stewardship Public Education Framework; and,
- iii) a Watershed Protection and Stewardship Framework.

This conceptual understanding is reflected within the Board's current Strategic Plan. Consequently we have organized the focus of our day-today work accordingly, along with an Operational Support component.

The Board and Society is not without its challenges, primarily related to its future financial and organizational capacity. Over the past few years, governments have significantly reduced, and essentially abandoned, their environmental monitoring and enforcement roles. In effect, these roles have been downloaded onto community non-profit organizations with limited capacity to full the spectrum of work required.

While the Society has strong support among its membership and a broad cadre of volunteers, the Board member succession is a continuing challenge, particularly within the Table Officer positions. Having said that, your Society is fortunate in having a full slate of volunteers ready to stand for election again for 2015-16.

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.*

As has been illustrated in the presentation by Margaret Hartley this afternoon, the Board's science work over the year has encompassed a broad spectrum, namely: the Science Framework Project, the Slocan Wetland Assessment and Monitoring Project (SWAMP), Western Toad Counts, Secchi-Dips, Carpenter Creek Water Sampling, and the Water quality Monitoring Project (WQMP) within Silverton Creek.

A major strength of our science team's work has been its collaborative partnership approach with independent consultants and ecology experts, Ministry officials, environmental organizations and supportive funding agencies: and above all, the collaborative community projects that have engaged volunteers in interesting, valuable and productive citizen science experiences.

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.*

The highlight of our educational activities this past year, as illustrated by our education team a few minutes ago, was the very exciting and successful *Wild Days Project*. The project was created and produced in the context of our "Culture of Stewardship" program begun last year.

Our public presence and information booth at the Friday Market in New Denver as well as annual festivals such the Summit Lake Toadfest and Hills Garlic Fest continue to be popular. The SLSS watershed model illustrating the contrasting values of natural and disturbed environments has been especially popular with children and parents alike.

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, water quality skills development and fish counting activities. Your society also co-sponsors the "Know Your Watershed" program at the Lucerne School in New Denver.

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 which was initiated last year and is still accessible through the SLSS website.

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.*

Our primary monitoring and protection concerns and activities on a continuing basis remain as follows:

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

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.

As noted in the Science section, we recognize that one of the best ways we can effectively help to protect the health of the lake is to encourage and support local residents in adopting a tributary and its surrounding watershed to research, monitor and protect; such as Vevey Creek, Wilson Creek, Springer Creek and the Bonanza Creek corridor. We feel that the ongoing Carpenter Creek issues are of such common concern in the New Denver area that it also has the potential to bring together a cross-section of community stakeholders in a positive working relationship.

And of course our major (now longer term) advocacy project remains the development and implementation of a Slocan Lake Management Plan (and/or Watershed Management Plan) and appropriate related enforceable 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. The RDCK planning department has now made the updating of various Official Community Plans its priority, with no anticipated work on an LMP for Slocan Lake until at least 2017-18!

Given the situation, as reported last year, we continue to take 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. The latter work has taken more time than anticipated and thus our foundation document is still in progress.

Operations: Our overall operational goal is *to develop and sustain a viable, efficient and effective organization to support the Society's mission.*

We have all been 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.

We continue to 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. To support and enhance our public presence and educational program, the Board recently purchased a sturdy quality display tent is expected to be serviceable for a number of years.

With Gratitude: Financial and In-kind Support

List of SLSS Funders / Financial and In-Kind Contributors – 2014-2015

Funders/ Donors	Project / Purpose
Key Gerard & Dan Donaldson re Lane Haywood	Lane Haywood Legacy Fund
W & D Battagin re Peter Roulston	Lane Haywood Legacy Fund
Peter Roulston Estate	Peter Roulston's Secchi-Dip Notebook containing his most current and historical records
Columbia Basin Trust (CBT)	Wild Days Project
Hills Recreation Society	Wild Days Project
Mainstreams Society	Water Quality Monitoring Project (WQMP)
BC Hydro: Fish and Wildlife Compensation Program	Donation of T-Shirts for sale at Toadfest as SLSS fundraiser
Village of New Denver (re CBT Community Initiatives Fund)	Science Framework Project
Village of Silverton (re CBT Community Initiatives Fund)	Science Framework Project
Regional District of Columbia Kootenay (re CBT Community Initiatives Fund)	Science Framework Project
Slouan Solutions Society – Received and managed funds for our Society's SWAMP partnership from: CBT Environment Fund, Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program, National Wetland Conservation Fund, Royal BC Museum and British Columbia Wildlife Fund	

Thanks To Our Many Volunteers

Your Society would not be able to accomplish the amount and quality of work it does without many volunteers donating their expertise and time as well as making other In-kind contributions, such as equipment use.

The creative artistic contributions from Diana deGroot (watershed map) and Roni Jurgenson (SLSS logo) deserve special mention.

In addition, the following consultants hired to work on various projects also volunteered many hours beyond their contractual requirements to ensure the success of the projects: Mechelle Babic, Rob Babic (watershed model design and construction), Marcy Mahr, and Theresa Tremaine (Wild Days project).

And of course, as previously mentioned, each Board Member also contributed many many volunteer hours of her/his time and expertise to the projects and activities noted below, such as preparing complex funding applications and reports, networking and meeting with government officials and partnership agencies, and performing a myriad of behind the scenes as well as public activities.

VOLUNTEERS – 2014-2015		
SCIENCE PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES		
Science Advisory Committee		
Jeremy Baxter, Hank Hastings, Marcy Mahr, Richard Johnson, David DeRosa		
Science Framework Project – Technical Expert Interviewees for the Resource Analysis		
Jeremy Baxter Aq Tech , Jakob Dulisse RPBio., Gary Davidson, Ryan Durand RPBio., Doris Hausleitner, Cori Lausen PhD, Wayne McCrory RPBio., Greg Utzig, Martin Carver, Jen Vogel, Crystal Lawrence RPBio.		
Slocan Wetlands Assessment & Monitoring Project (SWAMP) -Technical Team contributing volunteer time		
Ryan Durand, Marcy Mahr, Rhia McKenzie, Tyson Ehlers, Darcie Quamme, Richard Johnson, Theresa Tremaine		
Water Testing		
Gretchen Perks	Sample collection-Carpenter Creek	
Bob Fuhrer	Slocan Lake Secchi-Dips and Veliger sampling	
Kokanee Fish Counts – Volunteer Trainees at Two Counts		
Dale Caton, Brad Raymond, John Fyke		
Water Quality Monitoring Project (WQMP) – Silverton Creek		
Jody Cliff Claire de la Salle Leah Main Katrina Sumrall, Matthew Fry Jack Kelly Wayne Riedel Verena Shaw	Jody and Claire did the CABIN training and the CABIN monitoring in Sept. Jack and Wayne did incidental monitoring of the road/logging sites and the training Data entry	
Western Toad Counts – Summit Lake Mature Toad Night Counts		
Ann Meidinger		
VOLUNTEERS	Donation of Time and Expertise	In-Kind Donation
EDUCATION PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES		
Marcy Mahr	Wild Days Coordinator/Facilitator/ Resource Person: volunteered time beyond contract	
Theresa Tremaine	Wild Days Facilitator/Resource Person: volunteered time beyond contract	

Randy Cofer	General set-up support/construction	Use of tools/odds and ends
Diana deGroot	Creation of illustrated watershed map	Materials & supplies
Richard Johnson	Booth & Wild Days Facilitator/Resource Person	
Daniel Hellyer	Wild Days Facilitator/Resource person	
Ryan Durand	Wild Days Facilitator/Resource Person	
Hank Hastings	Booth Resource Person	
Mike Koolen	Booth Resource Person	
Leah Main	Booth Resource Person	
Matthew Fry	Booth Resource Person	
Evelyn Goodell	Booth Resource Person	
Gwynneth Davies	Booth Resource Person	
Brad Raymond	Booth Resource Person	
Dekker Butzner	Booth Resource Person	
Deborah Sword	Booth Resource Person	
Jane Murphy	Booth Resource Person	
PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES		
Jeremy Baxter	Watershed assessment activities	
Wayne McCrory	Watershed assessment activities	
Craig Pettitt	Watershed assessment activities	
Richard Allin	Environmental strategy sessions	
Richard Johnson	Environmental strategy sessions	
Herb Hammond	Environmental strategy sessions	
OPERATIONS PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES		
Susie O'Donnell	Year-end Financials Review	
Margaret Raymond	Website support	
Lorna Visser	Charity Status proposal	
Roni Jurgenson	Logo design options	

Further Gratitude

We wish to acknowledge the life and volunteer work of Bob Varaleau (who recently died from complications related to cancer) and his long standing commitment to protecting drinking water within his Red Mountain area community watershed. Bob had been active since the 1980's in researching and monitoring any developments that could have possible negative impacts on the water quality, timing and flow affecting residential use, especially related to logging and mining activities.

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.

Once again, 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.

On a final note, for personal reasons, I have decided not to accept any possible nomination to the Board for the 2015-16 year, though I will continue to volunteer from time to time if needed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Cottingham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bruce Cottingham
President