



Cowichan Water Use Plan
Public Advisory Group Meeting #4
Meeting Notes – May 8, 2018

Meeting Highlights

- This was the fourth and final meeting of the Public Advisory Group (PAG) that was established to participate on the Cowichan water use planning process. The focus and goal for the meeting was for the PAG to reach broad agreement on a series of recommendations related to the management and operation of water control facilities at the outlet of Cowichan Lake, which included aiming to reach consensus on a preferred water use alternative.
- All the water use alternatives explored and assessed during the process had significant trade-offs between better providing environmental flows down the Cowichan River for fish and aquatic species; maintaining water levels for threatened aquatic species in the lake; avoiding any increased flood risk on lakefront property owners; minimizing any adverse impacts on lakefront and water users on the lake or down the river. The PAG’s mandate was to identify and weigh the performance of the different alternatives towards a preferred option that balanced the competing water use interests, as best as possible, given the increasing effects that climate change is having in the region.
- A key point to emphasize in the PAG’s deliberations were the significant challenges faced with balancing competing water demands given that summertime rainfall (along with higher summer time temperatures and a much earlier snow melt in most years) will lead to significantly worse, prolonged dry periods by the 2050s where average inflows to the lake in the future will be equivalent to about 1 in 10-year summertime drought today.
- At the meeting, the PAG reviewed and evaluated a third round of water use alternatives consisting of 5 new alternatives plus 4 alternatives carried forward from past meetings. None of these alternatives were broadly supported however, as many PAG members felt strongly and opposed multiple alternatives, with most members opposing at least one alternative. In the end, all 9 of the alternatives were not supported by at least 4 or more members.
- A new hybrid alternative was proposed during the meeting that bridged the main differences highlighted across PAG members’ lack of support with the other options. The PAG reached conditional agreement (i.e., “consensus”) on the new alternative and recommended it as an outcome to be included along with a series of other supporting recommendations for the Cowichan WUP.
- The PAG agreed to another eight related recommendations to be included in the Cowichan WUP.
- Other topics covered during the meeting included: a detailed hydrology and performance measure assessment of the round 3 alternatives, which included supplemental information on the characterization of potential effects on lakefront areas; research and monitoring studies; a review of the existing operations and facilities; and preliminary discussions about the upcoming public information meeting scheduled for June 11.
- The meeting concluded with a discussion on the next and final steps of the planning process, which will include a report summarizing the PAG’s proceedings and main outcomes.



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Meeting Objectives

- To review and provide an update since the last meeting
- To review any changes to the current set of performance measures
- To review and discuss the rationale and performance of the new water use alternatives
- To discuss the characterization and significance of potential effects on lakefront properties
- To review and assess a series of related recommendations for the Cowichan WUP
- To reach agreement on a preferred and recommended water use alternative
- To discuss the next steps for the public engagement and planned public meeting
- To review the concluding steps of the planning process

Meeting Agenda

8:30am	Welcome and Update
9:00am	New Water Use Alternatives
9:30am	Characterizing Potential Effects on Lakefront Properties
10:30am	Break – 15mins (light snacks)
10:45am	Assessing the Alternatives
12:00pm	Lunch (Provided) – 60mins
1:00pm	Other Related Recommendations
1:45pm	Reaching Agreement on a Preferred Alternative
2:30pm	Break – 15mins
2:45pm	Reaching Agreement – Cont'd
3:30pm	Support for other Recommendations
4:15pm	Concluding Steps
4:45pm	Concluding Comments
5:00pm	Adjourn

Meeting Materials

- Pre-Reading Package – Public Advisory Group Meeting 4
- Handouts
 - Updated Consequence Table