



SQUAMISH RIVER WATERSHED SOCIETY

**Strategy Session
June 2017**

Introduction

The Squamish River Watershed Society (SRWS) held a strategy session on 17 June 2017 to:

- Set strategic direction for the next 5 – 10 years,
- Discuss ways to more fully engage the Board and advisors, and
- Discuss ways to work productively with key partners (First Nations, secondary institutions, industry and governments)

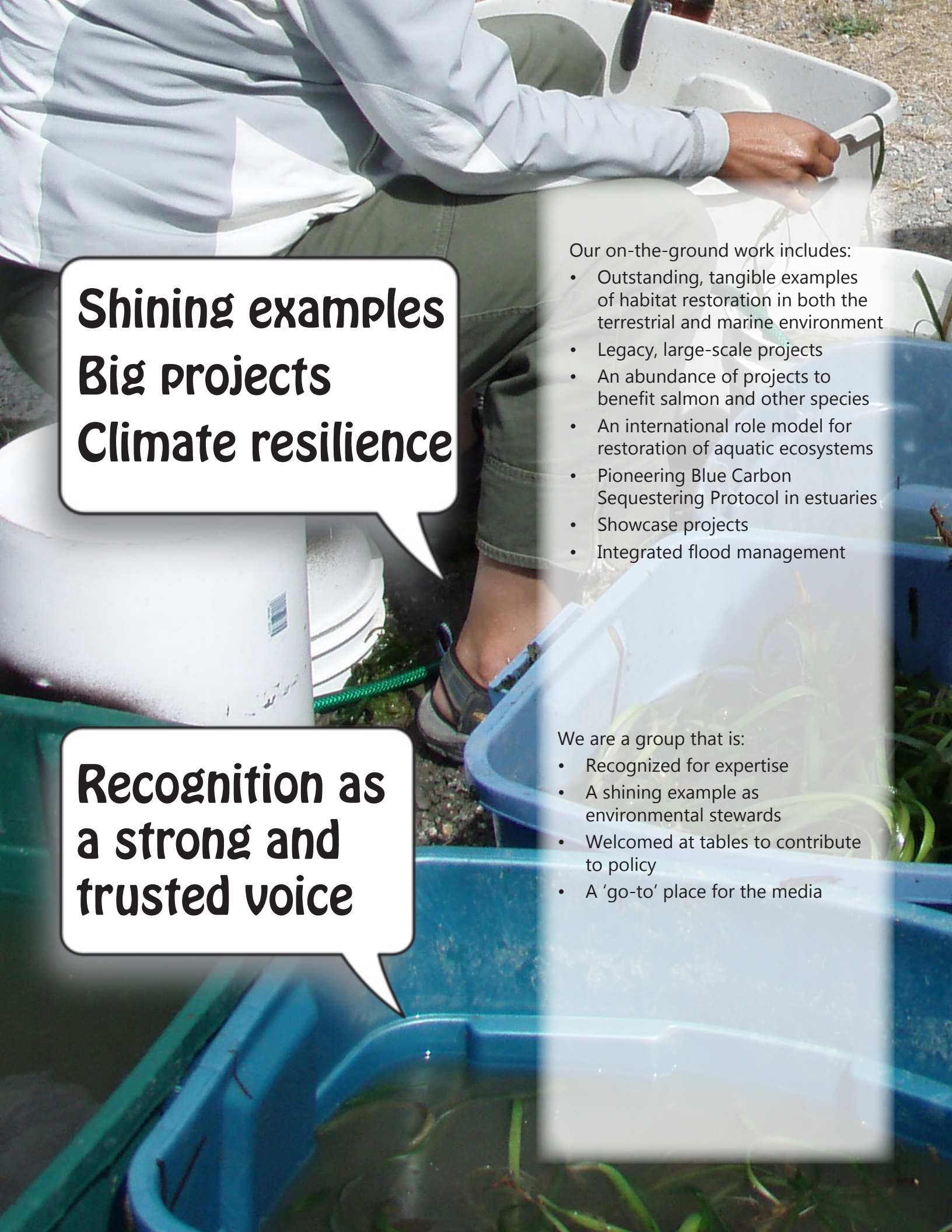
Attendees:

Randall Lewis, President
Shelagh Thompson, Treasurer
Chessy Knight, Director
Jordan Uittenbogaard, Director
Dave Nanson, DFO
Matt Foy, (retired DFO)
Clare Greenberg, Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council
Chrystal Nahanee, Squamish Nation
Nikki Wright, Seagrass Conservation Working Group
Dianne Sanford, Seagrass Conservation Working Group
Kimberly Armour, City of Richmond
Leah Bendall, Simon Fraser University
Vicki Marlatt, Simon Fraser University
Edith Tobe, SRWS Executive Director
Rhonda O'Grady, SRWS Education Coordinator
Lora McAuley, SRWS Blue Carbon project
Alyssa Togado, SRWS Summer Intern
Judith Cullington, Facilitator

Report writing and design: Judith Cullington,
JCA Judith Cullington & Associates

Photos: Judith Cullington, Edith Tobe

A word cloud in the shape of a salmon, oriented horizontally. The words are in various shades of red and pink, with different font sizes and orientations. The most prominent words, in the largest font, are 'COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT' and 'PUBLIC VOICE'. Other large words include 'EDUCATION', 'ACT', 'FOCUS', and 'OPPORTUNITIES'. Smaller words include 'SALMON AS THE BRIDGE', 'NOT JUST THE USUAL SUSPECTS', 'PUBLIC VOICE', 'EDUCATION', 'ACT', 'FOCUS', and 'OPPORTUNITIES'. The words are arranged to fill the shape of the salmon, with some words appearing multiple times. The background is white.



**Shining examples
Big projects
Climate resilience**

**Recognition as
a strong and
trusted voice**

Our on-the-ground work includes:

- Outstanding, tangible examples of habitat restoration in both the terrestrial and marine environment
- Legacy, large-scale projects
- An abundance of projects to benefit salmon and other species
- An international role model for restoration of aquatic ecosystems
- Pioneering Blue Carbon Sequestering Protocol in estuaries
- Showcase projects
- Integrated flood management

We are a group that is:

- Recognized for expertise
- A shining example as environmental stewards
- Welcomed at tables to contribute to policy
- A 'go-to' place for the media

In the next 5 - 10 years, we hope to achieve:

We have:

- Strong and long-lasting partnerships with First Nations, governments, industry, other stewardship groups, academia
- Strengthening of purpose – greater awareness, knowledge, expertise, bonding, strong voice

**Partnerships -
lots!**

We provide:

- Engagement with residents and visitors (existing and future)
- Leaders in environmental education
- Mentors for young people
- Jobs for youth
- Support for students from SFU, BCIT and other universities and colleges, including helping people to qualify for their RPBio or other accreditation

**Education,
mentoring and
training**

Challenges... and solutions

Funding

Funding is needed for staff, students, projects, planning, restoration, land purchase, prevention of pollution (and more). Sources are limited and often only available for specific actions.

- Seek core funding (from local or senior governments), but avoid downloading of responsibility
- Have fundraising for specific projects; use the Squamish Foundation to access core funding for collaboration
- Work with academia to access funding for students


Communications and awareness

Many people are not aware of what we do, especially with new people moving to the Corridor.

- Keep the community informed
- Keep the website current, use social media
- Bring in new people to keep community events fresh and fun; continue offering prizes and "swag"
- Work with teachers, First Nations and community stewards
- Celebrate successes

Stewardship groups are often not seen as credible.

- Legitimize citizen science



Working with others is essential.

- Show governments how we support their work
- Strategic approach to communications with government and others
- Advocate for an Environment Committee for District of Squamish
- Promote stewardship activities with other NGOs
- Maintain networks and trust

We need to be proactive as well as reactive.

- Have a strong 5-10 year plan with clear objectives and outcomes
- Have student projects 'ready to go'
- Consistently recruit new supporters
- Avoid burnout by building enough capacity, and avoiding unrealistic expectations of volunteers (e.g., they cannot do enforcement)

The community is changing.
Government programs and priorities can change rapidly.

- Maintain good communications with government and others
- Make sure our voice is heard

Maintain strong relationships

Be proactive

Remain relevant into the future

Getting to Board Excellence

“Board Excellence” means:

- Mutually beneficial
- Rewarding
- Engaging
- Supported by staff
- Trust and transparency
- Financial accountability
- Having clearly defined roles and responsibility of Board members

Board Roles are to...

- Support development of strategic plan
- Support implementation of key projects
- Support staff at key meetings
- Host fundraisers for specific projects
- Network with their peers, sharing information and ideas
- Conduct research and education
- Encourage new Board members

Expanding Board Membership

- Retain existing Board members
- Provide mentorship and succession planning
- Create Board job descriptions and actively recruit new members
- Aim for a balanced Board with specific skill or knowledge
- Seek representatives from industry, District of Squamish
- Have affiliate memberships and subcommittees

Improving Board Function

- Have a clear strategic plan
- Have more frequent meetings, including some by Skype / web, some site visits
- Use more email communications (everyone sharing information)
- Create a Board manual with roles and responsibilities, policies
- Have a staff succession plan and emergency plan
- Consider more open meetings, open houses, site visits, speaker series, use of newsletter / blog / social media

Improving our Partnerships

Academia

- Take a proactive approach / early planning
- Identify skill sets needed and provide list to SFU/BCIT etc. by early fall (part of Strategic Plan)
- Find \$ to support students: summer jobs, Mitacs grants, industry-sponsored
- Get students to write publications (to earn RPBio)
- Ask a Board member or subcommittee to lead this

NGOs

- Host an annual social (NGOs throughout watershed) with a theme and purpose
- Look for opportunities for collaborative approaches (joint funding requests), include planning and follow-up
- Update list of groups

Industry

- Partner with Fortis BC, BC Hydro, forestry, Squamish terminal, CN, Innergex
- Include industry member on Board
- Clarify policy for accepting industry contributions
- Seek project support (non-monetary as well as \$)

First Nations

- Continue strong relationship and trust with Squamish Nation
- Reaffirm mandate and relationship with other First Nations: Tsleil-Waututh, Mount Currie and Lilwat Nations, also US Tribes
- Share 5-10 year plan with Nations so we are 'on the same page'

Government (municipal, regional, provincial, federal)

- Ensure government understands value of having SRWS; but avoid downloading
- Have District of Squamish staff on Board; encourage them to create a DOS Environment Committee
- Maintain good relationships with provincial and federal agencies
- Seek relationship with Tourism Ministry
- Follow up with Wildlife Management Area; mechanism for coordinator

Other

- Define relationship with consultants and local businesses
- Ensure public voices support for SRWS work to government
- Share information and reports with public through webpage

