**Friends of Kootenay Lake Stewardship Society (FoLKSS)**

**Annual General Meeting** Jam Factory, Nelson and online by zoom

October 26, 2024, 3:30 pm PST

**Attending: Jam Factory**: Sukhananda, Greg Utzig, Ben Simoni, John Betts, Alanda Greene (minutes), Gwen Dell’Anno, Joanne Pittman, Camryn Oyler, Andrea Levine, Leslie Payne, Fern Sabo, Grace Sabo, Paige Thurston, Iuliia Stashevska, David Cunningham, Camille LeBlanc, (16)

**Zoom:** Martin Carver, Robin Louie, Melanie Mobbs, Michelle Oakley, David Reid, Stephanie Myers, Gregoire Lamoureux, Lily Feeback (8)

**Regrets:** Tina Deenik, Sangita Sudan

**Agenda:**

1. **Call to Order** by ChairMartin Carver, 3:30 pm. Move to approve agenda by Greg Utzig; carried unanimously
2. Invitation to Gwen Dell’Ano to lead proceedings
3. **Adopt minutes of 2023 AGM:**

**Moved** by Ben Simoni, Seconded: Melanie Mobbs; AGREED unanimously

1. **Treasurer’s Report for 2023: Ben Simoni**

Ben expanded on certain situations of 2023 year that impacted the financials strongly: not many grants were coming in yet $58,000 needed for professional fees, leading to need to lay off staff in fall. Many non-profits are facing similar situations of small profit margins. The $30,000. CEBA loan given during Covid required repayment, which was done. All projects were completed, all monies owing paid.

**Moved** by Ben Simoni to adopt financial report; Seconded: John Betts

Approved unanimously

1. **Waive audit requirement** moved by Martin Carver. AGREED unanimously
2. **Program Reports:**
   * **Executive Director from Gwen Dell’Anno:** 
     1. Showed photos of the **Harrop Wetlands Restoration Projec**t Phase 1 and 2, including planting of sedge, grass, hawthorne; monitoring toad survival. Partneredwith Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society (CKISS), who brought out students, provided seeds and plants. Brenda Beckwith of Kin-Seed native plants worked with advising, plants.
     2. **Osprey Monitoring**: 3 days with monitoring hatching and 3 with fledging.
     3. **Education Events:** The Polar Bear swim on New Year’s Day, the FoKLSS Summit in Balfour, 4 beach clean-ups, 3 market days – Kaslo, Creston and Nelson.
     4. **Charitable Status** work and preparation to move forward

* **Bonaventure Project from Greg Utzig,**

This project was a continuation of our ongoing work on shore-spawning kokanee in the West Arm of Kootenay Lake. The human controlled lake levels lead to spawning in higher elevation gravels when water is higher than natural levels in the fall, resulting in loss of hatching fry in the spring when lake levels are low.  Previous work in cooperation with provincial government, Selkirk college and the Okanagan Syilx Nation, east of 6 Mile on the north shore involved placing spawning gravels at lower levels along the shore and monitoring, to encourage lower elevation spawning. The Bonaventure project completed a feasibility study for improving kokanee spawning habitat in a human-constructed lagoon west of 6 Mile. We hired a hydrologic engineering consultant to assess various options for improving the spawning habitat. The basic design will require deepening the lagoon, installing spawning gravels, and potentially installing some kind of retention walls around the perimeter. The work is feasible, but costs will be substantial, depending on the option pursued ($37K to $230K). A report is available for future planning.

* **Fund-Raising Report from Sukhananda**

From the time when we discovered our funding issues, activities in fall 2023 and into 2024 included a GoFundMe and raising web donations ($6000+), Silent Auction, donation of ticket sales for Patagonia movie launch: *The Meaningless Pursuit of Snow* (together $3500) plussecuring grants from RDCK and Fortis.

* **HR Report from Sukhananda**

There was a complete turnover of new staff in spring 2023, each person leaving for different reasons, with a new Executive Director (Gwen, here today) joining in May and 2 more part time staff taken on in the summer. In fall, with cash problems, the 2 part time staff had to be laid off. ED continued until end of Feb. 2024 and helped us transition into hiatus.

* **June 20 Membership Meeting from Alanda Greene**

Alanda offered a summary of events leading to inviting members, community organization representatives and board to discuss difficulties with short term funding models that restrict ongoing, meaningful projects and information acquisition and how to attract members who would be an active, working board with skills in fund-raising, grant acquisition.

Good involvement from attendees who showed care, interest and willingness. Many ideas, possibilities, suggestions gathered plus people stepping up to be on the board and take FoKLSS into a new phase of functioning, educating and serving the lake.

* **Beach Clean Ups from Lily Feeback**

Showed photos; Two beach clean ups occurred: along edge of water from north end of WalMart to park and at Cottonwood Creek. Good turnout for both. Another planned on Nov 5. along dog walk area including lakeside of Cottonwood Creek.

* **Upper Columbia Basin Environmental Collaborative (UCBEC) from Martin:**

Martin Carver and Greg Utzig continue to represent FoKLSS with the UCBEC, which is a partnership of environmental voices across Canada’s Columbia Basin working to improve environmental outcomes associated with the modernization of the Columbia River Treaty.

1. **Election of Board Members**

* **Five board members to continue:** Martin Carver, Greg Utzig, John Betts, Sukhananda and Robin Louie
* **Leaving:** Alanda Greene (1 year), Ben Simoni (3 years), Tina Deenik (3 years. Rory Gallaugher and Chad Luke resigned before this AGM.
* **Stepping forward as board members:** David Reid, Lily Feeback, Melanie Mobbs, Michelle Oakley. All accepted by acclamation
* **Executive:** To be decided at the first meeting after the AGM

1. **Grant updates and Future Sustainability: Melanie Mobbs**
   * A major focus since the June meeting has been fundraising. Some of the grants awarded, including the BC Gaming grant, have been for less than hoped but we have gradually improved our prospects for finances of the 2024 year – over $26,000 in total and almost all of it unrestricted. This is a very useful start and with a growing membership and more activities again, it seems that in future, possibilities for larger grants would seem reasonable.
   * We need to find donors and sponsors through organizing events and outreach.
   * Sustainability thoughts: Creation of a fund-raising committee proposed; reactivate the volunteer base; achieve charitable status; upcoming grants give us potential for staff hiring.
2. **Charitable Status: Davis Reid and Sukhananda:**

To attract more donors we want to move forward with acquiring Charitable Status. This requires changes in the Constitution and some changes in the By-Laws. The proposed changes were circulated to members and the board several weeks earlier for perusal. These changes comply with CRA preferred wording in what we do. The suggested changes came from a lawyer experienced in the process of acquiring charitable status.

**Move to accept proposed changes to constitution:** David Reid Seconded: Greg Utzig AGREED unanimously.

**Move to accept proposed changes to by-laws:** David Reid Seconded: Melanie Mobbs AGREED unanimously

1. **Set New Membership fee: Sukhananda**
   * We could not have got through this past year and come back from Hiatus without the donors and support of Members; propose to write and thank the donors, members and volunteers of the last year for their contribution. AGREED
   * **Move to increase membership fee:** Sukhananda Seconded: Camille AGREED
2. **Meeting adjourned:** Martin Carver, 5:10 pm. Followed by refreshments and conversation.