

# S E R N B C



SOCIETY FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION  
IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

## **SERNBC Annual General Meeting: December 02, 2020.**

### **Meeting Purpose:**

- Director's Reports
- President's report
- Treasurer's report including the financial review by Philip Foucher (KPMG)
- Manager's report
- Resolutions
- Nominations/elections
- Presentation - Al Irvine R.P. Bio is principle of New Graph Environment and will present on Fish Passage: Considerations for Aquatic Restoration

### **Meeting called to Order: 9:02 am, December 2, 2020**

#### *Directors Present*

John DeGagne – Chairman/President  
Duncan McColl – Vice President  
Sean Rapai - Secretary  
Wayne Salewski  
Brad Martin  
Olin Albertson  
Andrea Erwin

#### *Directors Not Present*

Gerd Erasmus  
Ken Watson  
Michel Lavallee  
Warren Eastland

#### Members and Others present:

Adam Patrick  
Adrian DeGroot  
Al Irvine  
Tobi Anaka  
Adrian Batho  
Chelsea Heyer  
Darcie Fodor  
Patrick Ferguson  
Nick Hamilton

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Irene Ronalds  
Mark Pokorski  
Al Neal  
Bruce Rogers  
Scott Schilds  
Miodrag Tkalec  
Nathan Voth  
Lisa Helmer  
Lisa Wood  
Chelton Van Geloven  
Lori Borth  
Nathan Prince  
Mark Thompson

## *Coordinator*

Marc Steynen

## **Introductions:**

- Did not go through the introductions of all participants, as it is a virtual meeting
- Present on the call are directors, members, partners, and delivery agents [Approximately 22 people joining virtually at the time of the introduction]
- Review of meeting agenda
  - Director's Reports
  - President's report
  - Treasurer's report including the financial review by Philip Foucher (KPMG)
  - Manager's report
  - Resolutions
  - Nominations/elections
  - Presentation

## **Director's Report (supported by slideshow) - John DeGagne**

- SERNbc is about project delivery and governance
- Focussed on implementation and restoration of ecosystems
- Also governed by its constitution and bylaws
- Projects vary widely, and are increasing in number

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- Projects are treatment focussed, but also aim to better understand the management of ecosystems
- Directed by strategic plan, and engaged board of directors and membership
- Land use process with BC represents vital opportunity
- Focussed on continuing to build capacity and complimentary structure for complimentary implementation

## *Financial Picture*

- Looking to secure treasurer from BoD
- John DeGagne is currently fulfilling that role
- Would work to further delineate and enable-cross referencing of deposits with expenditures
- Also need to work to secure GST rebates, which has been a multi year process with the government that SERN is working on
- Continue to work with same accountant and bookkeeper – Phil and Grace
- Generally speaking, things continue to go well

## **Financial Statements for year end March 31, 2020 - Philip Foucher (KPMG)**

- Phil is a partner at KPMG in Prince George
- KPMG is the accountant for SERNbc
- Phil presented the review/engagement report (as apposed to other reports they produced with varying levels of detail)
- Incorrect statement being shared, so time taken to change to the March 31, 2020 on the shared screen
- Presentation starts with the statement of earnings.
- Statement of earnings from April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020 - Total Revenue 1.2 million
- Increase of \$576k on previous year, an 87% increase
- Expenses increased as well
- Project coordinator and contractor costs are the largest value on the statement of expenses
- Excess revenue over expenses, of \$365k over the year
- Accumulate earnings – Prior years balance at \$74,989 + \$365,569 = \$440, 558
- It was a good year for SERNbc
- Assets = \$595, 359 by the end of March 2020
- Liabilities down from \$112k the year before
- Deferred revenue from BC - \$128,779
- This in part explains the excess revenues
- Asset balance is \$595,359

## *Statement of Cash Flows*

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- Changes in accounts receivable, payable, resulting in an increase in cash over the year
- As of March 2020, there is a remaining cash balance of \$312,969
- GST receivable of \$35k
- Little risk to organization given the liquidity of the organisation

## *COVID 19*

- Little impact, but the financial statements ended March 31, 2020.

## *Questions for Philip Foucher*

Wayne Salewski – Is the GST rebate problematic? do we only get 50% of GST back?

Phil – the organization is eligible for the gst rebates, just needs to provide proper paper trail

John – Confirming that the GST rebate has accumulated to \$35k

Marc Steynen – Is there anything we should be doing differently, in terms of tracking and admin to help the GST issue?

Phil – No, working with Grace from Accutec means that it is under control. GST is evident on invoicing, so not likely an issue. No changes required

Wayne – Impressive value of work that SERNbc is doing, as is the work by John and Marc.

## **Managers Report - Marc Steynen**

- The presentation will focus more on the work SERNbc is doing, as opposed to the numbers
- Presentation will follow the presentation by Al Irvine

## **Policy on Board Composition - John DeGagne**

- Reviewing the approved policy on board composition and the nominating committee as it ties to the nomination elections process, which SERNbc has struggled with in the past
- The date has been updated, if the resolution adjustment is approved
- The only thing that needs to happen is a shift from the Omineca Region to the Northern area of BC
- Generally, there would be a nomination committee appointed by the board candidates
- Gerd Erasmus was going to lead the nomination process, but not able to attend, so now John DeGagne will lead this
- The change is just the change of region (Omineca) to the north Area and the bottom indicates that a BOD term is 2 years, instead of just 1
- Determines the process. BOD member at the end of term would need to retire at the AGM, then would be immediately eligible for re-election
- Would someone like to make a motion that we support these changes?

*Motion from Duncan McColl 1<sup>st</sup>, Bradley Martin 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

- Any discussion on these items?

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- If no concern, propose that we accept changes.
- [no concerns raised]
- John indicates that it is approved

## *BOD term ending*

- John DeGagne, Bob Frederick, Duncan McColl, Ken Watson, Chris Schell

## *BOD no standing for re-election*

- Bob Frederick, Ken Watson, Chris Schell

## *BOD term continuing*

- Olin Albertson, Andrea Erwin, Wayne Salewski, Brad Martin, Michel Lavallee, Warren Eastland, Sean Rapai

John - Regions are identified by individual director, and there is a hope that we can expand directorship and membership to all northern regions. As stated in policy, there is a goal to keep government membership on BOD to < 50%

Olin Albertson – Affiliation is broader than indicated. BCWF should be included, as he sits on the Omineca Wildlife committee and is SERN's representative there.

John - proposes a motion for nomination of individuals who wish not to retire

- Nomination of John DeGagne Duncan McColl, Adrian Batho, Tobi Anaka, Scott Schilds

John - Policy says we should have 9 – 15 people

Marc Steynen – has had conversations with Scott Schilds, and will put forward his name for membership

Scott Schilds – Part of the BC ecosystems branch of the caribou recovery program in the northeast

Olin - with Ken retiring, is there anyone else from the Guide Outfitter that we can put forward? Would like to see Guide Outfitter representation

John – suggest that we get the person in Olin's mind involved over the next year, then bring them forward in 1 year

Olin - will follow up with the individual



John – any more nominations?

Tobi Anaka – What about First Nation representation? Thinking of Skeena ESI

John – absolutely, increased FN representation has been a goal for many years, and the organization is open. Just looking for willing and interested people.

John – for those not present, will need to wait on an individual’s nomination until next year.

John – do we have a motion for new board members and returning board members?

Miodrag Tkalec – hand up – Agrees with the motion

Brad – second

Anyone apposed? Otherwise we have a new BOD for the next year

Board of Directors

*SERNbc Board of Directors*

- *John DeGagne, Duncan McColl, Olin Albertson, Andrea Erwin, Wayne Salewski, Brad Martin, Michel Lavallee, Warren Eastland, Sean Rapai, Adrian Batho, Tobi Anaka, Scott Schilds*

John – that was record time. Al, are you prepared to do you presentation now?

Adam Patrick – on the point of involvement of First Nations. What does the role for a director look like? Workflow, responsibilities etc.

John – main function is to approve the budget, and ensure that the society is moving forward and on track for budget and expenditures

John – also managing the bureaucracy. Mike Jull had set the finances of SERNbc up very well, so there is a role like that for someone to take on

John – board meets 2-3x a year, and one of the main functions to make sure the projects and budgeting is approved and SERN activities are directed by the board

Marc – looking for board members to make connections, lead projects or communications etc.



John – it is generally volunteer based, so the capacity is somewhat limited, but the work is often to coordinate with other organisations

John - Being involved with SERN could provide a conduit for becoming more knowledgeable of what is occurring in the north, and with SERNbc with regards to restoration

John – actively trying to work with the different ESI tables in the north

John – would Al Irvine like to begin his presentation? No other business to address.

John – SERNbc has been working with Al for 2 years or so. Prior to that, SERN was working with BC Hydro and FWCP around the Williston. Some successes, but some difficulties connecting on what it was the FWCP wanted, compared to what SERNbc could deliver. Chelsea Coady suggested that SERNbc work with Al on fish passage projects in the Peace, in the Parsnip to start and now in the Bulkley.

#### **09:50am – Al Irvine presentation begins**

- **Al Irvine R.P. Bio is principle of New Graph Environment and will present on Fish Passage: Considerations for Aquatic Restoration**

[https://newgraphenvironment.github.io/fish\\_passage\\_ern\\_2020\\_agm/#1](https://newgraphenvironment.github.io/fish_passage_ern_2020_agm/#1)

#### **10:40am – presentation ends**

#### **Managers Report - Marc Steynen – Caribou Habitat Restoration Development and Implementation**

- Not a technical presentation, but a narrative of what SERNbc has been working on and accomplishing

##### *Tweedsmuir-Entiakio Caribou Range*

- South of Burns Lake, in an area heavily impacted by disturbance (flooding in 1952 – by a dam), and now more recently pine beetle epidemic and fires
- These disturbances are having an effect on the herd
- Tactical plan developed by Wildlife Infometrics to guide the activities, which identified 3 key areas for the Tweedsmuir caribou - Whitesail, Chelaslie and Vanderhoof priority restoration areas

##### *Whitesail Reach*

- This time last year it was a planning discussion. The problem is the accumulation of woody debris from the flooding of the dam, and since the caribou use of the islands has declined

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- The objective was to clean up the beaches and reduce the volume of wood debris, to help the caribou use the islands more easily
- Partnered with Cheslatta Carrier Nation, which provided the boats and heavy machinery
- Work completed in November 2019
- Woody debris was collected and burned
- As money was running low, trails that the caribou could use were built by removing woody debris to provide better access for caribou
- There is also a monitoring program to evaluate the results of the activities
- One tool is wildlife cameras, which are posted throughout whitesail reach
- Mitch Flowers is retrieving cards from the cameras
- Various photos of wildlife captured on wildlife cameras shared (black bear, grizzly bear, caribou, lynx etc.)

## *Review of priority areas for Nadina-South Ootsa Road Restoration*

- Candidate roads have been identified for rehabilitation
- In October 2020, worked on roads in the north end of the Ootsa triangle.
- 25 candidate road segments identified - 30 km
- Following engagement with Cheslatta Carrier Nation and Stakeholders, it was reduced to 11 road segments
- Majority of roads are in block spur roads, so “easy” to rehabilitate
- The road prism was ripped with the cat, and two machines worked together to recontour, reduce compaction, regrade, and put any organic material available back on the roadbed
- Complex roads, which are long sections, culverts present, 30 – 40cm gravel cap) took more effort
- Excavator took deadfall and pulled it onto the road, to reduce line of site, reduce travelability of predators,
- Stock Digging bucket on excavator did not work well. So, the operators welded more teeth onto the bucket, which was successful in increasing production for removing material back onto the road surface
- 13 km rehabilitated in October 2020.
- Road densities remain high, so this is more of a “trial” or “pilot”
- Analyzed costs, and budgets, so that can be produced for future reclamation targets
- Will work on in block roads adjacent to pine stands that are 10-20 years old
- There is also a post fire area, and the old roads being targeted are fire guards
- They are longer, remote, and have more debris that make it more logistically and technically challenging.
- Found that the operators required more accessible information. So SERNbc is building georeferenced pdf’s and maps that give more clear direction to operators
- The map uses (x), (purple dots) and other images to show where different intensities of barriers and treatments that will be applied
- Quintette Caribou Range



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- Work with FLNRORD staff in Ft. St. John and other funders
- Work began with the 2 planning and prioritization documents for reclamation activities
- There is a priority area for the Quintette, and areas identified as candidates by Golder
- Subsequent engagement with tenure holders then reduced that list of candidate roads
- In 2019, 25 km of linear disturbances was restored within the Quintette priority area
- Activities included excavator to hoe scree, dig into remaining spoil piles, and placement of woody debris on road surface
- There were high elevation trails rehabilitated
- Tree planting was also completed, including conifers and alders
- The third activity that covered the most ground was tree felling
- 3 teams of tree fallers were employed, and provided by Duz Cho
- Tree felling blocked off-site lines and access
- The results, 90-line segments, 25.45 km reclaimed
- This year, Phase 2 is being developed within the Quintette herd range with BC and Forsite
- There are mines in the area, oil and gas, geotechnical exploration, and forestry in the area
- There are quick strategies that can be used, for example blocking access on seismic lines, and is likely to be the first activity attempted
- The seismic lines are approximately 6 m wide,
- They have regenerated to some degree, but the site lines remain of at least 500 m +
- These activities are being planned for winter 2021
- Draft documents, prescription documents and operator guidance how to's, are being prepared
- Those are being completed now.

## *Questions*

John – many details and questions arise.

Wayne – Did the fire guards not have an obligation for restoration?

Marc – spent time looking at the question, and talking to people, asking if any of the fire guards had been restored or reclaimed. Or attempts made? The answer is no, in the south Ootsa area at least

Marc- understands that the province is working on reclamation of fire guards in more recent fires

Wayne – This is an obligation that someone has missed and is an obligation of the crown. Something is missing, and there should be money for this.

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John – What would BC wildfire think of this rehab that Marc is doing, compared to the typical sediment and erosion control?

Marc – fire guards have been deactivated, which is different than rehabilitation or restoration. Technically, they will be harder to restore than FSR or branch road, because there is still decked timber there. The fire guards are wider, and completely bladed, so the organics and woody debris are pushed to the side. So, there is much more work required of these fire guards than a regular road.

Olin – Marc, could you explain how this ties into the larger picture in terms of those caribou herds and the work done to restore those? And the monitoring being completed to determine effectiveness?

Marc – yes, there are rigorous monitoring efforts, on the end of the restoration efforts. There is a suite of applications designed to monitor caribou movements etc. with trail cams etc.

- Analysis and reports due at the end of December
- NE there is a monitoring program and efforts
- There is very little road restoration work done in BC, but in Alberta there is much more science and monitoring work being completed on the seismic lines
- Can increase the connectivity and usability of the habitat by removing some of the

Chelton – supportive of road restoration, and views these as large scars on the landscape

- Cost analysis is key, as more projects are completed, you can revise cost estimates, which makes it easier to plan and find money to complete projects
- We are in a time when people are willing to fix natural infrastructure, so there is opportunity. There could be a benefit to look at areas for prioritizing areas for rehab, there would also be a huge benefit to the hydrology (slow waterflows, erosion etc,) would double down the value of the effort

Marc – improving on cost analysis, as experience gained with new roads, in blocks roads, roads with rock and debris on them.

- There are three categories of costs created
- Hydrology – important yes. It is straightforward in cut blocks, but the branch roads get tricky. 16 culverts pulled on one road and transported away, and the major cost was ensuring the fill was removed and drainage restored

Sean Rapai – UNBC Colloquium Series Presentation from Scot McNay is useful in pointing in the direction of monitoring results, and posted online

[https://video.unbc.ca/media/FWCP-NRESi+talk+-+Nov+18th+-+Scott+McNay+-+Navigating+the+uncertain+and+difficult+road+to+restoration+and+recovery+of+Klinse-Za+caribou/0\\_it2v4bvf/19801](https://video.unbc.ca/media/FWCP-NRESi+talk+-+Nov+18th+-+Scott+McNay+-+Navigating+the+uncertain+and+difficult+road+to+restoration+and+recovery+of+Klinse-Za+caribou/0_it2v4bvf/19801)



Duncan McColl – Licensee obligation on the culverts?

Marc – most roads are non status, so there are no obligations by licensees on the roads

- Looking for free to grow cutblocks to work in, where there are no obligations

John – there are culverts that exist on non status roads that SERNbc would work on

- Lisa posted UNBC colloquium series link in comments section
- will the prescription just become a map?

Marc – different levels of involvement require different levels of documentation and materials

- Not everyone will read it, or have the time
- So for machine operators, trying to reduce the paper to a very specific set of instructions?
- This is going towards a map for a machine operator
- There is also a training component

Allen Neal

- Lucky to have Marc and John
- Were you able to access carbon funds to support this work?
- Road rehab work is largely funded by FCI, which comes with extra standards around carbon, and the desire to model the carbon sequestration over time as well to demonstrate benefit

John – 13k this year, what is the goal for next year?

Marc – 80 km of road under prescription, goal is the 50 km mark before the funding runs out

Duncan – might be opportunities available through BCTS

Marc – just for BCTS operating areas?

Duncan – no for southern half of the province, there were non status roads with problem culverts, and BCTS has apparently been earmarked as the lead to do the leg work

John – some government decisions are made without SERNs involvement

Wayne – Once we have activities in an around streams (harvesting or road building) we are seeing the water distributed elsewhere than the stream. As climate changes, we are recognizing that streams are going dry because of both climate change and activities. We can see that water is no longer headed towards streams in all cases. We need to have this discussion.

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John – BCTS was there in the fish passage technical working group, (Duncan confirms this is it), and they are seemingly able to deliver on this fish passage work and so potentially opportunities extended. Might be opportunity for SERNbc to continue working with the fish passage working group. There are overlapping values, and if we think of in advance, we can accommodate many interests

Allan Irvine – with BCTS being always involved, they make things happen and facilitate actual work, and commission designs and see projects through to the finish is very helpful. Dave Hamilton on the island, and Phil Macdonald in Kootenays, those individuals seem to know how to get work done and BCTS tends to be involved in way or another. Often a capacity issue, and people are busy, so BCTS often becomes a key player.

John – BCTS locally (Vanderhoof) is delivering on road rehabilitation and deactivation work. It is built into their plans, so that it is not an after thought, and the so the costs are reduced as a result

Marc – potential partner

Mark Thompson – thank you for the presentation.

- In general terms, thinking about his project that he works on with BCTS, to leverage road rehabilitation funds. Looking at amphibian passage and crossing on roads north of Ft. St. James in the Chuchi lakes area. The one road is the initial study site and are learning while tracking western toad movement is helping them learning that toads set up camp and stay on the roads, they like the roads. Trying to understand the wider landscape dynamics. Glad to hear that in this idea of pre planning, and AI mentioned, that in the interactional of the entire landscape when you change the landscape hydrological dynamics are being changed by these roads, and you can clearly see how it changes the wetland context all around the road. This changes breeding for amphibians, there patterns of dispersion on the landscape. So likely the way of the future is to look at stream flow, hydrological gradients, and where water flow on the landscape. Then have this considered prior to deactivating a road, Feel the way to do this is using remote sensing in the planning process.

Allan Irvine – presentation from Oregon that discusses the hydrological effects of putting in a road, and the impacts it has on stream morphology. Also discusses the role of the beaver in anthropogenic disturbed watersheds, and what needs to occur to re-wild these watersheds.

STAGE 0 Restoration <https://fws.rev.vbrick.com/#/videos/22fde011-e839-430e-a51b-f1f6f120831d>

John – Thank you Chelton for passing on the link originally. There are opportunities for hug benefits. Try googling “Stage 0 Restoration”

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Allen Neal – Shares screen. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 – 2030. The ecosystems specialist with province of BC

- The general assembly of UN has declared 2021 – 2030 as the decade for restoration
- There will be opportunity

John – hard to get money at times if it just requires resources, and does not provide resources

- UN declaration provides good support, and highlights the importance of the work
- Any other items people would like to talk about?
- I did not formally get a motion to adjourn the business meeting. So, to be formal, could I get someone to make a motion to adjourn. I make a motion

Wayne – Seconds it

John – any additional comments or suggestions?

Wayne – do we know the plan for the following year? Generally speaking, we did 1.2 million last year, what are we forecasting for the year ahead.

Marc - 2020 has been difficult. Lots of funds was cancelled, re directed, and things did not pick up until August when things got very busy

- We do not have a good understanding of 2021, except for the commitments that SERN currently has. There were some commitments lost with the COVID response, e.g. LBI, so things are difficult to predict

John – always continuing to expand capacity and ability to deliver, and working with more and more people, so SERNbc is preparing to do more. It is just a matter of building the funding components. Funding is flowing, just not always where we would expect it to be. Do it slowly probably make's sense, but SERNbc is prepared to deliver if the interest is there

Wayne – sees that Salmon will be a priority, and opportunities in the land use planning process that is going to occur

## **Final Motion and Wrap UP**

John – Thank you everyone. A great discussion. Brief business, interesting discussion, and good engagement. Thank you very much.

Motion to Adjourn: John DeGagne

In favour: All

Opposed: None

Meeting Adjourned @ 12:00 pm

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Notes by Sean Rapai, December 2, 2020