



Whitewater Kayaking Association of British Columbia

Phone: (604) 515-6376
Web Site: www.whitewater.org
E-mail: admin@whitewater.org

PO Box 91549 West Vancouver
Postal Outlet, West Vancouver, BC
V7V 3P2

November 9, 2003 - Rutherford Course Development Meeting Minutes

Item 3 - Meeting began at 10:00Am with a walk through of the previously constructed course channel, and a review of the surrounding terrain, with an eye to the changes that have occurred. This lasted until approximately 11:15 at which time we moved to the Peter Kiewit compound to use the boardroom.

Item 4 -The web site updates were noted, as was the posting of a lot of the background information on the course development – noting that the web updates are ongoing. The RPC also noted that the feature plans were now posted there. In the future it is hoped to be able to provide a short e-mail, noting updates are posted, and have the paddling community, and the design committee view these at the web site.

Item 5 -The revised timeline for construction of the course was discussed, noting the discussions which had occurred with the developer and the contractor. Given deadlines for the project, the course construction has been pushed back until the spring of 2004. This is of concern, and the RPC will express this to the contractor. The post-flood survey of the course area (aerial & ground) will be analyzed by the engineers in the next few weeks, and the contractor is to notify the WKABC regarding the outcome of the insurance claim settlement under the builders insurance that the contractor carried.

Item 6 -Ongoing design issues were discussed, and the fine-tuning of features was of concern. It was noted that the latest drawings are posted on the web site, under password protection, and that these need to be reviewed by the design team.

Two project leaders were accepted by the committee, Lyall Featherstonhaugh (to oversee the coordination of the anchor pad design and construction scheduling) and Paul Nilsen (to oversee the design and construction scheduling of the baffle-wall plates and anchor systems). The RPC will coordinate with those two project leaders, in order to synchronize these areas of the course with the engineers and the contractor, and the construction schedule.

Item 7 -Commissioning the course once completed was discussed. It was noted that the engineers and contractor need to sign off on the course as planned, designed, and constructed – and that in order to complete this, require that a commissioning of the course occur. This is to include testing of the entire course length, at all possible flow levels. Both the engineers and contractor are requesting that this be done by a highly qualified test team that the WKABC will appoint, and that all possible safety precautions be in place while this process occurs.

It was agreed by all at the meeting that these individuals should have the following qualifications; documentable expert skill levels, river safety and rescue training, suitable equipment, and commitment to attend the entire testing process. Aside from the physical skills the committee recommends that the familiarity and involvement with the design and construction process be weighed heavily when selecting the test team.

Based on the discussions with the engineers, the contractors and the committee, this group would ideally be between 6-8 individuals, who would use a variety of craft to negotiate the course. This would also involve some out of boat swimming. The concept is to test the course at a variety of flows and identify any hazards and design flaws which would then be addressed before the course is signed over to the WKABC. The engineers and the contractor would also be involved in the course commissioning.

It was also noted that a similar test commissioning would need to occur for any future major design changes the WKABC may make to the course.

Item 8 -Operational protocol for the site was discussed and it was here that there was significant debate as to the users and user groups that may be allowed to utilize the facility. The site will be available only for the use of WKABC members. These may be any of the members defined in the WKABC bylaws. For out of province, out of country, or non-members, a day use membership will be available - fees and administration of day-of-use membership are to be worked out.

There are concerns regarding the use of the facility by other use groups (canoeists and rafters). While these concerns were noted, it was recognized that use by such non-kayaking users should be possible with the proper administrative structure, though it was generally thought that restricting the use to hard shell closed boaters during the first season (summer 2004) might provide a better understanding of the use the course may see. This will need to be addressed further over the winter to ensure that use by any group is considered before any policy is finalized.

The clear and prime focus of the artificial facility was recognized to be the use by the hard-shelled whitewater community. It must be noted that the RCABC has participated in the design and modeling of the course, and has provided the perspective and input of open canoe paddlers.

Discussion occurred regarding use of the facility by commercial operators (kayaking school, rafting companies, commercial vendors, etc). It was noted that the RPC is to seek legal counsel regarding the use of the facility by non-commercial versus commercial users, to see what differences in liability may exist. The RPC is also to look to other courses world-wide that have been developed, and to research the manner in which these are operated, and by whom they are utilized.

Access issues were discussed at length, and items such as appropriate signage, fencing (possibly in easy-access areas or possibly for the entire course), possible use of passes, and possible site manager (volunteer or paid) were discussed. It was felt that a full time person, available on site would be the best scenario for ensuring safe use, and policing use and possible abuse of the facility. It was noted this might be possible using a volunteer team. It was also noted that there were strong doubts that volunteers would be able to accept the responsibility that this might entail, and provide a consistent and ongoing presence. Paid staff to administer the site were also discussed, noting that funding restraints would need to be addressed to make this work, and that user-pay, revenue generation from the site (use permits for various commercial operators), or sponsorships might cover a paid site administrator.

Flow control was also discussed at length, and it was agreed by all, that not every user should have access to the flow control mechanisms. It was noted that a system which is able to be activated via the web would allow remote operation of the flow control mechanism. It was also noted that the contractor is strongly suggesting a two-stage control mechanism – that is a switch that is removed from the controls (at the course start) which must be activated before the flow controls may be operated.

The concept of scheduled releases of various magnitudes was discussed, so that users would know the water level at certain time (it must be confirmed that the flow controls at the start of the course will allow a constant flow rate, given variations in the flow through the diversion).

Item 9 -Insurance issues were discussed throughout the meeting, as they relate to all of the above topics. It was noted that the insurer has been contacted and has noted that insurance company will be able to provide coverage. The details of the use protocol and who the users are will likely impact the costs for the insurance. Any safety protocols will reduce the exposure of the association, and any protocols for use that document due diligence to ensure reasonable use will also reduce exposure. These protocols would include proper certification for any leaders using the site to teach or run courses, adhering to student instructor ratios, using appropriate gear, etc. Signage and any other mechanisms to restrict use by unauthorized users were noted by the insurer to also reduce the liability exposure.

The RPC is to discuss these issues with the insurance company and inform the committee as to the implications of various options for use of the course.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM