

Summary of 1st LAKE LINKS Meeting

Thursday October 24, 2002, Portland Community Hall

1. Meeting starts with Erika Kiss Welcoming all participants to the Lake Links
2. Introductions of all CSW staff by Sarah Rosolen:
 - Bob Sneyd – Executive Director
 - Sarah Rosolen – Programs and Development
 - Stacy McLean – Operations and Fisheries
 - Erika Kiss – Lake Links Coordinator
 - Geoff Hall – Scientific Diving Unit Coordinator
 - Barbara Robbins – Shoreline Stewardship
 - Julie Simard – Wildlife Habitat Canada
 - Jeff King – Citizen Science
 - Mark Sunohara – Information Management
3. Bob Sneyd describes the concept of the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds (CSW) – working among existing agencies and organizations to serve common lake needs - explains regional cross-boundary approach
4. Sarah Rosolen further described:
 - Mandate: To effect cross-linking among various agencies, lake associations and other community groups. Given limited staff and resources among these organizations, to assist in cost-effective ecosystem-based research, programs and services.

Purpose: To encompass an ecosystem approach that integrates research with learning in a responsive community, the overriding purpose of which is to foster sustainable watersheds.

Communications & Capacity Building:

Lake Links will be a network to improve information sharing (to NOT reinvent the wheel). It will work with existing partnerships and form new ones to make the most effective use of resources. With support from the lake associations, we will submit funding applications to work towards improved service delivery and information resources for the group as a whole. We will provide consultation on fundraising opportunities. We will develop a website and listserv for the purpose of sharing information and provide training, workshops to build capacity.

5. Programs & Services Presentations:
 - Water Quality – Erika Kiss (kiss@sustainablewatersheds.ca)
 - Littoral Inventory – Stacy McLean (mclean@sustainablewatersheds.ca)
 - Shoreline Stewardship – Barbara Robbins (robbins@sustainablewatersheds.ca)
 - Wildlife Habitat Canada – Julie Simard (jsimard@whc.org)
 - Citizen Science – Jeff King (king@sustainablewatersheds.ca)
 - Fisheries Education – Stacy McLean (mclean@sustainablewatersheds.ca)
 - Scientific Diving Unit – Geof Hall (hall@sustainablewatersheds.ca)
 - Information Management – Mark Sunohara (sunohara@sustainablewatersheds.ca)
6. Bob Sneyd: How do we make it happen?
 - strong lake associations & volunteers
 - clear objectives – we will provide guidance on determining priorities
 - fundraising - CSW can offer a charitable status (tax receipts) for donations made by private citizens or corporations for environmental programs that we can carry out on your lake. This

money will be tracked separately by lake. We will also be able to help with funding templates for foundations, student employment programs, etc.

7. Short Break

8. Questions & discussion period:

Dave Iley (Farren Lake) - posed a question about the shoreline visits being conducted by the Centre. Farren Lake is involved with the MAPLE program and members of their executive, Brian and Jackie Stapleton are part of MAPLE. **How does MAPLE fit into the Centre and does it serve as an equivalent purpose to the home visit program?** Barb answered the question stating that the MAPLE program was similar to the littoral inventory, which is more of a formal classification of landuse and structures around lakefront areas while the Home Visit Program is focused on outreach and stewardship. Both programs are valuable.

Where did the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds originate and how did the idea come about?

How do you fund staffing? Bob Sneyd explained that the Centre was developed by the Big Rideau Lake Association and that it is also the child of the Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation. CSW is currently being prepared for separate legal incorporation. The programs that have occurred on Rideau Lake have traditionally been conducted by the Big Rideau Lake Association through various employment funding opportunities. Funding sources are often targeted at specific programs. The demand for services and programs throughout the region has suggested the need for an entity separate from Big Rideau Lake Association to carry out these roles. Bob emphasized that the development of services the Centre will offer will mesh with the needs and mandates of various groups without encroaching on the territories of others. The structure of the Centre was shown on the projector, illustrating the role of the Board of Directors, the Membership, and Advisory Councils. It was stated that membership would be on a group basis (government agency, lake association, conservation authority, etc) and not at an individual level. Sarah explained the important role of Advisory Councils in guiding the future direction of the work of the Centre. Input will be sought to develop programs in the most efficient way, and to deliver programs that suit the needs of the groups involved.

Charlie Stewart (Bobs & Crow Lake Association) raised the point that all parties involved in the region need to work together and avail each other to use professional staff available to properly satisfy the many interests in the region. Charlie mentioned that CSW has gathered a number of resources that are presently being concentrated on Rideau Lake, but which are being developed to become applicable and accessible to any area. Charlie asked Bob for the group: **Are you looking for advice on how to develop your programs? Are you looking for a statement of consensus on establishing a subscription organization where the different organizations come together formally with money or are you looking for a continuation of a philosophical discussion? What do you want the group here to give you feedback on tonight? What would be the commitment of the members?** Bob replied that he wants input on the progress and development of programs. The surveys on the table were meant for input on programs, needs, concerns, etc. Bob said that money was not the idea of the meeting tonight. He said that when we speak for a membership of organizations we could be stronger in promoting the interests and needs of those organizations. Bob talked about membership for the CSW and said that membership for Lake Associations would not include a membership fee. CSW will continue to look for external funding to support its various programs and initiatives. The services provided by CSW will be developed to incur as small a cost to the organization as possible. Bob talked about the Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation as an effective means of fundraising for the different lake associations. Sarah said that CSW does want to know what particular concerns each group has so that we can then work with the different groups towards a common goal. The more concrete the mandate of CSW, the stronger its position will be. Bob talked about the magnitude of the Centre financially and value-wise, as compared to the Lake Association. Bob mentioned that each Lake Association would need to have a consensus from their board to join CSW, and that they would have to be well organized to make that a reality. The lake association would then email CSW and the process for membership would be initiated.

How does the watershed watch program factor in? Bob answered that the Watershed Watch program is a program to test the water quality in area lakes and monitor the changes in the lakes. Mike Yee (MVCA) explained they were carrying out the Watershed Watch program in their region to chart the health of the lakes. He noted that many of the lakes in the MV were less developed pristine lakes and they want to establish a baseline of the water quality. They also carry out educational programs to help maintain the water quality. The question was asked whether Watershed Watch was a one-time event. Mike said that they do about 8 to 10 lakes per year, and target to return on a five-year cycle. Bob mentioned that CSW services could be used to conduct sampling blitzes in problem areas to gain a finer scale of data over a specific period of time.

Gary Nielson (Leeds County Stewardship Council) asked the group about **the best way to get smaller lake associations involved**. He suggested the creation of a blue print on where to start/what's involved in forming a good lake association. He suggested that it might be intimidating for small lakes and new comers to look at BRLA.

Walt Ebaugh (Chaffey's Lock Area Lakes Association) said CSW was a great resource for their small lake association. CSW is doing the things that they, as a lake association, had sat down determined they needed, but would never have the capability to do. They can contract services from CSW and derive a good return. Barb continued with the statement that, for example, the home visit program funding proposal contained 7 different lake associations, which made the proposal that much stronger. Bob mentioned that strong lake associations are key. He also asked to pass on the word, for those lakes that were not represented tonight.

Sarah Rosolen asked if FOCA had information for lake associations wishing to develop, etc. Aileen Merriam replied that they have a number of committees that look into common issues and develop tools and resources for lake associations to overcome those concerns (taxation, land use planning, etc). She recommended a visit to their website to learn more. www.foca.on.ca. There are some excellent resources from the environment committee that could be of use to lake associations, etc. One such resource is the Lake Stewards Manual which is called "Take the Plunge" which is devoted to saving Ontario's waters. There is also a yearly Lake Steward's Newsletter, not only to learn about newly developing issues, but also to share experiences between different organizations. FOCA is also working with the Living By Water Project.

Cameron MacLeod (Long Lake, Friends of the Tay) found the group's discussion interesting; particularly with respect to the Tay Watershed Management Plan and the issues they are facing with the implementation of the plan. The issues span the spectrum of concerns that are faced by most organizations present in some form. There is an ideal opportunity for cooperation by groups with common goals. Cameron put the question to the group as to **how to develop the next steps in collaboration to achieve these common goals. How do we promote cooperation?** Bob answered stating that the lakes can become part of the Advisory Council to guide the steps. He suggested that dealing directly with CSW staff to develop and implement programs would be the best route to follow. Sarah said that developing a workshop to talk about lake management planning could occur and resources could be pulled together if interest is shown (please put this on the suggestion sheet). Lake associations and groups must evaluate their position first, to determine an appropriate course of action that will allow them to proceed with a proper lake management plan. Bob re-iterated the idea that becoming part of the Advisory Committee is an excellent way to help guide future work.

Cameron mentioned that with respect to data, Long Lake, of which he is a member, is being called an archival lake. It would be a good lake to look at for future research and monitoring purposes. They would like to see it protected in the future.

Duncan MacDougal (Wolfe Lake) asked if septic system monitoring, inspections or maintenance was part of the mandate of the Centre. Barb answered that the liability issues for re-inspection programs are high, but that they have been promoting septic maintenance and self-evaluation and providing information on how septic systems work and common warning signs of an improperly functioning systems. FOCA mentioned that their environment committee is creating a "road-map" for septic re-inspections for how to get such a program going in your municipality and area. Sarah mentioned that some lake associations are further ahead wrt to septic reinspection and could be a valuable resource.

Mary Rawlyk (Buck Lake) mentioned that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has a program for septic re-inspections on its website. This program lists the townships in Ontario that currently have re-inspection programs. They also state that there is no legislation to back this program and that it should only be used on the advice of a lawyer. Many municipalities have introduced these programs on their own. There are large liability issues. Barb responded that when she looked into septic re-inspections in the Township of Rideau Lakes, the data that was available was not well organized and entered in a database. It was noted that they are currently digitizing that data.

9. Erika closes the evening by thanking everyone for coming and an invitation to complete their surveys. Participants are encouraged to contact CSW for more information.