



Lake Links 2004 Summary Notes

September 18, 2004- Desert Lake Resort

How to Get People to Buy-In to Water Quality

Bev Clark, Lake Partner Program, Ontario Ministry of the Environment

How to engage volunteers:

- Not a lot of evidence that pamphlets and advertising in popular literature will enlist large numbers of volunteers
- Word of mouth is most effective
- Easy to find volunteers if they understand the issues

Start with well established programs that have:

- Resources to train volunteers
- Established protocols
- Data management capabilities

How to find volunteers for issues that are not well known?

Education: How we go about this will determine whether or not we can effectively engage volunteers.

Ontario Ecological Monitoring Council:

- Education
- Training
- Protocols

CSW helped form the Ontario Ecological Monitoring Council. The first meeting was held in June and 55 representatives from volunteer groups and government came together to discuss the issues related to community monitoring. Working groups have been formed and a Terms of Reference is being circulated. WE are planning for another meeting this fall or next spring. For more information, contact: info@watersheds.ca.

Question: How do you know that sampling is done correctly and what do you do with the results once they are compiled?

Bev: The first step before any sampling should occur is to figure out what question you (lake association) is trying to answer. For example, "Is bacteria too high or low in our lake?". Once a clearly defined question is decided upon, an association can move forth in the sampling, using a program with established protocols. The Ontario Ecological Monitoring Council is in the process of compiling appropriate protocols for volunteers.

Discussion: How do you make lake residents care? How do you raise awareness?

- Making connections with the municipalities - attend council meetings – get to know their issues. Invite councillors to a Shoreline Living Workshop. Engage them in lake planning. Some lake associations have had information distributed with their tax bills.
- Use the association newsletter as an educational tool. Bennett and Fagan Lake addressed the connection between property values and the protection of the lake within their newsletter. Membership increased from 35% to 75% of lake residents. Fear of losing property value, along with guilt that nobody was doing anything motivated the increase in membership. Sample of their newsletter is available at:
- Hand out newsletters in person – increase awareness of organization as well as environmental issues
- Develop a survey to gain understanding of lake issues, may identify new volunteers
- Educating new property owners is key – they often do not understand the 'rules'. Greater Bobs and Crow Lake Association is currently developing an information package for realtor's to give to new property buyers on the lake. The information package will include information about healthy shoreline practices including a copy of "On the Living Edge: Your Handbook for Waterfront Living". The lake association is covering the cost. The book is available to lake associations on consignment at discount rates through Centre for Sustainable Watersheds – contact us at stewardship@watersheds.ca.

For more information on the Lake Partner Program, contact Bev at bev.clark@ene.gov.on.ca or see their website: www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/lake_partner/

Organizational Challenges

Terry Rees, Executive Director FOCA

Terry Rees' presentation on FOCA is available through Terry: trees@foca.on.ca or for more information on FOCA products and services, check out their website: www.foca.on.ca

- FOCA has a Lake Stewards workshop in Toronto in March – check out their website for more information
- Taxes for waterfront properties are rapidly increasing as property values increase. To represent lake associations interests, FOCA has formed WRAFT - Waterfront Ratepayers Association for Fair Taxation. To learn more check out their website: www.wraft.com
- Insurance is a major issue for lake associations - the claim history for association is low but the risks are uncertain.
FOCA had to reapply for their insurance program this year – all lake associations had to apply separately. They continues to negotiate to get improved rates and are currently working on a Risk Management Manual.
- FOCA AGM is in November – check out their website for more information
- FOCA is partnered on the Lakeland conference, October 2nd in Buckhorn. This conference brings experts together to discuss lake issues. For more information contact Jennifer Card, Bancroft Stewardship Coordinator at (613)332-3940 ext260 or email:jennifer.card@mnr.gov.on.ca.

Discussion:

- Stewardship Councils may be able to cover stewardship events of partners under their insurance – talk to your Stewardship Coordinator (see contact information below).
- Liabilities of private roads – Terry recommended NOT to post a sign saying “Use at Your Own Risk” as this might be interpreted as an invitation to use the road.

Question: What are the benefits from a lake association becoming incorporated?

- It can be helpful to apply to a funding organization.
- If not incorporated, board members are individually responsible.
- Check out FOCA website for more information.

Lake Planning

Dr. Gray Merriam, Frontenac Environmental Partnership

FEP is proposing to develop a modular lake planning model that will suit individual needs. Modules will guide the completion of each of the five elements involved in a complete lake plan and indicate management practices that flow from the element. Remember: Lake planning needs to involve the watershed, not just the shoreline!

First Element: Consultation with lake residents and users to help them realize their values and to help them state their own visions for the future of their lake. Without the informed vision of lake users incorporated into the plan, you will not have the user support to put the plan in place.

- Should involve a combination of survey and 'town hall' meetings with a skilful facilitator. The facilitator does not have to have a scientific background, rather they must be able to understand human behaviour.
- An inventory of basic information about the lake and how it is used may be required before lake users are well enough informed to participate.

Second Element: Investigation and communication of stewardship interventions, Best Management Practices, and monitoring programs needed to achieve the lake future chosen by the users.

- Users need to understand 1) the constraints on their activities 2) the work/time requirements and 3) the resource requirements needed to achieve and maintain the future lake environment they choose
- Lake users can now begin to form the lake plan they need to guide their lake toward the future they want

Third Element: Biological and physical/chemical inventories required to assess capacities of the lake for use and development.

- Extent of inventory and data needed varies according to the users' proposed future for the lake environment – inventory and data should be purposeful.
- Capacity assessment should use as many variables as criteria. Variables should be relevant to values inherent in the chosen future for the lake
- Users must learn costs and consequences of planning for a future that violates unavoidable ecological laws

Fourth Element: Learn “Best Management Practices” required to safe guard the lakes valued qualities when lake is used within its rated capacities. BMPs should aim to safeguard natural self-maintenance processes by constraining threats to those processes

- Correcting bad past practices and restoring damaged features by technical interventions is costly, difficult and uncertain

Fifth Element: Learn to inform and communicate with local municipalities to incorporate lake capacities and required best management practices into the official plan revisions and into municipal legislation. There is no guarantee that the plan will be included in the municipal plans.

- Provide substantial data/information support for all propositions
- Calibrate information to suit the person/group – prepare well and communicate effectively.
- Use applicable practices from other jurisdictions
- Seek help from other effective groups

More information:

- Check out NALMS – North American Lake Management Society - to learn more about lake planning. For more information check out their website: www.nalms.org
- Huntsville Lakes Council has a handy guide to help you learn more about the steps of Lake Planning and has good sample questionnaires, lists of background information, etc to get you started. It is available for \$15.00 from Mary McCulley, RR#2, G.B. 35 Huntsville, Ont. P1H 2J3 or by email at hlc@vianet.ca .
- Notes from the lake planning workshop held last May will be available on CSW website this fall.
- Karen Hunt, President of Otty Lake Association, reported on activities of some 8-9 associations currently working on development of Lake Watershed Plans.

Updates from Agencies and Organizations

Eastern Ontario Conservation Authorities//Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) - Pat Larson

- Offer watershed data for lake associations within the Rideau Valley Watershed and have compiled reports for most of the lakes. See their new Watershed Information System: www.rideauvalley.on.ca/watershed/
- Watershed Watch provides comprehensive studies of all of the lakes in the Rideau Valley Watershed on a 5 year rotation. They are currently in year 4. Mississippi Valley also has a Watershed Watch program.
- RVCA is looking for volunteers to monitor rainfall in the watershed to help develop a more accurate model of water budgets. CSW has several of their rain gauges with instructions on how to participate. Contact CSW info@watersheds.ca or Patrick Larson: patrick.larson@rideauvalley.on.ca
- Learn more about the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority: www.rideauvalley.on.ca
- Learn about Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority: www.mvc.on.ca or contact Melissa Dakers about their Watersheds Watch program: mdakers@mvc.on.ca
- Learn about Cataraqui Conservation Authority: www.cataraquiregion.on.ca or contact Tom Beaubiah: beaubiah@cataraquiregion.on.ca

Frontenac Stewardship Council - Bret Colman

- Stewardship Councils are volunteer Councils, supported by a full-time Coordinator paid by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. They work with all types of community groups to facilitate stewardship practices.
- Bret has been the Stewardship Coordinator in Frontenac for just over a year. For the past several years, the Council had not been very active, but it is now rejuvenated, and Bret has 11 Members in his Council.
- Discussed the importance of getting the younger generations interested in the environment. Overall, there is an ageing population in all volunteer groups. Need to look at developing youth programs. He is developing projects with several schools.
 - Lake associations should solicit younger members for their Board of Directors. It was noted that children's events may carry increased risk/liability.
- Most Stewardship Councils run a “Stewardship Rangers Program”, and lake associations can become involved – see contact information below.
- To learn more about the Frontenac Stewardship Council or to get involved contact Bret at: bret.colman@mnr.gov.on.ca or check out the website www.ontariostewardship.org/FRONTENAC/frontenac
- Jeff Ward is the Stewardship Coordinator in Lanark County - to learn more or get involved contact: jeff.ward@mnr.gov.on.ca or check out their website: www.ontariostewardship.org/LANARK/lanark
- Gary Nielsen is the Stewardship Coordinator in Leeds County - to learn more or get involved contact: gary.nielsen@mnr.gov.on.ca or check out their website www.ripnet.com/falcon/stewardship

M.A.P.L.E. (Mutual Association for the Protection of Lake Environments) - Brain Stapleton

- M.A.P.L.E. is a volunteer organization that runs a nursery to help provide lake associations with access to native shoreline plants. Volunteers are needed in the spring and fall to help with propagation and planting and in exchange, the person or association receives plant species. M.A.P.L.E. events are an excellent opportunity to meet your neighbours. If you have an area of shoreline that needs rehabilitation – this is the place to come! Check out their website, hosted by the Landowner Resource Centre: www.rideauvalley.on.ca/maple/
- Fall planting day is scheduled for the last Saturday in October. More details to follow.

Friends of the Tay Watershed

- The Friends of the Tay Watershed (FoTW) will be holding an executive meeting in October addressing issues related to the implementation of the Tay Watershed Management Plan released in May 2002.

Long Lake Watershed Property Owners Association

- Cam MacLeod reported on a partnership with Tay Valley Township and the CGIS to bring together and make available information needed to develop and implement a lake watershed management plan for their lake.

Rideau River Roundtable

- Rideau River RoundTable is sponsoring a partners forum at Strathmere Conference Centre on 30 October 30th to bring stakeholders of the Rideau and Cataraqui watersheds together. Contact Jeff Kohl for more information jkohl@rideau.net

Septic Re-Inspection on Buck Lake

- South Frontenac Township has begun a septic re inspection program on Buck Lake, and it has been received well by the lake community. It is expected that this program will extend to other lakes in the coming years.

Frontenac Environmental Partnership (FEP) - Art Dunham

- FEP is currently working on an application for funding from Trillium for Lake Planning in the Frontenacs.
- They are working with a GIS company in Perth and have a database currently available to lake associations in North and South Frontenac. They will be meeting with Central Frontenac to get them on board. They are continuing to develop and have recently added new components to their database. Contact Art Dunham for more information or to get involved.

Centre for Sustainable Watersheds – Sarah Rosolen

- CSW had another successful year with the Home Visit Program – reaching over 20 lakes with visits and workshops
- Watersheds Information Centre, 14 Water Street in Portland, had a major revamp this year, and was really well received. We sell a number of products including biodegradable soap and cleaning products (with a refill service), SunMar composting toilets, low flow shower heads and rainbarrels, nature toys, as well as gifts and crafts from a number of local artisans. We offer 10% off composting toilets to members of lake associations. Lake stewardship information from a number of agencies is available, as well as Living by Water products and information. This location is closed for the winter, but products will be available through our offices at 11 St. Mary's Street.
- Water quality testing proceeded on 8 lakes this year. Reports will be available soon.
- Watersheds InfoXchange, our on-line GIS mapping application designed to help any lake association in Ontario access and manage monitoring and program data is on schedule for a January release. Find out more: www.watersheds.ca/wixmain.html
- Thanks to support from Environment Canada – Ontario Region, CSW website: www.watersheds.ca is finally on-line. It is aimed to help you protect your lake – both as an individual and as part of an association. While it isn't quite finished, we think we have a good start. Find out about our programs and resources that are available to help you. Any feedback is welcome!
- CSW is working with provincial stakeholders on developing a Lake Resources Cooperative to help lake associations look after their lakes – including protocols, training and materials to assist lake associations with education/stewardship, and monitoring/data management. Working with provincial partners will help improve the quality of the program and bring consistency in program delivery across the province. CSW would offer the program regionally in eastern Ontario and part of the funding would go towards better coordination with our common stakeholders, including expanding the scope of Lake Links.