



Project Summary Report

2008 Custodial Co-Management Project Summary Report

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A tent ring ... Low impact camping on Franklin Island

Executive Summary

In 2008, the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) was involved in two partnership custodial co-management programs:

- Carling Township and the Carling Stewards Project; and
- Township of the Archipelago and the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association (GLSKA) Stewards.

Stewards involved with these projects worked on the waters of Georgian Bay north of Massasauga Provincial Park and south of the French River Provincial Park.

In association with the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Council was also involved with custodial work at Severn Sound, Moon River, Gibson River, Pointe Au Baril (Burnt Island), McCrae Lake and extension work with the Gravenhurst high school.

A summary of work conducted, observations made, program progress, recommendations and financial statement are contained in the report.

It is with considerable dismay, the EGBSC reports it was often pre-occupied with higher priority projects and more pressing matters than the custodial co-management program in 2008. Regrettably, the program did not receive the attention it deserves, nor was the manpower effort directed towards it that it requires. This matter has been discussed by Council with the recommendation of a renewed and more concerted effort to form partnerships to meet the labour demands of the program.

Project #1: Carling Stewards Initiative (formerly Franklin Island Custodial initiative)

In a formalized manner, this project commenced on an experimental basis in 2006 when the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) lead a multi-partner initiative to address deleterious social and environmental issues related to Crown land camping on Franklin Island. (Private initiatives had been previously undertaken by local residents, marinas, resorts and White Squall Paddling Center.) The initial project comprised three components: 1) the installation of signage to promote best camping practices; 2) the installation of bush latrines at heavily used sites; and 3) behind-the-scenes campsite clean-up and monitoring. The beneficial results of this project were documented in a year-end summary report prepared by the EGBSC (McIntyre, 2006).

In 2007, the project was expanded considerably and renamed the *Carling Stewards* initiative. The scope of this project included both Franklin Island and Crown owned portions of Huckleberry Island. This multi-partner project was lead by Carling Township. Two summer students were hired by the Township to achieve the objectives of the previous year's project (i.e. signage, bush latrines, behind-the-scenes clean-up and monitoring), and also to incorporate a component of public education and awareness into the project. This was achieved through the distribution of information flyers and personal contacts with campers. The Carling Stewards submitted their own year-end summary report (Pullen and Bryk, 2007) which is available from Carling Township. A

précis of that report was also contained in 2007 Custodial Co-Management Project summary report prepared by the EGBSC (McIntyre, 2007).

In 2008 the project was conducted in a similar manner as 2007. Partners in the 2008 project included: West Carling Association, North Sound Association, White Squall Paddling Center, Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, Georgian Bay Land Trust, Great Lakes Sea Kayak Association (GLSKA) and the EGBSC. The lead partner was Carling Township. (EGBSC involvement was as per a MOU with Carling Township dated January 29, 2008.) The EGBSC contribution to the '08 partnership included:

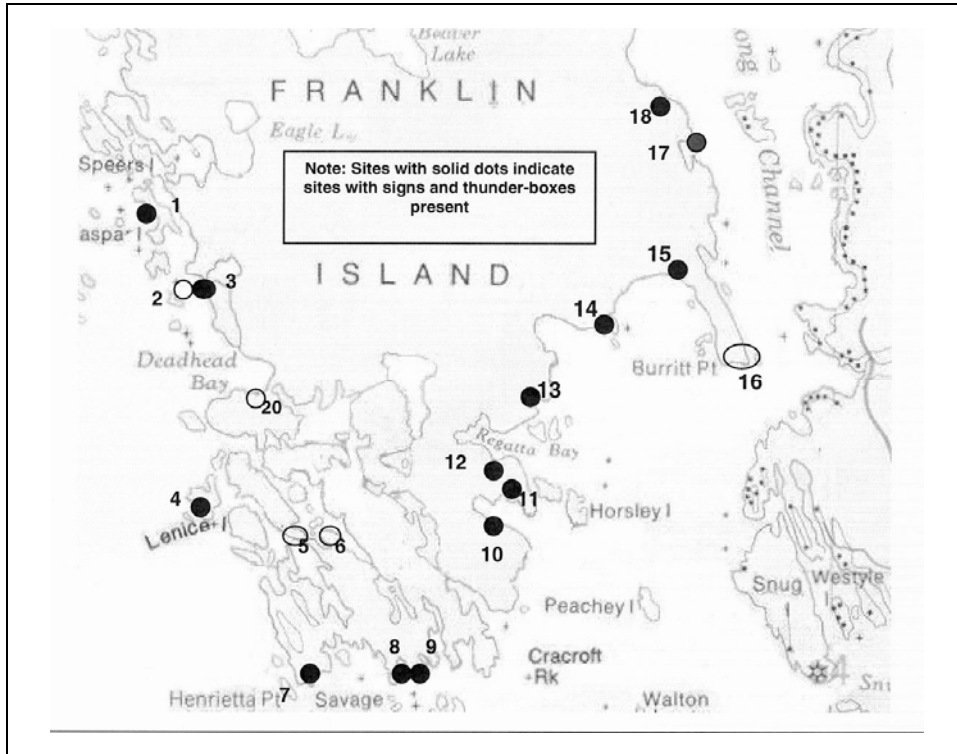
- \$2,500 in financial support
- Educational flyer (OMNR fact sheet on Crown land camping)
- Additional signage and the provision of bush latrines as required
- Periodic (one) field-inspection and
- Program year-end report (i.e. this report).

Nicholas Pullen and Harrison Bryk – the Carling Stewards for the 2007 project were again hired in 2008. In 2008 the Carling Stewards operated a motor boat (as opposed to kayaks in '07) to improve travel efficiency and to be able to take more equipment with them as well as remove larger garbage items. Toilets kits, provided by the GLSKA were also distributed to campers. (Toilet kits included: handbook entitled *The Scoop on Poop – how to go to the bathroom in the wilderness*; hand sanitizer; and a small trowel.)

The Carling Stewards submitted a year-end summary report (Pullen and Bryk, 2008) to Carling Township, which was in turn forwarded to the EGBSC and presumably other partners. Hi-lights from the report included:

- A perceived increase in boat cruiser traffic over 2007
- Increased camping activity on Franklin Island (526 campers observed in '08 compared to 406 the previous year). The percentage of campers from Toronto was approximately 30% in '08; much reduced from '07. (*Note: The observation of increased camping activity may be related to the crew using a motor boat in 2008 affording them the opportunity to cover a greater area and make more campsite visitations.*)
- Most heavily used sites on Franklin Island: # 7, 9, 12, 13 and 14 (see Figure 1 on follow page for campsite location).
- A small decrease in camping activity on Huckleberry Island (121 campers observed in '08 compared to 136 the previous year. Camping on Huckleberry was almost exclusively by Parry Sound area residents who have been doing so for many years. There is the perception of sites being 'theirs.'
- Totem Pole Bay on Huckleberry is also a popular anchorage site.

Figure 1. Designated campsite numbers for the southern portion of Franklin Island



Project #2: Township of the Archipelago and the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association (GLSKA) Stewards Initiative

In 2008, the partnership MOU between the EGBSC and the Township of the Archipelago, facilitated \$1,000 in support funding being directed towards the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association (GLSKA) Stewards initiative.

For many years, GLSKA has been an active participant in Crown land custodial activities without benefit of recognition or support funding from the EGBSC and MNR.

The Georgian Bay Committee of GLSKA has constructed, installed and maintained privies at some of the more heavily used campsites on the Bay for many years. In addition, they conduct annual clean-ups on Franklin, Snake, Mink and McCoy Islands as part of the GLSKA *Fall Gathering*.

At their own behest, GLSKA has remained independent in operating their own custodial program. Via a partnership MOU between the Township of The Archipelago, the EGBSC and MNR, the GLSKA Stewards program was supported in the following manner:

- \$1,000 financial contribution
- Provision of bush latrines upon request
- Pick-up of garbage caches consisting of large items.

In 2008, Melissa and Christopher Hachkowski were hired as GLSKA custodial stewards. The custodial area in which the stewards operated in 2008 was greatly expanded; stretching from the north end of the Massassauga Provincial Park to the southern boundary of French River Provincial Park.

Regular 2008 reports by the GLSKA stewards are available on their website at <http://www.geocities.com/glska/>.

Project #3 – Moon River Custodial Co-management Activities (including portions of C-90 Lower Moon River Conservation Reserve)

No formal MOU or partnership agreement has been formulated for volunteer custodial activities in the Lower Moon River CR. Nonetheless, Bill McRobb – owner of Moon River Cottages, has conducted campsite clean-up activities for many years.

The EGBSC participated in a one-day (July 30, 2008) clean-up in conjunction with the Muskoka-Parry Sound Stewardship Rangers. A two-day clean-up with Stewardship Rangers was held in 2007.

With one exception, we were very pleased with the relatively good condition in which campsites were found. Certainly, they were much better than the previous year. We optimistically believe that past custodial activities are having the desired effect. Notwithstanding the foregoing, we did come upon one site in dreadful condition with a large amount of garbage stashed in the backshore bushes. This occurred at campsite #2 – on the south shore about 300 meters downstream of Moon Falls. This was also a problem site in 2007.

We relocated three bush latrines in which the contents filled the earthen hole. It appears that campers are very appreciative of bush latrines being available as evidenced by them being full. However, we are unaware of a single instance in which campers themselves have relocated one when necessary. In an intensively camped area such as the Moon River, it is necessary that latrines be relocated on a regular basis.

An activity report for work done on July 30 is available from the EGBSC upon request. One of the recommendations contained in the report is that the EGBSC approach the Woods Bay Community Association to pursue a custodial agreement. It is intended that this task will be undertaken during the winter of 2009.

Project #4 – Severn River Custodial Co-management Activities (including portion of C-30 Severn River Conservation Reserve)

No partnership arrangement is in place for custodial activities in the Severn River area. However, in response to several complaints from the Severn River Association of Property Owners (SRAPO), the EGBSC has independently undertaken a very modest custodial program to mitigate some of the social and environmental issues related to Crown land camping in this area.

Regrettably, the 2008 project consisted of a single visit by EGBSC and MNR staff to Severn River on May 21, 2008 – following the Victoria holiday weekend. Two sites – the Pretty Channel Dam and the old ranger tower site on Lost Channel were found to be in unsatisfactory condition. Seven other sites were checked and found to be satisfactory. (An activity report documenting observations and work conducted on May 21, 2008 is available from the EGBSC upon request.)

We also had occasion to meet with SRAPO and OMNR at Big Chute Marina on May 26, 2008. Although the meeting was cordial, with a frank airing of issues, no resolutions or action items were formulated. However, one positive development from the meeting was an announcement by SRAPO that the Township of Georgian Bay intended to increase its by-law enforcement effort and had purchased a boat for increased marine patrol applications.

One positive development in this project was an offer by Todd McDowell, a cottager on Six-Mile Lake, to organize volunteers to assist with a clean up of Pretty Channel downstream of the Big Chute dam. This offer came late in the fall and could not be acted upon, however the EGBSC intends to pursue this in the spring of 2009.

Related Activities:

Gibson River Conservation Reserve

An issue relating to Crown land camping activities in the Gibson River Conservation Reserve was brought to our attention by the Ministry of Natural Resources. It was hoped that the EGBSC in partnership with the local Gibson River cottage association and MNR could formulate an agreement to cooperatively address the deleterious environmental and social impacts related to Crown land camping activities.

On July 14, Candis Strickler – OMNR Conservation Reserve project officer and Eric McIntyre – EGBSC coordinator, met on site with Vince Duobaitis – Gibson River cottager. Mr. Duobaitis gave us a tour of the subject area pointing out environmental issues (camper defecation practices, water and campsite quality, fire issues) and advising us of noise and trespass issues. At the time a couple of *CR best camping practices* signs were left with Mr. Doubaitis for posting at heavily used sites.

Mr. Doubaitis subsequently conferred with other cottagers in the area and advised us they were not in support of having bush latrines established at the campsites in question. Further discussions were not pursued because:

1. Mr. Doubaitis claimed that cottagers were already undertaking campsite clean-up activities – thereby negating the necessity of entering into an agreement to do so.
2. Signage was provided to Mr. Doubaitis independent of an agreement.
3. The cottage association wanted no part of bush latrine installation and maintenance.

One issue that was brought to our attention was the practice of Six-Mile Lake Provincial Park promoting camping on the Gibson River though the distribution of an old Gibson River canoe route brochure. In accordance with MNR policy, this practice has been discontinued.

Pointe Au Baril – Burnt Island

On July 24, Adam Rabiewsky of the MNR and Eric McIntyre of the EGBSC had occasion to visit Burnt Island in the Pointe Au Baril area in response to a camping complaint submitted to the MNR following the Victoria Day weekend. The site was found in deplorable condition with an abundance of broken glass (beer bottles), garbage, abandoned camping equipment and toilet paper strewn throughout or near-by. Three garbage bags of material were removed.

A site inspection report is available upon request from the EGBSC. One of the recommendations of the site inspection report is for the EGBSC to approach to the Pointe Au Baril Islanders Association to pursue a custodial co-management agreement. This action is planned for the winter of 2009.

McCrae Lake -

For many years, the Ministry of Natural Resources has received complaints related to Crown land camping activities on McCrae Lake; primarily the deposition of garbage. In 2008 the EGBSC was asked to consider opportunities with the MNR and Barrie Canoe Club to formulate a partnership to address these issues.

McCrae Lake presents an unusual and unique circumstance in which there are no private cottages on the lake. The lake is entirely surrounded by Crown Land.

On Sunday, July 19, 2008, I had occasion to be passing by the 'unofficial access point' where campers park on a small cull-de-sac off Georgian Bay Road. Over 70 vehicles were parallel parked on both sides of the road from the end of the cull-de-sac out to Georgian Bay Road. This was undoubtedly clear evidence of the popularity of McCrae Lake and upstream McDonald Lake for Crown land camping activity.

Subsequently, on Labour Day – Monday, September 1, I had occasion to accompany Conservation Officer Mark McKernon on a joint enforcement/assessment patrol on McCrae Lake. We loosely documented approximately 36 well-used campsites and inspected 9 of them. All but two were found in satisfactory condition. An inspection report is available from the EGBSC upon request.

Notwithstanding two unsatisfactory sites – and one in particular, we were pleasantly surprised with the very good condition that most of the sites were in. Furthermore, the inspection reports documents conversations with 28 campers in 5 parties – all of whom reported finding the site they camped on in satisfactory condition upon arrival and also spoke very positively about past camping experiences on the lake.

Although the EGBSC was unable to provide manpower assistance, the MNR in cooperation with the Barrie Canoe Club did hold an end-of-season clean-up on September 6, 2008. The Canoe Club collected garbage on McCrae and McDonald Lakes and brought it out to the access point where it was picked up by the MNR and taken to a near-by Township of Georgian Bay transfer site.

Turtle Lake – Extension visit with Gravenhurst high school students

On October 6, I had occasion to accompany Jennifer Brownlee – OMNR Protected Areas staff and King Wright (volunteer) on an extension visit to Turtle Lake in the C-30 Severn River Conservation Reserve (Geographic Township of Wood). Turtle Lake is a modestly popular Crown Land camping destination. Usage is probably inhibited by its relatively difficult access requiring a lengthy portage.

The purpose of the visit was to speak to a group of ‘outbound students’ from Gravenhurst high school camping on the lake. Jennifer spoke about the Ministry Conservation Reserve program and I spoke about custodial stewardship activities that our Council is involved with.

In addition to speaking with the students, we cooperatively conducted campsite maintenance, posted CR ‘Best Camping Practices’ signs, and installed three bush latrines as the most well-used sites.

General Observations:

1. The EGBSC has been largely unsuccessful in securing partners who are willing to maintain bush latrines, let alone have them installed. (Note: We exclude the Carling Stewards and the GLSKA stewards as they are paid employees and not volunteers.) Consequently, we recommend the very sparing and judicious deployment of bush latrines because their maintenance will rest upon the shoulders of the group that deploys them. If they are not well-maintained, eventually they too will become a blight on the landscape and yet another piece of abandoned garbage in the bush.
2. The reported instances of Crown land camping abuse continues to escalate as people become aware of this initiative and bring to our attention problems ‘in their backyard.’ We suspect these problems are not new and people are simply finding a means to vent their long pent-up frustrations.

As more problems areas come to our attention, the ability of the EGBSC to deal with any individual area is further reduced. The EGBSC has discussed this matter and have resolved that the solution is to bring more willing partners into the initiative to do the work required. This is easier said than done. Obstacles include:

- Building partnerships requires considerable time and effort that competes with other EGBSC projects. Effort spent on this is not always fruitful and is occasionally at the expense of other projects.
- Partners are often reluctant. They complain about issues that are not of their making and feel resentful that they are being called upon to be part of the solution ... and often a solution that is not to their liking.
- Complainants feel it is the responsibility of the MNR or OPP to get to the root cause of their issues. They often contend that they don’t need to be a partner if these agencies would do their job and they are resentful and uncooperative when they perceive the job is not getting done.

- Complainants may feel the proposed solutions actually magnify the problem. (E.g. – Install bush latrines will encourage additional camping and increase environmental and social problems.)

The above issues present serious obstacles in developing productive and viable partnerships. Regrettably, but perhaps predictably, the most successful projects have been the Carling and GLSKA steward programs that hire staff to do the work.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, there are many instances in which members of the public have displayed admirable concern and genuine stewardship action to address the detrimental impacts of Crown land camping. Bill McRobb (Moon River Cottages), Tim Dyer (White Squall Paddling Center), West Carling Association, the North Sound Association, GLSKA, Carling Township and Township of The Archipelago have been shining beacons of hope. Likewise, the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve and Georgian Bay Land Trust have projects specifically directed at Crown land and/or stewardship of their properties. Their concerns have been mobilized into real action and they are making a tremendous contribution towards Georgian Bay stewardship. In spite of real and perceived obstacles, there are many generous, genuinely concerned and dedicated stewards on Georgian Bay.

3. The Ministry of Natural Resources has become much more engaged in addressing Crown land camping issues through their Conservation Reserve program. The EGBSC highly commends them in this regard and expresses appreciation for assistance they have provided the Council in formulating partnerships and delivering a custodial Crown land co-management program.

However, there are social and enforcement issues that are beyond the capability of the Council to deal with. By necessity, addressing these issues remains a matter of MNR responsibility. The EGBSC and partners will continue in their custodial efforts to address the environmental issues.

Financial Statement:

The EGBSC has received two-years of funding support from the Ministry of Natural Resources: \$8500 in fiscal year 2007-08; and \$3500 in fiscal year 2008-09. As per the following financial statement, a balance of \$3,347.32 remains.

The Council is currently in the process of having additional bush latrines constructed for the 2009 season. This cost is presently outstanding and will be deducted from the above balance upon invoice submission for the work.

Recommendation: In past years, the allotment of money from MNR has been divided up amongst various projects – as per the financial statement. To simplify accounting, it is recommended commencing with the 2009-1010 fiscal year, money be consolidated into a central fund and expenses for various projects be withdrawn from that fund.

EGBSC Custodial Co-Management Program Financial Statement (as of Dec. 2008)

Custodial Co-Management Partnership Agreement			Expense Income	Balance
Lower Moon River	2007 Allocation:		1500.00	1500.00
	Expenses:	McNabb Lumber Mar 2/07	181.95	1318.05
		McNabb Lumber Feb. 7/07	111.68	1206.37
		McNabb Lumber Feb. 8/07	15.21	1191.16
		W. View Resort (parking)	15.00	1176.16
		Rona (cup washers)	2.84	1173.32
		2008 expenses	Bruce Crozier (lumber)	200.00
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Wahwashkesh Conservation Association	2007 Allocation		1500.00	1500.00
	Expenses:	D.Cargill (TBs) Mar. 1/07	495.00	1005.00
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Bayfield Nares Islanders Associaton	2007 Allocation		1500.00	1500.00
	Expenses	D.Cargill (TBs) July 5/07	540.00	960.00
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Township of the Archipelago	Allocation		4000.00	4000.00
	Expenses:	Home Hdw (shovels)	31.88	3994.00
		Big Chute Marine	19.85	3987.00
		D.Cargill (TBs) Mar.20/07	850.00	3137.00
		B.Crozier (lumber)	228.00	2909.00
		Carling Twp (Franklin)	2500.00	409.00
		2008 Allocation		1000.00
		GLSKA per July 21/08 Inv.	1000.00	409.00
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Township of Carling	2008 Allocation		2500.00	2500.00
		Twp Carling (June 24/08)	2500.00	0.00
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Over-all balance				3347.32