

# Record of Proceedings - Meeting Minutes Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council

Meeting Date: Nov. 19, 2008

Recorded by: E. McIntyre

Meeting Location: Township of the Archipelago

Status: Draft

Caveat: Unless statements are in quotations, they have been paraphrased to express the intent of remarks made by individuals to whom they are attributed. For brevity, only discussion and comments of a significant nature as well as 'action items' arising from discussion are included herein. These minutes represent a true and accurate summary of proceedings to the best ability of the recorder.

Full Member	Pres.	Regrets	Abs.	Full Member	Pres.	Regrets	Abs.
Deb Ratuszniak			x	Bill McRobb	x		
Peter Agnello	x			Eric McIntyre	x		
Dave Bulger			x	Doug Wright			x
Terry Crawford, Pres.	x			Mike Palmer		x	
Ray Hachigian	x			Karl Schiefer		x	
Greg Mason		x		Graham Poole		x	
Leah Salt			x	Gerry Haarmeyer		x	

Guests: Dave Gonder and Arunas Liskauskas – UGLMU; John Bell – observer and prospective council member

**Note: This meeting did not have a quorum. The meeting proceeded on an informational basis with no Council resolutions being passed.**

Handouts provided to Council members included:

- Project Planning Proposal (I. Filion; dated July 10, 2008): Regional Economic Development Supported by the Rehabilitation of the Eastern Georgian Bay and North Channel Fisheries
- Flyer: Bala Falls small hydro project
- Financial Report
- Copy of Moon River Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement Project Summary Report (Nov. 08) circulated to Council

**1.0** Welcome Guests – Dave Gonder, Arunas Liskauskas and John Bell.  
Introductions of Council members and MNR staff to John Bell

## **2.0 Review Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> Minutes/Action Items:**

**2.1** • **Resolution (July 3<sup>rd</sup> carry-over): The EGBSC requests a meeting with OMNR water management staff to discuss the matter of 2008 flow regulation on the Moon River and opportunities for flow regime improvements with respect to optimizing walleye spawning and incubation activities.**

- Done – See Update item # 3.2

**2.2** • **Action (Sept. 16 minutes item 3.4): Eric to get zebra mussel signs for Mike & Bill**

- Done. Sign given to Bill at meeting. Will be given to Mike at next opportunity.

- 2.3
- **Resolution (Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> meeting – item #3.6): The EGBSC approves pursuing this project in accordance with the Action Plan (above) and presentation given by Ivan Filion to council – July 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Eric in conjunction with the Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council (Bob Florean) to apply to Ont. Stewardship Opportunity Fund for financial support.**
  - Application was made however financial support from OS Stewardship Opportunity fund declined. See Update item # 3.3

### 3.0 Updates:

#### 3.1 Moon River Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement Project

- Project conducted from Sept. 24 – Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Over-view of project given by Eric. Copy of summary report circulated for Council's edification. Report will soon be posted on our website.
- **Action: Eric to see that posting is made.**
- **Action: Eric to prepare Media Update for project and circulate to Parry Sound North Star and other media outlets as appropriate.**

#### 3.2 Meeting with OMNR water management staff re 2008 and future flow management on the Moon River

- Meeting held Nov. 18, 2008. Mike Palmer and Eric attended on behalf of the EGBSC
- (Muskoka Lake rule curve for 2007 and 2008 as well as Moon River discharge graph for 2008 available for discussion)
- Mike and Eric expressed fisheries concerns related to the precipitous drop of approx. 100 cms on or about May 15<sup>th</sup> of 2008. Questioned why this could not have been spread out over a much longer period, especially in a spring where water was super abundant.
- Steve Taylor (OMNR water control) explained the circumstances and rationale leading to that action:
  - record snow pack in the watershed,
  - adherence to Muskoka River rule curve,
  - sustained record high flows for 21-day period that displaced walleye from traditional spawning locations. Because it was a poor spawning year – an abrupt change could be made with little impact to reproductive success as it was already poor. (Note – Council representatives disagreed with this rationale.)
  - despite record snow pack – very little rain during the freshet requiring addressing flooding concerns followed quickly by maintaining Muskoka Lakes water levels.
- Discussions were frank and constructive. One positive outcome was a mutual understanding to convene a pre-freshet teleconference.
- Discussion:
  - There is a need to advise Muskoka Lakes' cottagers of downstream fisheries concerns. Need for public education to bring this issue to a higher level of understanding and awareness.
  - **Action: Eric to investigate composition of the Muskoka Watershed standing advisory committee. Issue to be brought forward on agenda for next meeting.**

### 3.3 Fisheries Rehabilitation Action Plan (formerly Socio-economic Study)

- Resolution (Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> meeting – item #3.6): “The EGBSC approves pursuing this project in accordance with the Action Plan (above) and presentation given by Ivan Filion to council – July 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Eric in conjunction with the Manitoulin Area Stewardship Council (Bob Florean) to apply to Ont. Stewardship Opportunity Fund for financial support.”
- Unsuccessful application to the OS Opportunity Fund as per above resolution
- Discussion
  - Council approves 50% funding (contingent upon other 50% to come from the Manitoulin Area SC) in support of the project planning proposal submitted by Ivan Filion, dated July 10, 2008 and entitled: Regional Economic Development Supported by the Rehabilitation of the Eastern Georgian Bay and North Channel Fisheries.
  - *This approval cannot be made by resolution due to absence of a quorum. Matter to be brought forward at next meeting for resolution.*

### 3.4 Bala Falls small hydro project

- Copy of flyer recently sent to EGBSC distributed for information purposes
- Project could have beneficial implications related to small-scale regulation of water down the Moon River. Project would incorporate remote-control gates as opposed to current manual system that has to be manipulated by hand.
- This is only one of several factors to be considered in evaluating this proposal. Thus far in the local media, public opinion appears to be strongly against the project.

### 3.5 GBBR Conservation Committee Update

- Species at Risk Outreach Project
  - 9-12 SAR awareness workshops
  - Deploy six Eastern Fox Snake Nesting Boxes – 5 year monitoring program
  - 8 turtle and 1 snake crossing sign to be deployed
  - 10-year turtle monitoring strategy with Woods Bay Cottage Assn.
  - Promoting / facilitating reporting of SAR: brochures, mailings, monthly news releases in local newspaper
- Working to coordinate wetlands assessment/monitoring/inventory amongst several agencies and groups involved
- Water festival for secondary school students – Hidden Bay Leisure Camp
- Working on a property owners waterfront stewardship guide
- Almost complete – Conservation action plan
- Education Advisory Committee / Network (GBBR lead initiative)
  - Inaugural meeting held Sept. 25 at Hidden Bay Leadership Camp
  - “To support ... teachers, the non-profit Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve has set up an Educators Network to promote and share environmental educational materials, resources and curriculum ideas.” (Lifestyles article printed Oct. 10/08.)
  - Graham Poole has agreed to represent the EGBSC on this committee

- 3.6 Big Sound / Killbear Channel Lake Trout - egg thiamine survey
- Project conducted from Oct 22 – 24
  - Two netting sites: Davy Island (Killbear Channel) and Horse Is. (Big Sound)
  - Horse Island – caught 67; Davy Is. – caught 38
  - Egg samples collected from 11 gravid females
  - Summary report to be written up later this winter and posted on our website.

## 4.0 Financial Report

- Copies of report distributed in handout
- \$20k donation to Habitat Enhancement Program recently received from W. Garfield Weston Foundation. (Thank-you Geordie Dalglish and great work Ray!)

## 5.0 Work Planning

- 5.1 Habitat enhancement project for 2009 – Go Home Bay
- We have \$50k allocated from COA for our 2009 project + funds available in our Spawning Habitat Enhancement Account. Intention is to conduct walleye spawning enhancement project at Go Home Bay in 2009.
  - Discussion:
    - Arunas: The UGLMU would like to see some preliminary habitat and spawning population data collected prior to commencing such a project
    - Eric: We will incorporate that into our 2009 work plan – characterization of existing spawning habitat and a spring trapnet assessment project.
- 5.2 Walleye Culture (raising fingerlings) – Tadenac Bay
- Haven't officially heard back from the Tadenac Club, but they certainly have expressed considerable interest
  - Basically this is an experimental project to ascertain the feasibility of using embayments to produce walleye that the EGBSC believe is necessary to rehabilitate populations. There is little point in doing spawning habitat enhancement work if there are no walleye to utilize these facilities. We believe we need a source of walleye for rehabilitative plantings.
  - Discussion:
    - Arunas: If enrichment of public waters is required to enhance zooplankton production – then there is likely to be a public concern.
    - Eric: These embayments already are nutrient rich. If adding soy meal is a 'show stopper,' we will not do so and lighten up on the density of fry planting such that the fish will be entirely natural fed.
    - It may be more advantageous from a cost/benefit perspective to consider a commercial provider (i.e. private hatchery) to raise walleye.
    - VHS policies of the past year are still in effect (no transfer of walleye eggs out of a VHS infected zone). In other words, we still can't get Moon River eggs into the Provincial Fish Culture System.
    - Ray: We need a business plan to objectively evaluate various options. We've been talking about this for years and we are no further ahead today than we were five years ago.

## 6.0 Business Arising / New Business

### 6.1 Tournament Fishing in FMZ-14 (Georgian Bay) (Terry Crawford - TC)

- TC: Bass tournaments have been in decline after the new regulations were implemented on Georgian Bay (2002). (Regulations permit anglers to have 3 in possession, but tournaments generally require 5 fish for weight in; notwithstanding all tournament bass are live-released.)
- TC: Regulation exceptions to permit bass tournaments were intended in the 2002 regulations changes, but were inadvertently omitted.
- TC: Bass tournaments are a significant tourist draw and valuable source of community income and economic stimulus.
- TC: So – how do we overcome this regulation impasse? Most tournament organizers do not like the idea of a “permit” to facilitate exceptions to the regulations, due to its precedent setting nature and loss of control by tournament organizers (or perhaps more appropriately imposition of controls via the permit itself).
- TC: A resolution to the matter needs the support of the Competitive Sport Fishing Council. They are currently reviewing this issue.
- Terry has a meeting with OMNR Head Office Fisheries staff in early December to discuss this matter. (Due to the absence of a quorum and council resolution in this matter, he will not be formally presenting a position of our Council.)

### 6.2 • FMZ-14 (Geo. Bay) – Suggestion from Bill Davis that MNR consider a maximum size limit for small and largemouth bass.

- Rationale:
  1. Improve reproductive success (larger males have higher reproductive success rate and offer better protection to fry from predators)
  2. Primary predator on round goby (larger bass eat more and larger gobies)
  3. Larger bass are not as vulnerable to cormorant predation

#### Discussion:

- This proposal is largely a matter for the UGLMU to consider. If they deem the proposal to have merit, it should then be forwarded to the FMZ-14 (Georgian Bay) Advisory Council to consider. (Note: To the best of our knowledge, a FMZ-14 Advisory Council does not currently exist. It will be up to the UGLMU to decide how or if this initiative should proceed.)

### 6.3 Website

- There have been issues related to the timeliness of getting items posted. Eric: A local host that is dedicated solely to website management offers some improved convenience as well as efficiencies. Suggest we consider a local web hoster – “the Big Brain” (Dan Connaghan)
- Discussion:
  - Promotional flyer for The Big Brain distributed to Council for consideration.
  - Site can be set up such that Eric can make minor modifications and post and remove documents. This should lead to more timely updates to the site.
  - Consensus to transfer website to The Big Brain contingent upon costs not exceeding current expenses.
  - As this is an administrative expense it was concluded that a resolution was not necessary to proceed. Action: Eric to proceed with arrangements to

transfer website to The Big Brain.

6.4 Enforcement:

- Ray brought to the Council's attention an enforcement matter pertaining to walleye creel limit infractions present on the Shawanaga River this past fall.
- Ray: How can we assist MNR enforcement in this matter?
- **Action: Eric to invite Rob Gibson (UGLMU Enforcement Supervisor) to discuss this at our next meeting.**

6.5 Species – At – Risk Project

- Funding deadline for the current (2009) round SAR Stewardship Fund project is Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Last spring the EGBSC was unable to help out the UGLMU with a Sturgeon assessment project at the Moon River due to the lengthy and onerous nature of the project design. Can the design be modified such that we could help out in 2009?
- At this time, no commitment from the UGLMU to conduct a cooperative SAR project.
- Eric: Considering our new commitment to conduct habitat and spawning population assessment work at Go Home Bay in 2009 [see item 5.1], we may be hard pressed to add a SAR project for the same time period.
- Dave G.: It need not necessarily be Council members who do the field work. Perhaps the Council could hire staff?

6.6 Arunas: The UGLMU could use the assistance of the EGBSC to help fill a number of data gaps in their fisheries assessment program. There is an acute need for creel data collection.

**Action: Council to consider this issue at next meeting.**

**7.0 Date for Next Meeting:**

- Saturday, January 10, 2009
- This will be a ½ day meeting (10 am – 3 pm)
- Come dressed in your 'Sunday Best' for Council picture! And Ray – Get a haircut!