

Record of Proceedings - Meeting Minutes Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council

Meeting Date: Sat. Jan. 10, 2009

Recorded by: E. McIntyre

Meeting Location: OMNR Parry Sound Dist. Boardroom

Status: Approved

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 Ratushniak			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		
John Bell		x					

Guest: Venard Robitaille

Handouts provided to Council members included:

- Dec. 12/08 Lifestyles article re Moon River Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement Project
- Financial Report
- Dec. 18/08 Letter from Geo. Bay Coastal Trail re feasibility study
- Draft copy of 2008 EGBSC Annual Report
- EGBSC 2008 Update flyer
- EGBSC Terms of Reference and Operating By-laws
- Internal OMNR correspondence re ending harvest of snapping turtles
- Oct. 10/08 Lifestyles article re GBBR Biosphere Educator's Network (I intended to hand this out at our last meeting but forgot.)

1.0 Welcome Guest – Venard Robitaille

2.0 Review Nov. 19th Minutes/Action Items:

2.1 Moon River Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement Project

- **Action: Eric to see that web-posting of report is made.** (Done)
- **Action: Eric to prepare Media Update for project and circulate to Parry Sound North Star and other media outlets as appropriate.** (Done. Article published in Dec. 12 Lifestyles edition of the PS North Star; copy in handout.)

Discussion:

- Suggest Moon River Project Report and 2008 Annual Report be sent to Cottage Life Magazine, the Muskokan Sun, The Muskokan and Ontario Out of Doors. **Action: Eric to do so.**

2.2 Meeting with OMNR water management staff held Nov. 18th re 2008 and future flow management on the Moon River. (Mike Palmer and Eric attended on behalf of the EGBSC)

- **Action: Eric to investigate composition of the Muskoka Watershed Standing Advisory Committee (SAC). Issue to be brought forward on agenda for next meeting.**
 - Done. Committee members: Steward Martin (Chair), Ben Boivin, Rebecca Willison, Don Currie, Patricia Arney and Tim Clark. They are not representatives of any specific group, but rather interested individuals who applied to be on the SAC. Four were previously on the Planning Advisory Committee for the Muskoka River Water Management Plan.

Discussion:

- The Muskoka Lakes were the primary concern of the Muskoka River Water Management Plan. There was little or no representation of the fisheries' interests downstream of Bala.
- **Action: Eric to formulate a letter to the Standing Advisory Committee explaining Moon River (Geo. Bay) fishery interests and impacts of upstream manipulations; EGBSC offer to give a presentation to the SAC; include Moon River Report.**

2.3 Big Sound / Killbear Channel LT egg collection for thiamine analysis has been posted on our website (Under Documents & Reports)

- Report electronically sent to Council members
- No comments, corrections or revisions received to date. Please advise Eric of any modifications necessary

2.4 Website

Action: Eric to proceed with arrangements to transfer website to The Big Brain.
(Done)

2.5 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.
- **Action: Eric to invite Rob Gibson (UGLMU Enforcement Supervisor) to discuss this at our next meeting.** (Rob not available – away on course.)

Discussion:

- Council still wants to discuss enforcement matters with Rob Gibson
- The emphasis of discussions should be on 'how can we help'
- **Action: Eric to invite Rob Gibson to our next meeting**

3.0 Updates:

3.1 Regional Economic Development Fisheries Action Plan (formerly Socio-economic Study)

- Awaiting response from UGLMU re their participation in this initiative
- Behind-the-scenes discussion going on to garner OFAH support

- **Resolution:** Council approves 50% funding (contingent upon other 50% to come from the Manitoulin Area SC) for the “*Regional Economic Development Fisheries Action Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Eastern Georgian and North Channel Fisheries*” as per the Terms of Reference for the project dated January 1, 2009.
 - Note: Any supporting contributions to this project from other partners (e.g. GBBR / OFAH / etc.) will be deducted from the total cost of the project and the EGBSC and MASC will split the cost of the outstanding amount.

Discussion:

- (Greg) Part of the project should include a one-day meeting between the various partners to clarify roles and responsibilities and ensure a common understanding of deliverables and what the project is intended to achieve.
- (Greg) The GBBR is willing to contribute \$2k towards this project. Please submit an invoice to them.

Resolution passed.

3.2 Species – At – Risk Project

- Funding deadline for the current (2009) round SAR Stewardship Fund project is Dec. 12th. No project application submitted.

Discussion:

- (Eric) The fact that we did not submit an application does not mean we can't do a SAR project. We simply did not have a project requiring funding.
- **Action: Bill and Eric to proceed with an experimental sturgeon inventory/assessment project using snorkelling gear at Moon River this June. Incorporate into work program.**

3.3 Possible Creel Project for 2009

- At our last meeting the UGLMU (Arunas L.) indicated 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 item (Nov.19th): Council to consider this issue at next meeting.

Discussion:

- Creel surveys can be very demanding in terms of manpower commitment, project duration, project design, equipment, accommodation and supervision. The EGBSC does not have the capability to lead a creel survey – but we could provide support.
- Might a lodge creel be more practical than a roving creel? Lodge operators could hand out questionnaires/trip diaries to their clients. Prizes could be awarded to maximize participation.
- John Gunn (Laurentian University) has a template questionnaire that was used on the French River
- **Action: Eric to contact Arunas to discuss the option of a partnership project related to a Lodge Creel.**

3.4 Tournament Fishing in FMZ-14 (Georgian Bay)

- Terry provided an over-view of this issue: there is no mechanism to permit an individual to weight in five fish with the current daily limit of three bass. The Competitive Fishing Council was opposed to any permits/regulations to facilitate

this; furthermore MNR says no such permit exists. Team tournaments are still okay (daily creel limit for each angler part of the team weigh in). Tremendous tourism/economic benefit to local economies are being lost. For the time being – it's a dead issue.

- **Action: Eric to draft a letter to MNR on behalf of EGBSC indicating:**
 - **In supporting the bass creel reduction to 3 fish in 2002 - it was not the intent of the NC&EGBFSC to discourage/eliminate tournament fishing. Indeed, it was our understanding regulatory provision would be made for this!**
 - **Our Council supports tourism and sustainable economic development such as bass tournaments that do not have negative biological impacts to the fish population.**

3.5 FMZ-14 Advisory Council

Report on discussions between Eric & UGLMU:

- EGBSC still interested in participating
- Recommend a sub-committee of the EGBSC could contribute towards a FMZ-14 Council
- Concerns have been expressed by Ont. Stewardship that Council should not accept this dual role. Our Council feels there is no conflict in fulfilling the two roles; in fact – because of our focus on fisheries, it seems logical that we would be involved in regulatory and management discussions.

3.6 Custodial Co-Management Project

- Draft 2008 Year-end summary report circulated to council. Comments received from Greg Mason and incorporated into revision. **Action: Eric – post to website.**
- Offer received from Vince Langdon of the Toronto Out-tripping Outreach Program (TROOP) to assist with maintenance operations at McCrae Lake. Intention is to take Vince up on his generous offer and incorporate TROOP into the 2009 program.

3.7 Moon River Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement Project

- Congratulations received from Andy Heerschap – PS District Manager / Mitch Baldwin – Provincial Stewardship Coordinator / Dave McLeish – UGLMU Manager
- The EGBSC was delighted to present a 'gift of recognition' to Bill McRobb for his unfailing efforts and significant contribution towards the Moon River enhancement project as well as his long-term dedication to rehabilitate the Moon River walleye population. A framed print of an aerial view of Moon River cottages with a dedication inscription was presented to Bill.

3.8 GBBR Update:

- (Greg) In the last federal budget (2008), Biosphere Reserves in Canada received dedicated support funding. With that funding, the GBBR has contracted the *Georgian Bay Generations Institute* (Greg Mason and Becky Pollock) to act as their manager.
- Education Advisory Committee has been formulated (*Note: An article on this is included in the handout to Council. Eric had intended to include this in the previous meeting's handout but inadvertently omitted to do so.*)
- GBBR working to coordinate multiple projects currently being conducted by numerous groups and agencies.

- 3.9 French R. (Water Quality) Stewardship Council – 2008 Review:
- Continuation of phosphorus sampling program at 12 sites on the river
 - Above program expanded in '08 to include benthos, nitrates and dissolved metal sampling
 - Conducted community tree plant with primary school students in Alban, Noelville and Monetville.
 - Council in the process of incorporating for charitable status
 - EGBSC \$1250 contribution due March 2009.

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

Discussion:

- (Eric) Council projects in 2007 and 2008 were weighted towards MNR generated projects. Although we are providing valuable fisheries assessment information to MNR – this needs to be balanced with more environmental community sponsored projects. This should be kept in mind for our February work planning meeting.

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.
- The UGLMU would like to see some preliminary habitat and spawning population data collected prior to commencing such a project. We will incorporate that into our 2009 work plan – characterization of existing spawning habitat and a spring trapnet assessment project.
- (Karl) We need to involve the Madawaska Club at the ground level for this project.
- (Venard) In the 1960's, the walleye population in Go Home Bay was very healthy. Walleye formerly spawned at the Go Home Bay inlet from Go Home Lake.
- **Action: Eric to seek partnership with The Madawaska Club on this project.**

5.2 Walleye Culture (raising fingerlings) – Tadenac Bay

- 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.
- Patrick Scafe of the Tadenac Club has indicated their intention to proceed with walleye culture with our assistance.
- Concern raised at our last meeting by UGLMU re nutrient enrichment

Discussion:

- If this experimental project is to have any value and application for other Georgian Bay areas, we need to conduct assessment and documentation of our activities and the results.

5.3 Speakers / Agenda for 2009 Lake Stewardship Workshop:

- Theme: Water quality and social and ecological well-being – How are they connected.
- Environmental Commissioner (Gord Miller) has indicated his willingness to attend. Anna DeSellas (MOE, Lake Partner Coordinator) is not available.

Discussion:

- Speakers & Topics for workshop:
 1. MOE – Provincial perspective of water quality monitoring (MOE staff)
 2. Community Based Environmental monitoring (Karl)
 3. Stewardship (What you can do to help) (Terry Reese – FOCA)
 4. Overview – Environmental Commissioner
- **Action: Eric to proceed with invitations to guest speakers.**

6.0 Business Arising / New Business

6.1 Parry Sound OMNR initiative to end the harvest of snapping turtles

Discussion:

- There is certainly more awareness and less persecution of snapping turtles today than in the past. Will a closed season promote poaching?
- There is no data supporting this initiative. It is a non-issue with the exception of one incident on Six-Mile Lake. There is very little activity associated with the harvesting of snapping turtle; although there is potential for this to increase.
- We need to see some data/science before commenting on this.
- Consensus that Council not respond to this matter until input is sought through a public forum by MNR.

6.2 Walleye Culture

- Venard Robitaille is willing to raise walleye fingerlings for us on a contract basis. Venard has 3 ponds around Waubashene and previous experience with walleye culture. Cost will vary according to life stage with a benchmark of \$1 per fish for summer fingerling.

Discussion:

- What is the optimal stage to stock at for max. cost – benefit? Venard recommended fall fingerlings (4-6”) with some fish held over winter for stocking as yearlings.
- Where would egg come from? Preference – Severn River
- The EGBSC would provide eggs, soy-meal and feed.

Resolution: Council will set aside \$15K in 2009 to be dedicated to raising walleye for rehabilitative plantings at the Moon River, Tadenac Bay and Go Home Bay. Carried.

- (Tentative allocation of fish: 4/8th's to Moon River, 3/8th's to Go Home Bay, 1/8th to Tadenac Bay. Note: subject to future review and change)
- **Action: Terry and Venard to coordinate egg collection project at Severn River.**
- We should be able to approach the Woods Bay Comm. Association, Tadenac Club and Madawaska Club to seek support funding to pay for walleye purchased for their particular location.

6.3 Request for funding for Georgian Bay Coastal Trail

Discussion:

- Eric: Suggests that Council look upon this as a project in which our Council becomes a supporting partner – similar to our involvement with the French River (Water Quality) Stewardship Council. This project has linkages to our Regional Economic Development initiative.
- Resolution: The EGBSC agrees to become a supporting partner in the Georgian Bay Coastal Trail initiative and provide financial support in two annual payments of \$1500 in 2009 and 2010. This funding is intended to support the production of a feasibility study. Carried.
- **Action: Eric to notify Kirsten Spence**
- *(Addendum for clarification: Money for the above resolution is to come from EGBSC general funds and is not affiliated with our custodial co-management project.)*

6.4 Annual Report – Discussion / revisions / approval

- Revisions discussed – to be made by Eric and posted on website

6.5 2008 Update – Discussion / revisions / approval

- Revisions discussed – to be made by Eric and posted on website.

6.6 Terms of Reference revisions

- Revisions to Council area – agreed
- Addition of John Bell to Council – approved
- Revision re First Nation participation – agreed
- Quorum revisions – approved
- Addition of Disbursements clause (reimbursement for expenses) – consensus that such a clause is not necessary. However it can be added such that Council members who wish to do so may be reimbursed for gas expenses.
- **Action: (Eric) A letter to be sent to First Nations indicating they have an open standing invitation to approach and partake in any Council matters for which they have an interest.**
- Revise clause 3.1.1 (Termination of membership) to indicate failure to attend 50% of meetings, except under extenuating circumstances, as an indication of lack of participation and interest in Council matters.

6.7 Election of Officers:

- Chairperson – Terry Crawford
 - Co-Chairperson – Bill McRobb
 - Treasurer – Ray Hachigian
- Carried.

7.0 **Date for Next Meeting:** Wednesday, Feb. 25/08 6-9 pm OMNR Parry Sound boardroom.