

Big Creek Watershed Plan Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, July 9, 2009 Meeting Summary
Town of Amherstburg Council Chambers (6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jackie Hubbs chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. The meeting was attended by:

Matthew Child, Essex Region Conservation Authority
David Coates, Community Representative
Ed Faucher, Community Representative
Rick Fryer, Town of Amherstburg Councilor and ERCA Board Member
Carl Gibb, Community Representative
Teri Gilbert, Ministry of the Environment
Jackie Hubbs, Town of Amherstburg
Allan Parks, Amherstburg Committee on the Environment
Ari Varsa, Community Representative
Rick Visser, Ministry of Natural Resources

Project Support Staff in attendance included:
Rebecca Belanger, Essex Region Conservation Authority

Residents in attendance included:
Greg Nemeth
Dan Struhar
Billy Brydges

2. Approval of the Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda was reviewed by the Committee and no errors or additions were identified.

Moved by Allan Parks, seconded by Ed Faucher to approve the July 9, meeting agenda. Carried.

3. Public Question and Answer Period

Greg Nemeth identified the large amount of wildlife, particularly the diversity of birds that he has recently observed in the Big Creek Watershed.

Dan Struhar mentioned that he believes the water levels in Big Creek are presently higher than in the past. He is also noticing a large number of muskrat in the watershed. Dan mentions that he believes that the muskrats are contributing to shoreline erosion in his area. Dan requests information regarding the ownership of the channel of Big Creek and is concerned about the on-going problem of phragmites.

4. Review of the April 23, 2009 Meeting Summary and Action Items

The meeting summary was reviewed with no comments or questions. The Committee reviewed the Action Item List. Teri provides details regarding the dumping by Heaton Sanitation on the Hearn property. She states that this is a possible approvals issue at the Ministry level and that it is important for concerned residents to contact the MOE Area Office directly or (519)948-1464, so that they can identify what and when dumping is occurring in this and any other case.

Rick Visser comments on the question of the navigable channel in Big Creek. Rick Visser clarified that while historical mapping of the Big Creek Marsh channel (Crownland) was mapped, it is no longer applicable due to changes in the marsh that have occurred over the years.

Allan Parks thanks Matthew and Jackie for bringing reports to the Amherstburg Council and ERCA Board of Directors Meetings.

Moved by Rick Fryer, seconded by Allan Parks to approve the April 23, 2009 meeting summary and running list of action items. Carried.

5. Technical Updates and Discussion

a. Natural Heritage Study- Landowner Consents, Field Program

Matthew stated that since the last meeting additional landowner consents have been provided and that 82% of lands are available to the study team for the natural areas inventory work. Dean Ware and Dave Martin, faunal biologists, and Dan Lebedyk and Gerry Waldron, floral biologists, have completed their spring field work. Two rounds of faunal surveys and one round of floral surveys have been completed, with one additional round planned for each in August. Erin Sanders, a qualified Wetland Evaluator from the Ministry of Natural Resources will be attending sites, where permission is granted to update Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) boundaries. All areas of the watershed, where property owner consent has been granted including lands around Texas Road will be evaluated as part of this study. A presentation indicating environmental trends in the watershed will be available for the Committee in the late fall. The formal report and detailed site records will not be available until later in the year.

b. Water Quality and Quantity Field Program

Dr. Coates questions whether the Big Creek work overlaps with issues in the Canard River. Matthew advises that there has been a historical diversion of flow and the analysis of water quantity may conceptually consider low flow augmentation from the Canard River watershed. Dr. Coates questions whether benthic information is available for Big Creek. Matthew advises that Raj Bejankiwar is addressing benthics through his water quality analysis. Regarding fish, it was determined during the drafting of the Terms of Reference that fish data collection would not be completed as part of this study as there is a substantial amount of fish information available for Big Creek from DFO and that fish are considered a less important component of the natural heritage values for the watershed. Dr. Coates questions whether PCBs are being addressed. Matthew notes that a PCB screening study completed by Environment Canada for many Lake

Erie tributaries is being reviewed and additional sampling will be undertaken if necessary. He identifies that the water quality program is following Ministry of the Environment protocols and parameters for water quality analysis. Raj is regularly in contact with the MOE to discuss program considerations.

Based on Steering Committee input, an additional monitoring station was added on the west branch, to monitor during dry periods and also during rain events when flushing occurs. Tile drainage monitoring is also being undertaken on three farms. Matthew also advises that the monitoring in the marsh is for dissolved oxygen to focus on nutrients and the metabolizing of contaminants as well as the impact on the marsh from upstream. The Committee agrees to address any critical issues as they arise and to wait for completion of the water quality study later this year prior to taking any additional actions in the watershed.

c. Town of Amherstburg Interim Control By-Law – General Chemical Site

The Interim Control By-Law is presently being drafted. The Committee will be advised when further public meetings as scheduled to review the details of the By-Law.

6. Watershed Plan

a. Review of Preliminary Draft Table of Contents

The Committee discussed the draft Table of Contents for the Plan. Rick Visser requests clarification whether there are any differences between the Terms of Reference and the draft Table of Contents. Matthew advises that one study component that has changed from the Terms of Reference is the geomorphology study. It is suggested that a report be provided on this matter for the next meeting. Matthew and Allan advise that a number of major rain events have caused the erosion during the spring.

A revised Draft Table of Contents will be provided at the next Steering Committee Meeting.

b. Related Policy and Consultations Discussion

The Committee discusses the timing for addressing matters, as they are identified by the Committee or brought forward by the public. There was general agreement that issues have been dealt with appropriately to date, and that all issues will be dealt with on a case by case basis. Issues can only be addressed when the true nature of the problem has been confirmed and this will require additional monitoring and analysis in many cases. A list of issues to be addressed as part of the Plan will be collated and kept up to date. The Committee considers a Compendium of Actions a positive idea for inclusion in the final Plan.

c. Other Business

Dr.Coates requests to have Raj Bejankiwar attend the next meeting if possible. He believes that there needs to be clarification regarding information about chloride results to date. Matthew and Rebecca will confirm Raj's availability to make a brief presentation at the next meeting. Teri offers the support of MOE technical staff to make a presentation on the General Chemical site, at

the next meeting as well. A fall open house will be scheduled to provide an update on work completed to date. A specific date is not selected, however, after the harvest in November is determined to be an appropriate time. Rick mentions the positive work of the “Friends of Canard River” and wonders when a “Friends of Big Creek” Group will be formed. Matthew advises that these groups are assembled based on sufficient interest by the watershed community.

d. Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items

The next meeting is planned for Thursday, September 24th, at 6:00 p.m. at the Town of Amherstburg Council Chambers. Agenda items for that meeting include presentations on the General Chemical site and water quality program update, discussion about a November Open House, discussion of the revised Table of Contents, and review of a report on the evaluation of the geomorphology study from the Big Creek Terms of Reference.

e. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn made by Allan Parks, seconded by Rick Visser. Carried.

Meeting record prepared by Rebecca Belanger, reviewed by Matthew Child and Jackie Hubbs. Please forward any errors and omissions to rbelanger@erca.org.

Big Creek Watershed Plan Action Items- April 23/09

Date	Task	Resolution	Assigned To	Completed
Dec-09-08	Confirm possible point source locations of contamination in Big Creek	Teri Gilbert from MOE has been contacted and has passed this information along. Teri will report back once the investigation is complete	Teri Gilbert	Ongoing
March-10-2009	Identify water quantity monitoring stations	Prior to field measurements	Matthew/ Allan/ Teri	Ongoing
Apr-23-2009	Steve Mickle advises of dumping on the Hearn property on Thomas Sideroad	MOE has attended the site and is assessing permit requirements, if any	Rebecca/ Matthew/ Teri Gilbert	Ongoing
Apr-23-2009	Steve Mickle advises of peat being removed and replaced with clay at a property north of County Road 20 westside	Matthew will discuss the matter with ERCA's Regulations Department	Matthew	Completed
Apr-23-2009	Research and compile list of items for inclusion into the Watershed Plan	Rebecca will review all meeting records and public comments received to date and prepare list	Rebecca	Ongoing
July-9-2009	Provide water quality update	Raj Bejankiwar to provide presentation at September 24 meeting	Matthew	Planned
July-9-2009	Evaluation of geomorphology study.	Prepare a report for September 24 meeting	Matthew	Planned
July-9-2009	General Chemical site	MOE to provide presentation	Teri Gilbert	Planned

Big Creek Watershed Plan Table of Contents
Preliminary Draft for Discussion Only
July 7, 2009

Executive Summary

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