

STAFF REPORT: Engineering and Public Works – Solid Waste Division



**REPORT TO: Infrastructure and Recreation
 Committee**

MEETING DATE: June 14, 2011

REPORT NO.: EPW.11.059

SUBJECT: Blue Flag Beaches 2011

**PREPARED BY: Jeffery Fletcher, Manager of Solid
 Waste and Environmental Initiatives**

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report EPW.11.059, "Blue Flag Beaches 2011" for information purposes.

B. Background

The Blue Flag program works towards sustainable development at beaches/marinas through strict criteria dealing with water quality, environmental education information, environmental management and safety.

The Blue Flag program includes promotion of environmental education/activities for the public. The program includes the posting of the water health monitoring conducted by the local health unit, which will give beach users the confidence that the water is safe for swimming.

The Town has been participating in the Blue Flag program since 2008. Two beaches are certified this year: Little River Beach Park and North Winds Beach Park.

The table below is a list of environmental/educational events planned for 2011. The Engineering and Public Works Department is working with the Recreation Department to deliver the events lists below in the proposed schedule.

The Blue Mountains Blue Flag Beaches Event Schedule 2011

Event	Description	Date
Flag Raising	Opening of Blue Flag Season for The Blue Mountains	June 21, 2011
Bike to the Beach Day	Trail ride to Little River and Northwinds Beach Park	July 8, 2011 Noon start at Town Hall – return to Thornbury at 4:30
Stand Up Paddle Demo	Unique way to appreciate the natural environment of the bay	July 29, 2011
Love Your Beach Day	Partner with Barefoot Winery to carry out an “ecosystem clean-up” with volunteers and followed up with a wine tasting event (at a local away from Beach property).	July 29, 2011
Bat and Bird Box Placement	Work with local youth to create habitat at local water front parks	Alternative Event

These activities will be promoted by the Town and Environmental Defence (the administrator of the Blue Flag Program in Canada) in a variety of print, electronic and radio media. Staff will also be contacting local groups directly to gather participants and interest.

Environmental Defence hosts a website that will have pages dedicated to both of the Town’s beaches. Users of the site can access water quality results, events list and other information or images posted by the Town.

C. The Blue Mountains’ Strategic Plan

This activity will further, in part, Strategic Goal # 4, “Support the development of social and recreational programs to meet the broad range of needs in the community”.

D. Environmental Impacts

The Blue Flag “eco-labelling” program will not only promote the beaches as a location with certified environmental management, but the criteria of the program assist in monitoring the environmental health and safety of the beach.

The program will also help to develop ongoing local environmental awareness and education.

E. Budget Impact

An annual fee of \$1,000 will be paid to the Blue Flag Program for the Town's participation as a certified Blue Flag beach operator.

Additional funding will be provided from divisional advertisement budgets to support promotion of Blue Flag and the related events.

F. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

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