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Grey Sauble Conservation Authority

Full Authority Minutes

1:15 p.m.

Wednesday, September 9th, 2009

The Full Authority meeting was held at the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority Administration Centre located on Inglis Falls Road.

1. Call to Order

Chair Hibma called the meeting to order.

Directors Present

Dick Hibma
David Clarke
Judy Gay
Ross Herron
Michael Martin
Mark Wunderlich
Terry McKay
Harley Greenfield
Jim McPherson

Directors Absent

Deb Haswell

Staff Present

Jim Manicom, Drea Robinson, Doug Hill, Chris Hachey, and Cam Bennett

Media Present

Meaford Express

2. Approval of agenda

Motion No.:	Moved by:	Mark Wunderlich
FA-09-102	Seconded by:	Terry McKay

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority approve the agenda of September 9th, 2009, with the addition of correspondence from Ducks Unlimited Canada.

Carried

3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest

None at this time.

4. Approval of Minutes

- a) Full Authority – August 12th, 2009
- b) Arboretum Alliance – August 19th, 2009

Motion No.:	Moved by:	Harley Greenfield
FA-09-103	Seconded by:	Dave Clarke

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority approve the Full Authority minutes of August 12th, 2009, and the Arboretum Alliance minutes of August 19th, 2009.

Carried

5. Business Out of Minutes

- a) Recruitment Committee Report

The Chair reviewed the highlights of the Recruitment Committee minutes of the meeting held on August 25, 2009. Submission deadline for applications for the C.A.O. position is September 25th, 2009. Present employees applying for this position will be given equal consideration as others applying.

Motion No.:	Moved by:	Dave Clarke
FA-09-104	Seconded by:	Mark Wunderlich

THAT the Recruitment Committee minutes of August 25th, 2009, be approved as presented.

Carried

6. Correspondence

- a) Letter from Ducks Unlimited

The Owen Sound Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Canada is holding their Twenty-Fourth Fundraising Dinner-Auction, to be held on Wednesday, October 7th, 2009, at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre. Tickets are \$45.00 per person. In past years, Grey Sauble Conservation has been a Bronze Sponsor by donating \$250.00.

Motion No.: **Moved by:** **Terry McKay**
FA-09-105 **Seconded by:** **Harley Greenfield**

THAT Grey Sauble Conservation purchase two tickets to the Twenty-Fourth Fundraising Dinner-Auction of the Owen Sound Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Canada and also be a Bronze Sponsor by donating \$250.00.

Carried

7. Business Items

a) Water Management

1) Haines Dam – leak through embankment

Doug Hill made a presentation on the Haines Dam. Since 2001 staff has been monitoring a small amount of seepage through the base of the earthen berm on the north side of the dam adjacent to the concrete abutment. In the spring of 2009 it was noted that the seepage had become noticeably stronger. Significant flow is now passing through the berm and washing out soil on the downstream slope of the embankment. The seepage could ultimately lead to failure of the berm and a breach in the dam allowing water to flow around the concrete structure and create a new channel. It should be determined in the near future what actions are needed to stabilize the situation in the short term.

The structural condition of the remainder of the dam is unknown. In addition to the immediate problem of the leak, there is a need to determine whether other maintenance issues must be addressed in the longer term. If it is determined that significant repairs are required, the benefit derived from the dam must be weighed against the cost of repair.

Considerable discussion was held with regards to the benefit of evaluating the leak or removing the structure. An estimate to have an engineering evaluation of the leak completed is \$20,000 and to carry out a full dam assessment is estimated around \$60,000. A full assessment would be a more lengthy process.

Motion No.: **Moved by:** **Mark Wunderlich**
FA-09-106 **Seconded by:** **Jim McPherson**

THAT Grey Sauble Conservation staff be authorized to prepare a request for proposals for a three stage assessment of the Haines Dam to include an evaluation of the leak through the dam, a full structural assessment of the dam and the potential for decommissioning and removal of the dam.

Carried

2) Mill Dam Tender

Phase 1 of the repair to the leak through the Owen Sound Mill dam was completed in the fall of 2008 with the reconstruction of a concrete cutoff wall on the upstream side of the dam adjacent to the mill race intake structure. Phase 2 of the project is to fill the voids under the mill race, caused by the leak. Five contractors were invited to tender on this work and only one tender was received. The tender was set up on a unit price basis rather than as a lump sum due to the unknown quantities of materials that would be required. The void to be filled is below ground and not visible. The total tender amount received from the only bidder – Geo-Foundations Contractors is \$76,500.

Motion No.:	Moved by:	Mark Wunderlich
FA-09-107	Seconded by:	Judy Gay

THAT the tender of Geo-Foundations Contractors for flume foundation grouting at the Owen Sound Mill Dam, as set out in the schedule of tender items submitted, totalling \$76,500, based on the estimated quantities as provided by the engineering consultant, Hatch Inc., be accepted.

Carried

3) Skinner Marsh Dam

Doug Hill presented a report on issues concerning the renewal of the MOE Permit to Take Water for the Skinner Marsh Dam. Concerns raised by a downstream landowner have prompted the Ministry of Environment to require that a flow monitoring program be implemented at the dam. (See attached report).

b) Environmental Planning

1) Section 28 permits – August 2009

Motion No.:	Moved by:	Harley Greenfield
FA-09-108	Seconded by:	Judy Gay

THAT the list of permits under Ontario Regulation 151/06 – “Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation”, for the period August 1st – August 31st, 2009 be approved as presented.

Carried

c) Property Management

1) Inglis Foot Bridge Update

The installation of the Inglis Foot bridge is coming into the final stages with the bridge being installed on Friday, September 11, 2009. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at 1:15 p.m. prior to the October 14th Full Authority meeting. Invitations will include Bill Murdoch, MPP and Larry Miller, MP.

d) Forestry, Fish and Wildlife

A number of organizations and people are launching a new endeavour that will bring students of the Grey and Bruce areas and parts of Wellington and Huron Counties together to learn, appreciate and celebrate our local forest heritage. This idea is based on the success and experience gained from the Grey Bruce Children's Water Festival. The Forest Festival will involve many different local environmental groups and associations, ministries, stewardship councils, conservation authorities, local industry and volunteers from the community as well as the appropriate school boards. Curriculum based, interactive learning opportunities will be presented for grade 6 students from those schools to whom we traditionally provide programs. The festival will take place October 19th, 20th, and 21st, 2010 at Allan Park. A steering committee is being organized to ensure access to as many funding opportunities as possible.

Motion No.:	Moved by:	Terry McKay
FA-09-109	Seconded by:	Mark Wunderlich

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority endorses the concept of the Forest Festival and the participation by staff in planning the Festival with updates as organizational details are formalized.

Carried

e) Communications/Public Relations – nothing at this time

f) Administration

1) Receipts and Expenses

Motion No.:	Moved by:	Dave Clarke
FA-09-110	Seconded by:	Mark Wunderlich

THAT the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority approve the receipts and expenses for August 2009.

8. In Camera Items – nothing at this time.

9. Chairman's Report

Dick was in Sault Ste. Marie on August 20th and 21st with the public interest advisory group on the Upper Great Lakes Study. Sault Ste. Marie Conservation Authority sends greetings to Grey Sauble Conservation. Drinking Water Source Protection Management Committee meeting will be held on September 10th and Conservation Ontario on October 5th.

10. Other Business

a) Foundation Minutes – July 15th, 2009

Grey Sauble Conservation Foundation will be hosting a Mushroom Foray on Saturday, September 12, 2009 in the workshop at Grey Sauble Conservation. The 17th Annual Dinner and Auction Fundraiser is being held on Friday, September 18th, 2009, at the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre.

b) Staff minutes – August 20th, 2009

Jim McPherson brought to the attention of staff that the Georgian Trail has not been restored to its prior condition, towards the St. Vincent Lookout. Grey Sauble staff will look into this and make any necessary restoration.

c) Drinking Water Source Protection Items – refer to Source Protection Authority minutes of September 9th, 2009.

d) Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 14th, 2009 at 1:15 p.m.

11. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Dick Hibma
Chairman

Drean Robinson
Administrative Assistant

REPORT ON
SKINNER MARSH DAM
PERMIT TO TAKE WATER RENEWAL
UPDATE

BACKGROUND

Skinner Marsh Management Area is located just east of Hepworth in Lots 26,27 and 28, Concession 1NCD; Lots 25 and 26, Concession 2 NCD; Lots 11 and 12, Concession 12; Lots 11,12 and 13, Concession 13; all in the former Keppel Township, Township of Georgian Bluffs. The property was acquired in the early 1960's and consists of 131ha. (350 ac).

The marsh is located at the point where Hepworth Creek flows into large sinkholes and disappears into the ground. There is no overland outlet for the drainage from the 47.6 sq. km. (18.4 sq.mile) sub-watershed. In the spring the water levels rise to several metres in depth within the marsh as a result of the restricted outlet at the sinkholes. Over the course of the summer the water drains out of the marsh through the sinkholes. Historically the marsh dried up in the summer months.

In 1967 the authority constructed a low level dam upstream of the sinkholes to maintain water in the marsh over the summer months. This was done to improve the marsh habitat for waterfowl and wetland wildlife. The marsh has been evaluated by the MNR as a Class 1 Provincially Significant Wetland.

DAM OPERATIONS

Each year, after the dam was constructed, stop logs were placed in the control structure after the spring runoff to maintain the flooded condition in the marsh. In late fall the stop logs were removed to allow high spring flows to pass through the dam. This is the standard procedure for most dams.

In the late 1970's the authority was approached by the Hepworth Anglers Club with concerns about the operational procedure. The Hepworth Anglers are a private fishing club that owns Spring Creek and surrounding lands to the west of Hepworth. The club has been in existence since the 1890's.

There is anecdotal evidence of an underground connection between the sinkholes at Skinner Marsh and the springs at the head of Spring Creek which is a distance of about 5 km from the marsh. The club members indicated that when the logs were installed in the dam in the spring, flows in Spring Creek were reduced and portions of the upper part of the creek were dried up. In response the authority modified its operations of the dam in the late 1970's in an attempt to mitigate this problem. This involved maintaining a gap in the stop logs to allow more water to flow to the sinkholes in periods of low flow. Unfortunately this action resulted in the loss of water from the marsh and negatively impacted the wetland. The revised operating procedure was abandoned.

DUCKS UNLIMITED

In the early 1980's the authority contacted Ducks Unlimited to see if improvements could be made to the dam that would provide suitable wetland habitat and not impact flow to the

sinkholes. In 1981 the authority entered into an agreement with DU for the management of the dam and marsh.

DU undertook alterations to the dam by installing a concrete overflow structure which allowed for a change in operating procedures for the dam. Under the new procedure the stop logs were left in the dam year round. There was no necessity to remove the logs in the fall or to replace them in the spring. This eliminated the fluctuations in flow in Spring Creek that were of concern to the Hepworth Anglers. The new overflow structure provided the flow relief during periods of peak runoff that was previously provided by removing the stop logs from the main control structure. This procedure also stabilized water levels in the marsh and improved wetland habitat.

HEPWORTH ANGLERS

In the late 1990's the authority was again approached by the Hepworth Anglers with concerns about low water flow in Spring Creek. This was in a period when there were a series of extremely dry summers. They indicated that they wished the Authority to return to the late 1970's practice of gapping the stop logs in the dam to provide additional flow to the sinkholes. They were essentially requesting that we augment the flow to Spring Creek with water stored in the marsh. A series of meetings were held between GSCA, DU and the Hepworth Anglers in attempt to resolve the issues. We explained to them that, since the modifications to the dam in 1981, we had not obstructed flow to the sink holes. The dam has operated as an overflow weir since that time. Essentially water that flows into the marsh flows over the dam.

About this time we began experiencing vandalism at the dam with unknown persons removing stop logs from the dam and lowering the water levels in the marsh on a regular basis.

WATER TAKING PERMIT

When the dam was constructed the authority obtained a permit from the Ministry of Environment under the Permit to Take Water Program. The permit was renewed every 10 years and was due for renewal again in 2009. An application for renewal was filed on May 13th and has been under review by the MOE since then.

In recent years the Ministry has followed a much more rigorous permit procedure requiring significantly more documentation and posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights website for public comment. The Hepworth Anglers have lodged an objection to our permit with the MOE.

The MOE is attempting to satisfy the club's concerns and have requested that the authority and DU undertake a 2 year flow monitoring program to measure inflow and outflow from the dam to assure the MOE and Hepworth Anglers that we are not taking more than 90% of the available flow at all times. It is likely that a short term permit (two years) will be issued with several conditions placed on it until flow data is collected and analyzed and a report presented to the MOE to prove that we are not impeding flow to the sink holes.

The Hepworth Anglers apparently are still insisting that we supply more than 100% of the flow during low flow periods (augmenting flow with water stored in the marsh). The MOE has indicated to the club that we have no obligation to provide more than 90% of the flow.

Staff is currently working with DU to design a flow monitoring program to satisfy the requirements of the MOE. DU will be proposing to hire a local consultant to set up the monitoring stations, collect and analyze the data over a two year period beginning in the spring of 2010. DU has indicated that they wish to consider the monitoring program as a cooperative effort between DU and the authority. They may be looking for a financial contribution from the authority toward the program. A proposal and budget for the work will be coming from the

consultant within the next month. A budget item for 2010 to cover part of the cost for the monitoring program may be required.

