

MINUTES

September 1, 2009

ST. MALO LAKE STEWARDSHIP WORKING GROUP MEETING

Present: Marc Hamonic, Luc Lahaie, Neil Loughran, Georges Beaudry, Kristy-Layne Carr

Regrets: Pat Watson, Jodi Goerzen, Jules Gosselin, Gerry Maynard

Invited Guest: Wendy Ralley

1. Welcome of Invited Guests – Wendy Ralley, Acting Manager of Water Quality Management Section
2. Adoption of the agenda

6-2009: Neil Loughran – Georges Beaudry

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be hereby adopted with the addition of item 9 orthophotos.

CARRIED

3. Review and adoption of the minutes

7-2009: Marc Hamonic - Jules Gosselin

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of July 27, 2009 be hereby adopted.

CARRIED

4. Old Business

- a) Follow up with Arvid Ewashko on:
 - i. Original license and design plan of Cam-Mart drain
 - ii. Operable condition of gate on St. Malo Lake
 - iii. Use of capital funds for sediment clean-out
 - Members discuss pressuring the Province to access this money
 - Consensus is to wait until the group has a better idea of what they want to accomplish
 - The group is asked if they want to know the results of the Provincial infrastructure survey/evaluation
 - Arvid will be contacted to get the results
 - Arvid will also be asked about the Lake levels being lowered to kill weeds in the 1990's. Does MWS have any records regarding operational licenses?

-Sub-District 3/4 will discuss drainage in the Upper Rat River at the next meeting

5. Question Period with our invited guest

Wendy has prepared answers to the questions that were sent to her ahead of time. She discusses the information and accepts new questions that arise.

- Currently, there is no water chemistry data for the reservoir. The Province monitors fecal bacteria (e-coli) at the beach where the limit is 200/100ml. In all the data from 2000-2009, all but one test have been under 200. That test occurred last week, and the retest came back negative. Geese were the likely source.
- There is a long term water quality monitoring station at Otterbourne and its purpose is to give an idea of the overall health of the watershed (which is why most water quality monitoring stations are location downstream). The data from this station indicates an increase in total P. There was some data collected from within the Lake in 1995 by Ann Bowden, and SESCO also began collecting samples upstream and downstream of the Lake. SESCO has had poor consistency with their test sites; however, their data shows good water quality in Zhoda and the poorest water quality in Otterbourne. The 1995 Lake data from Ann Bowden showed good water quality for all indicators. The Provincial guideline for P in rivers is 0.025mg/L and downstream tests on the Rat River were showing 1.6mg/L. Is it possible to tell what the source of P in water is? To answer that question, it is best to look at land use changes. It is not likely that the Lake has a total P problem; that total P is probably near the 0.025 mg/L guideline but not significantly over it. This is important as it implies that if broad prevention measures were implemented (i.e. education, stop dysfunctional septic fields, prevent livestock manure overflows) and monitoring, "harsh" controls would not be needed
- There have been no incidents reported of extreme algae in the St Malo Lake Reservoir, and mercury is likely not an issue, as St Malo Lake is not a very large reservoir. Sediment does have an impact on water quality. Can nutrients "camouflage" in sediment and not show up in tests? Total P includes dissolved P so it would show up in the test results. How easy is P released from sediment? When nutrients are released in excessive amounts and taken up, there is usually a lack of oxygen. This is referred to as anoxia and the indicator is fish kill. This is not an issue at St Malo Lake. In an ambient situation, total P is usually made up of 50% dissolved P. The mid-summer, non high-

flow, "murkiness" of the water is likely due to duck weed and phytoplankton, not algae. Phytoplankton has a long stringy appearance and tends to be attached.

- Weed growth largely depends of light penetration through the water. The recipe for algae is hot, calm water plus nutrients. All in all, the water quality in St Malo Lake seems to be good.
 - The best thing to do is work with the RM, the SRRCD and the Park to reduce nutrient contributions to the Lake. Work with the SRRCD on a water quality monitoring program, but make sure you are specific in what questions you want answered. Perhaps add some upstream site to the current program. The RM could also pass a by-law for riparian zones.
 - The presence of sediment indicates that there is a problem upstream (erosion). It is not valuable to test the sediment itself rather; it is enough just to know that it is there. In terms of weed removal; check with DFO. The Provincial Water Handbook is an excellent resource for cottage/lakeshore owners and MWS can provide the group with copies.
 - How does the use of motor boats affect water quality? When sediment is suspended near shore in shallow water, nutrients become more available for take-up by weeds. Propellers cut up plants which (depending on the plant) can increase their reproduction. The waves can also disturb habitat and cause erosion.
 - Plants get their nutrition from sediment whereas algae get their nutrients from the water (dissolved). Weed harvesters disturb the lake bottom which is really just a band-aid solution. The weed problem is cyclical and depends on lots of factors. To harvest weeds, they need to be completely removed, or the cycle begins again. If an algal bloom is reported, the Province tests the algae for toxins.
 - There are some examples of constructed wetlands to remove nutrients, Arnes on #9 highway (Interlake) and in Roblin.
 - Do water retention areas cause nutrients to be released as the water sits on the landscape? Standing water can become anoxic but short-term retention should not cause a problem.
6. Invited guests for next meeting – Pascal Badiou from Ducks Unlimited
Also invite:

Jason Lasuik – Environment Officer, Manitoba Conservation, Steinbach
Dave Stevens – Park Superintendent

7. Next meeting
-Meeting date will be confirmed with Pascal
8. Adjournment – Marc Hamonic