

LAKE STEWARDSHIP AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE OF MCKELLAR TOWNSHIP*

Draft Minutes

THURSDAY, November 9th, 2023

*Educational resources posted by this committee are available on the Township of McKellar Website here:
<https://www.mckellar.ca/en/township-services/resources/Links-to-YouTube-Videos.pdf>

Item	Time	Please note: These are ongoing agenda items. Only items marked with an * will be discussed at the next meeting.
1. *		<p>Land Acknowledgement: In the spirit of reconciliation and co-operation, we wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and Mississauga people. Its boundaries fall within the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 and the Williams Treaty of 1923. We are grateful to live here and we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land for thousands of years. To honour the suffering of Indigenous people and the love and wisdom they have carried for thousands of years, we pledge to work in community and harmony with each other and the environment we inhabit and work towards Truth and Reconciliation.</p>
2. *		<p>Roll Call*: Tony Best (Y); Ross Crockford (Y); Peter Duffey (Y); Jennifer Ghent-Fuller (Y) ; Melanie Jeffrey (Y) ; Axy Leighl (Y) ; Carl Mitchell (on LOA); Suzanne Poff (Y); Nick Ryeland (Y); Rick Speers (Y).</p> <p>We need 5 committee members to have a quorum (Y) We had another round of introductions. This is the first meeting for Peter Duffey and Rick Speers. Does anyone have a declaration of pecuniary and/or personal interest and general nature thereof? NO</p>
3.1 *		<p>Motion to accept the minutes of Oct 12th, 2023. (These will be sent Nov 8th). Moved: Sue Seconded: Nick Approved: (Y) Amendments: none</p>
3.2 *		<p>Motion to accept the Agenda as presented. Moved: Peter Seconded: Melanie Amendments: none Approved: (Y)</p>
3.3*		<p>Nov 9. Strategic Planning – The November 2023 LSEC Achievement Assessment document was sent to committee members in the last week of October to review what this committee has accomplished in the past. We decided on the following topics which should have priority for our efforts for the upcoming year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lead weights, lures and jigs (get the lead out) 2. Shoreline planning to protect the lake from excess runoff. 3. What to do about leaves. 4. MLCA newsletter updates. 5. Discourage the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. 6. Turtle/animal road signs. 7. Recycling choices. 8. Drinking water source protection. 9. How to facilitate a cultural shift. 10. Fish habitat. 11. Fish stocking.

		<p>12. Water testing design program subcommittee. (suggestion was made to include samplers on this committee).</p> <p>We need to decide on priorities and establish who will work on each topic. Jennifer will tabulate the votes for the top 3 or 4 priorities and send the results to committee members, as the poll function was not working on zoom. (initial results tabulated after the meeting are bolded).</p>
4. Goals		<p>General Updates on Current Issues.</p>
4.1		<p>Waterfront/ Shoreline protection – Oct 12, 2023. New policy adopted.</p> <p>October 5, 2023 – Jennifer sent committee members a draft policy in the past few days for review.</p> <p>References used to write the amended policy include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural Shorelines and their Role in the Protection of Water Quality and Aquatic Habitat: State of the Science Report. Hutchinson Environmental Sciences Limited, Aug 18, 2021. 2. The Science Behind Vegetated Shoreland Buffers: Why the Ribbon of Life Matters, Watersheds Canada, 2022. 3. Shoreline Buffers and Water Quality, South Carolina Native Plant Society, 2020. 4. Lakeshore Capacity Assessment Handbook: Protecting Water Quality in Inland Lakes, Ontario Government, retrieved October 10, 2022. 5. A Shoreline Owner’s Guide to Healthy Waterfronts, Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association, 2019. 6. Planning for our Shorelands, Watersheds Canada, 2022. 7. Lake Protection Workbook: A Self-Assessment Tool for Shoreline Property Owners, Lake Links (Watersheds Canada) 2022. 8. A Regulatory Guide to Achieving Environmental Net Gain at the Waterfront, Watersheds Canada, 2022. <p>July 6, 2023 – Axy will send out a draft policy by July 17th. We will review it at our next meeting on August 10th and decide whether it is ready to share with Council at that time. Council members have expressed interest.</p>
4.2*		<p>Water Sampling</p> <p>Nov 9 – On Oct 17, the Lake Steward made a presentation to Council of the results of the water sampling program for 2023. The data has been forwarded to Council and placed online under Environment. The sampling program was under the budget set by LSEC. Data was also sent to DataStream for use by researchers as suggested by FOCA.</p> <p>Nov 9 Tony proposed that we establish a study group to review surface water testing needs. The purpose would be to look at exactly what are the current desirable types and frequency for testing. This proposal was adopted as part of our strategic plan for 2024.</p> <p>October 5, 2023 Three rounds of sampling for E. coli and for Phosphorus and Calcium have been completed for the season. Profile data was also collected for 16 sites three times this summer. Data will be sent to the Township for posting. Sampling and profile data were collected for Manitouwabing, Armstrong, Grey Owl, Mary Jane, McKellar and Moffat Lakes.</p>

4.3*	<p>Septic Education –</p> <p>Nov 9 – Concern has been raised confidentially by a local resident about the condition of septic systems in Air B n B rental residences. Jennifer mentioned that she had laminated a copy of the “Help Your Septic System and our Lakes” flyer and placed it in the guest bathroom, and guests commented on it. Propose that we make laminated versions of this flyer available in the library for area residents. Moved: Sue. Seconded: Ross. Approved.</p> <p>July 6 – A flyer entitled “Help Your Septic System and Our Lakes” has been printed and delivered to the Township Office. The invoice has been submitted and paid to Aquagraphics. It was included in the tax mailing at the end of July.</p> <p>A question was raised about septic inspection by a member of the public. Jennifer has made a preliminary call to the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Association and will follow up, as will Nick. <i>(follow up indicated that no further action could be taken).</i></p> <p>A call was received in June from a McKellar Township resident who will be remaining anonymous. There was a release of raw sewage into Lake Manitouwabing from a burst septic tank on April 15 that was visible on the melting ice. The North Bay Mattawa Conservation Association (NBMCA) was contacted, but by the time they were called, the ice had melted and the sewage was gone so they were not able to take any further action. E coli tests were completed in the area in June. The site level was slightly elevated and was over the provincial standard of 200 CFU/100 ml downstream. There is no mandated septic inspection in McKellar Township. This committee investigated the possibility a few years ago, but the cost of acquiring each septic registration in the township from NBMCA, the cost of paying the salary of a septic inspector (even one shared by other area municipalities) and the process to set the system up was agreed to be beyond the capacity of the Township at that time. Discussion included the diesel spill in the spring at which the health department, the Ministry of the Environment and the police attended, and this was contrasted to the government response to the sewage spill. We also discussed the possibility of asking the Township if one of its employees could go out to witness a future sewage spill and report it on behalf of the Township as quickly as possible. Perhaps a hotline could be set up and/or the By-Law officer could be involved. Currently, individual residents are relied upon to do the reporting; they are assured of anonymity by the NBMCA, but that does not extend to a possible court case. Individuals may suffer from personal harassment for reporting a neighbour and this is not acceptable. The committee also discussed a need to devise/discover a reporting mechanism for 24/7 reporting and advertise this to residents.</p> <p>The main concern is that a majority of township residents draw household water from the lake and treat it with various methods before drinking it. Discussion was also had on the need to advertise free tap water testing by the health unit and the water testing, likely at a cost, by Water Depot in Parry Sound. Nick will investigate the service available from Water Depot. We have a video on water testing available online.</p>
4.4	<p>Presentations - YouTube videos from this committee are posted here: https://www.mckellar.ca/en/township-services/resources/Links-to-YouTube-Videos.pdf along with other videos</p> <p>Our postings (listings and a table of contents) are uploaded on the township web page under “Residents/Environment.” Jennifer has been gradually updating the page with Mary Smith’s help. https://www.mckellar.ca/en/living-in-our-community/environment.aspx</p>

4.5	Microplastics/Microfibres/ Washing Machine Filters – video on our YouTube channel posted
4.6	<p>Earth Day / Clean Up Our Lakes –</p> <p>October 5, 2023 – Melanie will let us know when she is ready to do a presentation on recycling.</p> <p>July 6 - The “Clean Up Our Lakes” sign is badly damaged.</p> <p>Recycling was raised as an issue. There should be clear guidelines as to what plastics are successfully recycled and whether to remove labels etc in order to maximize the success of plastic recycling in our area. Melanie is an expert in this issue and offered to give a presentation at a future meeting. Request was made to record this session to be included in our resources.</p> <p>The Clean Up our Lakes campaign is scheduled annually for the end of April to end of May – suggestion was made to include roads and add it to the slogan – “Clean up our Lakes, Rivers and Roads” for publicity this spring.</p> <p>June 8, 2023 - Moved that We hold the Clean Up Our Lakes campaign in 2024 without ordering bins. Moved: Tony Seconded: Sue approved</p>
4.7*	<p>Fishing / Wildlife –</p> <p>Nov 9 – Tony gave a brief update on the day long Watersheds Canada meeting in Perth that he attended. One speaker that he connected with there suggested that there may be a way to work with MNR on stocking, even though we have been initially refused (see FMZ-15-Draft-Management-Plan-Highlights-Summary-V3.pdf (mckellar.ca)). Tony also mentioned a campaign conducted in another area to “get the lead out” of fishing by using fish weights and lures that are made of other metals. These have proven especially toxic to loons. Melanie reported that they are also a danger to children. These suggestions will be considered as part of our strategic planning.</p> <p>Sept 14 – Lumber and some T bars have been given to this group by committee members in addition to their independent receipt of township funds.</p> <p>July 6 – Al requested help with bird boxes for raptors that are on the decline. Sue and Al will work together on this. Steve Bradley has built a bird nesting boxes for raptors in response to a request from Tianna Burke.</p> <p>Additionally, it would be a good idea to build turtle nesting protection boxes. Al will draw up a list of materials needed, and we will all draw on the stores in our garages to fulfill the needs. Tony will work with Al on this.</p> <p>Loon counts. MLCA carried out a loon count over the July long weekend. Responses came in with loon sightings in various areas of the lake. Jennifer will be working with one of the respondents to summarize the input for this and for the next two long weekends. The plan is to submit information to Birds Canada and eBird. Loon counts will be carried out over the four long weekends between May and September in 2024.</p>
4.8	<p>Fish Catch reporting signs for Armstrong Lake - are up at Armstrong Lake beach. June 1 2023 – sign is well back from the portable outhouse and visible.</p>

4.9	<p>Catch and Release Signs are up at township launch sites. Copies of the Catch and Release sign are on the back of the Safe Boating flyer and were printed for distribution by the Township with the tax mailing to all households at the end of February 2023.</p>
4.10	<p>Benthic Study – Sept 14th – The property at 85 Cole Point Trail, which has been used as a sampling site for the benthic studies for the past 4 years has been sold. Jennifer has spoken with Katrina at GBB and will write to the Clerk to inquire about the new owner to inquire whether they will allow GBB to continue to use that property as a sampling site. 2023 sampling has been completed and the report will be issued by GBB shortly. May 11th – funding is included in the 2023 budget March 9, 2023 Jennifer distributed an evaluation of the value of the 2022 Benthic report along with a suggestion that LSEC recommend to Council that this research be continued. Proviso: that the data from the Lake Manitouwabing studies be posted on an existing publicly available website at no extra charge to the township or the MLCA. We passed a resolution supporting the continuation of Benthic sampling by the GBB.</p>
4.11	<p>Pesticides/Fertilizers – July 6th – an example of a brochure that would include pesticides Turtle nesting protection boxes. Built for people to use and store. Committee members liked the idea of promoting the planting of rain gardens and filter strips mentioned in the brochure below = to decrease the amount of nutrients seeping into the lake. CCE Lawn Care for Water Quality Brochure 2020.pdf (skaneateleslake.org)</p> <p>Pesticides – we will fold a discussion of pesticide use on lawns into the work/education on waterfront vegetation. Melanie and Jennifer.</p>
4.12	<p>Invasive Species – Oct 12 – Chair has had discussion with Greg Gostick about the occurrence of phragmites beside Centre Rd at the previously identified spot.</p> <p>Sept 14th – Sampling was completed in August for detecting the presence of two invasive plants: European water chestnut and water soldier by eDNA, through the auspices of FOCA.</p> <p>July 6th - Al Last, assisted by Jeremy Sintzel, has been putting up the new Invasive Species signs from FOCA at the boat launches.</p> <p>June 8th – Council approved replacing the old Protect our Lakes from Invasive species signs and replacing them with the new signs from FOCA. We also need to map and list where the signs are placed in the township. Need someone to place signs again.</p>
4.13	<p>Dark Skies – From Oct 13/22 minutes on planning: Sue and Jennifer will continue the work on Dark Skies.</p>
4.14	<p>Water Levels – A paper detailing previous work on water levels is posted on our section of the web page. Water-Levels-on-Lake-Manitouwabing-JGF-Amended-July-2022.pdf (mckellar.ca)</p>
4.15	<p>Pollinator Patches / Gardens– Oct 5th – Tony watched the geese to identify how they access Minerva Park and Jennifer has written to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to request permission to plant low shrubs in those areas. Sue and Jennifer met with Greg Gostick to discuss locations for the plants and the buried power</p>

		April 13th May 11th June 8th	October 12th November 9th December 14th
7.*		Motion to adjourn. Moved: Peter Seconded: Rick Approved: Yes Time: 8:49 PM	

Re: Item 4.18 above

Deputation made Oct 17 2023 re: Changing the mode of septic approvals from North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority to local townships.

To: David Moore, Mayor of McKellar Township

From: Jennifer Ghent-Fuller, Chair, Lake Stewardship and Environmental Committee of McKellar Township; Lake Steward, Manitouwabing Lake Community Association.

October 17th, 2023

Dear Mayor Moore,

In regard to the proposal to look after septic approvals within the municipalities in West Parry Sound District as discussed in the letter from Graydon Smith, MPP, dated Wednesday October 11th, 2023 to the Mayors of area municipalities my concerns are the implications in delivering a different level of regulation than accepted best practices. This could result in greater expense and increased liability for the rate payers of the township.

For the vast majority of the population of Ontario, septic approvals go through the local Conservation Authority as part of their Drinking Water Source Protection Plans. The Source Protection areas include southern Ontario, starting at the southern edge of Georgian Bay and Muskoka townships and curving under Algonquin Park over to the Ottawa River and all points south and east. There are also pockets which include Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and North Bay-Mattawa. The latter includes part of East Parry Sound district. These Drinking Water Source Protection Plan areas are organized according to watershed areas.

A source protection plan protects the area around municipal wells and surface water intakes from activities that are, or would become, significant drinking water threats. This plan governs the location and handling of sewage, agricultural source material, pesticides, road salt, fuel, chemicals that assist in the de-icing of aircraft, land use for farm animals, activities that affect the recharging of an aquifer and pipelines.

These drinking water source protection plans were drawn up after the 2000 Walkerton drinking water contamination by E. coli in which seven people died and 2,300 became ill. Many of those people remain on dialysis today as a result. The Clean Water Act was passed in 2006 which established Source Protection Plans under the Ontario Building Code. The North Bay - Mattawa Source Protection Plan was approved 9 years ago in 2015.

The policy for vulnerable areas states that "for all future and existing septic systems that could be significant threats and that are subject to the requirements of the Ontario Building Code, a mandatory maintenance inspection program shall be implemented by the principal authority (the conservation authority responsible for the area's Source Protection Plan) as defined by the Ontario Building Code. By February 1st of each year, the principal authority defined by the Ontario Building Code shall prepare a progress report for the Source Protection Authority to, at minimum, confirm that the program is being implemented and report the number of any outstanding orders. The report may also include the numbers of inspections completed, failed systems identified, and new systems constructed either as a result of new construction or replaced as a result of a failed septic system in the subject areas.

Within the last 2 years, the provincial government responded to the pressure to cover areas not under a Drinking Water source protection plan and came up with the following guidelines:

“Learning about the physical characteristics of your area can help with your assessment of vulnerability. [There are] maps and resources [that] provide information about soil types, aquifers, and the steepness of the land. Through the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines’ OGSEarth website you can access:

- water well records and other borehole records
- quaternary geology and bedrock geology maps
- aquifer maps
- depth to water table maps
- maps of the thickness of the soil layers above aquifers
- geological cross-sections
- topographic surface and surface water feature maps (topographic maps show the locations of hills, mountains and valleys using lines, called contour lines, to represent different elevations)
- a professional geoscientist or engineer.
- You can also do some further assessment work to determine how vulnerable your source is to contamination if you need more information than the simple techniques presented above. A basic hydrogeological assessment or advanced modelling techniques can be used to determine the vulnerability of your drinking water source. Hydrogeology, or the study of water underground, is an area of geoscience. Geoscience is a regulated profession in Ontario under the Professional Geoscientists Act. Hire a Professional Geoscientist or Professional Engineer who is qualified to conduct hydrogeological assessments to do this work for you.
- Professionals can be found through local listings in your area. You can also view public registers of Professional Geoscientists on the Professional Geoscientists Ontario website and Professional Engineers on the Professional Engineers Ontario website.”

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (FOCA) has studied this issue carefully and there is a 2022 paper that concludes that although the voluntary guidelines are good for the population not included under a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan, they are not a substitute for the comprehensive and well-regulated process in the protection of drinking water according to watersheds set up in the Clean Water Act (2006).

The best practices in relation to drinking water source protection are well established and any process that would deliver a lower level of regulation may put the municipality at risk for the occurrence of another tragic incident like that which took place in Walkerton 23 years ago. Also, since agreement about best practices is so well known and established, the liability of any municipality that adopts a septic approval system that provides less protection would therefore be increased.

The Drinking Water Source Protection plans are the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment which includes monetary responsibility. It is also possible that taking an independent route to Septic Approvals would result in considerably more cost to municipal taxpayers.

Since the area municipalities are coming together to discuss this proposal, perhaps they could consider a request to have the watersheds of the remainder of East Parry Sound District and West Parry Sound District included under the full services of the North Bay – Mattawa Drinking Water Source Protection Plan.

At the Oct. 12 meeting of the Lake Stewardship and Environmental Committee of McKellar Township, the following resolution received approval:

Resolved that the issue of septic inspection and permits in McKellar include the full breadth of Drinking Water Source Protection as defined under the Clean Water Act, 2006.

Many thanks for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ghent-Fuller