

SIMON LAKE COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP GROUP

Simon Lake/Lower Junction Creek Technical Working Group Meeting

Wednesday August 22, 2007
Naughton Community Center

IN ATTENDANCE

Perry Sarvas – Simon Lake Community Stewardship Group
Dave Furino - Simon Lake Community Stewardship Group
Dan Legrand - Simon Lake Community Stewardship Group
David Pearson - Freshwater Ecology Unit
Diana Leach Petrone – DalRon Construction
Bob Longarini – Greater City of Sudbury
Nick Benkovich – Greater City of Sudbury
Paul Sajatovic – Nickel District Conservation Authority
Jamie Meyer – McCharles Lake Stewardship Group
Sina Kicz – McCharles Lake Stewardship Group
Peter Kicz - McCharles Lake Stewardship Group
Marc Donato – Ministry of the Environment
Lana Haslam – Greater City of Sudbury
Stephen Monet – Greater City of Sudbury
Ray Alatalo – Health Canada – First Nations and Inuit Health
Charles Diosi – Sudbury and District Health Unit
John Lawrie - Simon Lake Community Stewardship Group

Review of Minutes of Previous Meeting

No concerns expressed

Opening Remarks

A front page article appeared in the Sudbury Star on August 15, 2007. The following day, the Sudbury Star published a letter to the editor and an editorial on the algae problems in Simon Lake. Though the woman who appeared in the article and wrote the letter is not a resident of Simon Lake, her opinions mirror the concerns of both stewardship groups. A letter to the editor was sent to the Star by a representative of the Simon Lake Community Stewardship Group, but has not been published as of yet.

Old Business – Phosphorous in Junction Creek watershed (D. Pearson)

The results of phosphorous sampling in Sudbury area lakes in 2007 were handed out. Simon, Mud and McCharles Lakes all had very high phosphorous level. The numbers are as high as have been recorded since 1983, and Mud Lake is at the highest level it has ever recorded. Measurements taken at Simon Lake on July 2 by David Pearson and Perry Sarvas showed very high levels of dissolved phosphates (~370 parts per billion) and low dissolved oxygen at a depth of 6 meters (1 meter from the bottom of the lake). The results suggest that Simon Lake itself is generating high levels of phosphorous internally. Due to lower water levels not flushing the system the problems get worse. The upper portions of the Junction Creek system do not have an algae problem to the degree that the lower sections have. The unprecedented levels of phosphorous come from the accumulations of organic matter at the bottom of the lakes – they are internally loaded. Kelly Lake showed very high levels in May of 1998 and 1999 but these were washed downstream by the spring run-off. This year the water temperatures at all levels of the lake were higher than normal, and the past phosphorous was not washed away and this mixed with these summers levels to produce the high levels measured to date. It appears that these levels will continue due to warmer temperatures in both summer and winter. Any solution MUST deal with the phosphorous which is contained in the organic matter at the bottom of the lake and creek beds along lower Junction Creek.

Questions and Discussion

Perry Sarvas asked when the levels of Kelly Lake were last samples.

Lana Haslam stated that Kelly Lake is not tested because the City only tests lakes where there is residential development (homes or cottages).

Dave Pearson states that sewer sludge at the bottom of Kelly Lake has been capped by sediment being washed down the system from urban Sudbury thus causing phosphorus levels to be low.

Dan Legrand states the algae problem in Simon Lake has been recurring every year for the past four years. He would like to see Kelly Lake resampled to ensure the phosphorous is not coming from that lake. He also stated that if the streamflow rates of Junction Creek are low, especially during summer, it may not be as effective in diluting the phosphorous levels in sewage discharge to acceptable levels.

Perry Sarvas stated that is imperative that we lower the phosphorus levels in the whole system and we have to find out the sources of these high levels to properly deal with them.

Comments from Working Group Partners

Marc Donato

He will ask the Technical Support Section to review the phosphorous levels.

Nick Benkovich

Announced that a working group is being organized by the City and will meet during working hours with Stephen Monet as project manager. A motion to council for an action plan was not done at this time as we are not fully prepared yet. The working group will organize a workshop in September with participation or consultation with all regulatory groups that may have restrictions on any action. The restriction will be funding and that is up to council. Something must be done as we can't depend on the weather in the future. The water treatment system in the City keeps the phosphorus levels below the levels stipulated by the MOE.

Bob Longarini

We will need a remedial action plan and a public action plan would require everyone's help.

Paul Sajotovic

In the years that had the lowest levels of phosphorus there were spring floods. Any plans must have government approvals.

Charles Diosi

The algae was tested and there were no health concerns. Bacteria levels in the lake were very low.

Stephen Monet

The Environmental Planning Initiatives Section at the City of Greater Sudbury will develop the action plan with input from various agencies and stakeholders and will assist in coordinating its implementation if required.

Ray Alatalo

Algae growth is a problem everywhere. When coming up with a plan look at the entire watershed and it seems that the water treatment plants are not the problem. What is in the lake is important and we should get precipitations levels for the past five years as that would be important.

Perry Sarvas

There seems to be difference in opinion among the partners as to how to control the phosphorus.

Dave Pearson/Lana Haslet

In two weeks we should take further tests in Mud, Simon and McCharles Lakes to help determine sources and inputs of phosphorous.

Perry Sarvas

The MOE should use the phosphorous (Dillon) model from Jan Lindquist's 1988 report to recalculate phosphorous budget using more recent data.

Old Business – Motion to City Council (J. Barbeau)

Councilor Barbeau was unable to attend the meeting because of previous commitments. However, both N. Benkovich and P. Sarvas relayed the message that no motion has been made because it is deemed to be premature. The motion should not be made to council until after an action plan is developed.

Old Business – Information on algae harvesters (P. Sarvas)

At this time no information is available on algae harvesters. Information will be forwarded once it is received.

Health Related Issues with Algae Blooms

Marc Donato has received a lot of calls. The algae have been tested and it will clog water filters and give off bad odors when it rots but does not contain any toxins. A report on the algae tests has been forwarded to the working group, which states that the algae samples submitted for testing do not have any health-related concerns.

The Sudbury District Health Unit confirms no health concerns with any E.coli bacteria in the lake. Charles Diosi noted that lab technicians are having difficulty processing the E. coli samples because the algae needs to be filtered from the water.

Perry Sarvas states that, while the tests indicate no health-related concerns, they represent "snapshots" in time and specific locations in the lakes. All we can safely say is that no health concerns have been identified in the lakes. We can't positively say that the lakes are safe.

Perry Sarvas also noted that, regardless of the health issues, algae growth is interfering with reasonable usage of these lakes, and environmental law states that this must be addressed and rectified.

Jamie Meyer stated that he found 4 dead fish in McCharles Lake last week. MOE states that this may have been caused by low oxygen levels or high water temperatures. It was noted that fish kills are considered a very significant environmental concern, and any observations of this type should be immediately brought to the attention of the MOE.

Formation of Technical Working Group

General discussion on the formation of a technical group that will focus on controlling algae growth in the lower Junction Creek watershed. It was agreed that the City will take the responsibility for organizing this group, formalizing the group's mandate and

objectives, invite the participation/consultation of the relevant municipal, provincial, federal and other interest groups, submit recommendations, and assist in the implementation of recommendations once the proper approvals and finances have been obtained. Stephen Monet will head this group. The group will regularly meet with the Simon Lake and McCharles Lake stewardship groups to discuss progress.

Nick Benkovich noted the committee will work during office hours. Stephen Monet will contact regulatory agencies to identify various options and their feasibility in light of regulatory requirements.

Perry Sarvas stated that the group should look at both short and long term solutions. We would like to enjoy the lake next year regardless of the weather and conditions.

Dave Pearson stated that the city should assume responsibility for the working group – not the stewardship committee. Stephen Monet acknowledged that he will accept the responsibility for the working group on behalf of the City. Stephen cautioned the members present against raising expectations and that there may be no feasible solution that would eliminate the phosphorus problem in Simon Lake.

Dan Legrand expressed his appreciation to the City for designating Stephen Monet to head the technical working group. He stressed the importance of having goals and deadlines for the group, and requested that this group keep the residents of Naughton community updated through progress reports and regularly-scheduled meetings.

Perry Sarvas noted that we have to look at all options for long-term solutions, regardless of regulatory hurdles, costs and perceptions. The bottom line is, “What is the best option for long term control of algae in the lake?” We should not necessarily accept a “no” from a government at face value for a good plan.

Sina Kicz wondered how we will know that the City will continue the work on our behalf. Stephen Monet said that the work done will be transparent and that designated stewardship members can attend meetings of the technical working group. Councilor Barbeau wants the working committee to keep in touch with the stewardship groups.

Nick Benkovich stated that the stewardship groups must keep in mind that the City must follow all regulations. The city should report back to our group regularly. A progress report meeting will be held on October 17, 2007 in Naughton.

Actionable Items

Stephen Monet

- Organize and head technical working group that will investigate, recommend and implement strategies to control algae growth in lower Junction Creek watershed.
- Invite participation/consultation of relevant organizations (including MOE, MNR, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, NDCA, stewardship groups).

- Organize meetings and workshops of the technical group, beginning in September.
- Provide periodic progress reports, and present progress at October 17th meeting.

Marc Donato

- Request that the MOE's Technical Support Section re-model the phosphorous budget of lower Junction Creek using the Dillon model from the Linquist 1988 report and updated data.
- Request participation on the technical working group by a representative from the MOE with some expertise related to control of phosphorous levels and algae growth (i.e., from Technical Support Section or other branch of the MOE).

David Pearson

- Collect samples (with Lana Haslam) along lower Junction Creek watershed to help understand sources and inputs of phosphorous.
- Participate (if invited) on the technical working group as a representative from the freshwater ecology unit.

Lana Haslam

- Collect samples (with Lana Haslam) along lower Junction Creek watershed to help understand sources and inputs of phosphorous.

Perry Sarvas

- Arrange meeting on October 17th.
- Provide information on algae harvesters.
- Participate (if invited) on the technical working group.

Dan Legrand

- Participate (if invited) on the technical working group.