

*Ausable Bayfield*  
**Conservation Strategy Development Team**  
Notes (Draft) from Meeting – November 3, 2010

The second meeting of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Strategy Development Team began at 7:00 p.m. at the South Huron Council Chambers in Exeter.

Attending were:

Wayne Forgrave, Bailey Williams, Kathy Braelt (for Paul Buttery), Jan Purvis, Jim Reith, Muriel Allingham, Dave Frayne, David Kemp, Paul Mennill, Sally McMullen (for Claire Dodds), Sharon Callan, Jacquelyn Denham, Ashley Cartwright, Carol Leeming, Joe Vermunt, George McEwen.

Tom Prout, ABCA General Manager, welcomed members and thanked them for their input in developing the new Conservation Strategy. Tim Cumming, ABCA Communication Specialist, reviewed the ideas presented from the previous meeting and has prepared handouts as requested by the development team. Tim has engaged youth in the process by guest-teaching Grade 9 Science (Biology) students at Central Huron Secondary School in Clinton about assessing tools for water quality improvement and asking for their feedback about watershed issues for the Conservation Strategy in development.

Paul Mennill said he was very impressed with the notes from the previous meeting and wanted confirmation whether the meetings were to be held monthly or bi-monthly. Tom confirmed the meetings will be held monthly, but the online Doodle program showed that the month of October was not favourable with the committee members so it was decided not to hold an October meeting. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at a site to be determined.

Tom distributed the *Conservation Report 1949 Recommendations* for all members to view. Joe Vermunt said that some of the problems described in the 1949 Report are some of the same problems we are trying to fix today. Joe asked if the 1949 Report could be scanned. Some of the actions completed from those recommendations include the creation of the Pinery Park and developing Rock Glen Conservation Area.

A new study of the Conservation Strategy implementation and monitoring was prepared by staff at the request of the development team and distributed at the meeting. Tim distributed the document showing the issues, goals, objectives and actions plans in the 1993 *Conservation Strategy*, with notes as to the current status of each action. Each environmental issue is categorized as: Water Quality and Quantity; Education; Soil Quality; Natural Areas; Planning; Sustainable Resource Management and Agriculture.

Paul Mennill said the study does not show to what degree each action has been completed. Verbs should be used to describe the action and percentages used to measure the degree completed. Tom referred the team to the ABCA Watershed Report Card from 2007, which provides grades for Forest Conditions and Surface Water Quality from data collected on

Geology, Soils, Land Use, Streamside Cover, Wetlands, Natural Areas Groundwater and Fishes, as one tool to measure successes.

Sally McMullen asked:

- What is a conservation strategy?
- Is it useful?
- What do other conservation authorities' conservation strategies look like?
- What do staff members currently do?
- What is missing?
- Is the strategy a guide or a document that dictates actions?

George McEwen said the group's mandate is to come up with recommendations. He said the 1993 group came up with ideas and with the elimination of most provincial funding in 1996, some ideas were unachievable. George said setting things out by categories may be good, but it may also cloud how team members look at the process. He stressed the group should make its own goals, and if team members have 100 ideas they should narrow them down to the five most important.

Jim Reith suggested the team should break the strategy into Advocacy, Stewardship, Education and Regulatory. He said it is hard to measure results but it needs to be done.

(<http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca/>).

Paul Mennill said he appreciated all the background material provided, but wonders if a strategy to last for 20 years works for this group and thinks the team may need a shorter time frame.

Sharon Callan said she liked Jim's breakdown and thinks there should be an ongoing list of what should be done.

Tim provided and reviewed a handout which illustrates how the *Conservation Strategy* is an 'umbrella' document that influences Ausable Bayfield Conservation programs and services. Members asked for a link to the ABCA Land Securement Plan of 2008. (Post-meeting note: The plan has since been posted to the web site at: <http://abca.on.ca/downloads/Land-Securement-Plan-2008-lr.pdf>).

Tim reviewed the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) web site (at <http://www.abca.on.ca/page.php?page=strategy>) to show members where to find their community group. Three breakout groups were developed to discuss how the Conservation Strategy currently influences decisions, programs and services in the watershed and how it should influence decisions.

Results are as follows:

Group 1:

- Start with what we have.
- Dissect the 1993 document.
- Education – Add 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills

- Add social networking
- Add Web 2.0 tools

Group 2:

- Make the ABCA 10-Year Business Plan conform to the Conservation Strategy
- The Strategy is the umbrella document so other documents, such as the Business Plan, should conform to its direction

Group 3:

- Maximum 10-year framework to make it manageable
- Develop a matrix framework. The following is an example.

	Advocacy	Stewardship	Regulation	Education
Forestry				
Soil Quality				
Land Use				
Water				
Natural Areas				

- Put existing strategy into above matrix
    - Consider can ABCA do the action? - Is it feasible?
    - Economic impacts
    - Balance of human - nature
  - What is missing?
  - Evaluate numbers 1 and 2 with vision statement
    - Three-pronged approach
      - What to STOP doing?
      - What to START doing?
      - What to CONTINUE doing?
- VISION STATEMENT – USE:
- Biodiversity - (consider for each action) - Actions Needed
  - Quality of Life – (consider for each action)
- Brainstorm all possibilities first

Sally McMullen will help Tim to develop the matrix. Tim said the Conservation Strategy Development Team may decide to develop a new vision statement and mission statement. Some members have already started commenting on the vision and mission statements through the Wiki web site staff has set up at the suggestion of the team.  
**([conservationstrategy.wikispaces.com](http://conservationstrategy.wikispaces.com))**

George McEwen said Group 1's and 2's ideas are imbedded in the matrix idea. The vision and time frame will become clear when the matrix is developed. All members can input the matrix in the break-out groups, but all have to agree on the ideas that stay in the matrix. Members who

feel comfortable with technology are welcome to develop ideas for the matrix on the Wiki site and populate it. That input will be brought back to the whole group for further consideration.

Tom reviewed the handout which outlines the current public participation in watershed decision-making and the roles and responsibilities of conservation authorities and the range of programs they can offer. Tom said the Conservation Authorities Act objectives have not changed in 60 years. Mandates are broad, but funding dictates what the conservation authority can or does provide. Joe Vermont suggested the conservation authority could look at new ways to generate more revenue. Tom used the example were municipalities that could use ABCA's expertise on a user-pay basis rather than hiring outside consultants, when conservation authorities can generally provide local expertise for a fraction of the cost.

Tim reviewed how to use Wiki site for members who want to post ideas and comments. The vision statement and mission statement have already been reviewed by a couple of committee members. Team members can comment through the new site or when the discussion is brought back to the in-person meeting.

Sharon Callan said that the Business Plan and Watershed Report Card are good documents with which to refer. The Watershed Report Card is developed every five years. Paul Mennill said the grades in the Report Card mean something different to two different generations.

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Conservation Strategy Development Team will be held Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30. Dave Frayne suggested the South Huron District High School as a possible location for the meeting. Tim will look into this.

Tim indicated that he will send out a request for the Development Team to use Doodle to select the meeting dates for 2011. He suggested members pick meeting dates for 2011 on Doodle. Ashley Cartwright is unable to attend Tuesday meetings. Members were asked to let Tim know if they feel a new Facebook group or page should be created for the public. (Currently there is a Facebook page only for team members).

The Watershed Report Card is available on the ABCA web site at <http://www.abca.websmart.ca/reportcard.php>

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.