

Biodiversity Strategy for the Port Franks Area
Public Meeting Minutes
September 12th, 2009

9:45am – Tom Prout, General Manager ABCA and chair of the meeting, called the meeting to order and introduced Mark Simpson (Municipality of Lambton Shores), Lawrence McLachlan (Chair, ABCA Board) and ABCA staff members (Mari Veliz, Kari Jean, Ian Jean, Hope Brock).

Kari Jean (ABCA Aquatic Biologist) discussed biodiversity, a biodiversity strategy and its associated goals and outcomes. She reviewed some of the unique habitats, natural areas and species of the Port Franks area.

A brief question and answer period followed:

Q: Is there a strategy for Grand Bend?

A: Yes, see website for OAC plan (www.oldausablechannel.ca)

Q: What if you don't have a computer?

A: See the hard copy or call Kari – a copy is now in the library.

Q: It's great to have a strategy for preservation, but how do we police this?

A: This would be discussed as part of the development of the strategy. We can provide information sessions to the community. One option is to get license plate number and contact MNR – contact information is on Port Franks Beach Homeowners Association website: www.pfbha.org

Q: Water quality is a risk – does Lambton County monitor our beaches? Does ABCA monitor for E. coli?

A: We don't test private beaches. We have monitoring stations and do some community testing (having raised funds to do so), and the Ministry of Health tests public beaches. There is some water quality data for Mud Creek, and we now have station in dunes as a result of the OAC management strategy.

Q: Are invasive species or re-introductions putting SAR at risk?

A: Zebra mussels and round gobies are contributing to threats.

Jarmo Jalava (Carolinian Canada Coalition) presented on the natural history of the area, with a brief question and answer period:

Q: Do we just let phragmites take over our beach?

A: There is an Invasive Species Task Force and we (and advisory committee) will keep tabs on their findings. Control measures tend to be labour intensive and can do more damage than doing nothing. We will discuss this during strategic planning process.

Q: Are there meetings held with the agricultural community to stress the importance of preserving forested areas?

A: Meetings are held with farm community, and one option is to donate farm with stewardship parcel to the Conservation Authority to ensure preservation.

Q: Can we restrict tree cutting?

A: There is a County tree by-law program. There is also Site Alteration By-laws (municipal), but this may not always prevent removal of trees.

People were interested in native trees/plants – the OAC plant guide should be put in the library as well. A copy is now in the library.

Participants were then divided into breakout groups which discussed several questions. Upon return to the larger group each sub-group reported back their findings (summary can be found on Port Franks Beach Homeowners Association website: www.pfbha.org).

A brief question period followed:

Q: What is the website for the OAC management plan and ABCA website?

A: www.oldausablechannel.ca and www.abca.on.ca

Q: Has there been a website set up for this process?

A: No, but this will happen – perhaps we could post on the Port Franks Beach Cottagers Association website (contact Deb Lake – secretary)

Q: Chatham-Kent has tree program (can apply for a tree each year). Does ABCA have a program like this?

A: No, but this can be brought forth during the planning process.