

Ausable Bayfield
Conservation Strategy Development Team
(Draft) Notes from Meeting - May 18, 2011

Attending in person were:

Muriel Allingham, Sharon Callan, David Kemp, Jennette Walker, Ted Briggs, Mike Leitch, Paul Mennill, Wayne Forgrave, Jim Handyside, Stephanie Donaldson, Jan Purvis, Jim Reith, Doreen McLinchey, Kathrine Thiel

ABCA Staff

Tom Prout, Tim Cumming, Judith Parker

Joining by conference call:

Jacqui Laporte, Donna Taylor

The eighth meeting of the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Strategy Development Team Meeting was held at the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Administration Centre board room and called to order at 7:05 p.m. Tim Cumming welcomed members and asked for any additions to the agenda. Members introduced themselves to the group. The notes from the previous meeting on April 20, 2011 were reviewed and approved by consensus.

Review of other Conservation Strategy Documents

The team members were divided into break-out groups to review the format and content of the Conservation Ontario Conservation Strategy and a copy excerpted from a federal climate change strategy. The groups were to review what is included in these sample strategies. Also look at the format of the strategies and discuss how they foresee the layout of the Conservation Strategy for Ausable Bayfield watersheds.

Conference Call discussion

Tim Cumming communicated via telephone with Jacqui Laporte and Donna Taylor. They discussed the title of the final document and he shared some US research from focus groups on current, recommended environmental-type language to use in public documents. Suggested words to be included in the title included *The Road Ahead: Conservation Authority Strengths*. Jacqui Laporte asked whether the title should say 'Conservation Authority' or just 'CA'. Do most people know what a strategic plan is? Road ahead is simple to understand. Other suggestions were 'Moving Forward', 'Progress', 'the Trail Ahead', 'Growing our Natural Area.'

Donna Taylor and Jacqui Laporte expressed that the strategy should be simple language with a de-emphasis on 'Conservation Strategy' and an emphasis on words people can relate to. Tim Cumming responded that the words 'Conservation Strategy' could be de-emphasized within the document. Jacqui Laporte commented that the ABCA strategy will be for a slightly different audience. We are dealing with local residents and their properties.

Tim Cumming asked for input on the sample goal: *Safeguarding Ontario's rivers, lakes and streams...*

Donna Taylor commented that she didn't like 'safeguarding' because it sounds too regulatory.

Tim said the U.S. research groups promoted the word safeguarding but it may not apply locally.

Jacqui and Donna suggested 'protection' and 'restoring' are good words also use language that empowers residents to take action. 'Management' is too regulatory. Jacqui commented that 'Protecting life and property' is useful in a conservation authority context because it refers to flood control and warning but 'protecting life' may be too bold for the overall work of the conservation authority. The suggestion was that one doesn't want it to imply a conservation authority has job to protect the lives of people from all water quality issues.

Results of Break-out Group Discussion on Review of Sample Conservation Strategies

Tim Cumming called the groups back to the table and asked for input from each group on their scrutiny of the sample strategies.

- Sharon Callan liked the bullets and the way the format flows on the Conservation Ontario strategy
- Mike Leitch liked the heavy, fairly glossy paper of the CO strategy as it adds to the quality and durability of the product and is less likely to be recycled immediately
- Jim Reith said the one-page style of the climate change strategy gears itself to presentation in a website application. This style could have links that takes one to further explanation and information
- Jan Purvis appreciated the graphics in the Conservation Strategy - she said the Climate Change Strategy is in simple, clear language and written without needless adjectives
- Paul Mennill said the 5-6 pages of the Conservation Ontario strategy is written comprehensively and is as thorough as a 20-page document.
- Jim Handyside commented that if the font was expanded to 12-point in the Conservation Ontario Strategy, it would probably be a 15-page document. He suggested that each goal of the ABCA strategy could be hyperlinked to an ABCA program that meets the goal.
- Tim Cumming said the strategy may need to be developed in two forms, e.g., as a web product with hyperlinks and as a print product with 20 pages which includes a four page Executive Summary as per previous direction - however, there appeared to be broad consensus that the smaller document (6-page pull-out) was the way to go
- Mike Leitch wondered if the strategy goals need to be more broad because of ongoing change in a 20-year period eg. *Green Act*, invasive species

Revisions to ABCA Vision and Mission Statement

- Sharon Callan commented that the mission statement will be the parameters for the next step which will be the individual goals in the strategy.
- Jim Reith inquired who the ABCA is accountable to. Tom Prout responded that the CA is responsible to the Board of Directors, and the local member municipalities.
- Jim Reith asked what is the mandate for conservation authorities. Tom Prout read from Objects: Section 20 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* which has remained the same since 1946 when the Act was legislated.

The objects of an authority are to establish and undertake, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals.

R.S.O.1990,c.C.27,s.20.

- Paul Mennill said the current vision statement should be shortened and the mission statement is missing the words balance and biodiversity.
- Jim Handyside commented that ‘restoration’ is more of a strategic word and infers that something was interfered with and now needs to be made right.

Results from Break-out Group Discussion on Draft Vision and Mission Statements

Each group presented their draft mission and vision statements for review:

Group 3

Mission: Our mission is to protect, improve, conserve and restore the watershed in partnership with the community.

Vision: Our vision is one of healthy watersheds where human needs and the needs of the natural environment are in balance.

Group 2

Mission: Our mission is of healthy watersheds with nature and human needs existing in a sustainable balance.

Vision: To lead and manage the conservation, restoration and development of watershed natural resources.

Group 1

Mission: Provide leadership and management in cooperation with the community to maintain and improve the watersheds natural environment

Vision: Our vision is one of clean and useable watersheds to ensure quality of life and biological diversity into the future.

There was discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of wording in each draft suggestion.

- Remove ‘manage’ as it sounds authoritarian
- Don’t like ‘develop’ as it can relate to land development
- Like ‘improve’ better than ‘enhance’
- Is there a difference between ‘protect’ and ‘conserve’
- Discussion on ‘restore’ and what do we need to restore?
- Whether ‘environment’ is an overused word
- Change ‘human needs’ to ‘our needs’

By consensus, Group 3's mission and vision statements were favoured by everyone with the inclusion of the word ‘improve’ into the mission statement.

Next Steps in Strategy Development

Jim Handyside proposed that in developing the strategy goals, the levels should answer the question “what” and then “how” - how to achieve and get to the next level

He suggested the sequence is:

- Pick broad strategic goals from general to specific
- Actions

iii) Outcomes

Based on the team's input, Tim Cumming will begin pulling together the conservation priorities, issues and themes for discussion and review at the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Conservation Strategy team will be June 15th at 7 p.m. in the ABCA Boardroom. The members were advised to re-Doodle their preferred dates for July, August and September meetings.

Proposed Use of Online Social Media Tools

Tim Cumming reminded the team that the ABCA Online Social Media Policy was to be used in Conservation Strategy process as a pilot project for determining what online social media tools the ABCA should use. The Conservation Strategy Team agreed by consensus to endorse the online social media policy direction and recommend the ABCA promote events using Facebook, Twitter and You Tube.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Notes recorded by:

Judith Parker
Corporate Services Coordinator