



## LAND OPERATIONS & STEWARDSHIP SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE A G E N D A

Meeting: March 12, 2010  
Location: John L. Jose building

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### Committee Members

Reg Cowan Springwater Twp, Orville Brown Clearview Twp, Ron Henderson Essa Twp., Terry Dowdall Essa Twp., Gord Montgomery Mulmur Twp. Fred Nix, Town of Mono, Walter Benotto, Town of Shelburne, Brian Mullin, Town of the Grey Highlands.

### Staff Members

Byron Wesson, Director, Land Operations & Water Stewardship/ Fred Dobbs, Manager, Stewardship Services, Shannon Stephens, Healthy Waters Coordinator, Rick Grillmayer, Forestry Program Coordinator, Greg Bray, Supervisor Lands and Operations, Linda Raeburn, Environmental Education Coordinator

### Stewardship Services

1. Election of a Chair and Vice Chair for 2009.
2. 2010-12 Business Plan Direction and Discussion

**Recommendation: Resolved that \_\_\_\_\_ be appointed Chair of the Land Operations and Water Advisory Committee for 2010.**

**Recommendation: Resolved that \_\_\_\_\_ be appointed Vice Chair of the Land Operations and Water Advisory Committee for 2010.**

3. Program overview including: Mandate, Business Plan Targets, 2009 Program Highlights and 2010 Program Direction/Expectations. ( See CAO report regular agenda)

### Proposed Work Plan for 2010- Stewardship Services

#### **Forestry**

In 2010 a total of 110,000 seedlings will be planted on 21 sites throughout the watershed. Grant funding totalling \$141,000.00 from 10 different sources continues to be a key to maintaining/expanding the number of trees planted through the NVCA Forestry Program.

Arbour day sales will be completed working with various partner groups around the watershed, will be coordinated as in previous years as a means of providing access to trees for landowners on smaller properties and as a mechanism for generating revenue in the Forestry Program.

Managed forest plans and applications to the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program will be developed as in previous years, as a means of both providing technical support to landowners and for generating revenue within the Forestry Program. Emphasis in 2010 will be placed on renewing plans previously written by the NVCA and on developing new plans for landowners currently working with the NVCA on tree planting projects. A total of 16 plans are expected.

### **Healthy Waters**

The implementation of the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship program is anticipated to be a large part of the work load in the Healthy Waters Program in 2010. Staff will be working towards the allocation of \$378,000.00 worth of Ministry of the Environment grant funding towards septic system cleanout/upgrade and well decommissioning/upgrade projects.

The NVCA will be offering the Healthy Waters Grant Incentive Program in 2010 to assist private landowners and community groups in the implementation of water quality and stream health improvement projects. Staff will be accessing funding from the Province (Canada Ontario Agreement Fund for the Great Lakes Basin) and TD-Canada trust in order to increase the funding available to distribute through this program, beyond the allocation provided through municipal levy. Approximately \$40,000.00 worth of grant funding will be allocated to Healthy Waters projects in 2010.

Through the “Community River Restoration” sub-program, NVCA will continue to work with community partners to:

- implement the Nottawasaga Watershed Improvement Program (N-WIP) in the northern part of the watershed (funded by Environment Canada, currently working on sustainability plan to access other funding sources). Projects will include volunteer tree plants, targeted livestock exclusion fencing and the development of a stream bed restoration/floodplain enhancement project on Lamont Creek.
- assist with the implementation of the South Simcoe Streams Network Program in the south (currently funded by Trillium). Targets will include volunteer tree planting and implementation of floodplain construction/bank stabilization works on Beeton Creek.
- coordinating construction of a footbridge over Bear Creek.
- finish construction of the on-stream pond decommissioning project at the Mervart site on the north branch of the Nottawasaga River.
- develop a strategy for managing bank erosion on Willow Creek in Midhurst
- develop a project intended to enhance the delivery of cold water from Walter’s Creek into the Boyne River.
- Install a Loon Platform with the Bass Lake ratepayers. The other hopeful is to facilitate opportunity for fisheries habitat compensation work by Tarandus (working for Town of Midland) on Bass Lake in Oro Medonte with Black Ash Creek in Collingwood as an alternate

Between January and the end of March 2010, the NVCA will be supporting Wetland improvement projects through implementation of the “Wetland Cares” program working in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada. Through this program, landowners help protect wetland habitats by committing to conservation agreements and by erecting nesting boxes designed to provide habitat for cavity nesting ducks.

In 2010, Healthy Waters staff will be working in partnership with the NVCA monitoring program to implement new monitoring approaches intended to provide an enhanced capacity to identify candidate project sites as well as evaluating the effectiveness of projects completed in previous years. This partnership also provides a timely opportunity to implement many of the monitoring recommendations in the NVCA fisheries habitat management plan.

Healthy Waters staff will also be working with NVCA GIS staff to collect Georgian Bay shoreline data as part of the Southern Georgian Bay Coastal Initiative with staff support funded by Environment Canada.

**Tiffin Environmental Education Program**

January to June 2010 – Student Programming

January	February	March	April	May	June
<b>Tiffin Education Program</b>					
226 (2010)	450 (2010)	700 (2010 - half/full day programs including MS tours)	351 (2010)	1250 (2010)	1500 (2010)
31 (2009)	457 (2009)	156 (2009)	143 (2009)	1099 (2009)	1631 (2009)
<b>Maple Syrup Tours</b>					
		1000 (2010)			
		994 (2009)			

Note: 2009 numbers provided below 2010 for comparison

Education Program - Statistics

Season/Year	2008	2009	2010
Fall	1560 (A)	1092 (A)*	1500 (F)
Winter	n/a	787 (A)	1723 (A)
Maple Syrup	n/a	994 (A)	1000 (F)
Spring	n/a	2730 (A)	2750 (F)
Summer Camp	n/a	202 (A)	500 (F)

A = actual  
 F = forecast

**Program Overview and Proposed Direction**

The education program is now into the second year with NVCA part-time contract staff. Staff continually strive to reach out to all area schools, with a wide range of environmental, outdoor and outreach program options. Each season brings new opportunities for program development and curriculum based programming both on and off the Tiffin site.

Although the above chart cites a slight reduction in student participation from the fall of 2008 to fall 2009 –due to decreases in contract bookings with the SCDSB, winter program participation has increased over the past two years by approximately 1000 students. This is substantial increase largely due to enhanced winter programming, additional and unique equipment (e.g. kick sleds), as well as our bus subsidy program offered once again in partnership with the Rotary Club of Barrie and Sinton Transportation. It should also be noted here that the Rotary Club of Barrie has supported other initiatives of the education program including a new, hands-on renewable energy program currently being developed.

In an effort to reach out to schools hindered by transportation costs, Tiffin education staff have prepared an assortment of 'Outreach' programs that can travel across the NVCA watershed. The original fee schedule has been adjusted to encourage more classes of the same school to participate and a promotional offer is currently being sent out to selected schools in the counties of Dufferin & Grey.

This year, the NVCA environmental education program is also expanding into public programming. To build on the success and popularity of Family Day and the traditional Maple Syrup/Spring Tonic Festival, Education staff have come up with a listing of seasonal programs geared to families and the general public. The scheduled dates and themes are as follows:

#### **2010 Schedule of Events**

February	Family Day	Monday February 15 <sup>th</sup>
March	March Break	Sunday March 14 <sup>th</sup>
April	Earth Day	Saturday April 24 <sup>th</sup>
May	Fabulous Forests	Saturday May 8 <sup>th</sup>
June	Nature at Night	Friday June 18 <sup>th</sup>

Public programming topics for July to December are still under consideration and staff are researching various ideas including wildlife presentations (e.g. Scienstational Snakes, raptors etc.), the Night Sky and so on.

In addition to a family oriented day over the March Break, we have offered a package of outdoor education/recreation based programs to area day camps at Tiffin. Four of the five days available are booked and it is felt that this program will increase in popularity with earlier notice to the area camps in subsequent years and we will see more than one camp scheduled in per day.

Summer camp will once again be offered at the Tiffin Centre in partnership with the YMCA. Although numbers were not what both parties had originally anticipated for the summer of 2009, it is expected that 2010 will see substantial growth in this program with one 'trial' year behind us and increased promotional efforts. 'Word of mouth' will play a major role in the growth of this program as repeat campers within the YMCA share their Tiffin experiences. Much positive feedback has been received from campers that did attend as well as their parents.

Volunteer involvement is key to the success and growth of the education program. Volunteers are actively involved in the delivery of our program – to accommodate larger groups, develop new programs (e.g. GPS, Renewable Energy), and to help out 'behind the scenes'. Volunteers are often able to assist and carry out projects that our program staff are not able to, with existing time and budget restrictions.

Communication with area schools is a continual challenge. Every change in season brings change in programming. As we continue to move forward and develop new programs and initiatives, 'getting the word out there' – frequently and cost effectively remains an obstacle. Presently NVCA education staff attempt to keep schools informed with both written and electronic forms of communication.

#### **Tiffin Centre Activity for 2010**

We have started marketing the Tiffin Centre through local media and do anticipate a busy year. Weekend bookings have already increased over 2009 especially with local Cub groups. Day use visits have also increased this year as families now enjoy cross country skiing on our trails, snow shoe the entire property and skating on the pond. This year we will see the return of the Ontario Geo Catchers annual meeting making this the 4<sup>th</sup> straight year they have brought close to 400 people for an entire weekend. The annual Pilgrim walk to the Martyrs Shrine will again stop over at Tiffin for the night with estimated numbers this year at 1000.

Other scheduled events for 2010 will include our annual Arbor Day, Spring Tonic, and the YMCA Summer Day Camp.

Staff continue to initiate action items from the Tiffin Education and Outreach Plan. New for 2010 will be the construction of a small Solar Shed that will be used for demonstration and practical purposes. Funded by the City of Barrie Rotary Club and designed by John Hix, the Shed will be located just north of the Sugar Shack and will be fitted with solar panels. Ideally the energy generated will power the lights in the Sugar Shack.

Staff receive numerous calls each year with requests to holding their wedding at the Tiffin Centre. More recently, a local Catering company has proposed a partnership to facilitate weddings, corporate functions or other opportune activities through a formal agreement. The NVCA would provide the property/select buildings and staff where necessary. The Catering Company would take care of all other details including set up and shut down. Compensation would be received through the agreed upon contract including our staff time when necessary. The benefits from this type of venture would be many for the NVCA. Staff plan to send out a "request for proposal" to local caterers and will be bringing a report to an upcoming Executive meeting for consideration.

A small log cabin (12 x8) will be constructed in the vicinity of the sap kettles through Rotary funding from the 2009 Spring Tonic event. With our volunteers dressed in period costuming milling about the cabin we hope to give considerable color and depth to this year's educational programming.

Staff have been researching the provincial governments new green energy act with particular interest in the solar options now available. To increase solar/wind installations the province through the Ontario Power Authority, is offering a sizeable payment of 81 ¢ per Kilowatt hour (KWH) generated, through a formal 20 year contract. As an example if we were to use the roof of the John Hix building to install a 10 kwh system at a total cost of ~ \$75,000 we would realize a minimum payment of ~ \$9000 per year. The system would be paid in full within 8 years leaving us 12 years within our contract of which again totals ~ \$9000/year. After our 20 year contract ends we still have a 10 year window of productivity as today's solar panels are guaranteed for 30 years. Revenue realized from the 10 year balance would not be at the 81¢ rate but possibly half. There are other CA's across the province who have implemented alternative energy demonstration programs into their business. Promoting the value of green living is seen as an opportunity to further educate our watershed residents and the Tiffin Centre is a perfect venue to do so. Staff recommend bringing this forward to be considered for the 2011 Business Plan or sooner.

### **NVCA Land Management Program**

In 2009 we were fortunate in receiving an additional 73 acres of land in Town of New Tecumseth and are anticipating good news on another 9 acres in the Town of Mono. These new properties, while not currently considered formal "Conservation Areas" but rather natural management areas will receive standard maintenance and enforcement attention. Both properties will be surveyed for invasive species and or species at risk and future management actions will be developed..

In the case of our New Tecumseth property we are looking at options for future opportunities. There is a small house on site that has been well maintained but will require an exterior staining of the siding and other smaller touch ups. Staff are exploring as one option to rent the house as a "weekend getaway" for families from the GTA or others. The house is not on a lake nor in cottage country but it is situated amongst rolling hills, forests and farm lands of which is sought after for retreat purposes. The Beeton Creek viewed from the front porch flows through the property as does the South Simcoe Steam Train. It is believed that 2010 would give us the time needed to bring this idea to fruition with anticipated Board approval, necessary upgrading and marketing. Ideas on this proposed venture will

be welcome for the March 12 meeting. The majority of the property is being leased for agricultural purposes.

Other property projects for 2010 include :

- outdoor vault privy for Minesing Wetland Canoe Parking lot (George Johnston Road)
- coordinated clean up of dumping site in Osprey Wetlands
- 911 signage program for our rural properties with numbers posted.
- updated signage and kiosk repair at Nottawasaga Bluffs
- updated signage and kiosk repair at Petun
- new signage at Oro Medonte property (Coulson Wetland Complex)
- accessible trail & entrance construction at Fort willow

A NVCA/Nature Conservancy of Canada joint submission to the Trillium Foundation to fund a position to assist with recommendations within the Minesing Wetland Management Plan (MWMP) will ideally be approved in June 2010. Trillium staff have indicated their satisfaction with both the MWMP and our submission.

The War of 1812 Bicentennial initiative being promoted by both the Provincial and Federal government continues to move forward. As Fort Willow played an integral role during the war we are on notice to receive funding for upgrades and special events during this 3 year event (2012-2014). A new Educational Pavilion is being proposed to facilitate future events and programming at the site. A local architect has taken on the task of design of we hope to bring to the Board for approval prior to the end of spring 2010.

**Recommendation:** Be it resolved that the Land & Water Advisory Committee have reviewed and support the draft Land/Operations and Stewardship Services 2010-12 Business Plan direction; and That staff develop a final draft version of the Program Services component of the 2010-2012 Business Plan based on recommendations of the Planning Advisory Committee, and the April 9, 2010 NVCA program review Board member workshop, for consideration of the Board of Directors at their May 14, 2010 meeting.

## **Other business**

## ***Adjournment***