

**BONNECHERE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
**STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)**  
**FINAL - Minutes of Meeting #20 – April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009**  
**Eagles Nest, Eganville**

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**Attendees:**

**SAC:** Don Pouliot, Murray Borer, Lucy King, Niall McArdle, Murray Bimm

**Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn:** Jan Leroux

**MNR:** Mike Radford, Joanna Samson, Tom Giesler

**Waterpower Producers:** Jeff Featherston (RPG), Peter Boldt (RPG), Frank Scheer (Eganville Generation Corporation), Janusz Rydel (Multistream Power Corp.), Andreas Vornweg

**Regrets:**

Steve Munger, Ross Campbell, Kevin O'Connor

**1. Housekeeping Items**

1.1. Other

- Introduction of Peter Boldt; can introduce himself as to why he is here
- Expense sheets
- Kevin O'Connor from Golden Lake left us a while back because he is gone in the winter. However, he will not be away this winter we asked him if he would like to come back to the committee. We are now back up to 8 of the original 9.

1.2. Review of Agenda

- Nothing added to agenda

**2. Review & Approval of Minutes of Meeting #19 – February 11/09**

Page 4, under operations update - 20-25 inches of ice at various spots on the lake. No additional changes; minutes approved by all.

**3. Power Producers Update**

Janusz

- Great run this year so far.
- power outage 2 days ago
- preparing for construction; still waiting on LRIA approval

Tom indicated that MNR is still waiting on plans from his consultant

Andreas

- Also a good year, nothing special at all
- Came up a little high but didn't go over

Jeff

- Non compliance on both lakes 10cm on Round and 25 cm on Golden. Round just went back into compliance on Tuesday. Golden is still out by 18cm. Still staying pretty flat, doesn't seem to be coming down.

- Exceeded the upper limit 22 days ago on both lakes.
- There are 2 charts. One is a weekly and one is a daily average.
- On Round Lake: good shape coming into freshet but rain on one weekend had it going up
- What Round Lake does, Golden Lake follows
- Don P. asked if all logs had been removed from the Golden Lake in February. Jeff indicated that yes, they were all out in February.
- RPG has been receiving calls on shoreline erosion – went and looked at last Wednesday with MNR near Sheryl Boyle park. They lost about 10 feet of shoreline.
- From a production point of view: lots of water; coming through very clean and clear. Price was dismal for April. 1.8cents per kilowatt hour VS typical 4cents
- Mike explained to the group that RPG exceeding it's upper limit is not automatically a non-compliance. It's considered an incident until it's deemed a non compliance. We won't know until we meet but that won't happen until Golden is back within its approved operating range.

#### Frank

- This time last year we had 10 logs out, we have 8 out now
- Lots of precipitation in winter
- We had an outage; but didn't go over the limit
- Debris hasn't been bad
- Preliminaries to the dam safety assessment, Tom is keeping me straight; get it in this summer because proposing to install a gate and some other stuff.
- Not much ice at the dam throughout the winter. Big difference between this winter and 2005 where we had 18 inches.

#### **4. Round Lake Trial Amendment Update**

Mike looked at previous minutes to recap:

- The trial looked at a sharp drawdown starting after Labour Day.
- Might not de-water, might influence Lake Trout to spawn lower.
- This could help with ice damage and spring flooding.
- The SAC recommended a major amendment and the Regional Director signed off on it to proceed as a major amendment.

Next steps (after last SAC meeting):

- Meeting was held on Feb 25<sup>th</sup> with Frank, Don, Janusz, Jeff & MNR staff. We sent the operating regime to Hatch for modelling on March 20<sup>th</sup>. We were waiting on the report to come in from Hatch on Thursday before Easter but we didn't get it.
- Peter Boldt is now involved to look at it closer. We have had to take a step back on it to make sure it's feasible and that it's right and can work. Model had a few errors so we had to send it back
- We had wanted to get your opinion on open house, where, when, what. But we aren't there yet. Lots of work involved with this and so far the stars aren't shaping up for it to be in place for this fall.

Peter Boldt explained his role:

- RPG has some operational concerns with Golden Lake. In order to achieve what we want to achieve we want to run some various assessments.
- Met with MNR, discussed potential to remove the Lake Trout box – redundant as RPG has been granted pre-approval to enter into box the last 4 years. If we can eliminate that box to start, it would assist the operator to get down to a lower regime. Instead of putting an entire stop for this fall, we could get rid of box. Gives option to come in lower.
- We also need to have some discussions on how we can operate Golden Lake. We have tried over the years to manipulate the water to try and create a better reservoir.
- 5 (or several) points of contention with this trial:
  - 1) Proposal puts a lot of onus on the operation of Golden Lake. Could take a couple of years to figure it out and have confidence that it can handle it.
  - 2) The round lake proposal is Round Lake centric - transferring the same challenges from Round to Golden.
  - 3) No development of a range, it's a line. If we ask for a 2 foot range there is a dramatic drawdown.
  - 4) According to letters RPG has received the majority of Round Lake cottagers want high water for boating.
  - 5) At the lower levels in Round sand and silt will migrate downstream from Round forming sand shoals and dunes around the islands and at the mouth of Golden.  
Don: Disagree. Sand and silt accumulates in front of dams;- not behind them.

Don; re round lake proposal is Round Lake centric; The lower levels in Round provide more capacity for freshet containment which would help in reducing the flooding impact on Golden.

Don; re majority of Round Lake cottagers want high water; This is not true as several surveys can attest. You cannot use one or two letters as representative of the whole lake.

- JAN: What about water from Algonquin Park?
- PETER: no control in the Park. RPG applied for the installation of control dams in the Bonnechere headwaters but was refused by Parks Ontario. RPG intends to look at this again.
- When you start to manipulate Golden Lake, you get a dramatic difference in the performance of the lake. Even though the representatives signed on to this, they may not understand the actual repercussions. If anyone realized the dramatic effect it would have on Golden – they may never had signed on. There are a lot of concerns that will come out if we run the trial as is right now.
- LUCY: worse case scenario for Golden?
- PETER: Can't tell you. Many things need to be investigated first. What's our impact? Need to answer some questions first.
- DON: why the change since last February 2008 when Jeff, you and I met and reviewed the proposal in detail? You indicated that it was possible and this is reflected in the minutes. Jeff confirmed with a memo that this was possible.
- Peter indicated that he personally didn't endorse the Round Lake Proposal with the quick drawdown in the fall.
- DON: RPG was on board and now they are dead set against this. You are pulling out last minute now? Don't follow. I have a memo that RPG endorsed this.

- Joanna mentioned that the SAC was shared a copy of that memo that was endorsed by the RLPOA, GLPOA and RPG.
- MIKE: this is what we have heard from RPG and this is why we aren't anticipating this amendment to be in place this fall; some things of what Peter has been saying we may agree with, some we may not. How to measure success? We have in some ways.
  - Measure eggs and where they are deposited. Should that be the only measure? Probably not, we should also look at the constriction.
- NIALL: Q. When we met and had the BMT Fleet Technologies Engineers present the ice damage study – the idea was to drawdown 4-6cm/week earlier in the fall. Is the trial amendment contravening this?
- MIKE: There will be a decrease in slope (rate of drawdown) on Round but we don't know what will happen on Golden. With the Round Lake proposal if you come in lower, may not have to have the steady drawdown as much because you are further from the shoreline. RLPOA – less risk to them if lower because there's a perimeter around the lake, which is why they proposed an amendment. It would be more like 3.5 per week but would start much earlier.
- NIALL Q2: drawdown at Round Lake is going to affect the Golden Lake group. Is there anyway we can look at pulling down Golden first to see if it will work?
  - PETER: that's sort of what we are talking about in conjunction with lake trout trial.
- JAN: why can't you draw down golden lake without draining it? How can you make hydro in the winter if you've drained Golden Lake?
- PETER: We don't have all the answers. Some areas of the system are very sensitive to changes. Once you start taking the water out you can stop because you have dams that can protect them. Other places will dry out and we need to be more conscious of these areas. One of the proposals is to start in September, have a 6 week drain and then shut it off on Round for the fish for a period of time.
- MIKE: Water would come out from Round. Can't get to the bottom of both lakes in time for freshet. Want to be as close to the bottom on Golden as you can. Golden stops drawing down and we aren't there. Ultimate goal is always to address the spring freshet and prevent flooding. Would still be enough water in the system for the winter to produce power, and if there wasn't, it wouldn't be a good proposal.
- PETER: this is why we need more observation. Need the opportunity to try some things with transparency and figure out how we are going to measure it. To endorse a major change without proper evaluation will not work.
- Mike: There may be some other things that could be done. It could be the removal of the box but looking at the conclusion from RPG's consultant makes reference to the trout box being in place. MNR wants to reserve the right to look at the conclusions further.

## 5. Lake Trout Report Update

MIKE:

- Still in a rough draft. MNR needs to look at the conclusions from the consultant. The report is roughly 79 pages. MNR internal have been asked to respond to Darwin by May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Peter & Jeff should have it directly from Rob. We also sent it to Steve Sandstrom, who was involved with the SPIN, and our Provincial Lake Trout person in Peterborough. When we get a first cut of draft comments, we will meet internally and talk about conclusion. We will then meet with RPG and talk about conclusions.

Comments will then go back to Darwin. On this time frame, we would anticipate printing in July at the earliest. The SAC could probably see a cleaned up final draft possibly earlier than that.

- We aren't prepared to talk about a potential amendment to remove the Lake Trout Box until we go a little further with the report and have a chance to analyze the conclusions.

#### 6. Golden Lake Minor Amendment Update

Joanna went through the details of the minor amendment

- DM letter was sent Feb 9/09 as a mailout to the water management plan mailing list.
- Advertisements were placed in 5 papers notifying the public that a minor amendment was available for inspection for 15 days

Summary of comments:

- Two respondents were in favour of the amendment
- Two respondents expressed concern about the impacts of the lower level on wildlife and are opposed to the amendment if wildlife is displaced. Kirby, the biologist did not feel that the amendment would displace wildlife.
- 1 respondent was opposed to the amendment; however the major reason stated is that the operator has never been as low as the amendment would allow. This is not the case. In 2005, RPG was that low on Golden Lake.
  
- Response letters were sent to all respondents this week.
- The updated plan will be ready for posting to the RPG website soon.

Jan: are there any studies planned to see the effect on wildlife? Mike: from a biologist point of view, coming low and staying low is better than have the level coming back up. That minimum flow line doesn't mean they'll get there in the winter; it means that they'll attempt to get there. Wildlife that overwinter, do so in the deeper part of the lake. Drawdown would be after thanksgiving.

#### 7. Walk-on Agenda Items

- JEFF: SAR Legislation: Has there been any movement on what these agreements will look like?
  - o Joanna gave an update that the SAR Unit is still working this out. Ontario Waterpower Association (OWA) is involved in the Saunders agreement which will be used as the template. Stay tuned. Every power producer in Ontario in the same position as you.
- Peter's Projects:
  - o 1<sup>st</sup> Chute, Clear Point, Refurbish of existing plan
  - o Fuel project – biggest project; WMP is now back in his portfolio. Jeff will be the production manager and will still be responsible for operations, log placement and so on. Peter will be dealing with the WMP and amendments. Happy to be back working with the SAC.

#### 8. Next Meeting Date

Wednesday June 24<sup>th</sup>, @ Eagles' Nest in Eganville

Agenda item: discuss potential amendment to remove the Lake Trout Box (dependant on report).

Golden Lake Boat Tour – never did get to finish it. At the June meeting we will finalize the date. Currently looking at Wednesday August 5<sup>th</sup> or August 12<sup>th</sup>.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.