

**BONNECHERE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN
STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)**

**Minutes of Meeting #3 – January 18, 2006
Bonnehcchere Valley Township Office, Eganville**

Attendees:

SAC: Kevin O’Connor, Ross Campbell, Lucy King, Don Pouliot, Steve Munger, Niall McArdle, Murray Bimm

MNR: Michael Radford, Joanna Samson, Paul Moreau

Waterpower Producers: Peter Boldt (RPG), Janusz Rydel (Multistream Power Corp.)

Regrets:

Aurel Boucher, Murray Borer, Jan Leroux, Andreas Vornweg (Vornweg Waterpower), Frank Scheer (Eganville Generation Corporation)

1. Housekeeping Items

1.1 Review of Agenda

No items were added to the agenda.

1.2 Expense Invoices

Mike Radford went over the form for SAC members claiming mileage to and from SAC meetings. He emphasized the importance of writing clearly as to not hold up the processing time. He also mentioned that when filling out invoices, please fill in the date of each meeting being claimed with the corresponding number of kilometres.

1.3 Vornweg Waterpower-Newspaper Article

An article that appeared in the Pembroke Daily Observer on October 4, 2005, about the Vornweg’s operation of the Old Killaloe Mill, was handed out to the SAC for their information.

2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting #2 – November 23/05

In 1.1, sentence 1 removed and replaced with “A hard copy of the ice damage study was distributed to every SAC member and a presentation by George Comfort, BMT Fleet Technology Ltd. followed”.

Joanna Samson handed out copies of the Media Advisory regarding the establishment of the SAC that went to the following media outlets on November 25, 2005; Pembroke Daily Observer, Renfrew Mercury, Eganville Leader, Barry’s Bay This Week.

Joanna also handed copies of the Media Advisory regarding the release of the Ice Damage Report by MNR & RPG, which went to the following media outlets on December 11, 2005; Pembroke Daily Observer, Renfrew Mercury, Eganville Leader, Barry's Bay This Week.

A copy of the updated Contact List was also provided to those at the meeting.

Minutes were approved by all SAC members present.

3. Ice Damage Study: Further Discussion and Follow-up Questions

Kevin O'Connor asked about the possibility of having a PDF of the ice damage study, done by BMT Fleet Tech. Ltd, posted to the Golden Lake Cottage Association Website. Steve Munger suggested that it would likely be more beneficial if the PDF was located on the RPG website with a link to it on the association's page. This would allow greater access to the study.

Both MNR and Peter Boldt were in agreement of this course of action.

ACTION: Joanna – send RPG a copy of the locked ice damage study PDF for posting to the RPG website.

As a follow-up to Meeting #2, the SAC was asked if there was any further questions, or comments, regarding the ice damage study that was presented by George Comfort and Andrew Liddiard of BMT Fleet Tech Ltd.

Joanna handed out to the SAC, a copy of the set of additional questions sent to her by Don Pouliot on Thursday January 12, 2006 regarding the ice damage study as well as a copy of the answers to the questions provided by BMT Fleet Technology Ltd., dated January 13th, 2006.

Q. Lucy King asked if the lakes were considered frozen over and if so, what was the freeze up date.

A. The Lakes are frozen over and December 14th was used as the Freeze up date for Round Lake.

Q. Niall wondered if water flows are greater than they normally would be at this time of year.

A. Peter Boldt indicated that not necessarily. This year we have a steeper drawdown rate, so there is a greater flow, however it is still within the range.

Don Pouliot showed pictures of ice push that occurred that morning (Jan 18, 2006) on Round Lake, south of the Sherwood River. One of the pictures depicted ice push approximately 20feet offshore. The ice push was concentrated on two cottage lots, and Don indicated that the push went up approximately another foot since that morning when the photo was taken. Don indicated that the length of the push in front of the two cottages was approx. 300ft and the shoreline is a sandy beach with a rock face. No berms are in place; however, one of the owner's had put in stones last summer to repair last year's damage. The ice push ranged all along Dunne's Bay up to Dombrosky's point.

Lucy commented that there was a dramatic change in temperature to which everyone agreed.

Don commented that one of the questions he asked to BMT Fleet Tech. Ltd. was with respect to the Sherwood River and if water circulation at the mouth of the river could have an impact on the shoreline bond in that area. Don is interested in understanding the physics of the cracking of the ice. Don also commented that he believes RPG has done the best they can with respect to following the recommendations of the ice damage study, and as a result believes that the recommendations made are suspect because the lakes are still experiencing ice damage.

MNR stated they feel that it is still too early to tell. The report is based on science and it doesn't guarantee that no damage will occur due to the combination of a number of factors.

Don P. suggested that we needed to have more studies done as we still need to find the root cause.

Steve Munger made a point of saying, that with respect to more studies, we have to be careful of the question we are asking and for what purpose will it serve. He mentioned that it may not be the best use of the committee's time if the answer doesn't solve the issue. Steve mentioned that there are a number of information needs listed in the Water Management Plan.

Q. Niall McArdle asked if the damage was confined just to beaches and maybe the odd dock.

A. Don Pouliot said that there is a lot of damage to structures & docks because of the high water.

Don P. asked "where do we go from here" and Mike Radford cautioned people to remember that it is still early, that we have a study we are implementing and if we find out that there is a further information need we will have to see if further studies are needed.

Q. Steve Munger asked if there is more data that can be gathered, such as snow depth measurements or ice thickness measurements.

A. Peter Boldt replied by indicating that RPG is already in the process of collecting this data at various locations (Sherwood Creek (1), Round Lake (4) & Golden Lake (3)).

The maximum depth of ice – was 8 inches a week ago. Slush was also measured. Pictures are also being taken. Peter B. indicated that RPG planned on going to Round Lake tomorrow (Jan 19/06) to see if there was any frost penetration in the yard in which the ice push occurred. If there is no frost barrier, Peter indicated that the ice will push inward and not buckle. This is due to the fact there is no resistance in the shore and the force of the ice will move inward. Peter also indicated that RPG planned to dig out the berm to see if it's actually ice moving up or it's possibly hard snow cover that is buckling. However, indicated that he is not disputing that the push is occurring.

Steve offered to Peter that they could use Brenlarken Place on Golden Lake as another study location if need be.

Q. Niall McArdle wondered, that with the additional data collection, if there was any plan to have another ice damage report commissioned after a year or so.

A. Michael Radford indicated no, not at this time.

Kevin O'Connor commented that he doesn't know how one could predict anything when weather is not predictive and therefore would we ever be able to solve any of this.

Don Pouliot commented that water levels in the fall have only been pushed up since the 50's and suggested that if you reduce water levels in the fall, creating a buffer area large enough to accommodate expected ice expansion, ice push would occur only in the buffer zone instead of against the shoreline banks and you would have your solution. Things were successful before, however, now you have the lake trout box and other concerns.

4. Terms of Reference

4.1 Approval

Some general discussion took place regarding the Terms of Reference, which is intended to be brief, and can be re-visited every year. Michael Radford started to go through the document paragraph by paragraph and Niall McArdle suggested that to save time, and because they've had the document for some time that they should approve it as a whole unless anyone has any issues.

Lucy King made a comment that the point being made consistently throughout the draft is that the SAC is an advisory committee only with a mandate to advise and not make final decisions.

Discussion regarding the number of meetings per year took place, in which, Michael Radford indicated that although the draft says 2-4, additional meetings could take place at the discretion of all parties.

Joanna S. asked if everyone was in agreement to approve the Terms of Reference as is.

Lucy – Yes

Kevin – Yes

Ross – Yes

Murray Bimm – Yes

Don – Yes

Niall – Yes

Steve – Yes

Consensus by the SAC was reached to approve the Terms of Reference as is.

4.2 Selection of Chair and other positions

Discussion also took place regarding the selection of Chair from within the SAC membership. Kevin was under the impression that MNR wanted the SAC to select a chair, however, Michael Radford indicated that it does not make a difference to the MNR. A number of SAC members indicated that they were happy with the present set up – ie. MNR chairing, taking minutes, setting the agenda, and so forth and would like to see that continue. Michael indicated that if they would like to keep the current set-up, it can always be re-visited at a later date if members want to make a change.

Joanna asked the members if everyone was in agreement to keeping the current set-up for the time being.

Lucy – Yes

Kevin – Yes

Ross – Yes

Murray Bimm – Yes

Don – Yes

Niall – Yes

Steve – Yes

Consensus was reached to not select a chair, or other positions, at this time and to keep the current arrangement with MNR chairing and preparing the agenda with input from the SAC.

5. Water Management Plan: Walk-through of operating regimes

Paul Moreau gave the SAC a brief introduction to the Pembroke District MNR Office by explaining that the District shares the same geographic boundaries as the County of Renfrew and is divided up into various teams. There are two Area Teams – Madawaska Area, for which Paul is the Acting Area Supervisor, and Mountain River Area, with Michael Radford as the Area Supervisor for that team. In addition, Pembroke District has an Enforcement Team (Conservation Officers), an Information Management Team (GIS & Planning) and a Support Services Team.

Paul M. then gave a brief history of how the plan started and the legislative requirements. He indicated that the water management plan (WMP) was used as an opportunity to talk to the waterpower producers and bring them all to the table. Paul explained the two main premises of the WMP:

1. Treating the Bonnechere River as a system (i.e. a share the pain mentality) with the intent to address the issue that were raised
2. Ensure there was adequate flows in the system

Reach 10 – Algonquin Park

No structures, no issues and no information needs were identified for this reach.

Reach 9 – Algonquin Park to Jack Chute

No structures, no issues and no information needs were identified for this reach.

Reach 8 – Round Lake

- approx. 90% of the time with the PAC was spent on issues in this reach
- Round Lake is a part of the headwater and is the biggest reservoir on the system
- Operating Regime was designed to give the operator a band to operate within and the band negotiated, is tighter than ever before.

- The License of Occupation is 107.5 (Legal Agreement with RPG) and was in place prior to the plan. The operating regime tightens the band.

Don Pouliot questioned if the L.O. was actually 108 and Paul replied that the L.O. is 107.5, however, RPG has a flooding easement at the 108 level under the *Lakes & Rivers Improvement Act*.

Paul went through the operating regime for Round Lake.

- A draw-down is required in the winter which forces RPG down.
- The term “box” refers to the Lake Trout Box, which is one of the major issues MNR put forward during the planning process. Lake Trout are indicators of water quality and are one of MNR’s priorities. It is genetically important to keep strains separated and therefore MNR shouldn’t stock over a naturally reproducing lake Trout Population. Lake Trout spawn on Victoria Island spawning shoal and in other places. MNR wanted to ensure that when OPG drops the water through the winter, the eggs on the spawning shoal don’t get crushed. An agreement was made in the WMP that RPG would check the ice above the shoal as they are dropping the level to ensure enough water is being passed over the shoals so that the eggs aren’t exposed and crushed by the ice.

Q. Don Pouliot asked if we had a Lake Trout population estimate.

A. Paul indicated that the population is probably not that high. A survey was conducted several years ago.

Q. Don indicated that he thought it was in decline everywhere in Southern Ontario.

A. Paul answered no; however, studies are being done all over.

Michael Radford made a link to the ice damage study and pointed out that the Lake Trout Box was not indicated on the graph showing the recommended draw-down strategy. He indicated that MNR and RPG recognizes that in order to implement the recommendation of the ice damage study with respect to a draw-down of 4cm/week starting at freeze-up, RPG would have to go into the Lake Trout Box.

- Paul talked about the “Typical Operating Line” and explained that it is not the historical average, however, it was established using historical information and it is simply to show where RPG may be under typical conditions. He pointed out that this line is not a mandatory line.
- Paul explained that the Upper and Lower limits of the operating regime are the legal lines. If RPG is outside of these levels, a review or investigation will follow. Depending on various factors, this may or may not involve a Conservation Officer investigation.
- The planning team and PAC needed to develop an operating regime that was within the current License of Occupation (LO). If they had modified it and had gone outside the LO, it would have required a separate Environmental Assessment under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.
- The LO was established in 1911 and it is a fixed level on the dam and therefore it cannot change.

Don Pouliot commented that the perimeter of the lake is larger now than it was in 1911.

- Paul explained that the 108 contour can change however. It moves back and increases the location of the easement (based on the contour).
- In the plan, the recommendation is that property owners need to protect their shorelines with erosion control mechanisms.
- The “Hat” in the upper limit is to allow room for the spring freshet. The RLPOA wanted a constant elevation from the May long weekend to the September long weekend. However, this was not deemed to be feasible for several reasons: the operating regime needed to mimic a natural system which has a gradual draw-down; evaporation was not factored in; & the need to pass water through the system for a variety of reasons (sewage dilution downstream, recreation, etc.)
- Throughout the planning process – the planning team was always up front with the public about the use of the river to produce power. Waterpower production is a priority for the province.
- Table 11 is the operating requirements table showing requirements for; minimum flows, monitoring, and reporting. The “Best Practices” in the table, indicates that the recording of daily flows is not mandatory, however, is recommended. Weekly reporting by RPG each week in an electronic format is mandatory. MNR also has the ability to dial into the electronic gauge.

Q. Kevin O’Connor asked if it was fair to say that if the operator stays within the upper and lower lines, will we still have problems with high VS low water people.

A. Paul responded that unfortunately we can’t always make everyone happy and a compromise to benefit people, fish, & power production had to be met.

Q. Kevin asked if things had been prioritized and if so was power production #1?

A. Paul was clear to point out that power production was not the top priority; however, it is a major factor and could not be ruled out. A balance had to be achieved between the environment, people, and power production. Issues were prioritized/ranked with the help of the PAC and three consultants. MNR put a lot of issues on the table during the planning process. The issues didn’t just come from Round Lake & Golden Lake.

- The chart (Table 10) shows the months of the year and tells the public, in association with the operating regime, why the operator is operating the way he is at any given time in the year.

Q. Don Pouliot asked who has control of the Lake Trout box,

A. Paul & Michael Radford explained that the Lake Trout box was negotiated with all parties (MNR, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, waterpower producers, PAC) as part of the water management plan. The “box” is not meant to be automatic; rather, it’s in place to ensure that the Lake Trout population is given appropriate consideration.

Reach 7: Golden Lake

Paul Moreau gave a general talk about the Table 12 and Fig. 10 in the WMP.

- The upper limit in the operating regime follows the License of Occupation (LO) for the most part, keeping RPG tight to the LO.
- In weeks 10 to 21 - operations are carefully monitored to ensure there are adequate flows during the walleye spawn. Walleye spawning occurs on the upstream and downstream side of the Golden Lake Dam and the fish have been seen to move from one side to the other.

- Peter Boldt explained that one of the dynamics of Golden Lake is the natural constriction, which was critical to the development of the operating regimes. Golden Lake is also very shallow and this, coupled with the natural constriction, does not allow for a fast evacuation of water from Golden Lake. Whereas Round Lake is quite quick. As a result, the intention is that all of the logs will be pulled out of Golden Lake Dam by early to mid February in preparation for the spring freshet.
- Michael Radford explained that the WMP has provisions to draw Golden Lake down lower than ever before to try to better accommodate for the spring freshet.
- Paul indicated that one of the Information Needs for this reach is to better establish the constriction.
- Table 13 – The operating requirements table for this reach is very similar to that of Round Lake.

Reach 6: Wilber Lake

Due to the time, Paul agreed to continue the discussion of the Reach 6 to 1 at the next meeting.

6. Other

Steve Munger discussed performance indicators, a topic he had brought up at the last meeting. He acknowledged that water levels were the primary performance indicator and the maximum and minimum water levels established in the management plan were the primary performance targets. After reading the WMP in greater detail, he countered his original idea of developing additional performance indicators as a measure of the success of the SAC and the WMP. He explained that he felt it was premature to develop additional indicators and targets given the number of information needs identified in the plan. In addition, the WMP already has a framework for this set out in the Effectiveness Monitoring Plan (Pg79).

7. Date of Next Meeting

Bonnechere SAC meeting #4 @ 6pm in Eganville – **Wednesday, February 22, 2006**

ACTION: Frank Scheer to book the Township Office

Meeting #4 will focus on the continuation of the walk-through of the operating regimes (Reach 6 to 1), and the Spring 2005 Flood Review.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.