



Almaguin Lake and Watershed Association Conference

Near North Environmental Education Centre

Sundridge, Ontario

June 10, 2023

Attendees:

Fayrene Boyd, Eagle Lake Property Owners Association
Jerry Brandt, Township of Armour
Robert Brooks, Village of South River
Elizabeth Bradley, Almaguin Resident
Alan Burt, Lake Bernard Property Association
Kris Callow, NNEEC
Lynda Carleton, Mayor, Machar Township
Abby Flynn, Almaguin Resident
Chris Haist, Horn Lake Property Owners Association
Wendy Hooker, Almaguin Resident
John Kelly, Kearney Watershed Environmental Foundation
Dale Klodnicki, Lake Bernard Property Owners Association
Marilee Koenderink, Lake Bernard Phragmites Working Group
Justine Leveque, Mayor, Village of Sundridge
Karin Mertins, Lake Bernard Phragmites Working Group
Mike Mitchell, Eagle Lake Property Owners Association
Jocelyn Palm, NNEEC
Bruce Pearson, Horn Lake Property Owners Association
Harry Schlange, NNEEC
Jim Schmidt, NNEEC
Scott Simpson, Ahmic Lake Cottagers Association
Rod Ward, Township of Armour
Tammy Ward, Three Mile Lake Community Club
Vicki Whitmell, NNEEC
Wendy Whitwell, Township of Armour
Stan Walker, Kearney Watershed Environmental Foundation

Goals

The goals of the one-day conference were to:

- bring members of the Almaguin Lake and Watershed Association (ALWA) together with local municipal councils.
- identify ways for the group to work together to identify and address environmental issues in the Almaguin region.
- set priorities for the group's work for the next one to five years.

Environmental, Developmental, Governmental, Advocacy and Educational Issues Identified

The following **environmental** concerns were identified:

- Climate change and resulting visible deterioration in Almaguin's lakes and watersheds.
- Increase of invasive species such as phragmites and knotweed.
- Over development of many areas with municipalities reluctant to limit this growth
- Protected natural areas are not being respected.
- Increased instances of flooding and threats to the water tables.
- Septic systems are dated, there is lack of documentation on the systems, there is poor testing and lack of education on how to properly use and maintain septic systems. This has increased with more lake properties being used for short-term rentals. Septic systems are expensive to update and upgrade.
- Shorelines are being destructed in many ways, including the clearing of native plants.
- The use of herbicides/pesticides near shorelines impacts the quality of the water.

The following **governmental** concerns were identified:

- Responsibilities for the care of local water and watersheds is being moved from municipalities to the provincial and federal governments.
- There is little enforcement of bylaws and legislation. There needs to be an understanding of the impactful consequences of what is being done and significant penalties for non-compliance.
- Local groups and associations are not being heard at all levels of government.
- It is often unclear which level of government is responsible for what in environment regulation.
- It is unclear what resources are needed and where they will come from.

The following **developmental** issues were identified:

- There are too many people on our lakes. Governments need to determine capacity limits and enforce them.
- Housing costs are too high to bring in and keep young people in the area.
- Houses are too large and are not built for our climate.

The following **advocacy and educational** issues were identified:

- There is lack of education and respect for these issues in our area.
- We must look at best practices and determine what will work for us.
- We are not learning from one another and sharing information.

- Connections and advocacy have not happened, and priorities have not been set.
- We are not getting the assistance we need from local councils.
- The importance of speaking with ONE VOICE.

Key Priorities Established

The group determined that together they will develop work plans and strategies around the following important priorities:

1. Septic Systems
2. Invasive Species
3. Healthy Shorelines

Working Group Roundtable Formed

A working group roundtable was formed to develop work plans and strategies to address these issues so that we might work together on these priorities.

The members are:

Tammy Ward (Co-Chair)

Bruce Pearson (Co-Chair)

Bob Atwell

Alan Burt

Marilee Koenderink

Mike Mitchell

Harry Schlange

Justine Leveque

Rod Ward

This group will communicate regularly with:

- All Almaguin Mayors and Councils
- ALWA Members
- Local media
- Schools
- Seniors
- Other like-minded groups