

**BOUCHIE LAKE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE WORKSHOP – DAY 1 MINUTES**

File No: 6481-02

Meeting Date: November 19, 2019

Location: Bouchie Lake Community Hall, 1975 Centennial Road, Quesnel

Present: Area B Director Barb Bachmeier; Nigel Whitehead, CRD Senior Planner; Shivani Sajwan, CRD Planning Officer; Nicole Pressey, Regional Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture; Jayme Hills, Recreation Technician, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development; David Law, Director, Bouchie Lake Watershed Stewardship Society; Stephanie Hanes; Peggy Smith; Robert Ross; Sybille Muschik; Elizabeth Montgomery.

Present for a portion of the meeting: Wendy Holtom, Subdivision Approving Officer, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure; Deborah Epps, Section Head, Provincial Water Quality, Ministry of Environment & Climate Change Strategy (via teleconference); Brian Steeves, Environmental Health Officer, Environmental Health Protection, Northern Health Authority;

Regrets: Stan Hall, Tony McHale, Neil MacDougall.

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 am

N Whitehead welcomed attendees, explained the intent of the meeting & schedule. Attendees introduced themselves.

N. Whitehead provided a brief overview of the Bouchie-Milburn Neighbourhood Plan project.

Deborah Epps provided an overview of Ministry of Environment's involvement in lake water quality monitoring and improvement activities for Bouchie/Milburn Lakes and watershed. Overview included background information, current state of water quality, past projects, and potential treatment options.

Phosphorous (P) loading is the primary concern. Lake water quality change began around 1950, with substantial decline over past 20 years. Root problems must be addressed, not simply treating symptoms. It will take a multi-agency approach.

Agenda was amended to continue group discussion on water quality.

Group discussion followed with questions and answers with D. Epps.

Approx. 10:40 am, D. Epps left the meeting.

Approx. 10:50 am, W. Holtom joined the meeting.

Group discussion/summary on treatment options:

Alum Treatment – Aluminum sulphate is added and binds P in water and settles to bottom. Multiple treatments per year for several years would be required. Estimated high (\$millions) and ongoing cost.

Discussion around dilution or flushing lake. Would require raising water level, which is not feasible due to residential elevations. Damning upstream and releasing to flush lake is not possible due to low water volumes upstream. Could try to drain/flush sediment from centre/bottom of lake – would require complex directional drilling. Substantial cost. Flushing has downstream impacts.

Lake aeration is a temporary solution (addressing symptom not cause) but likely financially feasible. Bouchie Lake Watershed Stewardship Society has cost estimates for aeration (\$90k materials, \$60k install, unknown ongoing operating cost). Ongoing operating funds would need to be sourced – Could be CRD service – taxation impact. Or MoE service? Would require onshore site for some of the equipment.

Oxygenating the bottom is important, or flushing out existing sediment. Physical agitation is needed. Noted high level of internal P due to sediments. Dredging is not financially feasible (\$2.5M). Settling ponds to trap sediment at lake inflow / outflow of agricultural operations is a possibility.

Unknown if forest fertilization occurs in watershed. Nicole Pressey to provide contact information for appropriate person.

Vegetation control is also needed. Fraser-Fort George Regional District provides service on Nukko Lake?

Primary oversight of lake is conducted by Resource Management Group, Ministry of FLNRORD and MoE Water Quality Group.

11:00 am break; 11:15 am reconvene

N. Pressey provided a brief overview of Ministry of Agriculture's involvement in managing water quality impacts of agricultural activities. New Provincial Code of Practice is being phased in over ten-year period. Agricultural operators must manage nutrient runoff (nutrient management plan). M.Ag provides stewardship advice. Enforcement is on a complaints basis. Intent of new code of practice is to reduce environmental impacts. More control options in areas with mapped sensitive aquifers. CRD has ability to regulate maximum number of animals on hobby farms. MAg has farm business advice program for farms with min. \$30k sales. Managing for good soil health is important and helps manage runoff.

B. Steeves provided overview on Northern Health Authority's involvement in sewage system regulation. Sewerage System Regulation was implemented a number of years ago. Challenging adherence in rural BC. B. Steeves provided an overview of different types of septic systems. Sewerage System Regulation requires new systems to fully treat all onsite wastewater within confines of property. Systems are available to fully treat septage on lakeshore lots. Many cases of overcharging for new systems in Cariboo. Some systems more complex than others. Some systems do not function properly in northern climate.

Failing systems are an ongoing challenge. NHA enforcement on a complaints basis. Out of sight/out of mind is common problem with sewage effluent. No enforcement ability from NHA

unless untreated effluent is coming to the surface. Sub-surface leaching into water table/lake is not an infraction (although is source of nutrient loading on lake).

N. Whitehead: Do not want to deal with issue through tit-for-tat neighbourhood complaints. We know systems are reaching end of functional life; need a way to encourage replacement. Maybe there is grant funding source available to support private septic system replacements?

Subdivision and land use regulation is important. Generally require more than 1 acre parcel for adequate treatment and water supply. (CRD zoning allows 1 acre lot sizes)

Good well maintenance is important too. B. Steeves provided a brief overview.

12:15 pm, Brian Steeves left the meeting

Lunch 12:15 – 1:00 pm

W. Holtom, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) Subdivision Approving Officer provided an overview of the considerations MOTI makes when assessing subdivision applications, e.g. access, water, septic, lake accesses, geotechnical hazards, First Nations, archeological.

Group discussion around developing lake accesses. MOTI requires lake access per the Land Title Act, but does not have ability to require upgrading/development. It is not in MOTI's mandate to develop lake accesses/provide public recreation opportunities.

MOTI requires a permit for society/agency to utilize/improve lake access, but someone needs to hold liability insurance. Bouchie Lake Watershed Stewardship Society (BLWSS) stuck in situation where they have an improvement plan for Milburn Lake access, but MOTI requires CRD to hold permit. CRD will not hold permit on behalf of a society for recreation use as CRD does not have a parks function. Group discussion that maybe Rec Sites and Trails BC could support the project.

J. Hills provided an overview of Rec Sites and Trails BC (RSTBC) legislation and activities. Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) provides for the legislative authority to develop and operate recreation sites. Section 57 applications for new sites/trails get referred to tenure holders and First Nations. If approved, Section 56 legally establishes the site/trail. Section 16 application is required for forestry operators to work through/around designated trails. Cannot prevent forestry uses on Crown land.

Hangman Springs site is partially(?) within the BMNP plan area. It is maintained by local motorbike club. Also jointly maintained by equestrian and mountain bike users/clubs.

Development of sites/trails can be coordinated with forest fuel management activities. i.e. access/skidder trails can be retained in some cases for recreation routes.

Trail network development in the BMNP area is difficult for RSTBC involvement due to the amount of private land.

Freshwater fisheries society of BC has funding opportunities to develop more recreational fishing infrastructure – i.e. sites, docks, etc., existing examples at Sardine Lake (Pine Valley, WL), Hush Lake(?). Accessible trails CRD project – there may be dock pads available.

Rec. sites can be developed on Crown land only (not MOTI road right of way). RSTBC would likely be able to support lake access development, but can't be on road right of way (ROW). Maybe there is a way to "close" road right of way, transfer to Crown, and develop as an RSTBC site.

RSTBC holds insurance for community groups to maintain facilities, not for events.

Build Canada infrastructure grants may have opportunity for recreation site development.

There may be Subdivision Approving Officer ability to require existing historical trails to be preserved at subdivision stage.

Claymine trails not suitable for equestrian. Need for formalized equestrian routes in the plan area.

2:00 pm Break; 2:15 pm reconvene

Group exercise was conducted where frequently used and desired trail routes were drawn on maps. Simultaneous side conversations / Q&A between committee members and agency reps.

Approx. 2:30 pm Jayme Hills, Wendy H, Nicole Pressey left the meeting.

Meeting wrapped up. Next steps reviewed with committee.

Committee to reconvene Nov 20 for day 2 of workshop.

Adjournment 2:45 pm