

Geraldton Area Natural Resources Advisory Committee  
 Date of Meeting: May 9, 2012 – 5:30pm  
 Location: Nakina Recreation Center  
 Approved Meeting Minutes

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Regrets</u>
Hector Vincent, Facilitator	*	
Evan Armstrong, MNR LCC Liaison	*	
Ben Bartlett, MNR Area Forester (Ogoki)	*	
Charlotte Bourdignon, MNR Area Forester, Kenogami	*	
Tom Gross, Conservation Officer MNR	*	
<b><u>Members:</u></b>		
Bernie Baillargeon	*	
Deanna Hoffman	*	
Edgar Lavoie	*	
Ed Hoffman (Chair)	*	
Gary Selinger	*	
George Horobec	*	
Ron Melhuish	*	
Jamie Armstrong		*
Louis Garon	*	
Remi Moretton	*	
Scott Koski		*
Toni Moroz	*	
Bill Hoff	*	
Donna Pelletier		*
Andy Yesno		*
<b><u>Alternates:</u></b>		
Bill Davidson		*
Martin Boucher	*	
Cory Nephin		*
Ken Stevens		*
Greg Riou		*
John Espinola	*	
Linda Beaulieu	*	
Jane Jantunen		*
Perry Barkhouse	*	
Tom Hunt		*
Tracey Bradley		*

- I. Call to order – Hector called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. We did introductions as we had some new faces at the table – namely Martin Boucher representing the Longlac Chamber of Commerce.
- II. Review of Agenda – Evan added a membership discussion to the agenda.
- III. Approval of previous minutes – the January minutes were reviewed. Toni moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Louis Garon – minutes approved.
- IV. Business arising from previous minutes – Tom Gross followed up concerning the records of Hunter Safety Certificates within the MNR and how long they are maintained. He said they keep the safety certificates forever, but only keep license information for a few years. Evan showed us a chart as to how money from the Special Purpose Account (SPA) i.e. the sales of licenses; is spent with regard to endangered species (caribou) and the Fish and Wildlife program. It is difficult to actually determine what is spent on this category but there is quite a bit spent on protecting endangered species – which is really not “hunting”. **Evan will follow up and report back as to whether Caribou is actually considered game.** Evan also reported that the audio and video portions of the Riparian Buffer presentation cannot be joined; however they are available to anyone wanting to view them together. Louis said it worked pretty well when he used it. The audio portion is available from Evan and the presentation (video) is available on the internet. **Evan is still researching for a presentation on global warming and the effects on wildlife and will get back to us.** The mining maps and link were sent out to everyone via email from Evan, identifying mining claim stakes in and around the Ring of Fire. Toni did mail all retirement letters.
- V. Financial report – Evan reviewed our financial report with the group. All funding is now in the account and we are actually in pretty good shape. This is due, in part, to not having many FMP meetings. A motion was made by Louis Garon to accept the financial report, seconded by Ed Hoffman, motion carried – financial report approved.
- VI. Correspondence – A letter was received from Ducks Unlimited asking for a donation, but it is our policy to not do that. A letter was received from the Geraldton Chamber of Commerce requesting to be presented, once again, in our group and noted that they wanted Greg Riou to be their representative. We also received a letter from the Longlac Chamber of Commerce requesting presentation as well – Martin Boucher. Martin has joined our group and a discussion concerning membership issues will be conducted next on the agenda.
- VII. New Business:
  - a). Membership – As mentioned above, the letters we received from the Chambers has prompted some changes to our membership. Evan noted that Greg will be representing the Geraldton Chamber as primary member, Martin will be the alternate for the Chambers, and since Greg was the alternate for Road

Accessed Tourism, Linda Beaulieu will take his place as alternate there, leaving the alternate for Cottaging open, since she no longer has the cottage on Klotz Lake. As Ed is the primary member for Cottaging (having one on Twin Lakes). Steve Crawford had expressed interest in joining the group again and we would all benefit from his years of experience in the forest, but Evan was concerned that there would be two people in Cottaging living on the same lake. Evan asked if any members had a concern about this given there could be other people interested from another lake; he had also sent out an email a while back asking for any concerns, with very little response. After a little discussion, it was agreed that Steve, indeed, should join the group. A motion was made by Louis Garon to accept the above mentioned changes, seconded by Linda Beaulieu, motion passed. Evan noted we still have vacancies in the snowmobiling category and asked everyone to keep an ear open for people in that group.

b). Pre-Approved Administrative Amendment List – Charlotte and Ben presented the Amendment Categorization list along with an explanation of what an Administrative Amendment is – requiring no formal or public consultations. The list of potential amendment topics that GANRAC could agree, in advance, should be categorized as administrative and should proceed accordingly. GANRAC provides the advice to the District Manager, in advance, to facilitate timely and cost effective processing of amendments that GANRAC believes to be non-contentious. The suggestions are as follows:

- Correcting errors in mapping or text.
- Allowing for operational roads through un-allocated stands (expansion of Operational Road Boundary).
- The addition of aggregate extraction areas.
- Allowing for renewal activities within areas not shown for renewal And not within areas allocated for harvest.

When the District Manager determines that a FMP amendment proposal should proceed as an administrative amendment as per the criteria above, this decision along with the details of the amendment proposal will be provided to the LCC at the following GANRAC meeting. All FMP amendment proposals that do not meet the above criteria for administrative amendments will be brought to the LCC prior to the District Manager determining whether the proposal should proceed, and if so, the appropriate amendment category.

All internal reviews will still take place on the proposed pre-approved amendments – they still go through the Forester, the Biologist, lands people, the supervisor and ultimately the District Manager so the process (except for LCC determination) still continues.

There was some discussion on each particular suggested administrative amendment – noting the aggregate extraction was for forestry use only; and of course, updates on all amendments will be provided at the monthly GANRAC meetings. Gary was very concerned about allowing for operational roads

through unallocated stands. Although this doesn't happen a lot, it does happen. Charlotte told us that overall there could be an average of 50 or more amendments (administrative or otherwise) to the plan, but that operational roads through unallocated stands is pretty small in number. After much discussion, it was agreed by the group that as long as all discussions take place with ANY affected persons, all the filters at the MNR are still in place, and anything considered even somewhat controversial will be brought to the LCC, the pre-approved list of administrative amendments would be accepted. A motion was made by Perry to accept this pre-approved list, seconded by Ed Hoffman – motion carried.

- c) Kenogami Update –Deanna told us that after 4 long years of work, they got the FMP approval page signed by the Regional Director and now they are in the middle of public comments for the last time (all comments are due back June 2). Calls are coming in, but hopefully they won't have to go to any kind of resolution process. No operations can occur until it has final approval. Deanna cautioned everyone pulling up the map on the MNR's FMP website, that it does take some time to load because of the size of the file and to please be patient while it comes up on the screen.
- d). Ogoki AWS and Update –LLFP is in bankruptcy and has affected the FMP planning and brought it to a stand-still. The SFL will, most likely, be surrendered back to the MNR and then it has to be figured out who gets the new SFL. They are unsure of the timeframe for the surrender of the license – as it's not an easy process – very long and tedious. It's anyone's guess as to what will happen. There are a number of forms that the forest license could take including some form of Co-op SFL or Local Forest Management Corp (LFMC). It is unlikely, however, that the forest license will be transferred to any new owners of the pulp/sawmill facilities. Remi asked is the forest is still viable and is wood available? Some of the best areas (high ground) were taken to facilitate primary road building to access the unit, but they stayed within the plan – and the caribou mosaic. There is a lot of wood left but in varying degrees of quality.

The AWS was not yet approved. There are lots of trees growing and need to be planted. The Receiver gave GFMI authority to submit the AWS to the MNR for approval. Nothing much will happen except for tree planting. Ads will be in the newspapers regarding the planting and tending. The Heart Lake block will have most of the trees planted – the same thing will be done for the Kenogami – site prep, tree plant, fuel wood permits, etc. Also, aerial tending is included, but it's not certain if it will happen. This would be an administrative amendment brought forth to the LCC for review. Ben noted the FMP for the Ogoki has been delayed, and the next April deadline will not be met. Hopefully it will all be figured out before next year.

On the Kenogami Forest, there is a time delay now in getting the fuel wood permits given the forest is in receivership and the District Manager must sign ALL fuel wood permits, so it's taking up to three weeks. Charlotte cautioned

everyone of the delay and not to expect walking out of the MNR with a fuel wood permit as it's considered an "exemption" and must be signed by the DM.

e). Minor Items –Evan noted first that the best system for the moose and deer draws is the phone. He put up a graph showing the snow stations, highlighting the most recent drop of snow in April, comparing it over the last ten years. He also handed out the new Geraldton area fishing brochures with the new logo – everyone is welcome to take what they need. And please distribute in the community.

The Bear Wise program has officially come to an end. It was originally established 4 or 5 years ago as a way of making people aware of the bears and what to do to make your home more bear proof. There will be no further trapping and releasing bears although the phone line will remain active for advice only. The MNR will support the OPP in helping respond to different situations. Of the 21 seasonal jobs 11 staff have been let go as a result. The OPP is working on putting a plan together but no answers are known at the present time.

Roads – no roads are being maintained right now – a few major washouts have been fixed by the MNR and billed to TBPI In an agreement with Buchanan, they will be doing some maintenance – on the main arteries and the work has started. The Ogoki Road is fixed but you won't see the level of maintenance as in the past. One guy is working in the Nakina area and another is working out of Longlac. Any new issues should be forwarded to Charlotte. There is no money in the MNR budget to work on roads. A public service announcement has been made telling people to drive on the roads at their own risk. There really is no place to look up any updates on the roads.

The Aquasabon Work Update/Project - the sturgeon on Chipman – Receiver has been placed just above the rapids downstream from Ogalla Lake to monitor the sturgeon. 16 were tagged and the station installation was done on Friday. Evan showed the group pictures of the water levels at different times of the year which affect the sturgeon. The blockage downstream that they must go over is downstream from the Kenogami Bridge and will affect movement. Evan doesn't believe they are going upstream to spawn. Some existing tags must be faulty since they're not switching back on properly, but sending a mortality signal in the spring so they are trying on 16 more fish. The new tags will not have the switches on them which seem to be causing the problems. The new ones should last up to 3 years. Evan doesn't believe the fish are dead – just that the tags are faulty. A fall flight would help to compare spring vs. fall for movement. The new receivers will also receive mortality beeps as well as the regular beep. Flights are planned for May and June.

Long Lake Trout - Water levels on the lake affect the fall spawn and spring hatch of trout in the lake. There has been a 1.6 meter drop in the water level where they are laying eggs causing the eggs to dry over the winter when the water

levels go down. So if the water levels drop 2 feet in October it will force them to lay their eggs deeper and should improve the hatch. The MNR is installing temperature gauges to monitor the water temperatures as well. Another project slated for the future is climate change and how it affects the spawn of fish. Monitors have been placed on Long, Kenogamisis, Wildgoose, Twin and O'Sullivan lakes

f). Ask a Conservation Officer – Toni brought up the recent issues centering around the new automated licensing system and expressed her concern over tourists not being able to get their licenses because of issues in the system. Given most of the non-resident licenses are written on Saturdays and the MNR is closed (Service Ontario is open Saturday Mornings) for helping the outside issuers on those days (even though the new technical support company in Tennessee will be open), she feels there could be a good possibility of people traveling hundreds and even a thousand miles to come here to fish only to be told they have to wait for 2 days until the MNR is available to help resolve any issues. This is not how we want to treat our tourists – especially when tourism is the only viable industry left in our area at the present time (aside from mining). She asked Tom what he would do in the instance of someone that has tried and tried to get a license and was unable to – whether or not a ticket would be issued for not having a license. Tom said he must follow the law, and he could not say anything to the contrary. That is not the answer she wanted to hear as many of the outfitters in the area don't even have their system yet (including Toni) and the ones that have it are having lots of trouble with it. Toni has been in contact with Mr. Gravelle's office to try and resolve some of her issues but is worried that the entire area may be negatively affected. **Tom said he would check into it and would let us know if he is given any kind of direction on how to handle these situations.**

VIII. Out next meeting is scheduled for June 13<sup>th</sup>. **Louis Garon will look into the possibility of having a BBQ somewhere in town and will let Evan know. Toni will advise Our Lady of Fatima of our schedule.**

IX. Linda Beaulieu moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ed Hoffman – meeting adjourned.