

**Big Creek Watershed Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 4, 2010**

**Town of Amherstburg Municipal Office
271 Sandwich Street South, Amherstburg
6 p.m. to 8p.m.**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Approval of Meeting Agenda
3. Public Question and Answer Session
4. Review of January 18, 2010 Meeting Summary (attached)
5. Updates
 - a. Technical Studies
 - b. Plan Writer
 - c. Big Creek Valley Fill Violation (Tim Byrne, ERCA)
6. Discussion of Steering Committee/Technical Experts Workshop
 - a. Potential dates
 - b. Facilitator Scope of Work (attached)
7. Public Meetings
 - a. Review of comments from the December 8, 2009 Public Meeting (attached)
 - b. Discussion of next Public Meeting
 - i. Date, Time, Location
 - ii. Focus of Public Meeting
8. Other Business
 - a. RAMSAR Convention (attached; learn more at www.ramsar.org)
9. Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items
10. Adjournment

**Big Creek Watershed Plan
Steering Committee Meeting
Monday, January 18, 2010**

**Town of Amherstburg Municipal Office
271 Sandwich Street South, Amherstburg**

1. Welcome and Introductions

Matthew Child chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. The number of Steering Committee Members did not reach quorum, however the Committee decided to hold an informal discussion of the Agenda and proceed with the same items at the next Steering Committee Meeting to be held in February. The meeting was attended by:

Matthew Child, Co-Chair, Essex Region Conservation Authority
Carl Gibb, Community Representative
Teri Gilbert, Ministry of the Environment
Jackie Hubbs, Co-Chair, Town of Amherstburg
Allan Parks, Member of ACE Committee

Project Support Staff in attendance included:
Rebecca Belanger, Essex Region Conservation Authority

Residents in attendance included:
Steve Mickle
Greg Nemeth
Dan Struhar
George Laprade
Ron Lepain

2. Public Question and Answer Session

During the public question and answer period Teri Gilbert offered comments regarding the General Chemical Soda Ash Settling Basin (SASB). An Interim Dust Control Plan for the SASB has been undertaken and has identified the need to bring fill to the SASB for winter dust control purposes. Greg Nemeth questions whether capping the SASB will assist with ensuring protection of groundwater. Teri mentioned that the capping of the SASB will serve to protect Big Creek from impacts of chloride contamination. Teri also mentioned that the site receives substantial surface and groundwater monitoring.

Steve Mickle questioned what will happen if there is not an appropriate owner to come forward for the General Chemical lands. Teri stated that the MOE has considered that possibility and would use some of the funds in reserve to manage the closure of the industrial lands to meet the Ministry's requirements.

Dan Struhar questioned whether the Plan might propose to redefine the Big Creek channel as part of the Report. Matthew suggested that this relates to the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and the *Public Lands Act*, and that Rick Visser would be the appropriate person to answer this question.

Steve Mickle noted that flow and sedimentation conditions have changed around the Island near the bridge at County Road 20.

3. Review of October 29, 2009 Meeting Summary and Action Items (attached)

The Committee reviewed the Meeting Summary and no additions/omissions were identified.

4. December 8th, 2009 Open House Outcomes

a. Review of Open House Outcomes

Rebecca and Matthew provided comments regarding the Summary of Public Comments from the December 8th Open House. The Committee agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

b. Preliminary Discussion of Next Public Open House

Jackie proposed that a date be selected for the next public open house and that this date be identified on the website as soon as possible to have substantial public notification and opportunity for input.

5. Technical Program

It is anticipated that all draft technical reports will be completed by the end of March.

6. Plan Formulation

a. Suggested Author

Matthew noted that the project budget includes provision for a writer, and that in keeping with our approach to date a local individual familiar to the existing partners should be used, as opposed to a consultant. Matthew suggested Mike Nelson, Biologist, ERCA. Mike is presently working on Management Plans for the Town of LaSalle and able to dedicate the substantial time required. Through discussion there was agreement that the author would take their direction from the Committee (not any one agency/member) and would develop the Plan iteratively over the coming months. There was general agreement that Mike would be suitable and that he should be invited to the next Steering Committee meeting, and that the matter should be further discussed with the Committee at the next meeting.

b. Suggested Workshop for Steering Committee

The Committee discussed the possibility of having a one to one and one-half day facilitated workshop to develop and structure and content of the Plan. This workshop would be for Steering Committee and Technical Specialists, and would be followed by additional community consultations. The existing Table of Contents and input received through all consultations to date will be utilized. Those in attendance were supportive of this approach and late March or early April was identified as a potential timeframe. The Co-Chairs agreed to develop a draft Scope of Work for potential facilitation consultants to review, which will be provided to the Committee for review. Two potential facilitators were identified.

Action: Rebecca to contact the Committee to canvass which days of the week are preferable for the Workshop and advise back to the group on preferred dates.

7. Other Business

All agenda items discussed at this meeting were deferred to the next meeting.

8. Next Meeting Date and Agenda Items

The next meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 23rd, at the Town of Amherstburg, Council Chambers.

9. Adjournment

Meeting Summary prepared by Rebecca Belanger and reviewed by Matthew Child and Jackie Hubbs. Please forward any errors and omissions to rbelanger@erca.org.

Big Creek Watershed Plan Action Items- January 13, 2010

Date	Task	Resolution	Assigned To	Completed
Dec-09-08	Confirm possible point source locations of contamination in Big Creek	Teri Gilbert from MOE has been contacted and has passed this information along. Teri will report back once the investigation is complete	Teri Gilbert	Ongoing
Apr-23-2009	Research and compile list of items for inclusion into the Watershed Plan	Rebecca will review all meeting records and public comments received to date and prepare list	Rebecca	Ongoing
January-12-2010	Maintain list of public comments received and attendance at all public meetings	Rebecca will maintain files of all comments received at meetings and those in attendance	Rebecca	Ongoing
January-12-2010	CT Soils will dig boreholes at the along Lake Erie beach area	Matthew will provide an update from Tirupati regarding the purpose and timing of this work	Matthew/ Tirupati	Planned

Big Creek Watershed Plan Steering Committee & Technical Experts Workshop

Terms of Reference *Preliminary Draft for Discussion Only*

Background

The Big Creek watershed drains over 7,000 hectares (17,000 acres) including parts of the urban core of Amherstburg as well as rural and agricultural lands to the south. In June, 2008 a watershed planning process was initiated. The purpose of the watershed plan is to affirm and/or identify and assess natural resources in the watershed, and to establish appropriate strategies for the protection or management of these features and processes under present conditions, and as land use and other changes occur over time. The plan must recognize the importance of creating an inclusive vision for the watershed which supports a diverse agricultural industry, a wide variety of recreational opportunities including hunting, bird watching and other passive uses, with plentiful opportunities for residential growth and other development.

A watershed plan will address two priorities – the collection, analysis and synthesis of technical information, and the development of coherent objectives and practical, implementable strategies to protect, restore and enhance natural resource values and residents' quality-of-life throughout the watershed (see attached *Big Creek Watershed Plan – Terms of Reference Discussion Paper*). The information generated by the Plan will be used to support planning, regulatory, and implementation responsibilities of the study partners, and also guide voluntary stewardship actions. It is expected that the Watershed Plan will inform and influence decisions and policies of the Town, the Conservation Authority, and other organizations.

Technical study reports (water quality, water quantity, natural heritage) are currently being prepared. A workshop of technical specialists and Steering Committee members is required to develop the Plan's Objectives and Strategies i.e., to 'flesh out' the plan. These should fully consider the feedback and comments received at Public Meetings held in November 2008 and December 2009, and a draft Plan Table of Contents that has been developed (attached).

Scope of Services

The consultant will coordinate and lead a 1.5 day workshop of project technical specialists and the Steering Committee. Participants will include all or most of the following individuals, and possibly others:

Steering Committee

Jackie Hubbs, Town of Amherstburg (Co-Chair)
Matthew Child, ERCA (Co-Chair)
Rick Fryer, Town of Amherstburg
Allan Parks, Amherstburg Committee on the Environment
Teri Gilbert, MOE
Rick Visser, MNR

Marie-Claire Doyle, Environment Canada
Ed Faucher, Community Representative
Carl Gibb, Community Representative
Ari Varsa, Community Representative
David Coates, Community Representative

Technical Specialists

Dan Lebedyk, ERCA	Floral
Gerry Waldon, Consultant	Floral
Dave Martin, Consultant	Faunal
Erin Sanders, MNR	Wetland Evaluator
Melody Cairns, MNR	Species at Risk
Tirupati Boliseti, University of Windsor	Water Quantity
Stan Taylor, ERCA	Water Quantity/Water Quality
Raj Bejankiwar, ERCA	Water Quality
Rebecca Belanger, ERCA	Plan Coordination and Administration
Mike Nelson, ERCA	Plan Writer

Services will be required for four related tasks, as outlined below.

Phase 1 – Workshop Planning

The consultant will meet with the Steering Committee Co-Chairs and others to be identified to share information and develop the Workshop details. These include but are not limited to developing Workshop outcomes as specific objectives (e.g., SWOT, development of environmental objectives and strategies), confirming logistics, and finalizing deliverables and next steps. Technical specialists are available to present key findings as part of the workshop, and the Plan Coordinator can assist with logistical arrangements.

Phase 2 – Workshop Design

The consultant will develop a draft workshop design and short background exercise for participants. Drafts will be reviewed by the Steering Committee Co-Chairs and others to be identified. The short background exercise should prepare and focus participants for the workshop.

Phase 3 – Workshop Implementation

The consultant will lead the Workshop and record all information generated. A variety of facilitation techniques should be used to maximize Workshop outcomes.

Phase 4 – Workshop Report

A complete report (original software and .pdf format) summarizing Workshop process and outcomes if required.

Timelines

Proposal Submission:	March 5 (4 p.m.), 2010
Workshop Preparation:	March 8 – 26
Background Exercise Distribution:	week of March 29
Workshop (tentative):	Friday, April 9 (evening) and Saturday, April 10 (all day) Amherstburg, ON
Report:	April 26

Proposal Requirements & Format

Proposals should include the following information:

Description of the Company

Provide a brief description of the company's core business area and specific knowledge, expertise and experience in completing similar assignments.

Description of the Workshop Plan

Provide a description of the overall approach and process to be used in carrying out the Workshop, including a description of the overall desired outcomes and techniques to be used during each Phase to achieve the desired outcomes.

Project Team

Describe each person who will work on the project and attach resumes. For each individual, describe the person's level of participation in the project and the role that each person will play in carrying out the project. Describe relevant experience in planning and delivering similar Workshops.

Budget

Provide a complete and accurate itemized budget including the cost of each person working on the project, and other costs (travel, incidentals, etc.) to be incurred by the consultant in carrying out the payment.

Relevant Experience

Provide documentation describing past performance, including projects similar to the one described in this RFP. If possible, provide one copy of workshop materials (background exercise, agenda, or other documents) prepared by the company for other, similar projects.

The proposal should not exceed five pages in length plus attachments.

Costs

Total project costs should not exceed \$5,000 - \$7,000 (exclusive of GST). No additional compensation for additional costs will be made beyond the bid submitted.

The client will pay for Workshop venue, food and refreshment costs directly.

Proposal Submission & Contacts

Proposals are due by 4 p.m., Friday March 5. Proposals to undertake this work should be submitted electronically to the individuals listed below. Questions can be directed, in writing, to these individuals as well.

Jackie Hubbs
Town of Amherstburg
jhubbs@amherstburg.ca
(519) 736 5408

Matthew Child
Essex Region Conservation Authority
mchild@erca.org
(519) 776-5209

Overall Comments Submitted from Tables at Break-out Sessions
Big Creek Public Meeting #2
December 8th, 2009
AMA Sportsman Club

Question #1 – What best represents the Big Creek Watershed for you? What do you like most about the Big Creek watershed?

Question #2 – Based on the information presented tonight, where do you think the Watershed Plan should provide direction, for example: habitat restoration, water quality enhancement, education and awareness, etc.?

Question #3 – Do you have any recommended changes to the Table of Contents?

From Rebecca (my table chose to answer question #1)

- Diversity
- Important bird area
- Wildlife (ie. Turtles)
- Protection for wildlife
- Gives a sense of what private individuals can do to protect wildlife/plants (credit)
- No human contact – very pristine atmosphere
- High number of Species At Risk
- Doesn't have to be just spring and summer for fauna, major area for over-wintering birds
- Life there all year round.

Some comments for question #2 as well

- Acquiring additional natural properties for protection
- Acquisition strategy- prioritization of acquisition strategy
- Pay a farmer for buffer areas
- What would it take to create the wetland complex that does not presently exist.

From Allan (overall comments at the table)

- Diversity of the marsh was a key. The group found it hard to identify one main thing about the marsh that is important to them when there are so many unique and special things in one package.
- The study may benefit from doing some core sampling in the creek bed to see what is there. This will help with generating a history as well as making us more knowledgeable about the bed of the creek before any disturbances occurs in the bed that could release harmful contaminants.
- The steering committee needs to find more ways to allow for dialogues with the land owners and stakeholders.

From Dan (overall comments at the table)

- Appreciated that they had nature around them and that this natural feature that they owned was not open to the public. Appreciated the hunting opportunities that Big Creek offered to them and viewing wildlife.

Question #2

The watershed plan should provide direction so that the plan does not interfere with their current landuses that they enjoy. For example, people that enjoy hunting should not be impacted by changes in adjacent land uses. Educating people on the significance of Big Creek so that they don't damage the vegetation through uses such as ATVs and snowmobiles.

Question #3

Emphasis on the fact that this will be read by all laymen and should be easily understandable by everyone in simple form. This is a multi-use document and should not be purely scientific.

Comments Submitted from Individuals
Big Creek Public Meeting #2
December 8th, 2009
AMA Sportsman Club

Summary of comments received verbatim.

Question #1 – What best represents the Big Creek Watershed for you? What do you like most about the Big Creek watershed?

- *In order to answer this question you must understand that as a landowner/taxpayer who has spent 63 plus years living near big creek and owning property on big creek, I feel that my thoughts and ideas should have as much say and thought put forth as do the thoughts of outsiders conducting these studies. Without the assistance of landowners this watershed plan would not be possible.*

What I enjoyed as a youth was the wildlife, fishing, trapping, and the water usage for skating, and cross country skiing. I had a profound appreciation for the overall beauty There were many opportunities to meet new people and make new friends.

The preservation of the big creek as a landowner is top priority . It is also important to preserve the value of my property.

As one of the few watersheds (that some politicians are now talking an interest in), we have one opportunity to get this right. We need to preserve the overall beauty and protect all species that reside in and around the big creek.

Unfortunately due to increasing development we are finding more and more habitat in our towns and very close surrounding areas. Our big creek watershed should be a refuge for these animals and the plants in the eco system.

- *1. The Upper part of Big Creek between Alma Street and Simcoe Street.*
- *2. A close second is the drive along Big Creek shores from Lowes Sideroad along Meloche Rd. south to the highway.*

What appeals to me most is the seasonal changes which provide the great diversity and abundance of water fowl with periodic flooding just south of Alma St bridge, and due to migration patterns of larger waterfowl.

- *We walk at Holiday Beach year round. The trails are interesting and we love watching the birds and wildlife. I've enjoyed canoeing various sections of Big Creek. We'll often go up the hawk tower in the migration and have benefitted from the information from more knowledgeable observer.*
- *Diversity Preventative (Peace River Watershed Plan)*
- *Water filter/ total ecosystem, diversity of all parts, interactive. The ability to create access, its our backyard.*
- *Hunting, bushlot (firewood harvest), wildlife viewing opportunities, private (non-public) not a lot of public traffic.*

Question #2 – Based on the information presented tonight, where do you think the Watershed Plan should provide direction, for example: habitat restoration, water quality enhancement, education and awareness, etc.?

- I believe that education and awareness are lacking. I feel that the agencies responsible for education are not doing their part with their own partners. Unfortunately time and time again the public is left out of the loop. There are too many closed door meetings and talks going on. We need to as a community and as landowners be privy to ALL information affecting the watershed plan. As a community and not individuals we can all lend a helping hand. We should be asking tough questions.....We should be asking how a studies can be conducted on wildlife without including all four seasons being taken into consideration. How can we account for travel during all these months, how do you look at habitat restoration if we don't truly study the true eco system from January through December. If people conducting these study aren't able to do a thorough and proper job, how are we to properly educate the community at hand. As a community and as a committee why are we not questioning a multi million dollar arena being built right on our big creek watershed.

- Adults and children can be taught to plant trees and shrubs that will provide protection and food to many animals. We can educate in the area of decreasing pollution. We can create corridors for wildlife instead of taking them away.

- Again my area of interest is between Alma St. and Simcoe St. In this area flooding due to new suburban runoff has killed off very old oak and ash trees. Either no buffer zone or a very narrow buffer zone exists. Habitat restoration could be accomplished with the cooperation of landowners who could give up land currently cultivated but marginal in crop yields. The plan to plant trees and shrubs and trees (flood tolerant) 12-50 metres along side the Creek as a buffer would keep cattle out of the creek (allowing for crossings) and filter the water before it reaches the creek.

- I'd enjoy more information about what I'm seeing. Is the ERCA website being used to its full potential? Could we get more information about what's out there and what's being seen.

- Prevention How do you know what to study

- More data needed first before we look at uses. Cleanup first. Stabilize environment Second. Entertain uses third.

- Winter animal habitat enhancement. Eg.should prohibit snowmobile access in winter, education/awareness regarding significance to help protect values from users (trespassing snowmobiles/ATVs). Further study and ongoing monitoring is required. Respect for hunting opportunities (ie. Development near existing hunted properties/blinds) could reduce existing opportunities.

Question #3 – Do you have any recommended changes to the Table of Contents?

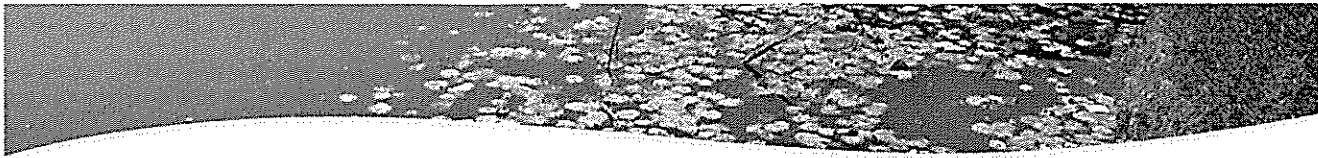
- In the grand scheme of things. Development has become the biggest threat to the ecosystem. There needs to be accountability at a municipal level and at a provincial level. If it wasn't for a few southern residents caring about our watershed it would be nothing to look at. Restoration has been their top priority. It would have dried up and we would still be hearing about an eco system in need of immediate crisis intervention.

- Like to see something more about commitment to public education. Big Creek is a marvellous resource for all of us in the County. We should encourage it to be valued.

- Habitat – Biomagnification, Core Sampling, Back to the public when we have the data.

- Ecosystem not mentioned. Healthy ecosystem protection and monitoring.

- *Add in a total look at the ecosystem. Summary of a Statement of Intent/ Purpose of Goals. Need to do New Fish Studies.*
- *Keep language simple (layman's terms).*



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Laguna Hedionda, Los Lípez Ramsar site, Bolivia (Photo Omar Rocha)

The Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Negotiated through the 1960s by countries and non-governmental organizations that were concerned at the increasing loss and degradation of wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds, the treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem, and the Convention's member countries cover all geographic regions of the planet.

The Ramsar mission

The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

The Convention uses a broad definition of the types of wetlands covered in its mission, including lakes and rivers, swamps and marshes, wet grasslands and peatlands, oases, estuaries, deltas and tidal flats, near-shore marine areas, mangroves and coral reefs, and human-made sites such as fish ponds, rice paddies, reservoirs, and salt pans.

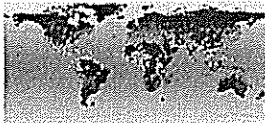
The Wise Use concept

At the centre of the Ramsar philosophy is the "wise use" concept. The wise use of wetlands is defined as "the maintenance of their ecological character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development". "Wise use" therefore has at its heart the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and their resources, for the benefit of humankind.

» [Contracting Parties \(Member States\)](#)

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Ramsar sites of the world



Wetlands connect us all.

[Ramsar Sites Info Service](#)

The Convention today

Number of » [Contracting Parties](#): 159 Sites designated for the

» [List of Wetlands of](#)

[International Importance](#): 1886 Total surface area of designated sites (hectares): 185,156,612

Latest news

- [WWD 2010: message from the Secretary General](#)
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- [South Africa's newest Ramsar site in KwaZulu-Natal](#)
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Credits



Renovation of the Ramsar Web site has been supported by the [Danone Group](#).

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