

**Big Creek Watershed Plan Steering Committee  
June 25, 2008 Meeting Summary  
Town of Amherstburg Town Hall (5 p.m. to 9 p.m.)**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Matthew Child chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. The meeting was attended by:

Lory Bratt, Town of Amherstburg  
Matthew Child, Essex Region Conservation Authority  
David Coates, Community Representative  
Ed Faucher, Community Representative  
Rick Fryer, Town of Amherstburg Councilor  
Carl Gibb, Community Representative  
Holly Simpson, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
Archie Parastatidis, Ontario Ministry of the Environment  
Allan Parks, Amherstburg Committee on the Environment  
Ari Varsa, Community Representative

Regrets were received from Sandie George and Marie-Claire Doyle, Environment Canada.

All individuals in attendance offered a few words about their background and their interests and expectations of the Big Creek Watershed Plan process. With respect to interests and expectations, a variety of comments were offered, including:

- Provide baseline information that can be used for ongoing decision making and to clarify misperceptions about what is happening in the watershed
- Provide sound technical information to enhance policies that can be used by the Municipality, ERCA and others to ensure long term management of the watershed
- An holistic watershed approach will allow a broad range of issues to be addressed, including geographic coverage (upstream and downstream) and environmental processes (water quantity, water quality, natural heritage, etc.)
- Lead to the enhancement of natural features in the watershed including fish, wildlife and vegetation
- Lead to improvements in sediment and water quality in Big Creek and its receiving Lake Erie
- Provide educational opportunities for the community, including providing understandable information on what current conditions in the watershed are, and what landowners can do to improve Big Creek watershed conditions
- Apply the watershed planning model used in Big Creek to other watersheds in the region and perhaps beyond
- The need to properly engage the broader community in the development of the Big Creek Watershed Plan

Through discussion, there was general agreement that the Watershed plan is/will:

- The first watershed planning process to be undertaken in our region (there are no others to learn from!)

- Include several technical investigations using modern protocols to fully characterize the watershed
- Develop a clear sense of community priorities for the watershed
- Result is a prescriptive, forward looking plan that describes actions that are needed to improve watershed conditions

There was also general agreement that the Watershed Plan is not:

- A process that will affect landowner rights
- A process that will delay other activities or developments, although information generated through the Watershed Plan will be used as it becomes available

## **2. Review of January 22, 2008 ACE/Agency Meeting Record & Big Creek Watershed Plan Terms of Reference**

The January 22, 2008 meeting of ACE and various agency participants was reviewed. The meeting was held at the request of ACE and resulted in several suggested changes to the Big Creek Watershed Plan Terms of Reference which were subsequently incorporated. Also, the process for selecting the four Steering Committee Community Representative positions was discussed, and was ultimately used for selecting these members.

The Big Creek Watershed Plan Terms of Reference were also quickly reviewed. The Terms of Reference spells out in some detail the technical investigations that will be undertaken. The water quality assessment is currently underway, while the remaining technical investigations (water quantity, natural heritage, and geomorphology) will be initiated late in 2008 and early 2009.

## **3. Watershed Tour**

The majority of the meeting consisted of a tour by mini-bus of the entire watershed (see attached tour route). The tour provided an opportunity for members learn about the watershed and to for members to interact.

## **4. Next Steps**

Following the tour it was agreed that Ontario MNR will proceed with confirming the Big Creek wetland boundary in the summer/early fall of 2008. It was also confirmed that the Big Creek Watershed Plan process should not delay alternative energy developments, although information gained through the watershed planning process should be utilized for other land use decision making.

## **5. Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 17, 2008 from 6 p.m. to ~9 p.m. at Amherstburg Town Hall.

Meeting summary prepared by Matthew Child. Please email any errors or omissions to Matthew at [mchild@erca.org](mailto:mchild@erca.org)