

Summary of Public Comments and Concerns
Big Creek Watershed Plan
November 2008 Open House

1. Participants responded that ERCA, MOE, MNR and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (as appropriate) offer educational support in the following areas:
 - appropriate tree planting and other habitat restoration;
 - septic tank inspections and upgrading;
 - keeping livestock out of the Creek;
 - the overall importance of protecting the watershed, water quality and habitat.
 - curriculum for elementary age children should be provided focusing on the importance of protecting the watershed.
2. The Town should encourage the careful/controlled used of fertilizers or chemicals within the watershed. Information session participants commonly answered that they believe that residents are aware of proper methods to apply chemicals (Note: Since the November 2008 Open House the Province has enacted a province wide ban on the cosmetic application of pesticides).
3. It was revealed that there is a lack of public knowledge regarding technical and financial assistance programs that environmental agencies including ERCA offers in areas such as: capping and safe closure of abandoned wells, preparation of conservation farm plans, assistance with repairing faulty septic systems. The community agreed that grants for these and similar initiatives are important.
4. Overall, residents identified the following priorities for the Watershed Plan (unranked):
 - improve water quality, including monitoring and addressing faulty septic systems as a source of contaminants, and completing more stream cleanups;
 - stricter enforcement of existing legislation and regulations, including the use of stiffer fines;
 - support private landowners stewardship project, including providing technical and financial assistance to landowners for beneficial management practices including tree planting, soil erosion reduction projects, buffer strips (planting along watercourses), livestock exclusion fencing, etc.;
 - provide improved education and awareness opportunities for landowners to learn, including workshops, education campaigns;
 - stop development completely within the watershed area;
 - eradicate invasive species e.g., Phragmites;
 - develop recommendations addressing erosion;
 - develop an approach to control hunting/hunters;
 - make businesslike decisions;
 - resolve drainage issues;
 - manage water levels of the Creek;
 - keep the public informed throughout the process.