

Minutes -- General Assembly Meeting of Property Owners of Lake Notre Dame and Usher Lake, held August 28, 2004

Time: 11:00 to 13:00 hours Place: Rupert Community Hall

Note: Attendance by property was taken at the door and voting slips were distributed, one per property owner. Seventy properties were represented at the meeting (approximately 100 people in total). Most of the members of the working group were present.

1. Chair and note taker

- Jacqueline chaired in both official languages the first portion of the agenda and John the second. Loreto took notes in French and Nick took notes in English. Nicole Latreille and Carole Doré translated whenever necessary.

2. Introduction

- Jacqueline called the meeting to order, explained the agenda and rules of conduct, introduced the working group and explained what the group had accomplished to date.
- Jacqueline explained the objective for the proposed new association. She explained the benefits of, and process for establishing an association. She then answered questions about this.
[for information presented, see attachment 2]

3. Voting session – property owners were asked to vote

- In favour of forming an association and registering it with the following name and objective:
Lac Notre-Dame and Usher Lake Association
'to promote, protect and preserve the quality of the lakes and the watershed environment to ensure their continued use and enjoyment by all'. Result – clear majority in favour.
- For an interim board (the current working group). Result – clear majority in favour.
- In favour of an annual \$20 membership fee. Result – clear majority in favour.
- To determine when the next general meeting should occur (this fall or next spring). Result – next general meeting will occur in November 2004.

4. Registration of new members

- There was a 15-20 minute break during which time members were registered and the annual fee was collected. Sixty-one property owners joined and \$1,220 was collected.

5. Milfoil weed

- Biologist Anne Phelps explained factors contributing to the spread of the milfoil weed and outlined immediate measures property owners can take to control its spread (see attachment 1). She cautioned against implementing interventions before proper studies of the lake are done.
- She also announced that the Museum of Nature is willing to lend us equipment to begin testing the lake water. Anne offered training sessions on how to use the equipment properly.

6. Closing remarks

- John offered closing remarks and made a request for donations. He said that the working group would attempt to organize an information session (on the request of numerous participants) involving a small panel of biologists (including the municipal biologist). He also stated that we would begin testing of the lake water as soon as possible, ideally before the November general meeting.
- The meeting was adjourned at 13:00hr.

Attachment 1 – Milfoil weed Presentation by Biologist Anne Phelps

During the general assembly, biologist Anne Phelps explained factors contributing to the spread of the milfoil weed and outlined immediate measures property owners can take to control its spread.

1. Map the depth of the lake.
2. Map areas of plant growth.
3. Collect water samples over time (nitrogen and phosphorous, particularly)
4. Collect sediment for testing.
5. Send the sediment to a laboratory for testing.
6. Weaken the plant by cutting off its bloom (Fall and Spring).
7. Mark the plant by placing buoys around the mats.
8. Limit activity through the mats (boats, canoes, swimmers).
9. Monitor septic systems.
10. Develop a lake management plan.

She cautioned against implementing interventions before proper studies of the lake are done. She stressed that actions against the milfoil may cause conditions that would lead to other serious problems (such as the rapid spread of other undesirable plant growth, like algae).

In the meantime, she invited individuals to take the following steps:

- Encourage and protect healthy plant growth
- Restore shorelines
- Reduce contaminants (septic, fertilizer, pesticides)
- Rinse equipment before and after entering the lake

Anne recommended that we

1. Investigate the problem
2. Gather information
3. Seek professional assistance, and
4. Create program for the lake.

During question period, Anne also mentioned that the plant can be weakened over time if it's cut near its base and removed from the water twice during the year (spring and fall). She cautioned against digging the plant up by its roots because this stirs up sediment, releasing nutrients into the water and creating conditions for an algae bloom or increased growth of milfoil.

Attachment 2

Agenda of the meeting

1. Introduction/background information
Questions/contributions
2. Voting session:
 - creation of a new association
 - Interim Board
 - membership fee
 - date of first general meeting
3. Reception of membership forms and fees
4. Eurasian Water Milfoil

a) Rules for conduct of meeting

All persons are to treat others with courtesy and respect

1. Only persons recognized by the Chair are permitted to speak
2. All speakers are to address the Chair and not the audience
3. Persons having the floor are limited to 30 seconds, subject to monitor by the Chair
4. Interventions must be brief given the bilingual situation
5. Anyone breaking these fundamental rules repeatedly can be asked to leave

b) Objectives of this meeting:

- to bring property owners together and share views
- to obtain a clear mandate and support from the property owners for setting up and registering a the new association; vote on Interim Board and fee
- to receive the membership applications and fees
- to decide on the date and location of the First General Assembly [election of the Board of Directors, adoption of the by-laws, strategy and the plan of activities]
- to share information and get support for the development of initiatives to investigate and determine the most appropriate methods for the monitoring and control of the Eurasian water milfoil.

c) What has the working group accomplished to this day?

- searched and collected all available information pertaining to the lake and its watershed
- put additional buoys around the areas covered with milfoil
- identified research institutions and experts who could be available to us
- gathered and shared information on Eurasian water milfoil and techniques to control it [documents, internet sites, visits of lake associations, etc.]
- prepared and launched an awareness/information campaign [bilingual leaflet on the plant]
- pressed the Municipality to resume water testing
- organized a presentation by Paul Hamilton [Canadian Museum of Nature] on the plant and its control for the working group and several property owners
- distributed of a draft bathymetric map (thanks to Alain Maisonneuve)
- prepared this general meeting.

d) Why set up and register an association?

Among others reasons to:

- share information and represent the property owners on the lake and its watershed
- obtain more easily all necessary information, identify possible means of control and define efficient and sustainable strategies with the support of experts and/or relevant institutions
- conduct consultation and establish formal relations with various levels of government
- get official recognition
- access funding from public and private sources
- obtain authorization for any intervention (Ministry of Environment)
- establish working partnerships with other lake associations at the municipal level (at least 15 known associations and approximately 120 lakes)
- establish signing authority (contracts, formal agreements between institutions, etc.)
- participate in the Gatineau River Watershed Association
- become a member of FAPEL (Fédération des associations pour la protection de l'environnement des lacs)

e) Steps and requirements for the registration? (Approximately 2 month period)

1. Search and reserve the name

2. The requirements for registration include:

- Name
- Minimum of 3 applicants [Carole Doré, Selena LaBrecque and Jacqueline Lambert-Madore]
- Fundamental objective [must be broad enough to avoid having to register again in case the association is expanding and/or diversifying its activities]

Web page (thanks to Robert J. Boucher): <http://www.magma.ca/~roblynn/association>