

NEWSLETTER – Summer, 2008

BSRA Annual Meeting – August 23, 2008

9:45 – Coffee

10:00 – meeting

St. Peter's Church Hall, north of St. Joseph on Highway 21

All member associations are encouraged to have at least one representative in attendance.

All residents of the shoreline wards of Hay West and Stanley West are invited to attend and participate, although only the official delegates of member Associations may vote.

Spring General Meeting (June 7)

The input of the representatives of our member associations provides essential direction in establishing Association goals and specific priorities for the following year. This particular meeting was planned to maximize such input through small group discussions on five important themes:

- **Property Assessments and Taxes**
- **Water Quality in Bluewater**
- **Large-scale Wind Turbines**
- **Sewage Treatment**
- **Shoreline Regulation by ABCA and Bluewater**

Each small group reported back to the entire group, summarizing the key points identified during its discussion. The Board is in the process of analyzing the input and preparing a summary report. It is important that your subdivision is represented at our August Annual Meeting when the resulting recommendations are discussed.

BSRA Water Quality Activities in 2008

- **Water Testing** With financial assistance from Bluewater, BSRA is working with ABCA to test 4 Bluewater ravines and beaches for E. coli. The 2008 results, along with previous years' data, are available on our website.

- **Municipality of Bluewater Environment Committee**
This Committee, chaired by Hay West Councillor Bill MacDougall, meets monthly. Current issues include mandatory septic inspection in Huron County and the future of landfill sites in the County. BSRA monitors these meetings.

- **Blue Flag Initiative** This municipal initiative, chaired by Stanley West Councillor George Irvin, is working toward achieving Blue Flag status for the Bayfield Beach and Marina. Paul Mennill is a committee member.

- **Collaboration with ABCA** BSRA and ABCA continue to work together to improve the water quality of the St. Joseph ravine/watershed and to investigate initiatives that would result in water quality improvements in

other Bluewater ravines. John Gillespie, Paul Mennill, and Jan Purvis represent BSRA in this important initiative.

- **Health Hazard Assessment** BSRA formally requested the County Medical Officer of Health to conduct a health hazard assessment in the ravines of the south gullies in Huron County.

The Health Unit, claiming that this is beyond their mandate, declined to conduct the assessment. As a result, BSRA has requested the Ontario Minister of Health to rule on the position taken by the County Health Unit.

Formal BSRA Presentations at Bluewater Public Input Meetings

- **Use of ATVs on Municipal Property** (June 23) **1st Vice-President Jan Purvis**

noted the continuing concerns of shoreline residents with respect to ATVs on the beaches: irresponsible driving, environmental damage, and noise pollution. BSRA recommended that Council adopt a by-law that prohibits the use of ATVs on its municipal properties and, with the exception of special circumstances, on Bluewater beaches.

- **Commercial Wind Farm Location** (July 14) **President Paul Mennill** identified a number of concerns with respect to commercial wind turbines, and presented the Board's recommendation that any commercial wind farm operations within Bluewater be located not closer than 2000 metres from all urban/settlement areas.

Property Taxes: 2009 – 2012

As noted in the *Spring* edition, 2008 is a reassessment year for property values. The reassessed value you will receive this fall will be the basis of your property taxes over the next 4 years, as per the current policy of the provincial government. Any increase in assessment will be spread over the following 4 years to lessen the impact in any one year. However, based on a study commissioned by WRAFT and CAPTR, the impact of the 2008 reassessment on your taxes from 2009 to 2012 inclusive is expected to continue the trend of increasing the share of the total tax burden paid by lakefront residents in the Wards of Hay West, Stanley West, and Bayfield.

Don't assume someone else will solve this problem for you. What have **YOU** done about your concern?

- Have you signed the on-line petition (www.wraft.com)?
- Have you considered visiting your MPP and conveying your message of concern? (See www.captr.org)

If not ... The only thing that will make the government think again is political pressure.

Proposed Change in Board of Directors' Composition

The 2008 Annual Meeting will be asked to approve a change which replaces the two existing positions of 1st and 2nd Vice-President with the two positions of Vice-President and Environment Chairperson. The total number of positions on the Board of Directors remains unchanged. Reasons for the proposed changes are as follows:

Vice-President It is expected that the Vice-President will proceed to assume the Presidency within one or two years. This period should provide sufficient time both to become familiar with the various issues and to establish working relationships with our Ward Councillors and members of the Bluewater administration.

Eliminating the current position of 2nd Vice-President will reduce the length of an individual's commitment to serve on the Board (i.e., Vice-President, President, and Past President). This shorter time commitment should assist the Nominating Committee in its search for new Association officers.

Environment Chairperson This position will serve as Chairperson of the Environment Committee, resulting in more direct communication between the Board and the Committee. The change reflects the emphasis shoreline residents place on environmental issues and the importance of ensuring coordination of all related BSRA activities.

"It All Ends Up in the Lake" **August 23, 2008** **8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

BSRA is a co-sponsor of this 5th annual environmental conference to be held at the Columbus Centre, Parson Court, in Goderich. See www.bsra.ca for full program details.

The scheduled keynote speaker is **Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario**, the province's independent environmental watchdog. Appointed by the Legislative Assembly, the ECO is tasked with monitoring and reporting on the government's compliance with the Environmental Bill of Rights to ensure that Ontario's natural environment is protected and conserved for future generations. In light of BSRA's leadership role in seeking to improve water quality, his comments should be of particular interest to shoreline residents. Although this event conflicts with the BSRA Annual Meeting, the date was chosen by the joint planning committee to accommodate the schedule of the keynote speaker. It is anticipated that such conflict in dates will be avoided in future years.

Keeping You Informed

Your Board of Directors attempts to keep you informed about items of importance to shoreline residents through this **Newsletter** (published three times a year – Spring, Summer, and Fall), the Association website, and periodic e-mail communications from the President to subdivision contact persons. In addition, the Board relies on the representative from your subdivision association to relay information to you from his/her attendance at our two General Meetings held in June and August..

However, our **Association website** does not have the space limitations of the *Newsletter* and can therefore provide those of you with Internet access more detailed information on various subjects. Also, it is updated on a regular basis and is usually the source of the most current news affecting shoreline residents. Learn to rely on our newly-restructured Association website for the most current information and for more detailed descriptions!

Paul Mennill
President

Bob Campbell
Communications Director