



NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2011

Note: BSRA Annual Meeting at 10:00 am on **Saturday, August 27th** at St. Peter's Church Hall, just north of St. Joseph on Highway 21. Coffee available at 9:30 am

Make sure your Association is up-to-date on current issues and represented at this meeting

BSRA's Water Quality Testing Program

With financial support from the Municipality of Bluewater, BSRA is continuing its water quality testing program along the shoreline, in cooperation with the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. To maintain consistency with previous years' data, the same four beach areas are being tested for *E. coli* in 2011 – Wildwood, Houston Heights, St. Joseph and Ridgeway. The weekly results are posted on the BSRA website. Although the quality of the lake water has been generally good so far this year, please remember that the probability of *E.coli* contamination is high if you can't see your feet when standing in waist-deep water and/or a heavy rainfall event has taken place in the previous two days.

This year, intensive research is taking place in the Ridgeway ravine. ABCA has received significant funding from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to do year-round expanded water quality testing, stewardship visits with landowners, implementation of beneficial management practices (BMP's) and research to determine the effectiveness of various BMP's in the part of the ravine east of Highway 21. BSRA, again with financial support from Bluewater, has been able to have ABCA carry out expanded water quality testing in the lower part of the ravine (not covered by the OMAFRA/ABCA study) and, thereby, complement the upstream testing and collect a *complete* picture of the health of the Ridgeway ravine.

Industrial Wind Turbines in Bluewater

In July, the Ontario Power Authority offered contracts through the provincial government's Feed-In Tariff (FIT) electricity production program to companies planning to develop industrial wind turbine farms in Bluewater. These contract offers give the developers the go-ahead to begin the process of obtaining the necessary permits and approvals for their projects.

In the Zurich area, two projects received contract offers: the Bluewater Wind Energy Centre, a 60 MW installation planned by Boulevard Associates Canada (a subsidiary of the NextEra energy company - formerly Florida Power & Light) and the Grand Bend Wind Farm, a 100 MW project proposed by the Grand Bend Wind L. P.

In the Dashwood area, the Goshen Wind Energy Centre was offered a contract as well. This 102 MW installation is also a Boulevard Associates Canada project.

Exactly where and how many wind turbines will be installed is still unclear. What *is* clear, however, is that all of Bluewater, except for the part of the municipality west of Highway 21, will be affected by the installation of 200+ wind turbines. NextEra has indicated that it will plan its installations in compliance with provincial regulations but will not adhere to the setback by-law passed by Bluewater Council. (This by-law was passed by Council just prior to the enactment of the provincial Green Energy Act – an Act that removed municipal control over the installation of wind turbines and other "green" energy projects.)

Municipal Matters

1. Bluewater has increased its water rates, effective July 1, 2011. Further increases will take place in 2012 and 2013. Details about the increases have been posted on the Bluewater website: www.bluewater.town.on.ca.
2. Bluewater is participating for a second year in the province-wide Communities in Bloom program. Judging took place in late July and results will be announced Oct. 20th. Last year, Bluewater earned "4 Blooms" in a "5 Bloom" rating system – a commendable achievement for a newcomer to the program.
3. Effective Aug. 15th this year, the Hay Landfill site will be closed for public dropoff and Hay West residents are directed to use the Stanley Landfill site located behind the municipal complex on Mill Road, just west of Varna. Check the municipal website for hours of operation.
4. Currently, an allegation of conflict of interest has been filed again Bluewater Mayor Dowson. Given that Mayor Dowson and family members have leases with wind turbine companies, his voting on wind turbine issues that have come before Bluewater Council is being challenged. The date for the hearing on this case will be set in September and is scheduled to take place in Goderich.

Environmental Threats

1. Emerald Ash Borer (EAB): this non-native beetle, first discovered in North America in 2002, is now present in Huron County. EAB attacks ash trees – any size, any age and any type. If you have ash trees on your property or your association's property, take note of the health of these trees. If you notice thinning of the crown, clumps of new shoots growing from the trunk, vertical cracks in the bark, or general decline in the appearance of the tree, then suspect the presence of EAB. For more information, go to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website: www.ontariosforests.mnr.gov.on.ca.
2. Giant Hogweed: this tall (3 to 4 m) distinctive plant grows on roadsides, stream banks, waste areas and yards and is hazardous to humans. If sap from the plant comes in contact with human skin, and is exposed to light at the same time, it may cause a serious burn. A helpful and detailed Fact Sheet about this plant can be found on the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority website: www.abca.on.ca.

Grand Bend Sewage Treatment Facility and the Lakeshore Sewage Collection System

The most recent meeting of the Tri-Municipal Committee was held on July 15th in Crediton. This provided Dillon's engineer with the opportunity to outline again his company's recommendation about the type and size of the Grand Bend Sewage Treatment Facility. He outlined the advantages of the ORBAL system re: cost, efficiency, flexibility and simplicity of operation over the SBR system being suggested by the Zone 3 group.

The Zone 3 group - a Grand Bend citizens' group actively researching this issue - questions whether a new sewage treatment facility is required at all, given how little of the current four-cell lagoon system is being used. Added to this is their discovery that the engineer's projections for input from Pinery Park are out by 80+ %. Detailed descriptions of this meeting, and earlier Tri-Municipal meetings, can be found in online editions of the Exeter Times-Advocate and the Lakeshore Advance.

For Bluewater shoreline residents affected by this issue, note the upcoming **Public Information Session** being held on **Saturday, August 20th** at 10:00 am at the Bluewater Community Centre (the arena complex) in Zurich. Dillon's recommendations regarding the proposed sewage collection system along Highway 21 from Port Blake to St. Joseph will be presented at 10:00 am and a question and answer session will follow the presentation.

The Bluewater Municipal Council will be making decisions about this project in the next few months. For those Associations affected by this proposed project, your Association's input at this critical stage in the process is important. Do you know how this project will be implemented? Do you know what your costs will be? Have you voiced your opinions to Bluewater's municipal councillors?

Congratulations to the St. Joseph & Area Historical Society for its successful production of "Narcisse, a new play about St. Joseph." The story of Narcisse Cantin and the history of St. Joseph and the French Settlement is a rich component of Bluewater's history.