

Niagara Coastal Community Collaborative

April 3rd, 2018, 5:30-8:30pm – Crystal Ridge Branch of the Fort Erie Public Library

Attendees:

Rick Froese	Nadine Litwin	Olivia Groff
Erica Froese	Diane Stemerding	Julia Hatcher
Paul Collard	Gary Stemerding	Jody McKenna
Beth Palma	Felix Barbetti	Tim Seburn
Clayton Nadeau	Jack Hellinga	
Ian Twyford	Amy Parks	New Member: Deanna Lindblad
June Chipp	Rick Stockton	(Replacing Mike Rose from the MNRF)
Jim Merrick	Cheryl Schonerille	Guest: Don Zelazny
		(New York State Department of Environmental Conservation)

Summary of Action Items:

- Coordinating committee to draft presentations and two page pamphlet for use when communicating with town councils and the public.
- Amy Parks to review MNRF data bases to ensure Bert Miller Fowlers Toad data has been accounted for.
- The group to consider volunteers with web design skills to maintain the website.
- Jody to circulate information on the State of Lake Erie meeting

Overview of citizen science program and funding proposal:

Jody McKenna provided an overview of the proposed citizen science program and the funding application. A summary of this material can be found in the presentation. The funding application was led and submitted by Annie Michaud and Niagara College on the behalf of the Collaborative and will lead administration of the funding if the collaborative is successful. The proposal outlined 4 streams of citizen science which linked to the Collaborative's ecological priorities:

1. Nearshore Water Quality Monitoring (Niagara College)
2. Cladophora Monitoring (Niagara College)
3. Local Species at Risk (Hogg Nose Snake and the Fowlers Toad) (MNRF)
4. Hardened Shorelines (Landcare Niagara and Albert Garafalo)

In hopes of reaching as many people as possible (a requirement of the funding program) three levels of engagement with citizens were outlined:

1. Coastal Ambassadors – core volunteers for backbone support
2. Scientific Community – trained and targeted volunteers
3. Extended Engagement – broad engagement of coast users

The **total funding** request was **\$755,726 with a committed \$114, 423 in in-kind support from 2018-2022.**

Expected to have the results in August.

If funding is not secured work will continue on the Local Species at Risk and Cladophora Citizen Science Streams.

Comments:

- Suggested that we engage the councillors early in our project to raise awareness and build buy in (municipalities include Fort Erie, Port Colbourne, and Wainfleet)
- Suggested that we put together some common outreach material engaging the public and councils about the work of the Collaborative. The coordinating committee is to draft material before the next meeting
- It was noted that the Bert Miller Nature Club has produced a manual on the Fowlers Toad that may be useful in the species at risk stream as well as observation data. Amy Parks committed to reviewing information already submitted by Bert Miller to ensure all supporting information provided by the club has been accounted for.

- It was suggested that some kind of computer script to quickly digitize the incoming citizen science data would be useful. Amy Parks noted that they may be some help from the MNRF GIS team
- Rick noted that the Bert Miller Nature Club would likely have members who would be interested in monitoring a stretch of beach for Cladophora
- FOFEC offered some limited support to the water quality stream
- Lorraine Bay Association noted that they have been monitoring water quality for some time and have shared this information with appropriate groups and there has been a general consensus that implementing targeted best management practices in tributary drains would improve water quality in the bay, however funding for implementation has been limited.
- The Collaborative requires assistance with website updates and maintenance. Potential to work with Niagara College students (if there is a volunteer within The Collaborative, please provide their contact information at the next meeting).

Commentary from Don Zelazny:

Don outlined programs ongoing in New York State that aligned with the planned efforts of the Collaborative. He agreed to future collaboration in the Eastern Basin.

- A Cladophora monitoring program is being developed for the 3 state and 6 municipal beaches in New York on Lake Erie: a template has been developed, but no plan for a common database yet.
- The Lake Erie Water Alliance is developing a common sampling design for investigating bacteria in creeks
- The United States Geological Survey is starting to monitor nutrient inputs in tribs to Lake Erie in support of the lake wide modelling
- Hardened shorelines are classified on the United States coast every 5 years to support emergency planning however no current effort to translate this information into environmental impacts and take action
- 2 large shoreline cleanups planned annually in April and Sept. with support of a full time coordinator
- There will be a **State of Lake Erie Meeting by the New York Sea Grant on April 12**. Information will be circulated to the group.

Other Funding Opportunities:

The group discussed other funding opportunities if the ECCC proposal is not successful. Most of them are due in the fall so we have time to decide how to repackage the current proposal and add the Collaborative activities that did not fall under the citizen science stream. Other funding opportunities include:

- Trillium Fund-Collective Impact Investment Stream (Nov deadline)
<https://otf.ca/news/ontario-trillium-foundation-announces-new-grant-deadlines-2018>
- Canada Ontario Agreement Funding (ongoing for discussion)
- Great Lakes Guardian Council Funding (Nov deadline?)
- Ontario's Rural Economic Development Program (Sept 2018 deadline)
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/rural-economic-development-program>
- Don Zelazny suggested Sustain our Great Lakes, a US group who fund on the ground restoration activities in both Canada and the United States <http://www.sustainourgreatlakes.org/>

Other Business:

- Next meeting date to be determined in May. Tom Edge from ECCC will present on the E.coli track down study and Tom MacDougall may present on the state of the local fish population