

APPROVED

Natural Heritage System for the Niagara Watershed Steering Committee

Tuesday June 29, 2010

1:30 – 4:30pm

NPCA Boardroom

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Geoffrey Verkade, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Jon Whyte, Niagara Homebuilders Association
Anne Marie Laurence, Niagara Escarpment Commission
Michael Fasano, Niagara Escarpment Commission
Albert Garofalo, Niagara Land Trust
Nadine Litwin, Land Care Niagara
Carla Carlson, Niagara Land Trust
Don Campbell, Region of Niagara
Suzanne McInnes, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Terry Mac Dougall, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation
Silvia Strobl, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
John Potter, Niagara Woodlot Association, Naturalist Community
Roman Olszewski, Peninsula Field Naturalists
Deanna Lindblad, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Regrets:

John Middleton – Brock University (recommended Dave Brown as rep.)
Mike Evers – County of Haldimand (sending alternate)
Brian Sky- Six Nations
Tony Van Oostrom- Ontario Power Generation
Catherine Plosz- City of Hamilton
Natalie Kiers – Niagara Land Trust



1. Welcome and Introductions

D. Lindblad welcomed participants. Each participant introduced themselves and stated what organization or agency they were representing.

2. Introduction to the Process (NPCA team)

D. Lindblad presented information about the Natural Heritage System process. She defined and gave examples for the Socio-political Constraints, Biodiversity Representation, Hydrological Function, Ecological Function- Course Scale Wildlife Habitat, Species Habitat – Fine Scale.

G. Verkade presented the details of the MARXAN Model being employed. He outlined how the model works explaining that it is a site selection tool that searches the possibilities on the landscape based on the data we put into it.

He also explained that it does not contain an ecological algorithm but is purely statistical and that it is based on “simulated annealing”.

The model runs multiple iterations and produces more than one nearly optimal solution. Those scenarios are then assessed by the Committees. Once the scenarios are presented, we can decide to run different scenarios i.e: what would happen if there were no constraints? Or, what if we only wanted to preserve half of the habitat for a given species?

Finally, G. Verkade explained that the database associated with the final output will allow us to determine exactly why certain cells have been included or excluded in the Natural Heritage System. It tells us how many times a cell was chosen (i.e: out of 100 iterations, a cell was chosen 80% of the time).

3. Background of Previous Projects (Silvia Strobl, MNR) Provincial Context

S. Strobl explained for the group the pilot projects undertaken in the Province by MNR using the MARXAN model. She explained that during the provincial pilots, they realized that the work really needed to be done at the local level.

S. Strobl outlined work going on in the Leeds-Grenville area and Prince Edward County as two examples of how other areas with the help of MNR analysts are completing similar projects.

She went on to further describe the Natural Heritage System process as a decision support tool. She explained how impressed the MNR representatives have been at the ability of participants to step outside of their own experience and consider alternate viewpoints. She also stated how in each area the expectations of MNR staff has been exceeded.

She outlined how MNR can participate in the process here in Niagara. She offered that MNR can bring experts, the science, the mapping and the methodology, and can ensure that it can connect to the provincial system.

She stated that the link to the provincial system is important since the natural heritage system has definite influences on climate change. She also emphasized the value of the roles of government and non-government working together.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee and its' members– Pam Hubbard (Facilitator)

P. Hubbard asked if anyone could think of individuals or organizations that are not currently represented that should be.

The following were offered as suggestions:

- agricultural rep from both the livestock farmers, and tender fruit growers.
- rural non-farm landowners
- Six Nations – D. Lindblad explained that they are planning on participating and will be sending a rep. from the territory level instead of at the local friendship center.
- D. Campbell suggested that the Region has a culture committee – ask to participate.

-S. Strobl gave examples of how the Leeds Grenville set up their SDT by hosting a large meeting to find the right people.

Roles and Responsibilities:

P. Hubbard asked if anyone had any general comments.

S. Strobl explained how the other areas used a system of Red and Green Cards at their meetings. The Facilitator would ask at the end of the meetings “what we should stop doing” and “what we should keep doing”. The participants would write them on the cards and submit them to be reviewed at the next meeting.

Other comments included:

Who are we going to present the information to?

Do we want a brochure? How far into the community?

S. Strobl shared an example of the brochure from Leeds-Grenville.

P. Hubbard asked each participant to state whether-or-not they had anything to add. The following are their comments:

G. Verkade: Stated, Steering Committee as Advocate for the process.

J. White: Stated, Level the playing field, agriculture, rural non-farmers

A. Garofalo: Asked for further definition of the anticipated deliverables?

G. Verkade explained that sections 4.1 and 4.2 will need to be revisited.

C. Carlson: Asked that the Powerpoint presentations and minutes be posted on line, suggested project website.

T. McDougall: Asked if everything will be done as a whole committee, Steering Committee? D. Lindblad answered “Yes, as a whole committee.

J. Potter: Suggested, Canadian Food Inspection Agency should be informed.

C. Carlson: Asked if there would be representation from the First Nations community? D. Lindblad explained that they would be participating but were not able to make this first meeting.

It was also put forward that the tender fruit farmers should be involved.



5. Visioning Exercise (Facilitator and Committee members)

Task: Come up with a word/phrase/image that best reflects the natural heritage system you are trying to create in this work.



Vision

Inner Circle:

- Healthy and resilient – various threats will be faced by our nat. her. sys, including, drought, climate change, etc... needs to be able to adapt and remain resilient
- Balance: balance between environmental initiatives and other provincial initiatives such as affordable housing, etc... Particularly within urban area boundaries (balancing urban and rural; development and economic stability with sustainable diversity)
- Part of our communities – part of everyday life
- Sustainable natural diversity
- Transition that brings us together
- Working together for the natural system
- EDGE – border international, escarpment edge, boundaries of lakes, northern and southern ecosystems, species on the edge of survival,

weaving the edges together, connected fabric, a system sustained through time leading edge***

Transitional edge (soft not sharp)– QUILT!!!! Individual patches woven together to create connected fabric

- Common vision for a connected management scheme for Niagara's natural areas, and a common operating picture, strategic design, dashboard for natural heritage. (steering wheel for steering committee). Connected – speaks back to resilience
- Native communities and species – speaks back to resilience

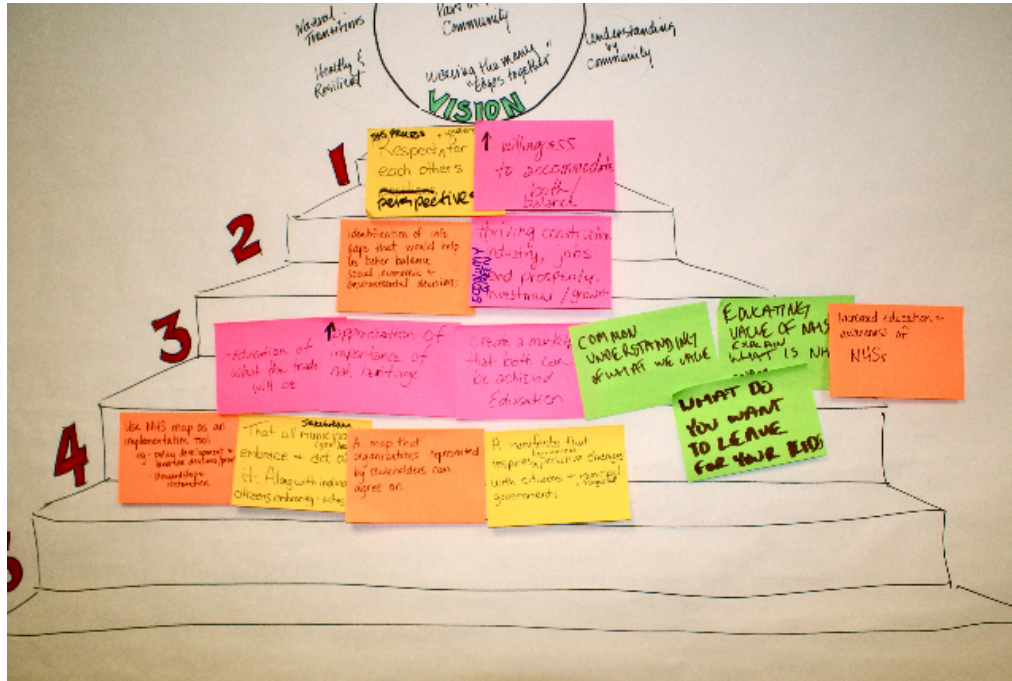
Outer Circle:

- Corridors that perpetuate biodiversity
- Maintain and increase habitat for wildlife
- Cocktail shaker – put in what we value and shake it up
- Sustainable natural diversity
- Built heritage, business heritage connect to the natural areas
- Green Sells!
- Consistent approach to implementing the natural heritage system
- Ecological, economic, culturally viable
- Sustainable (community has what it needs to survive without compromising what they want, farmer can make a living, etc), natural system can continue to live, diversity
- Not having blinders on....
- People understanding what a natural her. sys. is...education
- Walk to school in the shade

****Themes:**

- Working together, people and natural systems
- Connectedness – fabric of everyday lives
- Balance – economics/ ecology
- Dashboard for natural heritage. Odometer with # of trees.

6. Setting Goal (Facilitator and Committee members)



Goals:

Step 1

- process requires respect and understanding for each other's perspectives
- an increased willingness to accommodate/ balance between ecological and economic values.

Step 2

- identification of information gaps that would help us better balance social, economic and environmental decisions
- a thriving construction industry, jobs and prosperity, investment/growth (green economy)

Step 3

- education of what the trade-offs of balance will be
- an increased appreciation of the importance of natural heritage
- create a marketplace where both can be achieved through education
- common understanding of what we value
- educating the value of natural heritage, explain what it is
- increased education and awareness of natural heritage systems

Step 4

- use NHS mapping as an implementation tool (policy development and land use decisions; stewardship and restoration)
- that all stakeholders (municipalities, agencies, individual citizens) embrace the NHS and act on it!
- a map product that organizations represented by stakeholders can agree on
- a manifesto that inspires harmonious, positive changes with citizens, municipal and regional governments.

-what do you want to leave for your kids?

Additional comments:

- People understanding what a nat. her. sys does for them
- maintaining / perpetuating diversity
- Representative nat. her. sys of what is out there, reference
- Educating the value
- Ecological services
- What do you want to leave for your kids? How do you communicate this to the public?
- Explain what a nat. her. sys is? Do you like green space? Educated public. Public understands the value.
- Respect for each other's perspectives around the table and take that away with us
- All stakeholders act on it
- Identification of data gaps
- Increasing the appreciation of the importance of natural heritage

The Facilitator asked all the participants to sum up in a word or two what they were feelings about this process:

- J. Potter – “drained in a good way”
- S. Strobl – “energized”
- T. McDougall – “positive”
- S. McInnes-
- C. Carlson – “hopeful”
- N. Litwin – “positive and energized”
- D. Campbell- “surprised by the language around education, was not expecting that”
- A. Garofalo- “curiously hopeful”
- M. Fasano- “hopeful, learned a lot”
- AM Laurence- “optimistic about process, intrigued about what facilitator will do next”
- J. White- “came with idea to listen, learned a lot”
- G. Verkade: “pumped”
- D. Lindblad: “proud”

7. **Next Steps / Workplan** (NPCA team)

Gather the input of the Scenario Development Team into the draft vision and goals.
Steering Committee to present the draft based on the above discussion.

Require an additional meeting this summer before the SDT initial meeting to finalize the vision and goals.

ACTION: D. Lindblad to develop DRAFT Vision Statement and Goals based on the above discussion. Wording to be finalized at next meeting of the SC.

8. Next meeting
Thursday August 26, 2010 1:00 – 4:00
NPCA Boardroom

Adjournment: 4:44pm.

APPROVED

Natural Heritage System for the Niagara Watershed Steering Committee

Thursday August 26, 2010

1:30 – 4:30pm

NPCA Boardroom

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Travis Macbeth, Region of Niagara
Don Campbell, Region of Niagara
Geoffrey Verkade, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
John Potter, Nature Clubs
Paul Robertson, Niagara Land Trust
Suzanne McInnes, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Peter Minkiewicz, County of Haldimand
Joe Schonberger, Niagara South Federation of Agriculture/ Agricultural Subcommittee (Region of Niagara)
Ian Thornton, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Guelph District
Sylvia Strobl, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Southern Science and Information
Henry Swierenga, Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Nadine Litwin, Land Care Niagara
Anne Marie Laurence, Niagara Escarpment Commission
Terry McDougall, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation
Jon Whyte, Niagara Homebuilders Association
George Lepp, Agriculture Committee-Niagara-on-the-Lake
Deanna Lindblad, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Regrets:

John Middleton/ David Brown – Brock University
Brian Skye- Six Nations
Tony Van Oostrom- Ontario Power Generation – participating on the SDT
Catherine Plosz- City of Hamilton

1. Welcome and Introductions

D. Lindblad welcomed participants. Each participant introduced themselves and stated what organization or agency they were representing.
P. Hubbard (facilitator)– overview of meeting

2. Approval of Minutes from June 29, 2010 - Approved with suggested changes.

D. Campbell suggested that to include cultural aspects may not be appropriate at this time.
S. Strobl explained that culture became part of the Leeds-Grenville project but not necessarily part of their NHS.
I. Thornton explained that ReLeaf Hamilton has an anthropogenic focus that picks up the cultural aspects.

3. Overview of Terms of Reference

P. Hubbard (facilitator) walked the group through each section of the Terms of Reference to ensure that everyone's suggestions were incorporated.

1.0 Background

It became important to go around the table and discuss any concerns individuals had regarding the process. The following comments were made:

I. Thornton: possible update to NHS references for the Background section including a broader purpose and broader values of natural heritage.

N. Litwin: don't forget the linear corridors.

H. Swierenga/ J. Schonberger: NHS not to limit or prohibit farming practices.

G. Lepp: NHS take into account farm land as habitat without limiting existing agriculture.

J. Whyte: limit natural areas within urban areas to allow development to occur where it makes the most sense.

I. Thornton: more positive language required to highlight how land uses are mutually beneficial.

P. Robertson: the vision statement needs to be reflected in the Background.

1.1 Study Area

No changes.

2.0 Purpose

Minor changes to wording.

See Terms of Reference for final Purpose.

2.1 Vision Statement

See below for final Vision Statement.

See Terms of Reference for final Vision Statement.

2.2 Goals

See below for final Goals.

See Terms of Reference for final list of Goals.

2.3 Objectives

There was much discussion about incorporating the Objectives with the Guiding Principles. See the Terms of Reference for final list of Guiding Principles.

2.4 Guiding Principles

See Terms of Reference for final list of Guiding Principles.

3.0 Organizational Structure

D. Lindblad went over the list of members for the Steering Committee and the Scenario Development Team and updated the group on those she had heard from in regards to their participation.

A few minor changes made to wording in this section.

A.M. Laurence: suggested that a line be added to say that agencies may make written comments at any time to the Project Coordinator.

It was decided by the group that the Steering Committee be chaired by a representative of either the Niagara Region (D. Campbell or Travis MacBeth), or the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (Suzanne McInnes). They agreed to share the responsibility.

4.0 Conclusion

No changes.

4. Finalize Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee and its' members (Facilitator and Committee Members)

There were a few minor changes made to this section including changing the terminology around "advancing support" to "representing".

It was also decided that the Steering Committee should be involved with the development of the Communication Plan as well as its implementation.

5. Finalize Vision Statement (Facilitator and committee members)

TASK: take 10 minutes to read over examples and come up with a vision statement that you like.

Through a consensus-based process create a natural heritage system for the Niagara watershed that embodies our shared vision for a sustainable natural environment in balance with socio-political, economic and cultural interests and values.

6. Development of Goals (Facilitator and Committee members)

TASK: take 5-7 minutes to read over the samples and come up with goals that you like.

In order to reach the Vision we will set the following goals:

1. **Education:** People have an awareness and understanding of the natural heritage system.
2. **Information Tool:** We will create an information tool that the stakeholders agree with and that can be used to better understand natural heritage.
3. **Collaboration:** To collaborate on this process and better understand and respect all perspectives.

7. Next Meeting

February 2011

Adjournment: 4:54pm

APPROVED

Natural Heritage System for the Niagara Watershed Steering Committee

Thursday April 20, 2011

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

NPCA Boardroom

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

John Potter - Nature Clubs

Paul Robertson - Niagara Land Trust

Suzanne McInnes - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Peter Minkiewicz - County of Haldimand

Jon Whyte - Niagara Homebuilders Association

Joe Schonberger - Niagara South Federation of Agriculture

Project Management Team:

Doug Draper – Communications Consultant

Deanna Lindblad - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Geoffrey Verkade - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Regrets:

Mary Stack – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

1. Welcome and Introductions

D. Lindblad welcomed participants. Each participant introduced themselves and stated what organization or agency they were representing.

2. Scenario Development Team progress to Date (D. Lindblad/ G. Verkade)

D. Lindblad and G. Verkade brought the Steering Committee up to date with the progress of the Scenario Development team. D. Lindblad explained that the SDT has met 8 times since October. They have worked through the introductory phases of the project including understanding the modeling process. They have set constraints to ensure that the outcomes of the project consider what is happening on the landscape. They are currently in the process of setting targets on Hydrologic function of the system and will be addressing Ecologic functions at a Course and Fine scale as well as Biodiversity Representation in the coming months.

The SDT will be wrapping up their portion of the project by the end of June.

G. Verkade explained that he will be running the model over the summer and the team will come back together in the early fall to review the Learning Scenarios and arrive at a Preferred Scenario.

The final report for the project is due at the end of October.

Members of the Scenario Development Team that are also on the Steering Committee highlighted for the Steering Committee some of the challenges faced by the SDT.

J. Potter: the biggest issue is the suspicion around the development of policy from this process.

J. Whyte: explained the fear on the part of development community is that at the 11th hour, when developers have purchased a piece of land, the rules are changing. He acknowledged that there may be an ability to trade-off in the future, but the fear is that this process will make it increasingly hard for his community to develop their land.

S. McInnes: highlighted for the group that the municipalities have to review their official Plans every 5 years according to provincial legislation and that when this has happened in the past, we haven't had the Natural Areas Inventory data.

J. Whyte: the concern of the industry is that changes are next to impossible once a plan is implemented.

P. Robertson: the transition time to uptake the newly available data will be significant since we have let the status quo go for so long.

G. Verkade: reminded the group that this is an assessment process. We would be flawed if we didn't measure this new NAI data against the best available science to determine where we are now relatively speaking. How our natural areas measure up to what the science says we need.

J. Schonberger: stated that the information we are working with is already out there and policy and regulation has already been made from it. What we are doing is collating that information into one place.

3. Review of Draft Communications Plan (D. Draper)

D. Draper walked the group through the draft Communications Plan for the project. He explained that the important thing is to help the public understand why this is important to them. He wants to use as many different media as possible to reach the largest possible audience. He wants to accentuate the positives of the project.

J. Whyte; is concerned about not discussing the potential impacts with the public. E does not want this to be a one sided message where we "sugar coat" the process.

D. Lindblad: Jon's point is fair and we can discuss the issues but people will also want to know what is in this for them. How it can benefit them.

D. Draper: stated that we need to appeal to the "ecointelligence" of the public.

G. Verkade: we need to highlight that this is a systematic assessment.

The group then discussed the name of the project since Natural heritage System is problematic.

D. Draper: shared a potential list of names with the group. He explained that Natural Heritage System with the acronym NHS is a problem particularly in Niagara since it is the same acronym as the Niagara Health System which is very emotional for people.

The group agreed to put forward to the Scenario Development Team "Niagara Natural Areas Assessment" as their preferred name at this point.

D. Lindblad asked the group to put forward any other thoughts on the name to D. Draper by April 29th. The group was also asked to make any changes to the Communications Plan by April 29th and any ideas of how to address the fear over policy development down the road.

ACTION ITEM: All members of the committee: any changes to the document, thoughts on the fear over policy issue and any name suggestions to D. Draper by April 29th.

ACTIONITEM: D. Draper to present the groups thoughts to the Scenario Development Team on May 5th.

4. Next Meeting

Wed. June 29, 2011 - place and time to be confirmed by email.

Adjournment: 12:02 pm

APPROVED

Natural Heritage System for the Niagara Watershed Steering Committee

**Thursday September 8, 2011
9:00 am – 12:00 pm
200 Divisions Street, Welland**

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

John Potter - Nature Clubs
Paul Robertson - Niagara Land Trust
Suzanne McInnes - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Peter Minkiewicz - County of Haldimand
Joe Schonberger - Niagara South Federation of Agriculture
Terry McDougall – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation
Jonathan Whyte – Niagara Homebuilders Association
Henry Swierenga – Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Danielle DeFields – Region of Niagara
Ian Thornton – Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Project Management Team:

Deanna Lindblad - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Geoffrey Verkade - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Mary Stack – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Doug Draper – Communications Consultant

Regrets:

None

1. Welcome and Introductions

D. Lindblad welcomed participants. Each participant introduced themselves and stated what organization or agency they were representing.

2. Scenario Development Team progress to Date (D. Lindblad/ G. Verkade)

D. Lindblad and G. Verkade brought the Steering Committee up to date with the progress of the Scenario Development Team.

3. Review of draft communications piece (M. Stack, D. Draper)

H. Swierenga – has concerns with the bullet point on what lands might not be included in the project. Is wondering if we can rewrite that question? He is anticipating a question like “is my land included?”. We need to think about the answer and be prepared.

M. Stack explained that the team struggled with how to capture this idea and how to communicate the concept of what lands got included without a complicated explanation of the constraints process.

P. Minkiewicz: likes the piece would like to see a map included.

J. Potter: Has concerns with the type face for the title of the piece, "Introducing Nature for Niagara's Future".

M. Stack stated that we would do it in a different font style.

ACTION ITEM: Deadline for Comments on the Communications piece: Friday September 30, 2011.

M. Stack: In terms of the **broader Communications Plan**.

She talked about when we launch the final report and communications, she want some fanfare.

Timeline for Communications Launch: Presentations to councils: new year, what comes out of the scenarios will effect what the other communications look like. Open Houses/ Presentations to Interest Groups: will be important and we are looking at the new year for that as well.

P. Robertson: Will stakeholders be included in the presentations to build on the concept of consensus?

M. Stack: yes.

D. Lindblad: will the launch include the base data in the NAI?

M. Stack: yes, this project came out of the NAI so we are launching both.

P. Robertson: will there be a scenario in the web portal that the lay landowner can click on and see how it works?

M. Stack: it will depend on cost of setting something like that up.

J. Schonberger: we were given the draft communications plan a while ago. Comments were made on that draft communications plan and he wondered if there was a new version and if we would have the opportunity to see and comment on it.

M. Stack: there is another version, the one that was handed ut is not the most current.

ACTION ITEM: D. Lindblad to send the most current version of the Communications Plan to everyone.

J. Whyte: we say this process is not land use planning but rather information but planners are not able to use this information without policy developed around it.

G. Verkade: we are producing information that land use planners can use, but so can other processes. The focus is on information. We need to separate the question out and say this is an assessment to get new insight.

J. Whyte: if a planner is using this, I would ask what legitimacy is to this information if it hasn't been incorporated into official plans.

I. Thornton: there is lots of information that is out there that is used in planning review.

J. Whyte: that just further complicates planning matters. It is too subjective.

I. Thornton: this will likely eventually make its way into official plans. We could elaborate in the info piece. We could list possible purposes that the information can be used for, ie: guide stewardship, etc.

S. McInnes: J. Whyte is correct. It is not appropriate to use the information from this process until it goes through the proper channels, a public process. But it is the first step to get the right information.

D. DeFields: agrees with S. McInnes, until it goes through the proper process, the Region won't be using it for plan review.

I. Thornton: there is lots of good scientific info out there that is not gone through the public process. That does not mean that it is not good information and credible.

J. Schonberger: the information that is being used for this project already exists. If anyone has reviewed an official plan lately, it is clear the information we are using is already being used.

G. Verkade: Remember, we are understanding how the features work together for the first time. We are looking at how they contribute to the overall.

H. Swierenga: we need to push it as another tool in the toolbox when decisions are being made. He likes the word "voluntary". Road salts are a good example, it is a voluntary program for municipalities and we have 90% uptake across the country.

Why as a landowner should I care or have regard for? This question is key in the communications.

I. Thornton: stay away from the word regulation. It is a tool to help inform other types of decision making. We could add this to the policy question on the info piece.

P. Minkiewicz: Focus on terms like, "highlight info", "provides different ways of looking at linkages", focus on the benefits. Stay away from the word "guideline", as a planner that is problematic.

P. Robertson: use of the word "voluntary" is a good way to get people to buy in. Be careful with focus on government driven. The stakeholders should be presenters.

J. Whyte: "I will do the speech".

D. Lindblad: "I would like to hear that, there must be something good you can take away from this".

J. Whyte: "no".

S. McInnes: can we set a timeline/deadline for finalizing the communications strategy?

ACTION ITEM: Deadline for comments on Communications Piece and Plan-Friday, September 30, 2011.

D. Lindblad: receive the comments and then send them to Doug Draper.

J. Whyte: has concerns about the emphasis on consensus and the stakeholders. He is worried that the homebuilders will be seen as supportive of what we are producing here. He does not want that suggested. If we want to highlight consensus, remove Niagara Homebuilders from the literature.

S. McInnes: do you think it is important that the public knows you were at the table?

J. Whyte: he is more concerned that the public thinks Niagara Homebuilders Association are in agreement. "We don't necessarily support this". If some of our members read that the Niagara Homebuilders Association are part of this, they would not like it. He will give some thought to the fact that they are listed as a stakeholder.

P. Minkiewicz: Niagara Homebuilders have the right to not support it. You have to draw lines around what you don't agree with. Let this group decide what we can agree on. Your issues have been a valuable part of the discussion all along.

J. Whyte: it doesn't have to say in the literature that Niagara Homebuilders Association supports it, but also doesn't need to say that we are dead set against it.

We can also make our concerns known at Regional Council. He can help draft wording around, Socio political economic impacts and what that does to availability of developmental land, and targets for 2013.

M. Stack: it doesn't state in the communications piece that the stakeholders are all supportive.

J. Whyte: doesn't know if he wants to be listed in the communications.

D. Lindblad: "you did sit at the table the whole time. By leaving you out, doesn't seem right".

J. Whyte: He will send the comments to D. Lindblad.

Action Item: J. Whyte to help D. Lindblad draft some wording around socio-political and economic impacts.

H. Swierenga: this document/communications piece "is slanted towards Bambi". During this consensus building process, we considered a host of other issues.

P. Robertson: just sitting on the Steering Committee, I have talked to others on the Scenario Development Team. I would like to acknowledge the enormous amount of work that went into it. He believes that many will see the benefit.

P. Minkiewicz: is there a place in this communications piece to articulate the concerns from homebuilders, agriculture, province, others?

D. Lindblad: we can add a question in the brochure about "What is Consensus?" Answer: it does not mean we all agreed, give example about lengthy discussions around the impacts to current land uses within urban boundaries, agricultural land, etc...

I. Thornton: a paragraph about the uncertainty around how the info will be used and the end products.

J. Whyte: we shouldn't sugar coat the fact that the building community, agriculture, etc had major concerns. He believes that we should include at least a paragraph about those concerns in any communications.

P. Robertson: he thinks the vagueness is a problem.

I. Thornton: the info that is the substance of this is already being used in planning decisions and municipal documents. This is not something that is grabbed out of the sky, it is based on field info, etc., knowing that is it good info might stave off some of the apprehension.

P. Robertson: give individuals the next steps, that might help. There is some worth to giving examples of what it could be used for. That is what the public will want to know.

He also stated that there are not enough farmland, residential development land in the photos. A picture says a thousand words....we need to represent the whole project. Identify photos.

J. Whyte: doesn't want to be lumped in with the rosy picture by having a photo of a subdivision in this piece. He can appreciate that a property backing onto a green space might be more desirable, but when a whole area is sterilized because of regulations, what you might make off of the green space lot does not offset the loss.

4. Review of Minutes from April 20, 2011 meeting

Approved with minor changes.

5. Final Report Format

D. Lindblad presented her ideas for the layout of the final report.

The group agreed with the layout.

They would like to see a separate section added for the Results and Recommendations. They will be included in bullet point form in the Executive Summary but be fleshed out at the end of the report.

A separate section will also be developed for the Mapping. All learning scenario maps will be included at the end of the report plus a CD/DVD of the mapping in pdf.

Each fact sheet will include a map to show the contribution by colour coded hexagons.

The group discussed how to deal with the Constraints section of the report and it was decided that they would be split by their constraint category (e.g. conservation lands, aggregate lands, agriculture lands, urban lands, cultural lands).

Group would like to see photos included in the final report.

6. Next Steps

This group to meet again after learning scenarios have been assessed by the Scenario Development Team. Steering Committee to finalize Communications Plan.

Next Meeting

Wed. December 1, 2011 - place and time to be confirmed by email.

Adjournment: 11:33 am

APPROVED

Natural Heritage System for the Niagara Watershed Steering Committee

**Wednesday November 30, 2011
1:00 – 4:00 pm
NPCA Board Room
250 Thorold Road West, Welland**

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

John Potter - Nature Clubs
Paul Robertson - Niagara Land Trust
Suzanne McInnes - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Peter Minkiewicz - County of Haldimand
Joe Schonberger - Niagara South Federation of Agriculture
Jonathan Whyte – Niagara Homebuilders Association
Henry Swierenga – Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Danielle DeFields – Region of Niagara
Mike Scott- Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association
Steve Voros – Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Project Management Team:

Deanna Lindblad - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Geoffrey Verkade - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Mary Stack – Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
Doug Draper – Communications Consultant

Regrets:

Ian Thornton – Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

1. Welcome and Introductions

D. Lindblad welcomed participants.

2. Review of Minutes from September 8, 2011 – approved

3. Presentation of the Scenarios put forward by the Scenario Development Team The Scenarios and Key Messages (D. Lindblad/ G. Verkade)

D. Lindblad presented the final scenarios from the Scenario Development Team including the Baseline Scenario (formerly Baseline 2), the Most Constrained Scenario (Formerly Baseline 1) and the Compromise Scenario (formerly Map #20).

She also presented the list of Key Messages from the Scenario Development Team including the disclaimer developed to go at the outset of the final report.

D. Lindblad asked the group if there were any comments on the Scenarios or Key Messages.

There were none.

4. Review of final report (D. Lindblad/ G. Verkade)

D. Lindblad presented the draft sections of the final report including:

- executive summary
- constraints
- targets
- target fact sheets
- learning scenarios
- final scenarios
- appendices

S. Voros: asked about the mapping for the target fact sheets. He explained that in the other projects, the most helpful mapping was colour coded by assessment unit to show current condition. It is a good visual relative to the explanation and statistics that are being presented.

J. Whyte: will there be one for each target?

D. Lindblad: yes

G. Verkade: for targets that are not distributed, the watershed area is the assessment unit.

H. Swierenga: explanation of the mapping on each fact sheet so that it is not confusing would be helpful.

Decision: include map with each fact sheet.

D. Lindblad asked the group is there were any comments on the final report.

There were none.

D. Lindblad asked the group if there were any comments on the data product.

There were none.

5. Communications Plan (M. Stack)

M. Stack presented the ideas for the Communications of the project to the group. She stated that nothing is going out until the final report is done.

New communication products will capture the highlights out of the report. There will likely be a newsletter. The newsletter will introduce Nature for Niagara's Future to the public. It will communicate the vision statement of the project. It will stress that all of the data that is captured is an information tool, used voluntary in decision-making. This is a key message.

Target Audience

Agriculture Groups
Developers/Homebuilders/Aggregate Groups
Municipal representatives; elected and non-elected
Provincial Representatives
Nature/Conservation Groups
Partner Agencies
Public at Large
Educational Leaders and students at all levels

Key Messages in the Communications

"Nature for Niagara's Future" IS NOT a land-use regulation or policy. It is an information tool to be used voluntarily by stakeholders as they may need.

Project has been carried out transparently and has engaged a wide range of stakeholders representing important sectors.

While there has not always been 100% agreement, the team has worked in a respectful manner and arrived at consensus by using ongoing scientific information to arrive at a decision.

Timelines

February or March of 2012 will be first communication

Building new website for NPCA, this will be highlighted in that new website.

Take info to regional and municipal councils in the new year

Create portable display to take with us to present this info.

Children's Water Festival activities designed around key messages

Meet with media to get them interested in the project.

Public Open Houses to inform the public on the project.

Comments on Communications

D. Lindblad: asked the group if there were any comments on the communications.

S. McInnes : original terms of reference did not have the public open houses

M. Stack: might be able to piggyback this with source water protection open houses

S. McInnes: will double check the original terms of reference

D. DeFields: the communications and the vision statement seem to be leaning towards a preferred scenario, how will we communicate the fact that there are 3 scenarios?

G. Verkade: we need to communicate that the best we could do was a backbone of a natural heritage system.

S. Stack: we need to be very upfront about the lack of agreement.

M. Stack: wanted the group to know that there will be a watershed report card coming out for Niagara in 2012 and this information will be great for that since this is an area that was severely lacking.

P. Robertson: will there be opportunity for members of the team to help with presentations?

M. Stack: yes, we can consider that under a common presentation.

6. Next Steps

D. Lindblad stated that she and Geoff will be finalizing the draft of the project report over the next few weeks and it will be circulated for comment before the end of the year. A date will be set for comments to be returned to Deanna and she will make all necessary changes to the report in the new year prior to the final report being developed.

D. Lindblad: thanked everyone for their dedication to the project and presented a thank you gift to P. Robertson and the Conservation Achievement Awards to those that were not in attendance at the awards ceremony.

Adjournment: 2:20 pm