

Aguasabon River System Water Management Plan
Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting
November 3, 2022 Minutes
Terrace Bay Community Centre Meeting Room
Terrace Bay, Ontario

Attendees:

Richard Mannisto, Longlac (Chair)	Dave Pacholczak, OPG
Jody Davis, Terrace Bay	Regan Lord, OPG
Philip Wilson, MNRF Geraldton	
Natalie Cormier, MNRF Geraldton	
Ray Tyhuis, MNRF Nipigon	Tracy Apperly, OPG (recording secretary)

Regrets: Chad Tanner, OPG, Adrienne Igo, OPG, Tom Aaltomaa, OPG
Brian Desrochers, Greenstone District Trappers' Council

Meeting commenced at 10:15 am

1. Introductions

Attachments: November 3, 2022, Agenda
Aguasabon SAC Meeting June 10, 2021, minutes

2. The meeting agenda were approved.

1st Jody Davis

2nd Richard Mannisto.

Review of the Aguasabon SAC Meeting June 10, 2021 minutes were approved.

1st Jody Davis

2nd Richard Mannisto

Action from June 10, 2021 meeting;

Richard Mannisto noted that, Leal Strain to replaced Dave Baker as signing authority on bank account. Dave Baker was one of the signing authorities along with Richard Mannisto on the Aguasabon SAC's bank account at Caisse Populaire Alliance, Longlac.

Richard Mannisto checked with Caisse Populaire Alliance last week, a Letter is required from Richard Mannisto stating that Richard Mannisto and Dave Baker are no longer signing authorities and provide the names of the new signing authorities with email addresses. The instructions will be emailed out with the required documents attached by the Caisse Populaire Alliance, Longlac.

\$5,000.00 was the starting balance in 1999 when the SAC established.

\$1,700.00 is the current balance provided by Richard Mannisto, Aguasabon SAC Treasurer.

ACTION: Two signing authorities, one from MNRF and one SAC member. The SAC Chair holds the position of Treasurer.

ACTION: Determine the appropriate mileage rate for SAC members driving to the meeting

Dave Pacholczak noted that the Water Management Plan as no longer expiry date with Implementation report submission. The original Water Management Plan expired in 2023.

Effectiveness Monitoring 2022-2023 development

The SAC currently has one position vacant that was held by George Horobec and will have two positions vacation with Richard Mannisto stepping down.

Regan Lord stated that OPG Corporate Relations Officer will advertise for recruitment of SAC members.

MNRF / OPG/ SAC members – what is the future of the SAC? Is reporting required?

Richard Mannisto noted that the SAC presents to the public. Is there a need?

Dave Pacholczak noted that we prepare Aguasabon River Water Management Annual Reports. The implementation Report is a 5-year report. The one-year Annual report helps to prepare for the 5-year report. OPG follows the Water Management plan. OPG does the right things using the Water Management Plan to operate with the SAC advising.

In the past 20 years, Richard Mannisto remarked that the SAC has had no issues. OPG notice to meet regarding the construction at Aguasabon GS to bring forward any issues

or concerns. At SAC meetings water levels are presented by OPG along with the effect of the water levels on fish and the wildlife presented by MNRF are handled well. OPG has been a good citizen.

Jody Davis asked won't this fall under "New Business"?

Rules and regulations were the purpose of the government at the time. Water Management Plan having the Standing Advisor Committee (SAC) involved.

Dave Pacholczak is there a legal requirement to have Water Management Plan Standing Advisor Committee?

Jody Davis stated that the SAC it is a good thing for the communities. OPG and MNRF working together along with the Terrace Bay, Greenstone, and the Trappers Association. Maybe the municipalities of Terrace Bay and Greenstone can appointment a counsel person to sit on the committee, which will simplify things. Tom Aaltomaa had made the same suggestion. Richard Mannisto felt it is a good suggestion for municipalities of Terrace Bay and Greenstone appointment people. Dave Pacholczak stated that Chad Tanner, OPG Stakeholder Relations – Renewable Generation, Corporate Affairs can advertise in the two communities – Terrace Bay and Greenstone. Jody Davis asked about the First Nations member, they were part of the original SAC. Dave Pacholczak, Long Lake #58 was the representative. Regan Lord asked if the SAC members had a target structure, number of members and interest groups? Richard Mannisto stated that in the front of the Water Management Plan & the Terms of Reference; Public at Large from Terrace Bay and Greenstone, Trappers Association, First Nations and previously there was one from Longlac Historical Society. Jody Davis noted that any issues identified by OPG and MNRF come to the committee and can be forwarded to the municipalities.

ACTION: Chad Tanner, OPG Stakeholder Relations – Renewable Generation, Corporate Affairs to advise for new members.

Presentation – 2021 Report

Provided by Dave Pacholczak, OPG

a. Water Levels and Flows

2021 Report

Long Lake, Hays Lake, Aguasabon and Kenogamsis reported by Dave Pacholczak, OPG

Kenogamisis Lake was prepared by Natalie Cormier, MNRF

Regional Weather

The winter of 2021 was warmer than normal. There was more snow depth at the beginning of the season based on measured snow depth and water content with the end of the season values were below normal percentages. Freshet was started on April 7th and peaked April 16th as of result of warmer temperatures and by precipitation. March and April temperatures were warmer than with May returning to normal temperatures. Both March and April experienced precipitation were much higher than normal, 123% and 154%. The summer months experienced warmer temperatures with the precipitation well below normal, July was 42% of normal precipitation. The warmer temperature continued to the end of the year. The second half of the year only recorded one month anywhere near normal precipitation, September at 90%, the remaining months were well below normal between 41-59%.

- 6 out of 12 months had precipitation much lower than normal.
- 5 out of 12 months had precipitation in the normal range.
- 1 out of 12 months had precipitation much greater than normal (April at 154%)
- The largest single day of rainfall in Geraldton, 29.3 mm, August 29th.
- The largest single day of rainfall in Cameron Falls, 34.6mm, September 20th
- The largest 7 Day average accumulation of rainfall was 56.15mm May 19 to 25th.

Snow Survey data

The 2021 Snow Survey results for the Aguasabon Basin were presented using the graphs out of WISKI. OPG has started to use the WISKI program, which is the same program the MNRF uses.

The graph shows the snow-water equivalent, snow depth and snow weight. The compares historical data of Snow-Water equivalent.

The three OPG snow survey sites for the Aguasabon River System are Long Lake Control Dam, Hays Lake, and Geraldton. Each snow survey courses have 10 observation locations that are stripped 100 metres around the survey site.

Phil Wilson asked where the Geraldton snow survey was located because MNRF also performs a snow survey in the Geraldton area.

On March 14, 2021, the Aguasabon Basin snow surveys were the following of normal, Hays Lake – 52%, Geraldton – 162% and Long Lake Control Dam – 151%.

ACTION: Dave Pacholczak to email Phil Wilson, MNRF the actual location of OPG's Geraldton snow survey.

Water Flows/Levels- 2021

Kenogamisis Lake

Operated by MNRF
Presented Dave Pacholczak, OPG

The water level was below average because of the weather. Kenogamisis Lake was below average because of the weather. Summer was hot and dry, September helped with the refill.

The fall was wet with elevation high and down after two weeks. The Elevation, Inflow and Outflow graphs were reviewed.

The spring freshet and inflows peaked in early to mid-April. July to December had little activity at the dam. Most of the logs were placed to build up the lake level. The highest lake elevation was April 20, 2021 @ 329.672 mSAL and the lowest was August 27, 2021 @ 329.327 mASL.

Long Lake

Operated by OPG

Long Lake water level draw began early in January 2021, was modified for the Aguasabon GS outage, and resumed January 27th. The flows were adjusted upward on February 14th to 58 cms. The lowest level was March 23, 2021, at 311.66m. Smaller drawn downs for about a two-week period with the late March rains holding the elevation and the Knowledge of the snow water equivalent was lower than normal. Elevation jumped up earlier than normal in mid-April and went over the upper decile, heading to the upper compliance limit. A decision was made to open the Kenogamisis Dam on April 14th and continued to be open for two weeks to release further expended inflows and prevent going over the upper compliance limit. Long lake increased for three weeks and meet the preferred elevation on May 20th. The highest elevation point was May 30th at 313.37m measured at Long Lake North gauge.

Largest 7-day average (combined) accumulation of rainfall – 56.15mm on May 25th

Largest daily average (Cameron Falls) was September 20th and the total was 34.6mm.

Largest daily average (Geraldton) was on August 29th and the total was 29.3mm.

Evaluation dropped below preferred on June 9th and followed along the lower decile until July 21st.

Summer was warm and dry and did not provide the prescription to increase the elevation causing to set the outflow to the minimum from July 17 to September 7th. The flow as increase minimally to draw the Long Lake elevation to the intent elevation of 312.4 m and was held successfully for two weeks. The lack of rain and warm weather did not provide the opportunity to refill.

Hays Lake

Operated by OPG

Flows from Long Lake Control Dam (LLCD) were in the range 18 to 58 cms over the winter period. Aguasabon GS had one of its units on an outage for two-week period. The inflows were in the range of upper decile and quartile for most of January and February, the declined in early spring by roughly 30cms. There was later than normal drawdown began March 3rd and by March 21st with a total 1.16 was drawdown.

Freshet was early on April 7th, when inflows to Hays Lake rose rapidly from 38cms on April 3rd to 172 cms on April 15th. The flows out of Hays Lake were passed through the dam from May 4th to December 15th due to the outage. During this timeframe the maximum flow through the dam was 120cms on May 24th declining through the summer to roughly 14-30cms from mid-July to December.

OPG has small rain gauges at Hays Lake and Long Lake Control Dam. Local inflows were weak through the summer, there were only a few rain events that were significant, May 20, June 10, and July 23 for both Hays Lake and Long Lake Control Dam. September was the month in the later half of 2021 with near normal precipitation, 90%, the other months were very dry. Oct 10th showed a rain event of 30mm which drove the Hays Lake informs and elevation up for a short period in mid-October.

Annual Compliance Report

During the year of 2021, there were no periods of non-compliance for Ontario Power Generation facilities on the Aguasabon River system that the was required by the Water Management to be reported to MNRF.

b. Effectiveness Monitoring Program

Reports provided by Ray Tyhuis MNRF, Philip Wilson MNRF and Dave Pacholczak OPG

Effectiveness Monitoring is done jointly by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)

2021 Report

The Effectiveness Monitoring program was affected by COVID-19 restrictions on travel and work in 2021, staff were unable to complete all fieldwork. The reports presented outline the work performed in the 2021 calendar year.

Jody Davis asked if climate change was causing the warm weather and early melt. Dave Pacholczak that freshet has been all over the map in the last few years.

Brook Trout Survey

Provided by Ray Tyhuis, MNRF

Nothing out the normal to report. The schedule for surveys ended. The schedule was for every 5 to 10 years. The annual surveys done by driftnetting was not done in 2020 because of COVID-19 and was done in 2021 in the spring. A virtual survey was done in the fall for spawning fish. The mark and recapture programs were done in 2020.

Walleye Spawning Survey

Presented by Ray Tyhuis, MNRF

Walleye Spawning survey were not done in 2021 due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the survey was done in 2022.

Benthic and Small Fish Surveys

Presented by Ray Tyhuis, MNRF

In 2021, only two sites were sampled for the Benthic Survey and only three sites were sampled for the Small Fish Survey.

2022, all sites were sampled.

Loon Surveys

Presented by Ray Tyhuis, MNRF

Two Loon surveys have been completed annually since 2012 to 2021 along the south half of Long Lake, one in June and the other July. The survey was done once in 2021 by a university student.

The June survey objective is to see how many loons are using Long Lake for nesting and are using the nest platforms and the July survey objective is to see if there was hatching. The data showed rapping had some effectiveness. Rapping rates have effective on chicks.

Richard Mannisto commented the reason for the SAC overlook the survey reports to ensure that the science and the economics fits. OPG is economic only and the MNRF Biologist studies the effectiveness of the water flows and levels on the environment. OPG has a reason to do the surveys,

Jody Davis commented that with climate change, the speed and stages, the history over 10 years is important. Keeping the SAC, OPG and MNRF working together is very important.

Dave Pacholcak commented that climate change has an effective on hydroelectric. The benefit of the report, it is the the right thing to do. The government is looking to create new electricity, hydroelectricity is the best electricity for mother nature. The government may open a new Water Management plan for new hydroelectric. example: Little Jackfish.

Richard Mannisto the intent was to monitor the fall drawn down for the Lake Trout and Brook Trout working together with the MNRF and OPG. With all three, SAC, MNRF and OPG working to determine what is good for the water and the environment with OPG generating electricity to make money.

Dave Pacholczak with the late spring at Long Lake, rain and snow melt is where trouble can happen with flows and elevations. Aguasabon is under control but the Fort Frances and Kenora flooded this spring.

Lake Trout Population of Long Lake

Presented by Philip Wilson, Management Biologist, MNRF

Summer 2021, netting was done. MNRF looks at the depth, sample, reasonable sample size.

From 2006 to 2017 study showed that the ice thickness, the length of the drawdown – October 1-15 intent. The October 1-15 intent to an objective to have the draw down one week before for the hatch in March – April.

Effective Monitoring Program

Implementation Report Review

Presented by Dave Pacholczak

In 2022, the Water Management Plan will end.

The Implementation reports are for the next 5 years, what we want to study and things we want to look at.

Amendment process:

example: MNRF temperature / levels for pickerel and lake trout

what are the triggers, temperature how long, a week?

Are there impacts to the power generation with the implementation of the Water Management Plan.

The Hays Lake Bathymetry and Habitat Study concluded in 2018.

Action: Regan Lord

OPG to do the Bathymetry

Long lake Fall Level

Result – achieved the 312.40 m by October 1 intent.

2021 there were no complaints or comments.

2022 Update

Kenogamisis Lake

Presented by Natalie Cormier, MNRF

There were no comments or concerns for the Kenogamisis Lake in the Aguasabon watershed in 2021.

There were 11 log operations during 2021.

Upper-level compliance line was hit one day.

It was a dry summer.

2022 high water in the spring, there was seven out of compliance for the year. Freshet was late, causing to go through the upper compliance line. Normal to July, elevation going back up and allowing for refill.

Comment made by Dave Pacholczak that the concrete spill wall needs to be checked, the levels may be incorrect.

Implementation Report Review

Presented by Dave Pacholczak

Philip Wilson, 2022 Effectiveness Monitoring Plan schedule 1 to 2 years behind because of COVID-19 based on the appendix in the Water Management schedule.

All watersheds benefit with the 5-year implementation review report because it looks at climate change, brainstorming between MNRF and OPG. A comment was had that the year annual report provides the basis for the 5-year implementation review report, without the yearly report things could be forgot or missed.

Draft Implementation report review, April 1, 2013 to 2019. Aguasabon only review, it was written 2013,

The original report was done in 2022. 2005 – 2012, the review was started in 2010. Review 2013-2023. In 2017 amended, as of result of the 2016 technical bulletin.

Implementation report update looking at 2023 plus 5 years, 2028.

Amended, 2016 technical bulletin, remove expiry date permanently as requested by MNRF.

Terms of Reference to reviewed by the SAC.

Effectiveness Monitoring plan between OPG and MNRF should be brought to the SAC committee to discuss, and debate was commented by Richard Mannisto.

MNRF is not the final. The towns are important in the process commented by Jody Davis. The Implementation Plan is for OPG and MNRF to have something to follow the law. SAC is the citizen review of ideals, the yes and no and why.

Jody Davis, this is a year behind, no 2021 meeting. This is a lot of information to go through, reports should be provided ahead of time by OPG and MNRF.

The Implementation report should have been given to the SAC to review for feed back at the meeting.

Richard Mannisto resigning from the SAC effective the end of the day November 3,2022.

Jody Davis asked what MNRF and OPG really want to do. Regan Lord stated that OPG supports the SAC, if they want to keep it going or dissolve i

Jody Davis stated that OPG supplies the help with time and money. The SAC is the communities, OPG and MNRF. We need connect Greenstone and Terrace Bay.

Richard Mannisto appointed intern chair, Brian Desrochers

Meeting adjournment, 2:40 pm

1st – Richard Mannisto

2nd – Jody Davis