

Kaministiquia River Water Management Plan
Standing Advisory Committee
Annual Meeting
By virtual & phone platform
May 3, 2022

Attendees:

Gail Willis (on behalf of Tammy Cook)	LRCA
Dave Butler	Dog Lake
Henry (Hank) Syposz	Lower Kaministiquia Resident
Alex Hillback (alternate)	Resolute Forest Products
Marek Klich	MNRF
Erin Hudson	MOECP
Jamie Mucha	NDMNRF
Tana-Leigh Harty	OPG **Acting Chair for Oliver Paipoonge
Dave Pacholczak	OPG
Adrienne Igo	OPG
Jason Bailey	OPG
Tom Aaltomaa	OPG
Regan Lord	OPG
Tracy Apperly	OPG Recording Secretary
Mike Friday – Guest	NDMNRF
Regrets:	
Ed Collins	Fort William First Nation
Jim Moshonsky	Shebandowan, Kashabowie, Greenwater
Dave Dasti, alternate	Shebandowan, Kashabowie, Greenwater
Tammy Cook	LRCA
Ashleigh Marchi	Resolute Forest Products
Rebecca Dickson	Upper Kam
Lucy Kloosterhuis	Oliver Paipoonge
Chris Bowles	Oliver Paipoogne
Shannon Lawr	Kakabeka Falls Park
Jason Boesche	FWHP
Jacinth Gilliam Price	MECP
Todd Kondrat	MECP
Rik Arkman	MNRF
Scott Galloway	MNEF

Land Acknowledgement

Presented by Dave Pacholczak, Water Management Officer OPG

Meeting Introductions

Tana-Leigh Harty, OPG welcomed everyone and thanked them for being accommodating with using the virtual/telephone meeting platform for this year because COVID-19.

Tana-Leigh Harty asked if anyone from the committee was willing to be chair for this year's meeting. Lucy Kloosterhuis was to be chair this year's meeting, called to ask she was under the weather. After a bit of discussion, the committee agreed to have Tana-Leigh Harty, OPG will chair this year's meeting.

Introductions were made by all attendees.
Henry Syposz would like to be referred to as Hank.

Mike Friday, NDMMNRF guest at this year's meeting to provide a Sturgeon Monitoring update

Call to Order

Tana-Leigh Harty called meeting to order at 5.05 pm.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted. 1st by Alex Hillback, RFP, 2nd Dave Bulter

2021 Minutes

4.1 2021 minutes were approved.

Motion to approved: 1st by Dave Bulter 2nd by Henry Syposz

4.2 Action Items

2021 Actions

2021 ACTION:

Notification of Water Level Flows - contacts, add: Lower Kaministiquia Resident - Henry Syposz. Operations will call, Water Management will follow up with an email.

Dave Pacholczak, OPG Water Management Officer added Lower Kaministiquia Resident and contact – Hank (Henry) Syposz.

2021 ACTION:

Dave Bulter, Dog Lake - asked to have the inflow graph added to the OPG River System website

Dave Pacholczak, OPG Water Manager Officers added the Dog Lake Inflow graph to today's meeting

2021 ACTIONS:

Dave Bulter, Dog Lake - wanted the size of Dog Lake

Tom Aaltoma, OPG FLM Operating – Hydroelectric provided the size of Dog Lake to Tana-Leigh Harty to pass on to Dave Bulter.

2021 ACTION:

Rebecca Dixon, Upper Kam - Signage and barriers for public access to Crooked Rapids - to contact OPG Real Estate and Legal

Tana-Leigh Harty, OPG Corporate Relations Officer is working with Real Estate and Legal.

Action to be carried forward to 2022 Actions

Presentation and Reports

5.1 2021 Kam Annual Report

Presented by Dave Pacholczak, Water Manager, NW Operations

Dave Pacholczak, OPG went through the Kaministiquia Water Management Plan 2021 Annual Report Executive Summary. The summary included a review of precipitation, temperature, and water level/inflow/outflow graphs for the Dog Lake, Shebandowan, Kashabowie and Kakabeka.

Executive Summary

The WINTER of 2020/2021 was above average temperature wise with most months being warmer than normal and October of 2020 and February of 2021 being the two outstanding colder months. Precipitation was lacking over the winter, October and December assisting but with only normal precipitation and the remaining months well below normal precipitation. Snow surveys reported a maximum winter snow water equivalent of 101% of normal for Atikokan and 161% of normal for Dog Lake, however both of these maximums were recorded early in the winter and the snowpack did not accumulate and actually declined over the winter so that the amounts in the spring for refill water were not strong. SPRING March was warmer than normal, and April and May temperatures were average. Starting on April 7th, approximately one week earlier than normal, the inflows to the watershed lakes picked up due to a few warm days coupled with some decent precipitation amounts. April was a blessing as the precipitation that month was 217% of normal and contributed mainly to the refill of the lakes. Warmer SUMMER temperatures in the months of June and July with average temperatures in August made for an overall very nice summer, however the summer months did not contribute much water wise as they were well below normal (June 75%, July 43%, August 64%). The FALL season continued the warm trend set by summer and all months were warmer than normal. September started out by contributing normal precipitation, but October and November trended towards the dry side. Finally, December closed out the year with some above average temperatures and precipitation. Section 3.0 provides a summary of weather conditions in 2021.

There was one notable rainfall event (greater than 50mm) as measured at Environment Canada gauges and it occurred September 20th when an average 38.1mm fell across the watershed (26.2mm in Thunder Bay, 61.7mm in Atikokan and 26.4mm in Upsala). The largest 7-day accumulation of rainfall was 71.6mm that fell from April 7th to 13th.

Once again, the major focus for Water Management decisions on the system was for the sturgeon spawning at Kakabeka. Adequate flow was maintained, as provided for by the upstream lakes to support the 25cms initial total river flow and 14cms minimum continuous spill flow over the falls. Section 5.1.5 outlines the details of the Sturgeon Mitigation Plan in 2021.

During 2021 there was one instance of non-compliance for Ontario Power Generation (OPG) facilities on the Kaministiquia River system. The dry summer period caused the elevation at the Dog Lake reservoir to go below the lower compliance limit from Aug 14th to Sept 6th. Section 4 outlines this further.

2021 Water Levels update

Presented by Dave Pacholczak, NW Operations, Water Manager

General conditions across the Kaministiquia River Watershed for 2021 with the review of flows and levels.

The winter was warmer than normal with normal snowfall amount. December 2020 was a normal snowy, with a lack of snow until March/early April. Dog Lake's maximum snow was measured in January at 161% at normal and Atikokan's snow surveys showed a maximum at 101% in early February. February was cold, followed by above normal temperatures through spring, summer and fall and even early winter.

April and December's monthly precipitation were well above normal. May and September's had normal allotment of rain. The remaining eight months were well below their monthly precipitation averages.

The 2021 freshset was slightly earlier than historically recorded by roughly by one week. It was triggered by some very warm days in early April (3rd to 6th) followed by rain over a 7-day period (April 7 to 13th) recorded by Environment Canada of up to 73mm.

Summer's temperatures were normal to warmer than normal with the fall's temperature warmer than normal.

Precipitation was lacking in the fall, occurring mostly normal in September and very limited until December which came in strong with 204% of normal.

The largest single rainfall of 38.1mm fell across the watershed occurred September 20th with Thunder Bay 26.2mm, Atikokan 61.7mm and Upsala 26.4mm. The largest 7-day accumulation of rainfall was 71.6mm from April 7th to 13th.

OPG tipping bucket rain gauges recorded their largest rainfalls on:

September 16th, 31.3 mm, Shebandowan

June 10th, 32.4mm, Dog Lake

July 23rd, 49.7mm, Dog Lake

September 14th, 23.9mm, Greenwater

November 11th, 57.8mm, Kakabeka

5.2 2022 Water Levels update

Presented by Dave Pacholczak, NW Operations, Water Manager

2022 Spring temperature as of today looks like it is warming up. The precipitation in the previous fall was dry, with the spring dry in the north. The winter snow for December @ 183% and January @ 66%. Silver Falls GS outage will be completed in June -July 2022.

Flow changes in for the spring will be coming for the sturgeon.

Dave Pacholczak explained the graphs for the alternates at the meeting.

Kashabowie not filling in April 2022. May 2022 the inflow is taking off. The outflow at the minimum for the pickerel spawning at Kashabowie.

Shebandowan's refill is about 1/3 of the way. The outflow was high during the winter of 2022. April 2022 was cool but caught up with the quick melt along with the inflow of rain from April/May 2022.

Kashabowie and Shebandowan drawdown was above compliance.

Greenwater has no elevation compliance limits. Five logs out all year for maximum operating level. Inflow was 11 cms. If 6-6 cms dumped at Greenwater, the outflow will creep up at Shebandowan.

Dog Lake's 1-10 year High Water level not perfect. Water Management has stayed at the compliance line. Temperature cold, refilling late. Snow melt was fast.

Kakabeka is preparing for the flow over the falls for the tourist season along with the 25 cms limit for the sturgeon spawning season. The Water Survey Canada gauge at Fort William Historical Park was broken during the 2022 winter.

5.3 Effectiveness Monitoring

Presented by Adrienne Igo, Site Environmental Advisor

2022 Sturgeon Monitoring

No larva at the Kakabeka GS. The study showed that Lake Sturgeon were low

Drift netting done by MNRF above the Kakabeka GS.

North Bio

May 28-June 9, 2021 drift net was successful. The good new is that what OPG is doing is working.

5.4 Sturgeon Monitoring update

Presented by Mike Friday, MNRF

Lake Sturgeon Juvenile Assessment 2019 and 2020

Information was gathering from the larva, water temperature and the drift netting.

Year class, spill flows, recruitment and flow mitigation are all look at.

2013 evaluate requirements were adult Lake Sturgeon at Kakabeka were egg depots, hatching, larva and drift downstream.

The fish are surviving.

2019-2020 study area was downstream with two crews, 8 nets and 2 spots. First two days were random spots, two days later were set spots. Sampling was done on length, weight, and fin sampling. The fin sampling was done at the Dryden, Ontario lab for aging.

60 gill nets, 32 in 2019 and 28 in 2020.

Mean total length 46 cm

Mean weight 554 grams

Mean age 3.5 years (range was 0-12 years), no 7 years Lake Sturgeons captured in 2019

The question was asked by Regan Lord, would have the 2012 high water flood effected the spawning.

Mike Friday noted with the 2009 high water flow there was successful spawning larva.

Spill flow for spawning is important. Larva drift downstream out of habit and the food availability.

2012 was an interesting year, high flows delayed the spawning down from the falls.

Representative Reports

Fort William First Nations- no representative at meeting to report

Resolute Forest Products – Alex Hiiback

Status quo. Summer 17 cms flow, higher summer temperature

Water intake, outtake and treatment no change.

NW Operations, control room operators are very good at communicating. Dave Pacholczak will send an email to the operators with the feed back.

Resolute Forest Products needs the minimum of 17 cms for discharge levels.

Oliver-Paipogone – no representative at meeting to report

Shebandowan/Kashabowie/Greenwater – no representative at meeting to report

Dog Lake – Dave Bulter

Major concern is climate change with the long summer and warmer falls. Water levels higher August – September – October. Another foot of water later summer months. Mother Nature responsible for the weather conditions. The water flows makes electricity with the interaction between the Silver Falls Generating Station and the Kakabeka Falls Generating Station to make the maximum.

Climate change group at Head Office OPG (Ontario Power Generation) is researching the effect on climate change and operating difficulties. They will evaluate climate change and if it is good or bad for generation.

The preferred line on the graphs are the perfect weather and equipment.

Property owners would like to see the boating season extended with the water flat during the summer into the fall.

The Water Management Plan is 20 years old. Can the plan be amended to reflect the current conditions. Higher than 20-30 cms below the line. OPG will try but can not guarantee.

Upper Kam – Rebecca Dixon

Everything good, no problems

Lower Kaministiquia Resident – Hank Syposz

Everything is exceptionally good. Summer was warm with calm waters for boating. Winter there was people snowmobiling, skiing and dog walking along the Lower Kam.

Spring 2022, the snow is slush. Spring breakdown two weeks late with colder weather. Water elevated a bit. Lots of snow on the ground to melt.

Hoping for a great summer.

LRCA (Lakehead Regional Conversation Area) – Gail Willis, on behalf of Tammy Cook

2022 snow / water content surveys is taken at 3 locations. Rain / snow has peaked. High water in the watershed causes water safety announcements.

The Moundale boat launch is a current project with the City of Thunder Bay and Environment Canada. Vickers Street wall is being inspected, to look to see if the slope of soil/rock shows any weakness. Hazard signs are up.

MECP – Erin Hudson

No concerns other than the Kaministiquia River at Resolute Forest Products.

Fort William Historical Park – no representative at meeting to report

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park – no representative at meeting to report

Other Business

Dave Bulter asked what the water level will be this summer, Late part of summer.

Erin Hudson asked when the work would be done at Mountdale. Gail Willis, LRCA indicated that the work will be done September-October 2022.

Dave Bulter asked if any work will be done at Dog Lake Dam in the next 12-18 months.

ACTION: OPG to follow up with Projects/Maintenance for a more specific timeframe.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

Meeting adjourned at 7:29pm

1st – Dave Bulter

2nd – Alex Hiiback