

NEWSLETTER – Spring, 2007

Upcoming Saturday Events – Mark Your Calendar

May 26 1st Annual BSRA Beach Cleanup

The BSRA Environment Committee is organizing this event to clean up our beaches of garbage, including tires, steel, styrofoam and other waste items deposited over the winter. The cleanup is scheduled prior to Bluewater's large item collection. **We are asking each of our member associations to participate** with a team of 2-4 persons. BSRA will provide each association with 2 pails and 2 metal-tipped poles to collect smaller items in addition to the larger items found. Association representatives involved with the beach cleanup are asked to meet at the Stanley Pavilion (Pavilion Road) between **8:00 and 8:30 a.m.** to receive their equipment. All participants are invited to a free luncheon/social from 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. at the pavilion following the cleanup. To facilitate our planning, participating associations are asked to phone Bob Slow, Committee Chairperson, at 519-472-3349 by Saturday, May 19th.

June 2 BSRA Spring General Meeting 10:00 a.m.

St. Peter's Church Hall, north of St. Joseph on Highway 21.

All residents of the shoreline wards of Hay West and Stanley West are invited to attend and participate, although only the official delegates of member Associations may vote.

August 11 "It All Ends Up in the Lake" 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

BSRA is pleased to be a co-sponsor of this 4th annual environmental conference to be held in Goderich at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

Program details will be available on our website when they are finalized.

August 25 2007 BSRA Annual Meeting 10:00 a.m.

Bluewater Administrative Appointment

John Graham has been appointed **Roads and Property Manager**, replacing Ross Fisher who retired last December. Shoreline residents appreciate Ross' assistance and advice over the years and wish him well in his retirement. John is a Bayfield native who had similar responsibilities for the former village of Bayfield prior to amalgamation. His responsibilities also include landfill, garbage and recycling programs. We look forward to working with him. John may be contacted at 519 - 565 - 4410, or by e-mail – j.graham@town.bluewater.on.ca.

Increase in Bluewater Road Grant

The last rate adjustment was three years ago. This winter, BSRA documented to Bluewater Council the increases in costs shoreline residents are incurring to maintain their unassumed residence-access roads.

In response to the BSRA submission, Council approved an increase in the road grant reimbursement to **\$2,640 per kilometer** – the average cost Bluewater incurs to maintain its own gravel roads on a year-round basis. The new maximum, effective in this budget year, will remain in effect for 2007 and 2008.

Later this year, BSRA will provide additional information to Council to support our request that insurance costs be included in the list of road-related expenses eligible for reimbursement under the Road Grant Program.

BSRA's Role in the Political Process

One of the purposes of our Association is to represent the interests of shoreline residents.

At the **municipal level**, BSRA has worked actively to ensure the election to Bluewater Council of quality candidates who both have an appreciation of, and are responsive to, your issues of concern. This is particularly important with respect to the three positions that represent Bluewater on County Council. Accordingly, BSRA endorsed an at-large candidate in each of the last two elections – 2003, Jim Fergusson, Councillor-at-large; 2006, David Johnston, Deputy Mayor. **Your votes resulted in their election – your votes indeed count !**

However, certain issues can be resolved only through action at the **provincial level**; e.g., **water quality** and the negative impact of the **current value assessment** system. BSRA representatives have expressed your concerns on both of these issues formally and in person to two Cabinet Ministers (Environment and Finance), and also in informal discussion with the Premier.

Shoreline residents include supporters of all political parties, representing a diversity in political philosophy.

Therefore, BSRA is understandably non-partisan with respect to party affiliation, but it is our expectation of all parties and their local candidates that they show an appreciation of, and responsiveness to, concerns of shoreline residents. The upcoming October provincial election provides the opportunity for you to make a choice. Where a party, and its local candidate, demonstrates a commitment to resolve our concerns, they warrant your support; where they fail to show leadership on issues of major concern to shoreline residents, you should consider voting for a candidate from another party that demonstrates a more credible response to our concerns. BSRA will continue to keep you informed on the positions of the major parties on these two issues as their campaigns unfold.

Water Quality

- ***Provincial Response to Your Water Quality Concerns***

On December 11, 2006, three BSRA Board members answered an invitation to Queen's Park to meet with Minister of the Environment, Laurel Broton, as well as our Huron-Bruce MPP, Carol Mitchell. The Minister asked for our views on the July 10 manure spill in the St. Joseph drain and assured us that the Ministry follow-up is still in process. We presented her with a detailed water quality report outlining the history of water quality studies in Bluewater, the responses to date, the lack of progress in the quality of lake water, and a set of recommendations for Ministry help in making improvements.

Three months later, the Minister responded, complimenting BSRA on our "*activities to improve the quality of the environment*". She responded carefully to each of our main recommendations. In response to one of our proposals, she stated that the Ministry "*has taken steps*" to develop a formal protocol for a new water quality testing process called Microbiological Risk Assessment. In most other cases she referred us to various officials with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Environment, Huron County and the Municipality of Bluewater.

We are following up on each of her responses, but the progress is slow.

- ***2007 BSRA Water Quality Initiatives***

Locally, BSRA is continuing in 2007 with projects initiated in previous years. These include: adding to E-coli data on ravines and beach water; determining an appropriate approach to sediment testing; partnership with Huron County Health Unit and Ausable-Bayfield Conservation Authority on testing, education and reporting; pressure on local and provincial governments to clean up the Zurich sewage lagoons and the lake; publishing our water quality reports; building alliances and taking every opportunity to dialogue with the rural community.

- ***Bluewater Council Environmental Leadership***

Bluewater Council has included in its 2007 budget **\$15,000** to be used **to fund BSRA costs related to the above initiatives**. In the absence of adequate support from senior levels of government, those members of Council supporting these ongoing efforts are to be commended for their demonstrated leadership in recognizing the importance to our municipality of the quality of surface water entering Lake Huron.

BSRA Association Fees

At the September 2006 Annual Meeting, representatives of the member associations approved a small increase in the annual BSRA fees to meet our anticipated costs. Membership fees for 2007 consist of a base fee of **\$10.00** for the subdivision association, plus **\$1.50** (formerly \$1.00) for each property owner in the subdivision. Association fees should be forwarded to the Treasurer as soon as possible.

Paul Mennill
President

Bob Campbell
Communications Director