



NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2011

Note this date on your calendar

Saturday, June 4th -- BSRA General Meeting Coffee at 9:30 am Meeting at 10:00 am
at St. Peter's Church Hall just north of St. Joseph on the east side of Highway 21

Plan to **bring a friend** from your Association with you to the meeting.

Your Shoreline Organization

Many of you reading this newsletter are members of your own beach association and, because of the fees you pay and the membership fee paid by your association (and the 40+ other associations along the shoreline), you are also a member of the Bluewater Shoreline Residents' Association (BSRA). But why should I bother or care, you might say? The direct benefits you receive from you own association are obvious to you but the indirect benefits of being part of BSRA are perhaps less so. Examples of BSRA's work include:

1. The road grant that your association receives from the Municipality of Bluewater
2. Group pricing for road work (grading, dust control, and snow clearing) and insurance
3. The monitoring of water quality in four Bluewater ravines and their associated beaches
4. Regular updates about Bluewater issues through the BSRA e-Bulletin, the BSRA Newsletter, the website and two general meetings each year
5. Regular attendance at the Municipality of Bluewater's Council and Planning Meetings

By the way, 2011 Association fees, payable to BSRA, are now due. An association's fee involves a base fee of \$10 for the association plus \$1.50 for each property owner in the association. This is hardly an exorbitant price to pay for dedicated volunteers working on your behalf.

Industrial Wind Turbines – Are They Are Coming To Bluewater ?

Realizing that the development of industrial wind turbine farms in Bluewater was certainly possible, the BSRA Board formed a sub-committee to thoroughly examine this issue. To date, this committee has:

- Developed BSRA's position paper on this issue (This is posted on the BSRA website.)
- Met with wind energy companies to make them more aware of shoreline concerns
- Attended public rallies in Clinton, Strathroy, Port Elgin and Zurich
- Encouraged Bluewater residents to become educated about this issue.

Councils in Seaforth, Chatsworth and Saugeen have recognized the implications of having wind farms in their communities and have formulated new policies in an attempt to stop the onrush of turbines. Will Bluewater follow this lead? Noteworthy as well is the Ontario Government's moratorium on turbines in the lake until a study is done to study their effects.

Faced with the potential for 400+ turbines being constructed next year from Grand Bend, through Bluewater, to Goderich, a group of Bluewater residents has formed a new organization called **BAT(Bluewater Against Turbines)**. Their next meeting – open to the public - takes place at 7:00 pm on Thursday, May 26th at the arena in Zurich. To look at a map of these proposed turbine "farms" go to www.chatcentralhuron.com.

For further information on this controversial issue, go to www.windconcerns.com (Wind Concerns Ontario)

Lake Huron's Low Water Levels and Our Beaches

Currently, Lake Huron water levels are as low as they have been for decades. For shoreline property owners these low water levels are viewed in a positive way. The beach becomes wider and rebuilds itself - a natural defence that will combat future high water levels and the accompanying erosion of the bank. You can help this beach buildup by doing the following:

1. Encourage the growth of dune grass on the beach. This is the prime natural way to trap sand and build up the beach level. This buildup, in turn, protects the toe of the bank and minimizes bank erosion. Make your path through the dune grass a winding one – not a straight line (this reduces the chance of a “blowout”).
2. Allow other non-invasive vegetation to take hold on the beach. Milkweed plants, for example, are critical in the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. An abundance of milkweed plants will help restore the monarch population in the Great Lakes basin.
3. *Discourage* the growth of the invasive common reed, *Phragmites australis*. Do not allow this invasive species to take hold on your beach. Continual cutting of the plant will, over time, eradicate it. The best time to cut down this plant is late July – when the plant has expended its energy to produce the flower head but has not yet stored energy in the root for future growth.

More information about water levels, beach development and invasive species can be found on the website of the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation: www.lakehuron.ca

The Lakeshore Sanitary Sewer Project

Since 2006, when Bluewater Council first endorsed the planned Grand Bend sewage treatment plant and the lakeshore collection system, BSRA has backed the projects. Eliminating shoreline septic systems from Port Blake to St. Joseph would result in improvement in the quality of the water in Lake Huron, we hoped.

Now, however, in light of several studies and engineers' projections, it is judged that only 3 - 5 % of the toxic effluents entering the lake are coming from lakeshore septic beds. This, therefore, is the chief reason why the BSRA Board has recently decided to adopt a less enthusiastic endorsement of the project. While we continue to support it in principle, the reality of the current situation leads us to now favour a wait and see position.

In addition to the above concern is the matter of the cost. Currently, Dillon Consulting's engineer is projecting that the smallest house on the smallest lakeshore lot would be required to pay at least \$31,000 (government grants already included) for the treatment plant, collection system, and grinder pump or pressure system (which Dillon favours) while larger homes on larger lots would pay even more. Each property would be assessed over \$500 yearly for the operation and maintenance of these pumps. A gravity system (no grinder pumps required) would cost an additional \$20,000 minimum per property and is not being promoted by Dillon.

These prices do not take into account the large amounts already spent by many residents who have recently installed new septic systems or who have upgraded their older ones nor do they show the costs of decommissioning those systems, should that be required. Dillon Consulting has been rigid in its reluctance to consider any alternative (e.g. the "Waterloo System" - or other tertiary septic systems), so the pressure system is the one currently before Bluewater council for its approval or rejection

For further information about this sewer project, go to the Bluewater Municipality's website where the Utilities Superintendent posts a Question and Answer format.

Shoreline Residents: Keeping Up To Date On The Issues

To ensure that you have the information you need:

- Sign up for BSRA's e-Bulletin (you can do this on the BSRA website)
- Register with Prism 911 at www.huroncounty.ca/prism or call 1-888-524-8394 ext 711
- Contact any member of the BSRA Board with your questions (contact information on the website)
- Attend the BSRA General Meeting on June 4th
- Watch for the next BSRA Newsletter in mid-August