

Local people showing their interest in shoreline issues by their participation in survey, Steering Committee

Public open houses about Shoreline Management Plan Update project to take place in summer of 2016 so shoreline and seasonal residents in Ausable Bayfield watersheds are able to attend and review technical work that is being prepared over coming months; Other public involvement includes first electronic survey (open for public responses between 2015 and February 1, 2016), stakeholder participation on Steering Committee; Public also subscribing to free electronic newsletter

Shoreline residents and other interested people are showing an interest in shoreline management issues by taking part in an electronic survey and subscribing to a newsletter about the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) Shoreline Management Plan Update.

Staff of the ABCA say they are at the start of a Plan Update process that will take more than a year to complete. No drafts or recommendations have been prepared yet and technical work will not be ready for public comment until 2016, said Alec Scott, Water and Planning Manager with ABCA. He said public open houses have not taken place yet and are to be held in the summer of 2016 so all residents, including seasonal residents, are able to attend. Staff members expect technical work to be ready by summer of next year so the public will have the latest mapping and shoreline information to review at that time.

An electronic survey is one of the first opportunities available for people to provide input about shoreline issues of concern to them. Local people have already started to respond to the survey and to subscribe to a free electronic newsletter with updates about the project. "We are very pleased with the high level of public interest that has been shown already," said Scott. He said the Steering Committee and the ABCA are in the very early stages of updating technical work about the shoreline and identifying shoreline issues as provided by the public. "We want all seasonal residents, shoreline residents, and other interested people to have the opportunity to attend open houses so that's why the Steering Committee has decided to hold those public meetings next summer," he said. "We also want to make sure we will have updated information ready about the issues and the state of the shoreline so local residents have current and meaningful information to review as they provide comments."

The online survey is available at this link: www.surveymonkey.com/r/Shoreline-Management-Plan-Update. The survey is to be open until February 1, 2016. This is one of the first of many opportunities for the public to be involved over the coming year.

The conservation authority is also releasing the first of several free electronic newsletters about the Plan Update to keep people informed about opportunities to be involved over the coming year. The newsletter is to be available on the shoreline management web page. You may subscribe to the newsletter at this link: http://eepurl.com/bxn8_5

People may find out about the Plan update by visiting the shoreline management plan web page at www.abca.on.ca/page.php?page=shoreline-management. The page includes answers to a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs). It also includes the link to the survey.

The first ABCA Shoreline Management Plan was completed in 1994 and it was last updated in 2000. The updated Shoreline Management Plan should be completed by late 2016. A local Steering Committee and consulting team are now working with the conservation authority and area stakeholders to guide the update over the next year. The Steering Committee includes local people with an interest in shoreline issues, representing seasonal and shoreline residents, industry, neighbouring conservation authorities, the counties of Lambton and Huron, and representatives of the four shoreline municipalities in Ausable Bayfield watersheds. All meetings of the Steering Committee are open to the public and anyone with an interest is invited to attend. Fifteen (15) minutes are to be set aside at the end of each Steering Committee meeting to allow members of the public to ask questions, make comments, or present delegations to the Steering Committee. If you wish to make a presentation to the Steering Committee, please contact ABCA staff in advance.

Anyone with further questions about the Plan Update is also invited to contact Alec Scott or Geoff Cade at Ausable Bayfield Conservation at 519-235-2610 or toll-free 1-888-286-2610 or email info@abca.on.ca.

- 30 -

CONTACT: Geoffrey Cade, Water and Planning Supervisor, at Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA), 519-235-2610 or 1-888-286-2610 or e-mail gcade@abca.on.ca