



Sources of Knowledge Newsletter

Sharing Perspectives on the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Bruce Peninsula

Forum 2013 – Challenges of A Changing Lake

As you read this newsletter, the Sources of Knowledge team is busy putting the finishing details in place for this year's Forum. With registrations coming in quickly, the Forum is expected to sell out again this year, in spite of moving to a larger venue that can accommodate more participants. Activities will be centred on the Tobermory Community Centre, with three interesting field trips planned for those who want to extend their experience into nearby locations.

As in the past, the Forum brings together knowledgeable speakers sharing their expertise about important and relevant topics, exciting works by local artists, an interesting collection of films, and many opportunities for participants to engage in thoughtful discussions on key issues. Visit the Sources of Knowledge website for details about registration.

Keynote Speaker Jeff Gray

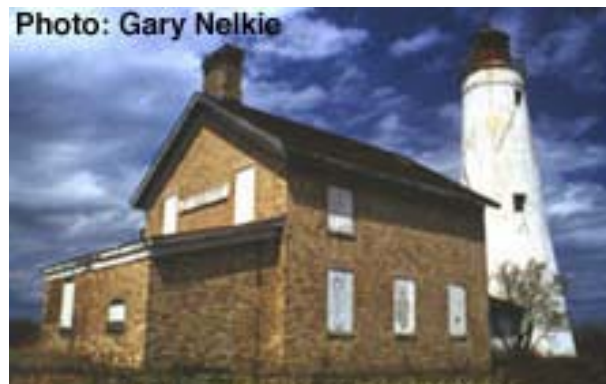
A highlight of the Forum will be the keynote address by Jeff Gray, superintendent of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Alpena, Michigan. Jeff will focus his comments on how the Sanctuary has worked to encourage community engagement by fostering personal connections and strong partnerships among their stakeholders. He will point out that economic development and conservation of natural and cultural resources can be complementary activities.

There is much that people in our area can learn from the Thunder Bay experience, especially when we consider the similarities we share with the Sanctuary.

Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Directly across Lake Huron from our shores, the 1,160 km² Sanctuary is adjacent to "Shipwreck Alley", one of the most dangerous parts of the Great Lakes for shipping. Over the years, more than 200 vessels have gone down on its rocky shoals that are made even more dangerous by frequent fogs and unpredictable weather. The Sanctuary now protects over 116 shipwrecks dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These wrecks tell the heroic story of maritime travel and commerce on the Great Lakes.

In addition, the Sanctuary helps to preserve the cultural landscape that goes along with a vibrant maritime way of life. Lighthouses (such as the Thunder Bay Island lighthouse shown here), docks and fishing camps are some of the historical artefacts that are



sheltered from destruction or despoiling. In addition, there is good evidence to suggest this area was home to prehistoric First Nations and archaeological efforts are underway to explore potential sites. Taken together, these natural, cultural and historic features form a maritime heritage that is nationally and internationally significant.

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary is jointly operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the State of Michigan through a joint management committee. Jeff Gray, as superintendent, is responsible for day-to-day activities, taking advice from an advisory council made up of government, education, economic development agencies and community interest groups.

The Sanctuary works with local, state and national authorities to enforce its protection regulations, but much of its efforts are aimed at education and research. Recreational diving is encouraged and Sanctuary programs bring people of all ages and backgrounds to their facilities. For the Thunder Bay Sanctuary, education and community involvement are effective preservation tools.

The Amended Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

Discussions at our Forum on Challenges of A Changing Great Lake will take place against the backdrop of significant amendments to the Canada – United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA). These amendments came into force February 12, 2013.

The original GLWQA was first signed in 1972, with revisions in 1978 and 1987. In 2007, a more comprehensive review acknowledged that the agreement was out of date and could not address a number of current issues. The two countries began negotiations on amendments in 2010, and agreement was reached in September 2012, to come into effect five months later.

Weaknesses of the original GLQWA centred on three problem areas:

- impacts of new toxic chemicals in the water on fish, wildlife and human health
- cumulative effects of overlapping stressors, such as invasive species and climate change
- changes in stream flows, water levels and pollution sources.

The amended agreement has wording that is designed to tackle the impacts of climate change by understanding its impacts on water quality and ecology. It also better recognizes the complexity of factors that contribute to healthy lakes and recognizes a need for conservation strategies.

The amended GLWQA has been broadly criticized on a number of fronts, including that it does not set clear, measurable targets, human health issues have been given less importance than previously, and that there was limited public involvement in the development of the amended agreement. In addition, concerned groups have questioned the availability of resources given tight economic times and declining government funding. Our Forum will provide a setting to begin to assess the value of the amended GLWQ Agreement.

Key Forum Organizer – Scott Parker

Participants in the 2013 Forum may be interested in recognizing the central role played by Scott Parker, one of the members of the organizing committee. Scott is a founding member of the Board of Sources of Knowledge and has been involved in organizing the previous four highly successful events.

Even as a child, Scott was drawn to the natural environment and eagerly participated in nature and conservation activities in his home town of Niagara Falls. For him, studying biology at the University of Guelph was an easy decision. He started with Parks Canada in 1989 as an interpreter, and then moved into a role as an ecologist specializing in resource conservation. With Parks Canada, Scott was able to work in a variety of ecosystems across Canada and beyond. Among the highlights of his experiences he lists:

- scrambling for alpine plants in the San Cristobal Mountains with botanist George Douglas
- diving the wrecks of Fathom Five with historian Stan McClellan
- crawling deep into Root Cave with geomorphologist Daryl Cowell
- searching for the pupae of a rare glowworm with entomologist Steve Marshall
- counting shorebirds north of the Arctic Circle with CWS colleagues
- culling deer on the remote and sacred island of SGang Gwaay
- diving on a Spanish wreck and remaining motionless as orcas swam nearby

- pulling sampling fishnets with his own children in Fathom Five.

One of the activities that Scott is currently involved in at Fathom Five is the coastal wetland project. He has been monitoring these wetlands for eight years and has had a chance to witness first-hand some of the changes taking place in Lake Huron. What intrigues him a lot is the interest and insight into the ecosystem that the work generates among the staff and volunteers that are part of the project. His work with the University of Waterloo, especially on his doctorate, allows him to use the project to directly link academia and practice in tangible ways.

What are future priorities for Scott? In his own words: “We need to re-think our stewardship efforts on Lake Huron. As I see it, there are some people and institutions locked in a rigidity trap – unable to adapt and respond effectively to the new and novel ecosystems, and there are others with innovation and energy. Somehow we need to improve the governance context on the lake. There are lots of examples from around the world where coastal or lake conservation has moved forward in a collective, conservation-based manner. We know that protected areas work as a conservation tool and contribute significantly to human well-being in adjacent communities. My personal priority is to see a protected area network on Lake Huron.”

Take a minute to say hello to Scott Parker during the Forum.