

WRWEO AGM
29 March 2018
BMO Community Room
2nd Floor Halifax Central Library

Attendance: 20 members attended the AGM

Agenda

1. Recognition of Unceded and Unsurrendered Mi'kmaw Territory (Ancestral L'nu Lands)
2. Jayden's Video - BTSP Introduction
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from AGM 2017 (30 March 2017)
5. Chair's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Stewardship Coordinator's BTSP Report
8. Election of Board of Directors for 2017-2018
9. Green Network Plan
10. It Takes a Village to Steward a Forest: the first year of the Bluff Trail Stewardship Program and where do we go from here
11. Group Discussion
12. Adjournment
13. Meet & Greet Networking Time

[Documents Available on WRWEO Web](#)

MINUTES

- 6:00 - 6:05 Recognition of Unceded and Unsurrendered Mi'kmaw Territory (Ancestral L'nu Lands)
 - commenced @ 6:05
- 6:05 - 6:10 Jayden's Video
 - Introduced by Paul Berry
 - [Video overview of BTSP work, appeal to get involved](#)
- 6:10 presentation - Paul
 - Rich Campbell: honored with lifetime membership award
- 6:10 - 6:15 Approval of Agenda

- Ian Smith moved, David P atriquin second
- passed
- 6:15 - 6:20 Approval of Minutes from AGM 2017 (30 March 2017)
 - Rich Campbell moved
 - Hildi Konok seconded
 - passed
- 6:20 - 6:35 Co-Chair's Report - Paul Berry
 - enumerate, acknowledge present board members
 - Huge thanks to Kimberly Berry for BTSP program getting started
 - one big thing accomplished this year: management agreement, Heather Olivella acknowledged
- Treasurer's Report
 - still working on setting up lighting/camera system, money set aside for it
 - BTSP money is acquired and spent through the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association
 - motion to approve: Ian Smith, 2nd: Barbara Klass, passed
- Stewardship Coordinator's BTSP Report
 - Mike Lancaster, the approach is to focus on community, ecology, for a balanced approach
 - ensuring careful & responsible management of trail & surrounding area
 - program needed due to increased use in recent years
 - issues & impacts
 - fires, impacts on trail & vegetation, user safety, dogs, hunting, littering
 - over time, wear and tear on trail will only get worse
 - some helicopter rescues this year, because people were poorly equipped, dehydration
 - dogs
 - number one complaint from users: what are we doing about off-leash/uncontrolled dogs?
 - difficult for enforcement, as the legislation is not clear

- and dogs can be off-leash
 - also some dog-walking groups promoting use of the trail with dogs
- Hildi Konok: education of young?
 - good time in the Spring to show them first-hand
 - vulnerable birds at this time
 - extra signage in the Spring?
- Mike: we have some existing signs year-round
- Some illegal hunting practices:
 - permanent blinds set up around the trail
 - zones of trees chopped down which are not permitted
- from floor: are blinds illegal?
- Yyes, the permanent ones are, which we've been seeing; they must be taken down immediately after use
- Hunting is allowed on and near the Bluff Trail
 - can hunt within 40m of the trail
 - 15m from the trail, snares and traps can be set
 - education & awareness: be aware of the season, wear orange, know what activities are permitted (without outright trying to encourage it!)
- Mike Lancaster estimated that there were about 20 permanent blinds in the area
- littering: in appendix of BTSP report a big enumeration of kinds of things found
- Program Goals:
 - education, adapting our behaviours, reduce illegal activity, liaise with NSE conservation officers, reduce impacts
 - doing well to meet/exceed many of these goals
- Core concepts:
 - ecological stewardship
- Rich Campbell
 - reminder that many people walk away from the trail thinking it's built for recreation, but the reality is it was built for

conservation. We've prevented developers taking it over, but now so popular, threatened by being ruined by use. Our goal should not simply be harm reduction, but also to serve the wilderness area itself: we seem to be doing that effectively through the BTSP program

- Many trails are patrolled by volunteers from the trail warden program, how does this training for Bluff Trail Stewards compare with the warden training?
 - Mike, Ian: a lot of parallels
 - here to inform, not enforce (similar)
 - BTSP more hands-on - on trail and interactive, sets out scenarios for interaction and show Stewards what to do.
 - Paul: wardens more legislation based; we've gone beyond that to personal responsibility
- Numbers for this season
 - count of 10 flora and fauna added to compendium
 - 99 LNT site check-ins with goal of 100 for 2018
 - 50 damaged sites remediated - camp fires, trash etc.
 - all the numbers are in the BTSP report available online
- How you can help
 - The main thing you can do is become a steward, there are different levels of involvement, but it is beneficial to have you come out. We need help with data crunching (esp. with Kimberly stepping back, need help this year). The BTSP and WRWEO are open to input, not just telling you how to do things, but willing to listen. Apr. 22 is the next Volunteer Stewardship Day and Bluff Trail Steward training session.
- [2nd BTSP video \(Trail Barricades\)](#)
- Election of Board of Directors for 2017-2018
 - Paul invited Rich to come forward, direct the election
 - There are 6 people nominated from the current Board of Directors and all have accepted to stand for election.
 - Paul Chair, Ben Secretary, Marine, Jayden, Robert, David

- call for nominations
 - Brice Walsh self-nominated
 - Maria Armstrong (nominated by Ben)
 - two more calls for nominations; none provided.
 - Rich Campbell declared these persons elected by acclamation.
- Green Network Plan
 - Jenny Lugar absent due to family emergency but David Patriquin advised that it is in its final phase. The plan is for Halifax to reduce sprawl, promote green spaces but it won't have legislative authority, it is up to the people to use the plan when issues come up.
 - The vote on the plan has been deferred and it is a good time to lobby your municipal councillor.
- Group Discussion
 - David: It Takes a Village to Steward a Forest: the first year of the Bluff Trail Stewardship Program and where do we go from here?
 - Paul: community needs to be involved if we want it to remain a real wilderness experience instead of a place where you can see garbage such as Tim Horton's cups, kill zones cut in the forest for deer hunting, and all the [human impacts on the trail](#). Mike Lancaster reminded us that impact radius is not just focused on the footpath, but it radiates outwards and impacts on the surrounding area.
 - so what else do we need to do to be successful?
 - The group was tossing around ideas like shutdown 1st loop, open alternate access to let the 1st loop recuperate. Wade MacIsaac indicated it would be a lot of work, but sometimes just doing a parallel trail run and close off the old one is the way to go. It appears that people don't want to walk on the rocks put down for trail hardening, they avoid the rock, avoid the mud, and then step on the duff. One solution may be more boardwalks.
 - Mike: a lot of engagement through Facebook page & a lot of interested people waiting in the wings to come out and get involved.
 - David: good idea to point people at other areas as well such as Sandy

Lake and other Off-Leash dog walking areas and other nearby spots more suitable for camping. We can spread this idea of stewardship beyond just the Bluff into each new area.

- Rich: noted BTSP day & Sandy Lake walk day both on the same day, Apr. 22. Maybe have each leader talk about the other group as a part of their presentation (i.e. implementing this encouraging to look beyond)
- Mike: Ingram river wilderness area, not as high traffic, not as sensitive to the impact of humans. There are not as many sensitive species in Blue Mountain area.
- Mike: hard to get the message through, people think “dogs are animals, i.e. part of nature”, but fail to see their impacts, and that it’s really a human impact, being their owners and giving them access where they wouldn’t otherwise go.
- Rich: information overload on the initial signs; wonder if where there are clear choices, there were small signs to encourage people to go the right way, e.g. “walk on granite, save the woods”, etc.
- Maria: how do we draw attention to people seeing the impacts?
- Ben: community engagement via event, send groups of hiker with a trained steward to interpret the walk.
- Mike: barricades on pot lake loop to prevent trail users from widening the trail and following spurs. There are about 200, and it is making a difference; signs are not as effective as design/barricades. The rope placed on Leg “B” of Pot Lake Loop seems to be effective, and so are barricades.
- Wade: people are basically just following their feet
- Heather Davis: The BTSP has resulted in phenomenal progress in a very short time! it looks like a trail that is managed, stewarded, cared for; huge congrats because it’s all because of you guys. it’s working!
- David Patriquin: kudos for Kimberly Berry. [applause]
- Mike: praise for Kimberly’s efforts.
- Adjournment
 - Ben moved

- adjourned @ 7:36