

POCKWOCK WATERSHED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



March 4, 2021 – 10 a.m.
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting
Minutes

Attendance:

Michael Allen, Watershed Planner.....Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
Jeff Brown (JeB), Forestry Technician.....Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR)
Jillanna Brown (JiB), P. Eng., Regional EngineerN.S. Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
Barry Geddes (BG), (*Vice Chair*) Watershed Manager.....Halifax Water
Rachel Gilbert (RG), Manager of Planning Services.....Municipality of East Hants (MEH)
Andrew Houlihan (AH), Supervisor, J.D. Kline Water Supply Plant.....Halifax Water
Anna McCarron (AM), (*Secretary*) Source Water Planner.....Halifax Water
Tim O'Brien (TO), (*Chair*) Regional ForesterDepart. of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR)
Michael Perry (MP), Community Representative.....Mount Uniacke
Sally Steele (SS), Protected Areas Coord., Western Region N.S. Environment Climate Change (NSECC)

Regrets:

Reid Campbell (RC), Director Water Services.....Halifax Water
Dawn MacNeill (DM) Protected Areas Coord., Central Region...NS Env. and Climate Change (NSECC)

Guests:

Tricia Isnor (TI), Regulatory Services, Halifax Water.....Halifax Water
Neil Moorehouse (NM) for Dawn MacNeill....Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)

Pockwock Watershed Management Committee (PWMC) Meeting Called to Order by Chair (TO)

1. Attendance/Introductions:

- Regrets listed above:
 - i.* Quorum noted.
- AM displayed the following:
 - i.* March 4, 2021 Meeting Agenda;
 - ii.* DRAFT September 10, 2020 Meeting Minutes;
- a. Review and Approval:
 - i.* March 4, 2021 Meeting Agenda:
 - BG moved to approve with change in order; i.e., move 2.g. (Water Storage and Withdrawal Permit) to 2.a; MA 2nd; all in favour.
 - ii.* March 5, 2020 meeting Minutes:
 - BG moved to approve; MP seconded; all in favour.
 - iii.* September 10, Meeting Minutes:
 - JiB moved to approve; RG seconded; all in favour.



	<u>Action</u>
<p>2. Old Business:</p> <p>a. <u>Water Storage and Withdrawal Permit Application:</u></p> <p><u>TI displayed her presentation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultants have created sub reports, which will be attached as appendices to the main report to be submitted to NSECC in June, identifying the field work findings, data collected and conclusions specific to each of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wetlands assessment; 2. Aquatic habitat assessment; and 3. Hydrological monitoring • Wetland Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 36 wetlands were identified around the water’s edge and into the Pockwock watershed areas; field surveys were conducted by boat that was chauffeured by BG on September 15 and 16th 2020; ○ TI displayed an illustration showing the location of the wetlands, a cluster of which is concentrated around the northern end of Pockwock Lake and another amounting to about a third of them clustered mainly around Haverstock Island and the western shoreline of the lake; ○ each wetland vegetation community was classified by their wetland class and type per the Canadian Wetland Classification system; ○ each wetland disturbance area was given a score between 1 and 4 to describe the level of disturbance associated with seasonal water level fluctuations, and resulting vegetation/habitat; and ○ 7 distinct wetland communities were identified, which included mostly low shrub swamps, a couple of mixed treed swamps, a tall shrub swamp, a few bogs, a couple of fens, numerous shallow water wetlands and a marsh at the abandoned sawmill site at the very bottom of the lake, closest to the treatment plant; and ○ the consultant’s report is in a draft form that Halifax Water will be providing comments to, which will be included in the filed report. • Aquatic habitat assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Field surveys were completed August 19 and 20, including four transects (illustrated) conducted by boat across Pockwock Lake; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 tributary inlets were identified around the lake as well; ○ Assessments on the fish community and riparian habitat were conducted as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fyke nets were deployed at two sites – one at Lacey River at the northern point of the lake and the other in the channel between Haverstock Island and the western shore of the lake – capturing the following fish species: American eel, common shiner, yellow perch 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Aquatics Report is in draft form and under review by staff. ● Hydrological monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ waiting on the hydrological report, which we should receive any day; ○ once we get all three reports, we will give them feedback to complete the sub-reports while they work on the main report; ○ the main report will include discussion on the three reports and a multitude of other elements; and will get into contingency planning, monitoring planning associated with water withdrawals, as well as water storage (reservoir/dam applications); ○ they will send Halifax Water a draft report that includes all the elements and components in a couple of months or so for Halifax Water’s review and comment; ○ the final report will be sent to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and NSECC by June 3rd for their review and approval; and ○ an approval would mean that Halifax Water would have a 10-year permit renewal to withdraw water from Pockwock Lake. 	<u>Action</u>
<p>Action: Provide Protected Areas Branch of NSECC a copy of report.</p> <p>b. <u>Special Constable Status (SCS)/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):</u> <i>BG displayed signed SCS MOU for Halifax Water.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BG is the only one with Special Constable Status specific to Halifax Water’s <i>Protected Water Areas</i>. 	Pending
<p>Action: remove this Item from the Agenda.</p> <p>Q: <i>Have any charges been laid? (TO)</i> A: No. The new gate at Long Ponds has helped to deter off-highway vehicle (OHV) activity. Security cameras indicate that there has been very little activity – 2 bikes – last one January 21. People are not bothering to go that way. However, they are still getting through in the northern side and into the Pockwock Wilderness area. (BG)</p> <p>Q: <i>Any word on the Uniacke Trails Association’s effort to convert the railway to a trail, MP? The trail would have a positive impact on the watershed area. (BG)</i> A: The Uniacke Trail Association (UTA) made a complaint to the Nova Scotia Utility & Review Board (NSUARB) that the Windsor & Hantsport Railway Company (W&HRC) were not following the terms of their operating license, nor the <i>Railways Act</i> and Regulations. The NSUARB determined at a hearing [December 2020] that complaints about the W&HRC railway company could not come from the UTA because they do not have jurisdiction over transportation issues; the complaint must be from Nova Scotia Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (NSTIR).</p> <p>With all the evidence they have, the UTA is actively lobbying NSTIR and the province to have the lease to the W&HRC removed from that rail line. However, it could be a few years before that happens.</p> <p>HRM, East and West Hants/Windsor municipalities, as well as the Kings/Hants MP, support removal of the lease and converting the rail line to a multi-use trail for</p>	Remove

horses, walking, OHVs, etc. The trail will connect not just the local Mount Uniacke community but will open a lot of wilderness and economic opportunity all along that trail, which runs between Windsor Junction and Windsor. (MP)

BG displayed a Google Earth map showing the railway portion that travels under highway 101 and skirts around the watershed area.

The railway is no longer in use and has not been for many years. Converting the railway into a trail would provide an important and safe connection between the eastern and western areas of the province. The railway travels under the 101, which, once converted to a trail (which the ATV Association has been asking for) OHVs could use as a thoroughfare and would divert access outside of the watershed area instead of cutting through an access road at Exit 3 and through the wilderness area portion of the protected water area (PWA) to western areas. This would provide better protection for both the Pockwock PWA and NSECC's wilderness area. (BG)

CN leased a portion of the Windsor Hantsport railway line to the W&HRC of the US, contingent that they use it as an operational railway. But the Mount Uniacke portion of it has been asphalted for many years, the bridges are not structurally sound and most of the area is completely grown over. The W&HRC says they will lease the land to the municipalities for an exorbitant price per kilometre.

If the W&HRC loses the claim to the railroad, it will defer to CN who will go through the disposal process of the property and allow the federal, provincial and municipal governments to purchase it, which is the preferred way forward for all, except the W&HRC who are working hard to maximize their economic gain. (MP)

Q: *Could the Pockwock Watershed Management Committee (PWMC) write a letter in support of the effort to convert the railway into a multi-use trail?* (BG)

A: Paul Smith, Chair of the UTA, will be asked to put in a formal request that can be assessed and approved by the Association regarding asking the PWMC for a letter of support. (MP)

Action: Ask the [Uniacke Trails Association](#) (UTA) to ask for feedback from the PWMC in support of their action to lobby NSTIR to continue the push to have the Windsor Junction – Windsor railway converted to a trail.

c. [Pockwock Wilderness Area](#)

i. Signage Update (BG):

- more wilderness area (WA) signage is needed, especially along the northern boundary area of the watershed along the power line, which OHVs access via a road that goes around a pulled bridge on private land outside of the watershed area in the northwest;
- we would like a larger protected WA sign where the watershed boundary crosses the power line where OHVs access and have cut a new trail around a large swamp; this was not an issue until 2-3 years ago, when they started coming in during the winter; bikes are bigger, providing the ability to access areas not previously accessed;

Action

MP

frequent these areas seem to access the protected wilderness area website. We want wilderness area/watershed area visitors to know what the watershed area regulations are, in addition to the wilderness area regulations. (BG)

A: DM is looking into that. Just not sure how often changes are made to the website to get the message posted. (NM)

- maybe add where it says Protected Water Area, the following: “protected water area regulations apply”, with a link to them;
- there has been a huge increase in watershed traffic since Covid-19 began;
- people are accessing the Pockwock watershed through the Exit 3 entrance and they are bringing 100-150 dogs with them;
- people need to know the rules for all of our watershed areas – they are not intended as recreation locations; for instance, you cannot swim in the Pockwock watershed and that includes pets; dogs carry the same diseases as humans, and we want to reduce the risk to the water supply; the number of dogs far outweighs the number of deer, for example, so comparing those impacts does not apply; and
- dogs must be on a leash while in the watershed area.

Action: NSECC is asked to create a link on the [Pockwock Wilderness Area](#) webpage linking where the Pockwock Watershed Protected Water Area is mentioned to the [Pockwock Watershed PWA Designation and Regulations](#).

d. Sackville River Wilderness Area:

i. Public Consultation Period

- the Sackville River WA is included in the [Parks and Protected Areas Public Consultation Review](#), which BG invited Committee members to provide comments on, in an email dated February 12, 2021;
- the comment period for the wilderness areas public consultation closes April 13th 2021.

ii. Watershed Boundary Lines

- Halifax Water wants to maintain its access road on the western side of the Sackville Rivers WA to travel across along the power line, just below the WA, to access the harvesting areas on the east side of the WA;
 - we are looking at putting in a new road there and more signage;
- when the Sackville Rivers WA receives its protection status, Halifax Water wants to put in signage along the WA boundary;
- clarification is needed on the boundary lines around the portion of the Sackville River WA southwest of the 101 as well as on the Crown land boundary line extending southward from the eastern WA boundary;

Q: *Should Halifax Water request an update of the Sackville Rivers WA boundary from NSECC?*

A: Yes (NM)

Action

**BG/DM/
NM**

<p>Action: Request clarification from NSECC of the Sackville Rivers WA boundary southwest of the 101.</p> <p>Action: Halifax Water will meet with NSECC Protected Areas Branch to discuss the impacts on the portion of the SRPA inside the Pockwock PWA.</p> <p>Q: <i>Will the Chesapeake Road be excluded from the pending portion of the Sackville River Wilderness Area? We are proposing road upgrading activity that includes that road. However, if it is not going to be excluded then we wouldn't upgrade it.</i></p> <p><u>BG displayed the Parks and Protected Areas Interactive Map to determine the location of the Chesapeake Road.</u></p> <p>A: It was determined that the road and the area north of the road was not included in the pending portion of the Sackville River Wilderness Area. The Wilderness Area is bound by Chesapeake Road in the north and by a wood road in the south.</p> <p>e. <u>Mount Uniacke Signage:</u></p> <p>i. Bell Park:</p> <p>a) Interpretive signage throughout Bell Park</p>	<p><u>Action</u> BG NSECC/ DM/NM</p>
<p>Action: After watershed signage has been installed, approach Bell Park Association President, Jim Foster, about interpretive signage in the Park.</p> <p>ii. Pockwock Watershed Protected Water Area (PWA) Signs (see <i>Appendix B</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three (3) of these 4 ft. x 8 ft. signs near/on Highway 101 were replaced in October by Eastern Fence who were awarded the contract to install them; 	<p>Proceed</p>
<p>Action: Remove from Agenda</p> <p>iii. Regulatory Signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two regulatory signs (see <i>Appendix C</i>) to be installed by Halifax Water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ one replaces an existing sign just inside the gate at Exit 3; and another is a new sign on the trail to St. Margaret's Bay; • since these are just sign maintenance projects, we can move on to consult with Jim Foster regarding interpretive signage in Bell Park – a positive thing for the Mount Uniacke community. 	<p>AM</p>
<p>Action: Complete regulatory signage for Pockwock watershed area and begin work on Bell Park interpretive signage.</p> <p>f. <u>Resource Management Updates:</u></p> <p>i. Forestry:</p> <p><u>BG reporting based on an email from Westfor:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westfor is continuing with their forest management plan that they have been chipping away at over the past three years on a hundred hectares (ha) of blocks previously approved (<u>see</u> 	<p>BG/AM</p>

	<u>Action</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we increased our sampling of zooplankton and algae to determine which of these animals or compounds may be an issue for water treatment; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ tabularia diatoms (in 2018) and anabaena cyanobacteria have caused problems in the filters of our treatment plants; • with a better understanding of what is in the lake, we can better predict what treatment is needed to handle the water’s new composition; for example, we know that specific zooplankton appear at certain thermal stratification levels and at certain times of the year, so to avoid having to treat these organisms inside the plant, a floating intake could be employed that avoids pulling in such creatures into the plant. <p>g. <u>forWater Research:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lake recovery, geosmin and the <i>forWater</i> research project are intertwined; • the forWater research project is an ongoing 5-year international study involving Australia, US and Canada that looks at forest management in a watershed setting as a water quality improvement technology; i.e., how can forest management be conducted to positively impact water quality; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ for instance, we want to find where the carbon threshold is, so we know when it is best to cut the trees to maximize the carbon left in them, so as not to allow the carbon onto the land base to leach into the water and cause treatment issues; • the research is being conducted within five nodes across the country – Pacific, Mountain, Prairie, Ontario and Atlantic, with each node focussing on a specific area of study; • this research provides a means for NGOs, utilities, the forest industry and the regulators to speak the same language; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ for instance, typically, the forest industry would not look at the land base from a water quality perspective, instead they would look at it through a sustainable forest lens; • this research is teaching us to look at it from a sustainable watershed management lens and what we need to do to achieve our common goals. <p>Q: <i>What is the link between the decreasing mean annual increment for a harvest and the threshold for doing the right thing for water quality; where do those two worlds meet? (TO)</i></p> <p>A: We don’t have the answers to that yet. This is part of the research being conducted, led by Peter Duinker. (BG)</p> <p>Q: <i>Is the harvest that is being conducted this summer compatible with the objectives you are trying to achieve with the forWater study? (TO)</i></p> <p>A: Yes. The last three blocks were targeted for water sampling at the land base/tree level and the water quality level; beginning in 2018 we have been sampling for a full year using an automated grab sampling system has been deployed in each of the catchment areas prior to the harvesting, during the harvesting and up to five years</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with MA, AM and BG regarding some draft regulations for the Mount Uniacke Business Park; that process has just started; • waiting for some feedback and to do more work before sending draft regulations to AM and BG for their review. <p>5. Municipal Planning Update</p> <p>d. <u>Development within natural watershed/Business Park Expansion:</u></p> <p>i. Business Park Expansion – see 4.c. above.</p> <p>ii. Regulations regarding sulphide bearing material (SBM) and salt impacts in watershed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RG was speaking with her economic and business development colleague about the procedures in place to notify people about the potential for SBM; • they have had discussions with people purchasing land in the past about the potential for exposing the SBM; • we don't have a formal procedure in place to notify people; • there is ongoing discussion on how to make people aware that there is potential for exposing SBM in the area. <p><i>Q: Will the municipality be doing the land site preparation or excavation that could possibly uncover the sulphide bearing material, or are you expecting a lot by lot development scenario? (JiB)</i></p> <p>A: I believe it will be a lot by lot development situation when they purchase the land, so they will be clearing the land themselves. We had to remove some sulphide bearing material when we built the roads, which we addressed during the road construction. (RG)</p> <p>A: Please be aware that it becomes a regulated activity and may require NSECC approval when an excavation exceeds 500 cubic metres; at that point if the SBM is to be encapsulated on site, it requires an approval, otherwise, if it goes to a disposal cell such as Fairview Cove Container Pier, the approval is held by the disposal. (JiB)</p> <p><i>Q: What if it is a cumulative situation? (BG)</i></p> <p>A: For NSECC, it is about the disposal and how much is excavated at a time. Typically, if it is lot by lot, it is not occurring simultaneously. With sulphide bearing material, the risk is exposing its surface area to precipitation. If it is dealt with and back under the ground and if it is smaller than that amount, it does require proper encapsulation. (JiB)</p> <p><i>Q: What if the lots are excavated at the same time? Could MEH consider not selling the lots all at the same time to avoid a greater area of SBM being exposed? (AM)</i></p> <p>A: I am not sure if that would be a reasonable request to the economic development unit of MEH. MEH's Economic and Business Development Officer, Graham Scott, said that when they were looking at the extension part of the area, they did not find a lot of SBM. It seems to be more concentrated around the Martha Road area. However, as mentioned earlier, such considerations are all part of the discussions</p>	<p><u>Action</u></p>
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Appendix A: Map of Landownership and Pockwock Wilderness Area

Pockwock Lake Watershed Protected Water Area

Emergency Spills: **Call 911**



(902) 420-9287

Appendix C: Regulatory Signage Inside Watershed Area

PROTECTED WATER AREA

REGULATED* ACTIVITIES

- No unauthorized fires
- No fishing
- No swimming (including pets)
- No unauthorized boating
- No dumping or disposal
- No unauthorized tree cutting

**Pockwock Lake Watershed Protected Water Area Regulations*

NO UNAUTHORIZED VEHICLES

- Cars and Trucks
- Snowmobiles
- All-terrain (Off-highway) Vehicles
- Trail Bikes

Note: Leave at least a 4 inch space for two stickers that will be placed here.

For More Information Call (902) 420-9287

Pockwock Lake

