

Submitted by Paul Morgan through the GBA President:

I wanted to update you on several developments since my message to you last month.

Water Levels:

Despite the almost record rainfall we have received this spring, which thankfully has brought water levels in Georgian Bay back up to about last year's level, we are still 19 inches below the long term average. So while we can be grateful that conditions have improved from the crisis point of last winter, we can't leave water levels solely to the whim of an increasingly variable climate. We will continue to pursue a long term solution to maintaining water levels in a historic healthy range.

Please remind your members to write to their elected representatives in Canada or the US if they have not already done so, to urge the governments to take the action recommended in the IJC report. Contact information and suggested points for correspondence are available under "Political Action Plan" at the "Water" tab on the GBA's website: www.georgianbay.ca.

Bob Duncanson and our past President, Craig Bowden, were interviewed by CityTV this week for an item about water levels. If you didn't catch it live, you can see it via this link: <http://www.citynews.ca/2013/06/26/water-levels-in-cottage-country-take-a-hit/>.

We held a first and promising meeting at the end of May with Restore Our Waters International and its Chair, Roger Gauthier. Roger is a hydrologist who worked for the US Army Corps of Engineers in Detroit for many years. ROWI is working to build support for action on Great Lakes water levels with an emphasis on efforts with US stakeholders and politicians. ROWI has asked us to circulate the attached notice of public meetings they will be holding in the Georgian Bay area in early July, so we are passing it along.

We will be meeting with fellow funders of the Mowat Center's Water Levels Economic Impact Study being sponsored by Georgian Bay Forever early in July.

In addition, we have provided materials on the GBA's position regarding water levels to Stop the Drop.

Strategic Plan:

The Board has updated the GBA's strategic plan for the next three years. Our key priorities for 2013-14 are water levels, water quality, membership (i.e. helping our member associations build their membership) and communications. We have improved the GBA's website and will enhance it further over the next few months. We are also mindful that while water issues have been dominant for the past while, we also need to pay attention to other issues that are important to our members, including boating and safety (OPP relations, boater/cottager relations, emergency response), government affairs (waste management, MPAC, municipal planning, First Nations), lands and forest health (species at risk, invasive species) and fisheries health (native fish, aquaculture).

We have reorganized the membership and leadership of the GBA Board committees to align with this strategy. A copy of the strategic plan and more information on the committees and their membership is available on the GBA website.

Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (FOCA)

Several but not all of GBA's member associations are members of FOCA. The primary reason for them belonging to FOCA is to take advantage of the special insurance package the FOCA has negotiated for directors' liability and general liability insurance. The GBA has been a member of FOCA since 1965, two years after FOCA was founded. Typically members of FOCA are charged a per member fee but because GBA is itself an umbrella organization we pay a much reduced fee. We attend FOCA meetings and are recognized as a voting member of FOCA. We also have access to FOCA materials that we share from time to time with our Member Associations as appropriate. FOCA has a very good website where hot topics are discussed, and past publications can be accessed. The website address is www.foca.on.ca.

Cottage Life

Over the past year or so, GBA has been developing a closer relationship with Cottage Life. We held our very successful Annual Meeting in conjunction with the Spring Cottage Life Show. In addition, we have been working with them on a number of articles including one on water levels that will be published in the July edition of their magazine. Cottage Life has approached us with an offer that we thought we should pass along to our Member Associations for possible further relay to their Members. Cottage Life is prepared to offer GBA members a reduced price on subscriptions to their magazine. A subscription that will cover 8 issues would cost \$24, a savings of \$15 off the retail price. This offer is only available for Canadian mailing addresses. If your members wish to take advantage of this offer they should contact Cottage Life directly at the following web location: www.cottagelife.com/member3.
