

WOODLAND BEACH PROPERTY OWNERS' ASSOCIATION

Working together to encourage community spirit and wise environmental practices

President's Message – Aug. 31, 2013

What does Woodland Beach mean to you? Why do you choose to own property here? Are you like me? Is Woodland Beach your “escape hatch”, your sanctuary away from the hectic pace of daily life? Does a walk along the shore calm your mind and ease your stress level? Do the sparkling waters and glorious sunsets nourish your soul?

If Woodland Beach means all these things and more to us, we should be worried. Low water levels, high E-coli counts, disappearing sand dunes, rampant Phragmites, algae blooms, avian and fish die-offs – these are all signs that our ever-expanding human footprint is altering and destroying the fragile beach ecosystem. The issues become almost overwhelming, but I believe that it is not too late. I believe that we can make a difference.

For example, we can

- stop bull-dozing and clearing native vegetation from the beach
- plant beach grass
- erect sand fencing in the fall
- control Phragmites
- care for our septic systems
- stop using products that contain phosphates and other harmful chemicals
- refrain from planting lawns on the water side of shoreline properties
- use permeable paving

Some shoreline property owners are already working to remove Phragmites, to plant beach grass and encourage dune restoration. These properties can be recognized by the “Sensitive Area” signs awarded by WBPOA.

These positive actions, one step at a time, will make a difference. We are the current custodians of this special place, and it is our responsibility to protect and preserve it for future generations. By working together, we can do it !

Following are actions that WBPOA has undertaken during the past year:

Environmental

Invasive Species: The reed Phragmites is threatening to over-run our beach and all the beaches of the Gt. Lakes. It spreads aggressively and can grow to a height of 15 ft. It is easy to identify at this time of year by the purple plumes that are waving in the breeze. These seed heads should be removed and burned immediately before they can mature and spread. We have been in contact with the Twp., MNR, Lake Huron Centre and Env.Can. trying to learn the best method of Phragmites control. Spraying with Roundup is effective, but harmful to surrounding vegetation and is not suggested near water. A special permit issued by MNR is required, and spray can only be applied by a licenced pesticide contractor. At the July WBPOA Meeting we heard from Pat Donnelly (LHCCC), Lynn Short (Wymbolwood) and Rob Sleigh (Woodland) who have all experienced success in controlling Phrag. Towards the end of July, when the plant has used much of its energy to produce leaves and the beginning seed head, stalks should be cut off just below the surface of the soil. This weakens the root because the plant has been deprived of its ability to photosynthesize. Stalks are then disposed of by burning or municipal hot composting. This method is labour-intensive and must be repeated for several years, but eventually the

plant will weaken until only the odd shoot re-appears. Next summer the Assoc. is planning to organize a beach-wide neighbourhood "Phragmites Control" project. More info in the spring!

Water Levels: Directors attended a meeting hosted by Tiny Twp. and Sierra Club to keep current on the latest info. Canadian and US governments are being lobbied to fund the placement of "sills" in the St. Clair River to slow the flow of water. Even if current political and financial issues are solved quickly, it will be many years (if ever) before we see a return to former levels.

Water Quality: WBPOA water quality tests last summer showed high E-coli counts in Tamarack Creek. We urged the Twp. to take action and are pleased to report that Severn Sound Environmental Assoc. has been hired to do further testing of both Tamarack and Culver's Creeks in an effort to identify the source(s) of the pollution. No definitive results to date, but we will keep you informed.

WBPOA Activities

Community Events: Third annual Community Clean-up (45 volunteers collected 35 bags of garbage) and Canada Day Celebration was held at the Bayshore Seniors' (approx. 160 in attendance). Our 1st Woodland Beach Day on Aug. 3rd was great fun despite the windy weather, with 2 beach volleyball courts and impressive sand sculptures along the beach. Due to many requests, "I Love My Beach" T-shirts and sweatshirts will be available again next summer. Order in the spring!

Communication with Members: Monthly Email up-dates, Spring Newsletter, Brochures and signage. Webmaster Ray Stittle keeps the Website current and welcomes receiving feed-back, news and photos to share. But nothing is more effective than positive word-of-mouth....we urge all members to promote WBPOA to their neighbours and encourage their participation. New "Welcome to WB" signs are needed on south and east road entrances, as well as some new Beach Access signs at the trails. These signs will be replaced as WBPOA membership funds allow.

WB History Project: Tracey Price and her committee are embarking on an ambitious project to collect photos and stories about WB. They would welcome contributions, either originals or copies. Contact Tracey through the Website. info@wbpoa.org

Thank you to Directors Tracey Price, Gary Seagrave, Ray Stittle, Bev Holmes, Debbie Curry, Denise Gardian and Derek Ramsay for their cooperation and commitment; to the Bayshore Seniors' for the use of their beautiful facility; to John Price and the "Neighbourhood Watch" Block Captains for their watchful eyes; to Barry Woods for organizing the beach volleyball; to all the volunteers who contributed time and effort to make this another great year at Woodland Beach!

We need HELP! Please consider volunteering! There are on-going projects that need your help. Please consider choosing one that suits your interests and available time commitment. It doesn't have to be long-term or onerous.....any and all help is appreciated.

Remember, this is our beach and our community. Let's work together to preserve and protect it!

Linda Lockyer
President