

Bruce Peninsula Environment Group Annual Report 2009

From the Chair

What a year ! In this, our 20th Anniversary Year, the list of BPEG activities and events continues to respond to needs but also to grow.

Our membership has now pushed through the 200 barrier and is currently at 206, composed of 67 families and 49 'singles'. A lot of the credit for this popularity must go to our monthly General Meetings (GMs) which have experienced attendances ranging from 50 to 80. At 80, the Church Hall is full ! One particular success story was the August meeting, with Stephen Scharper and Elizabeth May at the National Park Visitor Centre, discussing his book, 'the Green Bible', followed by a Farmers' Market - sponsored barbecue and an evening of aboriginal drumming and story-telling put on by the Grandmothers' Connection. Around 150 people were present at that one !

Our sincere thanks go out to all of our speakers in 2009 for making our GMs so informative and enjoyable. Grateful thanks also go to Joan and Don McIlraith for organising their wonderful after-meeting- refreshments team and the gifts for presenters, not to mention for making all those dead batteries and printer ink cells disappear greenly !

In addition to the GMs, BPEG has continued to support: the phenomenally successful Saturday morning Lion's Head Farmers' Market initiated by student rep Megan Myles in 2008 with the support of Tina Chladny and teacher Betsy Burrows; the ongoing Dark Sky initiative work of Graham Thomas in seeking Northern Bruce Peninsula Municipal by-law status; Glen Estill's major role in the Golden Dawn Seniors' Home solar water heating project; and Judy Appleton's bi-annual Road 9 cleanup.

New in 2009 has been the start-up of our community garden on member Helen Westover's land. The weather was not kind, the soil was (and is) in great need of improvement but, with Stuart Burgess and Tim Spencer leading, and John Baker and Gerry Myles doing a lot of the work, we did manage a small potato crop on part of the plot. The harvest was donated to BPDS' Outers Club's fund-raising dinner.

Our Waste Management team of Mike Jorna, Jacqui Wakefield, Jim Kuellmer and Judi MacLeod also continued to make itself felt, gaining official recognition as a main component of the Municipality's new advisory committee.

Our environmental library and freebee table under the control of Ruth Tompkins and Joan Barton continue to be busy at monthly meetings, with donations of excellent books, magazines and brochures coming in steadily. In other forms of communication BPEG owes a continuing debt to web master Rick Roman, e-mailing network manager Bob McKay and, of course, the Media Committee headed up by Donna Dilschneider with Stuart Burgess, Barbara Bobo, Jenna McGuire, Jan Mackie, Bob Patrick, Loretta Plomley, and Rick Roman sharing the load.

August's 3rd Environmental Film Festival, in collaboration with the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory's Ron Baker under the mentorship of U of T's Stephen Scharper, played out to good audiences and raised over \$700 each for BPEG and the BPBO.

Collaboration between BPEG and Bruce Peninsula District School also continues to grow – a positive for both of us. Members help judge the school's Science and Ideas fairs, enlist school classes for our projects, offer awards to students showing environmental excellence, and make donations towards items of school projects. In return, the school gives us its support and lends us equipment for our meetings when needed. Heartfelt thanks to principal Matt Pickett and his great staff.

Interventions are one of BPEG's mandates and we have undertaken a number of these again during

2009, attending OMB and Environmental Assessment hearings and offering submissions and letters on behalf of BPEG members and other groups.

A number of our members also participate in the activities of other environmental organisations. Jim Kuellmer has replaced John Appleton on the board of the Peninsula Biosphere Association and Dale Thompson remains a member of the Grey-Bruce Drinking Water Source Protection Committee. Bob Patrick became President of CONE this year and Don McIlraith president of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club. Ziggy Kleinau, BPEG founder, is also founder and long-standing Co-ordinator of the Coalition for Renewable Energy. Tony Barton and Don McIlraith continue to take part in Ont Nature's Greenway Initiative and Jennifer Parker to lead the Roots and Shoots family.

We would be remiss in not thanking publisher John Francis of the BP Press for his continuous support of BPEG's activities.

I invite you to count the members listed above and then add in all those of you who have volunteered as worker bees. You all are the great strengths of BPEG as we go forward into 2010.

This year, we lose three members of our Board whose terms, under BPEG's by-laws, are up. I wish to thank Donna Dilschneider, Media chair, for her dedicated commitment to our advertising and reporting needs, Pauline Morill our secretary and Tina Chladny, director at large, who remains as membership secretary. A huge hole was also left by the departure of student rep Megan Myles for the far west, but I am hopeful that Jenna Lawson will fit right into her place.

Tony Barton.

Financial Report

B.P.E.G. ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT
NOVEMBER 4, 2009

Opening Balance November 5, 2008	\$ 4,502.26
Closing balance November 4, 2009	<u>\$ 3,826.54</u>
Difference	- \$ 675.72

Our books were last audited by Mr. Paul Conway, MBA, on 31 January, 2009, and approved by him. At that time I initiated a spread sheet in addition to the voucher register system we had to make it clearer and easier to reconcile our financial transactions with our bank account at the Lion's Head branch of RBC..

Income:

Memberships for this timeframe were our largest single income item, amounting to \$1,740. The next largest was the Film Festival which netted \$ 466.79.

In comparison, in 2007, our last Energy Tour netted BPEG \$1,259.

Other income of note was from the sale of shares in Organic Meadow in the amount of \$1,118, as well as grocery tapes (a project of Joan McIlraith), book sales from Lyle Estill, a \$231 dividend from Organic Meadow, our lottery operated by Tim Spencer, and generous contributions of interest earned from our RBC account amounting to \$0.29. However, these were offset by our fees of \$21.00 to write cheques for a net loss of \$20.71! We enjoyed only one donation during this period.

Expenses:

Our single largest expense was a donation of \$2,000.00 on March 10, 2009, to act as seed money in part, in the very successful campaign to install solar hot water heating on the roof of the Golden Dawn Nursing Home.

B.P.E.G. also supported other local initiatives such as Lyle Estill's book sale, Citizens for Renewable Energy, Lion's Head Farmer's Market, Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment (C.O.N.E.), Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (C.A.P.E.), road clean-ups organized by Judy Appleton, our website maintained by Rick Roman, and the many and varied projects undertaken by Joan McIlraith like t-shirts, coffee mugs with Amnon Goldstein, gifts for speakers, and coffee for meetings.

B.P.E.G. also supports Christ Church here for letting us have the use of their wonderful hall for our meetings and some other events like the Film Festival.

For much of our printing, we buy local and find The Tobermory Press to be very helpful and competitive price wise.

You supported the first local community garden, an experiment to see if it could work and what the dynamics of doing so would be. This cost B.P.E.G. \$ 279 and gave us much valuable information and about two hundred pounds of potatoes.

Your club is a member of many other environmental groups and related organizations such as C.F.R.E., Bruce County Woodlot Association, Great Lakes United, Royal Canadian Geographical Society, and Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (O.S.E.A.)

Your Club also subscribes to a number of publications like the Mother Earth News and Home Power magazines, which you may find in our wonderful new Library.

We also have a few office supply expenses like stationery and stamps and we bought a new self inking stamp from the Tobermory Press to mark our library books, Tina's envelopes to you at membership renewal time, and correspondence by the Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. Excluding the stamp itself, postage and stationery amounted to about \$217 this year.

Under the guidance of Donna Dilschneider, we completely redesigned our membership forms and brochures and had a multiyear supply printed for \$359.

I have moved the date of having the books audited to the 31st of January to allow any outstanding entries to be attended to and this allows us to close out our books at the end of each year.

I believe the Group is in good financial shape for the level of activities in which we participate.

I am aware that in 2010, B.P.E.G. is planning a closer relationship with the Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory (B.P.B.O.) and that a challenging renewable energy project involving them and perhaps the Cabot Head Light Station is being looked into. This may be somewhat expensive and involve more than one year.

There is also a renewed interest in reorganizing the Energy Committee which at some time may create a newer version of the energy tour.

I have also requested that someone in our membership volunteer to help me as a back-up when I am away so that bills may be promptly paid, cheques issued, and the mail including memberships may be picked up and organized.

I wish to thank every one of you for allowing me to serve you as Treasurer of B.P.E.G. and to also serve on the Board. It is a most enjoyable experience indeed.

Thank you.

Tim Spencer, Treasurer

MEDIA COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2009

Committee Members

Donna Dilschneider (Chair)
Barbara Bobo
Stuart Burgess
Jennifer McGuire
Jan Mackie
Robert Patrick
Loretta Plomley
Rick Roman (Webmaster)

Since this is my final year as committee chair, I wish to take this opportunity to thank my committee members for their dedication and good work. Barbara and Jan joined us in the past year and are proving to be valuable additions.

We continue to get generous coverage of our meetings and special events in the Peninsula Press, and in the Warton Echo. We also create the posters that go up around the area to promote meetings and speakers, and one of our major undertakings this year was the design and production of a new, revised BPEG brochure to publicize our activities and achievements, and bookmarks.

Speakers and topics in past year:

Stuart Nutt	Return of the Piping Plover
Dick Hibma	Ontario Conservation Authorities
Ziggy Kleinau	Nukes or Renewables?
Kris Stevens	Ontario Green Energy Act
Dave Cooke	Personal Power
Tom Boyle	Waste Management
Brenda Sutherland	Green Gardening
Don McIlraith/Tony Barton	Greenway Initiative
Stephen Scharper	Film and Spirituality
Kevin Rich	Importance of Wetlands
Doug Cunningham	Legacy of Galileo

Website

Please visit our website, bpeg.ca, and contribute to our blog.

Submitted by Donna Dilschneider

BPEG's major initiative this year was to work with Gerry Myles, chair of Golden Dawn, and Golden Dawn staff and board to help them select and install a 20 panel solar hot water heating system. The system is expected to save 6-7000 litres of fuel oil per year, and reduce emissions accordingly, while supplying almost half of their hot water needs. Golden Dawn is an important non-profit institution in our community, with a volunteer board, dedicated to providing for the needs of seniors with long term nursing care, and seniors apartments, some of which are income assisted. The project included identifying grant programs, and helping with local fundraising to meet the almost \$100,000 budget. Grants and donations so far have covered over 80% of the cost of the project. Golden Dawn can issue tax receipts, and is still looking to finalize its fundraising.

Energy was also the subject for three of our monthly meetings : Dave Cooke on the truth about renewables, Ziggy Kleinau on renewables vs the Bruce Power restart and Chris Stevens on the Green Energy Act.

Glen Estill

Farmers' Market

A very successful farmer's market year, starting on May 24 weekend and running to thanksgiving. There were 20 vendors signed up and they fluctuated from 12- 20 each saturday. The hours changed from last year to 9-12 and seemed to please vendors and customers. There were fees charged to the vendors this year, \$8.00 per table, to cover costs of advertising, joining the ontario farmers market association etc. Music, live crepe cooking and wool spinning demonstrations were among the highlights of our market this year. We will be having a farmers market potlck this fall to exchange ideas and grow from our 2009 experience.

Tina Chladny

Dark Sky

A proposal for a Dark Sky by-law was submitted in June (?) by Graham Thomas to the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula but was rejected as being too complex, as was a revised submission..

Graham has not given up on this mission.

Also in June an award was presented to BPEG by the Niagara Escarpment Commission for our part in encouraging MNBPs Dark Sky proclamation. Even more encouragingly, the National Park has also now instituted a Dark Sky policy.

Community Garden

For the first time ever, a community garden was established in Lion's Head. The goal was two-fold:

to take advantage of land offered to the group by member Helen Westover, and to contribute some funds from locally grown produce to environmental projects either by BPEG or BPDS.

It was decided to take a small part of the land that was going to be used by a local farmer, and plant potatoes in one portion, and a green manure in the other. Buckwheat was chosen for the green crop, and a mixture of potatoes (mostly Kennebecs) were purchased.

The garden plot was marked off, and measured at approx. 75ft. by 200ft.

Some serious plowing was initially done by Jerry Myles, followed by discing by Tim Spencer, and roto-tilling by John Baker, Tim, and Stuart Burgess. With the help of some volunteers, the potatoes were planted on June 12th. The soil was not very healthy, and contained a lot of clay.

Some weeding and hilling took place by volunteers, mainly Tim, Tony, John and Stuart, and after a poor summer, the potatoes were harvested on Sept 25 by about a dozen volunteers. Several pounds were damaged by insects, and by forking, but an estimated 184lbs of decent potatoes were gathered. The exotics (blue and fingerlings) did very poorly and were saved for future planting.

Just before the harvest, Birch Behmann contacted us wondering if we would have locally grown spuds that could be donated to the BPDS Outers fundraising dinner to be held on Oct 16th. It was decided to donate all the "good" potatoes to that project, as it fit in with our criterion.

It was a rather disappointing return for a lot of effort but the weather was not particularly co-operative and the soil needs improving. Next year, if we continue to make use of this space, we may consider some other vegetable. One environment group member suggested planting black raspberries, so that a value-added product could be developed (jam). But that needs further discussion. Personally, I am leaning towards a low maintenance crop, such as squash....but we will wait until our energy levels rise again, and our own gardens are looked after before we make any decisions.

Many thanks to those who donated their machinery, gasoline, time, energy, tools, coffee, etc. to the first attempt at a community garden.

Stuart Burgess

Waste and Recycling Committee

BPEG members Mike Jorna, Jacqui Wakefield, Judi MacLeod and Jim Keullmer participate in the Waste Diversion Group of the municipality -- along with three other community members, a Councillor and selected municipal staff. Councillor, Tom Boyle, is the current Chair of the group, and Mike Jorna is the Vice-Chair. The mandate of this ad hoc group is to liaise with local municipal government and the residents of the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula -- to assist Council in developing an overall waste diversion plan for the municipality, to develop a public education and awareness strategy plan for all residents, and to develop a staged plan to implement programs introducing waste diversion into the municipality.

In the past year, a sub-committee of the group (Tom Boyle, Frank Burns and Judi MacLeod) interviewed and surveyed owners of businesses in the municipality regarding the feasibility of a *commercial composting program*. A report was prepared and Municipal Staff were asked to further investigate expansion of the Composting Program to include commercial composting. Unfortunately, it was determined that the cost is prohibitive at this time, but this will be reviewed in the future.

All three *landfill sites* have undergone a major upgrade, including a weigh scale and easily accessible recycling bins. The WDG provided feedback and suggestions on design and components. The Grand Opening of the St. Edmonds landfill site occurred on Friday, Sep 18th. Students from BPDS were involved: high school students assisted in the construction goods exchange "Re-Use" building, elementary students from St Edmonds provided an a display about waste and recycling, and students were present at the opening.

A community *Waste & Recycling calendar* has been proposed. It would include helpful information and tips on the 3 Rs, local recycling and landfill specifics, and environment-related artwork from BPDS students. As this cost is not in the MNBP budget, it will be deferred until next year. However, the WDG assisted in the preparation of material for a special pull-out centre-fold in the September 2nd edition of the Peninsula Press.

An on-line *survey on Waste and Recycling* was developed to better understand practices of residents related to residential composting and recycling. It was posted on the MNBP website in late March. Results from the survey were reviewed and suggestions made about how to reach under-represented groups.

The proposal (Waste Management and Diversion Initiative) presented to Council by Public Works staff in May recommended the removal of rural dumpsters and the development of a user-pay (bag tag) system by January 2010. Council agreed in principle and asked that the WDG "consult on this issue with Municipal Staff." The WDG supports staff in recommending steps to try to reduce unsupervised waste disposal as part of a move *towards Zero Waste philosophy*. However, because of the need for more education and consultation with the public, WDG members attended the two open houses about the waste initiative and prepared an exit survey to obtain specific ideas and suggestions from citizens. Judi also wrote an article for the Peninsula Press to clarify misconceptions about the process. The results of the survey have been prepared but not yet discussed by the WDG.

To make progress on an *overall Waste Diversion plan for the Municipality*, the WDG recently supported "the development of a professionally prepared Waste Management Plan (that will include the Waste Diversion Plan)" and requested the opportunity to participate in the waste management consultation process in concert with Municipal staff and Council. This proposal will be presented to Council. In the interim, the Waste Diversion Group will continue to search for ways to engage and inform residents of the municipality about improvements needed in local waste diversion.

Jacqui Wakefield

Roots and Shoots

BPEG continues to be a member of the Jane Goodall Institute's Roots & Shoots youth program. The cost of membership was previously sponsored by BPEG, but GOOD NEWS there is no longer any fee requirement Jennifer Barratt Parker continues to be the lead in administrating BPEG Roots & Shoots, and maintains links with the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada and their Roots & Shoots network. The Roots & Shoots program is about making positive change happen—for our communities, for animals and for the environment. With thousands of young people in more than 100 countries, the Roots & Shoots global network connects youth of all ages who share a desire to help make our world a better place. There are about 12 Bruce Peninsula families who have participated in BPEG Roots & Shoots activities. Our activities were few this past year, but they have a big impact on the children who participate.

A key highlight this past year was a visit to Doug Cunningham's conservatory on an outstanding clear starry night. This led to one Roots & Shoots member undertaking a science fair project on light pollution which went on to win a special astronomy award at the Bluewater District Science Fair (Moirra Parker).

Our original BPEG Roots & Shoots members are getting a little older – the age range is about 7 to 13 yrs – and the intent is that they can now take more leadership in directing their choice of activities. There are exciting links to be made with initiatives at Bruce Peninsula District School and the Me to We group there which shares similar goals with Roots & Shoots. Ideas for activities are welcome, particularly activities that link the youth of BPEG with the more seasoned members. I would also welcome input from BPEG members to support the leadership of Roots & Shoots - my work travel schedule has limited my ability to organize as many activities as I would have liked. In fact, this past year I haven't even been able to organize to accept help, but things have settled down recently and so I am now happy to invite interested folks to contact me if they have a desire to get involved.

Jennifer Barratt Parker