

2006 All-Chapters Meeting

October 26, 2006; 4:00 p.m.

Ramada Inn, Gordon Street; Guelph, Ontario

President Marc Gagne opened the meeting with a welcome to the 45 persons in attendance.

President Marc Gagne introduced the Directors : Shawn Vanacker, Matt Stephenson, Wray Wilson, Andy McBride, Rene Landry, Eric Chamberlain, Brian Dobbie,

The presentations were given in Power Point and the summaries are given below.

Topic: “Drainage Grant Application Issues” - Andy Kester, OMAFRA

In general the processing of the information submitted for grant by the Municipalities went fairly smoothly. Problems are listed by area below.

a/ Superintendent Grant Applications issues:

- noted no standard method of documenting time spent on drainage projects
- maps for projects were not included in submission
- ineligible time was included in some applications –e.g. tile drain inspection duties
- some confusion on what projects should be included in the project list
- if a list was submitted it may not include the required information
- nothing (a statement) to indicate that no list was needed
- salary and expenses for drainage superintendents not shown separately
- expenses and benefits not calculated correctly

b/ Maintenance Grant Applications

- Farm Property Class Tax Rate (FPCTR)
- Eligible vs. receiving - definition
- Not checking FPCTR
- The \$500.00 limit

c/ Construction Grant Applications

- there is the misconception/opinion that inclusion in any of the following programs qualified that property (assessments) for grant:
 - 1/ Farm Property Class Tax Rate
 - 2/ Managed Forest
 - 3/ Conservation Land Tax
- processed a limited number of construction grant applications under ADIP policies
- processed even fewer reports that had been completed after September 22, 2005
- reports completed after September 23, 2005 are expected to comply with ADIP policies
- Additional maintenance schedules
- Registered agreements for a shared access
- Inclusion of optional work
- Additional information required in the engineer’s report to support the grant eligibility

d/ The Construction / (Improvement Queue

- How can the process be improved?
- 77 additional projects paid
- the Queue format and the by-law adopting the report must be sent to “Queue” a project

e/ General

- deadline dates being missed
- TP numbers are not being assigned by the Municipality
- Municipalities submitting invoices , not grant applications
- Allocation request submitted, assumed payment would be made
- Grant applications with original signatures not being submitted

- An individual other than the superintendent appointed by by-law has signed the grant application
- One grant application being submitted for multiple superintendents
- Assessments not being apportioned when property is being severed
- No response from the Municipality when additional information is requested

f/ Contact Information

- New e-mail addresses for OMAFRA employees
- Sid.vanderveen@ontario.ca
- andy.kester@ontario.ca
- brooke.misasi@ontario.ca
- valerie.j.anderson@ontario.ca
- <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/drainage.htm#adip>

g/ Changes for 2006-2007

- incomplete superintendent and maintenance grant applications will not be processed!!!
- Complete applications where clarification of information is required, municipality will be contacted once, if no response, the application will be considered incomplete.

h/ 2007 Policy review

- internally we have a few items that we would like to review for potential change
- we have received some suggestions for items that should be changed
- if you have suggestions for the policy review please forward them to sid.vanderveen@ontario.ca

Topic: “Recovery of fish and benthic invertebrate assemblages following drain maintenance”

Belinda Ward-Campbell, PhD Student, University of Guelph

Overview of presentation

- Background and previous work
- Hypotheses and predictions
- Study method – field work
- Preliminary results
- Future directions

Background and previous work

- in Ontario drains are created and maintained under the *Drainage Act* by the Provincial Government
- protection of all fish habitat under the *Fisheries Act* is under Federal Government jurisdiction
- Under the Fisheries Act the harmful alteration, disruption or disturbance (HADD) of fish habitat is prohibited
- Drain maintenance requires the removal of material blocking flow including: boulders, large cobble, woody debris, instream vegetation
- Tensions between the agricultural community and fisheries officers
- The Class Authorization system was created
- Class Authorization helped ease relations, however many parties still remain opposed to the Fisheries Act pertaining to drains
- First question to be answered: Do agricultural drains function as fish habitat?

Drains and Fish Habitat – completed study by K. Stemmler noted:

- 24 pairs of watercourses (drains and reference streams) were used in study
- Concluded that there were no differences between agricultural drains and ‘natural’ reference streams
- Further suggested that there was no long-term effect of drain maintenance
- Second question: What are the short term impacts of drain maintenance?

Hypotheses and Predictions

- Hypothesis A: No effect on fish and invertebrate communities
- Hypothesis B: Drain maintenance significantly alters fish and invertebrate communities

Quantifying recovery

- 2 main points of interest
 - 1) when can the drain be considered recovered? - of interest to drainage superintendents, DFO, conservation authorities
 - 2) what is the nature of the recovery? In what order are fish and inverts returning?
Answers would be of scientific interest to add to body of literature

Field Work

- General habitat characteristics
- Fish and benthic invertebrate communities - Pre and post maintenance sampling, abundance, species richness
- Criteria for drain selection - Must be permanently flowing with enough water to sample
- Each study drain paired with unmaintained drain
- 2 sites per drain - one in maintained section and one below maintained section

Within and Below Maintenance Site data will be collected on:

- Physical features of the drain : 1/ Width and depth, 2/ Flow, 3/ Substrate – clay, sand, silt, gravel, cobble, 4/ Aquatic vegetation, 5/ Bank slope, 6/ Temperature
- Fish sampling: 1/ Single pass electrofishing, 2/ Fish identified and counted in the field
- Benthic invertebrate sampling: 1/ T-sample or grab sample, 2/ Identification in lab

Preliminary Findings (from studies to date)

- 4 drains sampled intensively - Pre and several post samples
- Overall decrease in species richness and abundance immediately post maintenance
- At 1 month post maintenance fish were caught in all 4 drains, but still depleted

Predictions

- Significant recovery with next growing season – a) Ability for flying insects to recolonize drain, b) New growth of bank vegetation, c) Increased movement of fish with warmer waters

Future Directions

- Broad scale drain sampling across southwestern Ontario
- Pre-sample and post-sample: 1) immediately following maintenance, 2) 6* months following maintenance, 3) 1 year following maintenance

The speaker appealed to the group to inform of any anticipated drain maintenance of warm or cold water channels in Southwestern Ontario in the coming year-winter or spring - which meets the criteria above. Contact Belinda Ward – Campbell at “bwardcam@uoguelph.ca”

The speaker suggested that late season maintenance may need less mitigation.

Members of the group suggested that the topic should be included in the 2008 Convention topic list as the study would be more complete.

It was noted that DFO is financially supporting the project.

Other matters noted:

- DFO issues - Andy McBride advised the group that a New Committee to review Drainage /DFO issues on drainage projects was being formed.
- The DSAO Website (www.dsao.net) has been updated with a number of improvements.
- The annual LICO/DSAO Convention will take place in London at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn on January 24, 25, 2007.
- Pictures of DSAO member activities are welcome for website.
- Safety issues under the Labour regulations (which includes Drainage Contractors) has increased surveillance by the Ministry of Labour. Reference to the last issue of “In the Trenches” published by LICO discusses recent situations. A workshop on compliance with the safety regulations is being held on Tuesday , January 23, 2007 in London and a form is included in the LICO registration package.