

D.A.W.G
Drains Action Working Group

Meeting Minutes for Feb 22, 2007

Present: Eric Chamberlain-Drainage Superintendents Association of Ontario (DSAO), Andy McBride-DSAO, Sid Vander Veen-OMAFRA, Joe deLaronde-DFO; Mike deVoss – Land Drainage Committee (LDC); Davin Heinbuck-ABCA; Dana Boyter-DFO

Absent: Peter Jeffrey –Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA)

Agenda

1. Additions to Agenda

2. Terms of Reference (TOR)

2.1 Discussion of general or specific drain projects

Drain projects that come forward as issues may be of a similar type (e.g. tile-in) and as such could be discussed by the D.A.W.G. This group of drain project types would likely be brought to the attention of DSAO and/or LDC and could be brought to the table by these groups for discussion. We could also have invited guests to present issues or concerns to the group as needed.

2.2 Committee members

Peter Jeffrey will be representing OFA

Comment about whether each committee member can adequately represent their agency or group. **Action - Davin to check to determine if he is representing Conservation Ontario.** Should MNR be part of the committee? MNR provides us with fisheries information on drains and natural watercourses and with the timing guidelines for in-water work. MNR would have input into projects such as Wetland Drains. **Action 1. – Dana to contact MNR to gauge interest or appropriateness of them joining committee.**

Also discussed, if Municipalities should be represented. **Action 2. – Sid to contact ROMA to discuss possible rep for our committee.**

DFO also commented that this committee may fall under the umbrella of the new ARMAC (Aquatic Resources Management Advisory Committee) **Action 3. – Dana to follow up with ARMAC**

2.3 Other Committee functions

Sponsor/Lead/Initiate Demonstration Projects, Training, Outreach. Research & Development programs, pilot projects, and coordination of studies.

Discussion took place on actions or initiatives that D.A.W.G. could become involved with to further the actual implementation of such things as Buffer Strips and other environmental practices. We focused somewhat on the idea of using available

funding such as Healthy Futures or Green Cover to incorporate and pay for buffers and other BMP's as a component of the municipal Engineer's Report. Another initiative is to produce buffer markers (similar to tile outlet markers) to clearly mark buffer strips as part of drain projects.

Action 4. – Dana to talk to Ag Canada at the APF (Ag Policy Framework) meeting to get more information on funding of green initiatives and to get a contact to meet with the D.A.W.G.

Action 5. - The group was in agreement that this initiative should become part of the mandate and included in the TOR.

DFO has an MOU with the Canadian Electrical Association which serves to formally acknowledge each parties objectives. This MOU was established over many years and was the basis for a better working arrangement. There maybe some benefit into looking into something similar between DFO and the Drainage Community...

3. Topics for Discussion – Issues and Concerns

3.1 Status of “Agricultural Drain Maintenance in Southern Ontario Guidance to Meeting the Requirements of the Fisheries Act”. Is it still in effect?

This document is still in effect but needs to be updated. The updated version can include such things as the 2 drain process posters and any new updates to the drain classification or drain verification process.

3.2 Define the process (in writing) to reclassify drains.

Some feedback on this will likely be part of JSR survey and workshop. DFO's internal Ag Task Group to work on this. **Action 6. – Joe to work on draft copy of Drain Reclassification process.** Include points at which a drain reclassification is triggered.

3.3 Jane Sadler-Richards to do a study on municipal drains or drain classifications. Provide an update on the purpose and scope of this study.

D. Boyter explained the work that Jane Sadler-Richards (JSR) is doing and that feedback from this might be included in the updated document. The work includes an “audit” of sorts to get feedback on the Class Authorization Process and Drain Classification from all involved agencies and groups. On the JSR work, it was recommended that the draft survey be circulated to the committee for comments.

Action 7. – Dana to circulate draft survey to group for comments.

3.4 Drain Enclosures

What is acceptable with these types of projects? How valuable is the habitat at the top end of the drain or watercourse? Numerous environmental, fish habitat, water quality benefits in an open channel. DFO is currently looking at this issue through research. Peter Jeffrey may be involved?? There are less of this type of project due to a decrease in OMAFRA funding

3.5 What is DFO's role in CA's with Level 3 agreements?

Also, what is the appeal process? Which brochure describes this process?

Davin discussed the inconsistencies between DFO and the CA's. These have been discussed at DFO/CA workshops. Level 3 CA's work with the proponent to determine appropriate mitigation and compensation. Some problems with CA's and DFO are a result of staff turnover and training. Comment was made about the need to have a system of checks and balances and an appeal process when CA decisions are a "No". It is reported that some CA's with Level 3 impose more onerous requirements on MD's than DFO would, which results in inconsistency across the Province & that this should be addressed somehow.

Action 8. – Joe to discuss the CA/DFO issues through DFO's Habitat Operation Council (HOC)

General note that CA's should stay involved with all MD projects, whether they hand the fisheries issue off to DFO or not, as the CA's represent their member municipalities and therefore all watershed residents, including those in the agricultural sector.

3.6 Protection of fish habitat vs. Public Health and Safety

Section dealing with this in the Guidance Document (3.1)

3.6 Review of the Fisheries Act

Will let committee know when public commenting period has been determined.

4.0 Next Meeting

Week of April 2, 2007

5.0 Summary Points – Major Tasks

- 1) Establish *Terms of Reference*
 - include in mandate – Initiatives and Implementation component of the D.A.W.G.
 - define our common purpose – vision of where we want to go. **Action - Sid to develop a draft "common purpose" or "vision statement" for the working group.**
Drains and Fish Habitat – Stakeholders Comments
- 2) Guidance Document - update
- 3) CA/DFO Consistency