

# **Crooked and Round Lakes Committee Meeting with Water Security Agency on Saturday August 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am Sunset Beach – Farmer’s Market Quonset**

Minutes Prepared by Colleen Stinson. For corrections, please contact [colleen@marieval.com](mailto:colleen@marieval.com) or Ph: 306-794-2051.

**Present:** Ray Bernhardt (R.M. Grayson), David Crittle (Sunset), Lori Hutchinson-Hunter (Greenspot), Yvonne Cyr (Grimmeau Park, Round Lake), Randy Durovick (Sunset), John Fahlman (Director, Water Security Agency), Stan Franks (West Melville Beach), Jamie and Lisa Gorchynski (Grenfell Beach), Randy Hornung (Advisory Committee), Sean Miller (EMO), Monica Roussin (Bird’s Point, Round Lake), Judy Mann (Melville Beach), Vicki and Ivan Ottenbreit (Advisory Committee), Brian Petracek (West Melville Beach), Jason Sriver (Assistant Deputy Commissioner, EMO), Janet Steinhubl (Bird’s Point, Round Lake), Trent Sillers, (Cedar Cove Resort), Colleen Stinson (Note taker), Howard Schweitzer (Exner Twin Bays), Warren Thomson (Manager, Regional Yorkton Office, Water Security Agency), Cherylynn Walters (Chair, Melville Beach), Ron Woodvine (Agr Canada – formerly PFRA), and Derick Wolfe (Indian Point).

**Regrets:** Ralph Beattie (Greenspot), Doug Johnson (WSA) James Wilson (Independent)

1. Water Security Agency (WSA) Presentation – Basin Layout, Operations and System Reponse to high flows.
  - Presentation available as a PDF document.
  - **Notes/Comments to Presentation:**
  - Understanding of the Qu’Appelle Watershed
  - Craven is a meeting point for all tributaries.
  - There is a natural split (uncontrolled flow) at Craven
  - There is channelization in and out of Last Mountain Lake.
  - WSA operates and constructed strategic channels so that the water flows more efficiently (I believe this is at Craven) which helps share the water between Last Mountain Lake and Qu’Appelle.
  - WSA states that all dams have been wide open since March 2013.
  - There are two dam structures that affect us: 1. Qu’Appelle Dam Structure; and 2. Gardiner Dam
  - Crooked Lake has a stop log control system. On a normal year, Crooked Lake water level will reduce and logs will be put in the summer to keep the water high until October.
  - Round Lake’s control structure has not been operational since 2002. This control structure was damaged in 2011. There is no way to operate or fix it until the dispute with Ochapawace First Nation is resolved.

- Ron (formerly PFRA), water levels were very high in 1950's, 1990's water levels dropped down into the early 2000's. 2014 water levels at approximately 454.39 m are the highest water levels for Crooked Lake on record.
- WSA states that there are periods of wet/dry cycles
- The water monitor gauge was washed out in 1955. I think this refers to Pearl Creek water monitor.
- Peak flood periods were 1955-1956, mid 1970's, 1997 was a very high water year
- It takes a long time for Crooked and Round Lakes to decrease due to low elevation (Crooked at 0.12 and Round at .08)
- In 2013, It water didn't decrease to normal low levels until mid December.
- The level of the lake was 441.535 m on December 31, 2014(this information came after our meeting from the WSA).

**Question:**

**What has happened in the last 5 years that is different from previous years?**

- In 2014, there was some snow melt. Lake levels did increase somewhat in May. The rain at the end of June raised the lakes. Lakes started to decrease by July 15, 2014.
- Water also enters the lakes from a variety of creeks.
- "Back Water Effect" goes all the way to Manitoba.
- Rain is impacting the volume of water in the Lakes.
- There is usually some evaporation with the greater humidity, no wind this year we are not experiencing this.
- If there are hot, dry and windy day's water can evaporate at 7 ml per day or ¼ inch per day.
- In 2011 land was saturated. A lot of the rain runs off the land.
- We are also experiencing higher rain events, greater humidity, and fewer hot windy days.

**Water was coming into Crooked and Round Lakes through: 1. Remnants of spring run-off from Last Mountain Lake; and 2. Rain upstream; and 3 Rain in our area. This is why high waters are persisting in 2014.**

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**At the present time water is coming in at 220 cubic metres and leaves at 100 cubic metres.**

- Feeder creeks that flow into Crooked Lake, Cutarm Creek near Spy Hill, Ekapo near Marieval, Pheasant Creek near Abernathy and Pearl Creek (What percentage of water is coming from that?)
- Pearl Creek high river water monitor was discontinued due to funding cuts when the PFRA managed and monitored water flows.
- When PFRA was managing the water, Crooked Lake was at 1479 feet (5 feet below now and Round Lake was at 1451.5 ft also 5 feet below the present water level).

- Other important areas are Fenwood, Birmingham and Kaposovar.
- What about Red Fox Creek at Wolseley?
- There are 6 creeks that directly impact Crooked Lake
- An Agricultural Drainage Impact Study should be requested to look at the volume of water entering into Crooked and Round Lakes.
- This study would look at the 6 Creeks that feed into Crooked and Round Lakes south of Katepwa.
- John Polmeroy studied Smith Creek and attributed 32% of peak volume flow to drainage water. Water Security Agency helped fund this study.
- Can data be extrapolated from this unique basin at Smith Creek to the Lower Qu'Appelle Watershed and specifically the situation at Crooked and Round Lakes?
- John Fahlman (WSA) will look at the possibility of financing an Agricultural Impact Drainage Study in the Crooked and Round Lakes area.
- Additional request for information needs to be sent in writing to Warren Thomson (WSA) and the corresponding Minister.

**Question:**

**How many illegal trenching issues are you dealing with right now?**

- There is a back log of about 80 complaints on file
- How can you control the drainage issue when many trenches are illegal?
- Complaints are submitted
- We need to support the Provincial Government to introduce some deterrents to trenching and illegally draining agricultural land.
- WSA states that in dry periods drainage of agricultural lands was not even on the radar
- The Drainage Control Act was introduced in 1981.
- Drainage complaints are investigated by the WSA
- Presently, there is the WSA Act. This Act requires anyone wishing to drain land to seek prior approval from WSA. A permit requires that the landowner must get an easement agreement with other landowners who are trenched. Most land owners will not allow anyone to register anything against their land title.
- There is a complaint process in place but it doesn't allow 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Complaints for damages.
- It is intended to help resolve local complaints over drainage.
- You can take people to court but it is a long process.

**Complaint Process can take a minimum of 1 year or much longer and the maximum penalty is \$11,000 - \$12,000.**

- Illegally trenching becomes the cost of doing business for many farmers because there is no deterrent.
- There is some new water legislation coming out in 2015.

- There was a consultation process – an on-line consultation that ended March 2014.
- Need controlled drainage
- Everyone has to share the risk of drainage of agricultural lands.
- Land owners need to be able to levy fines and financial penalties for reckless drainage of agricultural lands.
- Farmers can store their water in their sloughs
- Ducks unlimited has been involved in working with farmers to restoring wetlands.

### **Flood Damage and Flood Prevention Discussion**

- Need flood prevention/flood damage prevention through PDAP to include permanent flood protection/solutions
  - Presently, the Program indicates coverage when there is imminent threat of flooding (sandbagging, building berms only covers temporary measures).
  - None of the existing programs include erosion control or permanent flood protection efforts
  - Permanent flood prevention measures are not eligible under the existing guidelines for flood prevention measures.
  - For example: lifting homes is not an eligible expense
  - There is not enough time to be experiencing the flood and trying to protect your property
  - Flood prevention program this year required engineers, local municipal input and there is not enough time when water is rising quickly (this year 2 days) and property/business owners are trying to secure their properties.
  - There is a disconnect between the Flood Prevention/Flood Damage Programs and the reality of property owners
  - In previous years the Crooked Lake area could tolerate 6-8 inches of rain.
  - We need a buffer and have controls in place.
  - We will need federal participation
  - There needs to be a long-term flood prevention program.
  - Request to assist communities with flood control/infrastructure projects.
    - These projects could include: research into how we can add control structures to reduce flooding – between the RM of Grayson and the RM of McLeod (Pearl Creek) or in the Lower Qu'Appelle Basin between Katepwa and Crooked Lake.
    - Between Katepwa and Crooked Lake, there is a basin of 80-100 km long for a control structure
2. Need to move the High River Water Monitor at the old Bridge at Hwy #47 to the new bridge to check the in-flow of water entering Crooked Lake and place a High River Water Monitor at the bridge along the Hwy #605 at the Cowessess Bridge to monitor the outflow of water leaving Crooked Lake. This would provide more accurate and timely information for both Crooked and Round Lakes.
  3. Control structure at Kaposovar Creek – put a similar structure in place 6 miles south of Pearl Creek.

4. Request from the Committee to Jason Scriver and Sean Miller of the (EMO) for the inflatable tubes for flat areas around the lake as a temporary flood prevention measure. This could be useful for areas like the back areas of Indian Point and possibly Exner Twin Bays.
5. WSA needs all requests/Action Plan, from the Committee to be in writing. A letter needs to be sent to the WSA, the Minister of WSA and PDAP.

#### **What to Expect in the spring 2015?**

- WSA states that lakes are going to recede
- As of August 16, 2014, Last Mountain Lake is coming down at a faster rate
- There is threat of a flood in spring 2015
- Lands are saturated
- There needs to be a voice from Crooked and Round Lakes.
- In previous years, the Friends of the Qu'Appelle Valley negotiated the boards to be put in order for people to launch their boats and environmental protection.
- Randy is opposed to not putting the Boards in.
- WSA is obligated to put logs into the Crooked Lake Control Structure every 18 months.
- In terms of the Crooked Lake Control Structure, the Committee is suggesting that there needs to be consultation and fair representation with the Crooked and Round Lake Flood Committee with WSA prior to WSA Staff putting the boards back into the Crooked Lake spillway/control structure when water levels remain high.
- The Crooked Lake Control Structure needs to be rebuilt. This is a longer term plan.
- Request from the Committee to Jason Scriver and Sean Miller of the (EMO) for the inflatable tubes for flat areas around the lake as a temporary flood prevention measure. This could be useful for areas like the back areas of Indian Point and possibly Exner Twin Bays.
- Round Lake's Control Structure is in disrepair and is creating a bottleneck.
- The Committee wants to work cooperatively with the WSA and Government to look at short and long-term solutions/issues.

**Quill Lakes (Dead Basin):** This is a very flat area. Quill Lakes are part of the Last Mountain Lakes area.

- These lakes are filling up and rising 4, 5 and 6 feet. They are starting to trickle out towards last Mountain Lake.
- There is an Association that would like to dredge possibly into the Qu'Appelle watershed.
- Meetings with this Association started with municipalities 5 years ago.
- Flooding started 10 years ago
- All pasture land that started to flood.
- Privately owned agricultural land.
- Farmers are trying to reduce their flooded areas.
- They would like to have a control structure
- There is the issue of quantity and quality of water from Quill Lakes entering the system.
- The water from Quill Lakes has a higher degree of salinity than Last Mountain Lake.

- WSA states that the Quill Lakes do support smaller fish species. That the quality of water is “fairly reasonable”.
- Any proposal to lower the natural spill level of Quill Lakes would trigger an Environmental Assessment, regulatory agencies and significant public consultation
- A Drainage Impact Study is requested prior to dredging and building a control structure that would allow water from Quill Lakes to enter the Qu’Appelle Watershed from Last Mountain Lake.
- This Drainage Impact Study would look at how much water is entering the Last Mountain Lake to the Qu’Appelle Chain.
- A consulting engineering firm is engaged with the Quill Lakes Association to discuss some potential solution such as channelling, surface water inflows
- Ultimately it would be government that would decide if a control structure at Quill Lake would go ahead.