



– JULY AND AUGUST, 2011 –

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. “Pat on the Back” Awards Ceremony

The Committee received 27 applications to the first-ever “Pat on the Back” award competition. Applicants ranged from small to medium to large environmental organizations as well as school groups looking to “green” their playground. The “Pat on the Back” sub-committee screened the applications and narrowed it down to the top seven.

The top seven applicants as well as all of the organizations and schools who originally received the “Pat on the Back” award application were all invited to the award ceremony on August 9th 2011 at the Ojibway Nature Centre. Each of the top seven applicants was instructed to give a five minute presentation about their organization and their project. Unfortunately, the sub-committee was unable to contact one of the top seven organizations and therefore only six presentations were made.

Once all presentations had been made, the judges left the room to deliberate. The decision was extremely difficult as all applicants are working on incredibly deserving projects. During this time, the approximately 40 people who attended the ceremony were able to network and enjoy fresh local appetizers provided by Tastebud Food.

At the end of the evening the judges announced the four “Pat on the Back Award” winners and presented them with \$500 and a plaque commemorating their award.

The “Pat on the Back” award winners for 2011 were:

Campus Community Garden Project (www.uwindsor.ca/ccgp)
Windsor Essex Coop co-op (www.windsorurbanchickens.com)
Windsor Essex Community Supported Agriculture (www.windsorcsa.blogspot.com)
St. Andrew’s church community garden, Lakeshore
(www.lsachurch.org/news-events/community-garden)

The remaining two candidates were brought forward and presented with a plaque noting that they were an “Honourable Mention” award recipient. The applicant who did not present at the awards was also given an “Honourable Mention” award.

The “Honourable Mention” award winners were:

Glenwood Public School (www.gecdsb.on.ca/schools/elem/glenwood)
King Edward Public School (www.gecdsb.on.ca/schools/elem/kingedwa)
Kingsville District High School (www.gecdsb.on.ca/schools/sec/kdhs)

The award ceremony and the “Pat on the Back” award recipients received media attention from CBC TV, CBC radio, the Windsor Star, AM 800 and A News.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

1. Provincially Significant Wetlands Subcommittee

The PSW subcommittee submitted a letter to Carolinian Canada in support of their Biodiversity Awareness Trail proposed for Kingsville. This type of trail encourages environmental education as a key component with learning stations placed along the trail.

Further to a public meeting regarding the Lauzon Parkway project, the subcommittee submitted their concerns with the project as well as stated what they would like to see included in the Environmental Assessment of the project.

I was able to establish contact with the Windsor office of the Windsor Essex Mobility Group, responsible for the Windsor Essex Parkway. In order to coordinate a meeting with them, the subcommittee must first submit their questions and concerns about the project. Hopefully once this is done, we will be able to set up a meeting with representatives from the Mobility Group. The subcommittee will begin working on this letter shortly.

The script for the Black Oak video has been submitted to the subcommittee for review. This script will be looked at and discussed during the next subcommittee meeting. Once satisfied with the script, the subcommittee will send the script back to Axxess Design for the completion of the video.

2. Regional Integrated Community Sustainability Plan

The application to the Trillium Fund for Integrated Community Sustainability Plan funding will be started upon my return in October. I will work closely with ERCA on this initiative as we will apply for funding using ERCA's Trillium account.

3. Sustainable Purchasing Policy

The City of Windsor Purchasing Department has agreed to work with the Environmental Coordinators to implement a Sustainable Purchasing Policy. In October, I will meet with all City of Windsor Buyers to establish the best way to introduce a new policy. Windsor's policy will likely model a plan already implemented by the City of Richmond BC.

4. Speaker Series – Elizabeth May

Contact has been established with an assistant to Elizabeth May at her Ottawa office. Preferred dates and logistics for a Windsor speaking event are in the process of being organized. It has been requested that Elizabeth's travel expenses be reimbursed by the Committee.

IMPORTANT UPDATES AND INFORMATION

1. City of Windsor “Healthy Home Guide”

The City of Windsor has created a “Healthy Home Guide” now available on the Environmental Master Plan website: www.windsorenvironmentalmasterplan.ca. The guide details how to make an “ecological starter kit” for cleaning and offers cleaning product recipes that are non-toxic, safe for you and the environment, and will probably save you money.

Products we use in our homes everyday can contribute to toxic pollution in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the environment we live in.

The average Canadian household uses between 20 and 40 litres of cleaning products per year. Many of these products contain harmful ingredients that may affect your family’s health. Certain chemicals found in cleaning solutions may affect the nervous system, provoke allergies and even be carcinogenic. Once these toxins are released into the environment, they pollute our water and can cause harm to fish and wildlife.

If you do not want to make your own cleaning solutions, environmentally-friendly cleaning products are available. These can be purchased from natural food stores, certain grocery stores as well as specialty stores. Be sure to check the labels and look for eco-certifications.

2. International Upper Great Lakes Study Meeting

In 2007, the International Joint Commission launched a five-year study to look at future water levels in the upper Great Lakes and the options for regulating those levels to support the region’s economic and environmental interests. In the entire upper lakes basin, water levels are currently influenced through a regulation plan at the St. Mary’s River control structures at Sault Ste. Marie, where Lake Superior outflows have been regulated since 1914.

Although there will be advances to better manage Great Lake water levels in the new regulation plan, the improvements will be slim. More importantly, the study will briefly introduce the feasibility of building new control structures either to restore water levels on Lake Michigan-Huron to conditions that existed prior to channel modifications or regulate the entire Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system. In addition, the study will look at adaptive management measures, such as strengthened monitoring and information sharing that can help water managers and property owners know what to expect in terms of changing water levels so that they can take action to reduce risks.

The Study’s final report will be submitted to the International Joint Commission by March 2012. Public hearings will be conducted and a new regulation plan will be forward to the governments of Canada and the United States.