

# **BRUCE PENINSULA ENVIRONMENT GROUP**

## **2015/2016 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **MISSION**

The Bruce Peninsula Environment Group (BPEG) is committed to preserving the unique ecology of the Bruce Peninsula and promoting a greater awareness of the diverse flora, fauna, geology, and cultural history of this region. We subscribe to the concept of sustainable development - striking a healthy balance between environmental protection and economic activity. We seek to build partnerships with other groups, agencies, and individuals in seeking cooperative community based solutions to present and future environmental challenges and concerns. Through education, presentation, and open dialogue BPEG endeavours to communicate the importance of and the means to maintaining a healthy natural environment.

### **CHAIR'S MESSAGE**

*Submitted by Megan Myles, Chair*

When I first joined the board as student rep in 2007, I never would have imagined that, nine years later, I would be writing this message and have the privilege of being chair of such a vibrant, diverse, supportive and vital group in the community. My BPEG involvement from an early age no doubt planted many seeds and was incredibly empowering, so thank you! I've enjoyed both observing and engaging in BPEG as it has grown and evolved over the last number of years, and most intimately, in my capacity as chair over the past year.

A huge thank you to the countless volunteers who relentlessly contribute their time and energy to many different aspects of BPEG - organizing and donating items to our annual yard sale (our more significant fundraiser, raising even more than the sum of membership fees), coordinating speakers for our monthly meetings, preparing snacks and refreshments, participating in the roadside cleanup, writing articles, making posters, updating the website, operating a booth at the farmers' market, selling door prize tickets, magnets and water bottles, marching in our Santa Claus Parade float, working with the Municipality on the installation of water refill stations in Lion's Head and Tobermory, studying and taking action on shoreline naturalization at the Lion's Head beach, and doing our day-to-day administrative tasks. These efforts are so wide ranging, it seems like it has taken most of the past year for me to familiarize myself with all the different projects and initiatives that our members are undertaking!

Last year, we welcomed Joanne Rodgers to the board as Media Coordinator and we were so appreciative that she stepped into this role and brought such competence, creativity and commitment to the position. Our 2015/2016 board of directors was as follows:

<b>Position</b>	<b>2015/16 Board</b>
Chair	Megan Myles
Vice Chair	Rod Layman
Secretary	Sally Pierce
Treasurer	Irene Grainger
Past Chair	Jim Kuellmer
Student Rep	Moira Parker
Directors At Large	George Plhak (Membership & Webmaster) Joanne Rodgers (Media Coordinator) Susan King

In particular, I'd like to recognize the significant commitment of those who are finishing their terms - Irene Grainger who has served as our treasurer and kept our books in order for the past two years, Sally Pierce who has been secretary for the past year and vice chair in the year previous, and of course, Jim Kuellmer. Jim has been a board member for the past eight years - as director at large for two years, as vice chair for two years, as chair for three years, and past chair for the past year! In these years, both Jim and Jan have demonstrated an extraordinary dedication to BPEG and the promotion of BPEG's ideals. Thank you!

I am extremely proud of what BPEG has accomplished over the past year and the local credibility that we have established through our work in the community over the past 27 years!

**2015/2016 Highlights:**

- Hosting a wide range of speakers and continuing to facilitate a respectful dialogue around controversial topics (i.e. wind development in February, neonics in July, nuclear energy in August and September)
- Organizing another successful garage sale, raising more funds than the sum of our membership fees and promoting reuse of items - huge thank you to Donna Baker!
- Updating and revamping our website revamp and enabling online membership renewal - thanks to George Plhak and Irene Grainger!
- Advocating for the installation of water refill stations in Lion's Head and Tobermory and raising awareness about plastic water bottle use - thanks Jan Mackie and Judi McLeod!
- Promoting public awareness through a presence at the Lion's Head Farmers' Market - thanks to Susan King and Sally and Dave Pierce!
- Facilitating a highly successful community discussion on sustainable tourism in October with over 150 participants - a huge thank you to all the facilitators!

- Organizing a roadside clean-up on the Ferndale Road with grade 7/8 and secondary students from Bruce Peninsula District School (BPDS) - thanks to Dale Thompson!
- Continuing to support student and environmental projects at BPDS - thanks to Moira Parker for serving as student rep and supporting this partnership!

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

*Submitted by Irene Grainger, Treasurer*

<b>CREDITS</b>	
<b>Membership</b>	1 512.00
<b>Sales:</b>	
Yard sale	1 649.00
Water bottles	305.00
Species at risk magnets	15.00
Monthly door prize draws	174.00
<b>Donations:</b>	
General	205.00
Film at The Fitz Hostel	100.00
Snacks	78.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4 104.00</b>
<b>DEBITS</b>	
School Contributions:	
BPDS Environment Fund	500.00
Student Environmental Award	200.00
Fencing for Geese Management Project, LH Beach	252.00
Donations	
Canadian Association for Physicians for the Environment	200.00
Gifts / Items to Sell:	
Reusable produce bags	199.00
Mugs	192.00
Administrative:	
Insurance for school use	37.00

Insurance for church use	43.00
Donation for church use	300.00
Post office box rental	176.00
Website & advertising	132.00
Miscellaneous	133.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2 364.00</b>

The bank account balance as of October 11, 2016 - \$5,943.00

## **MEMBERSHIP**

*Submitted by George Plhak, Membership Coordinator*

BPEG currently has 66 memberships (34 family memberships , 31 individual memberships - single, student and life members, 1 group membership) compared to 67 in 2015 and 69 in 2014. Surprisingly, we had 29 people not renew from last year but almost made this up with new members. We plan to slightly increase the membership fee for the coming year to \$20 for an individual membership and \$30 for a family membership.

We introduced PayPal as an option for membership purchase this year and approximately 1/4 of our members used PayPal to renew.

## **MEDIA & PUBLIC AWARENESS**

*Submitted by Joanne Rodgers, Media Coordinator*

### **Monthly Speaker Series:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Summary</b>
December 2, 2015	David McLaren	Science is Just Another Word for Knowing	David told us stories from his long and varied experiences with the view to finding ways in which we can work to repair our relationship with First Nations peoples. He invited Lenore Keeshig to read her poem "Goodbye, Wild Indian". She asked us to think about the stereotypes of First Nations as her poem

			addresses many of these that her people encounter in their daily life.
January 6, 2016	Glen Estill	Net Zero Building	Lion's Head has a net zero home on Sylvia Street. A net zero home is one that produces as much energy as it consumes. Former BPEG Chair and alternate energy expert Glen Estill shared his experiences and lessons learnt while constructing his home.
February 3, 2016	Mattias Purdon, MSc Candidate, Trent University	Building Wind Energy Landscapes	Matthias' thesis research explored wind energy development, politics, conflict and policy in Ontario, involving a case study in Huron County to better understand the experiences of landowners living near, or anticipating living near, wind turbines. This was a very lively debate as expected.
March 2, 2016	John Reaume	Spiders of Eastern North America: Their Natural History and Identification	Wildlife photographer and spider enthusiast John Reaume shared fascinating facts about the ubiquitous arachnids. His presentation, complete with colourful photos, was all about the spiders we have in Ontario and they are everywhere, millions within an average acre, some of them very tiny. We have 746 known species but most haven't even been identified yet.
April 6, 2016 - CANCELLED due to weather	Ben Caesar, Fiddlehead Nursery	Edible Landscape Design	Fiddlehead Nursery is a permaculture plant nursery located in the Beaver Valley, near Collingwood, Ontario, specializing in edible, perennial plants, and design low-maintenance, productive gardens.
May 4, 2016	Thorsten Arnold	Eat Local Grey Bruce: Building agroecological food systems from the bottom up	Eat Local Grey Bruce is a new initiative – a cooperative of local producers dedicated to getting their high quality product to their customers (neighbours) – an online farmer's market. Fitz Hostel is the pick-up site for customers wishing to sign up for delivery.
June 1, 2016	Moira Parker,		BPDS secondary students discussed their various initiatives over the past school year

	Megan Malone, John Chenier & Clayton Durrell		including science fair, a UNESCO conference in Winnipeg, and an ERM project promoting more sustainable fish consumption.
July 6, 2016	Kim Perrotta, Executive Director, CAPE	Coal, climate change & neonics	Kim provided updates on recent projects of Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), including elimination of coal-fired plants in Alberta and neonics. CAPE has been calling for the banning of neonicotinoids, systemic pesticides that are resulting in damage across the ecosystem, especially in the decline of bees. This topic was of particular interest to the audience. John Rodgers, a local farmer and Science teacher at BPDS, presented his response, making the point that science is slow, requires patience, and sometimes gets it wrong.
August 3, 2016	Shawn-Patrick Stensil, Greenpeace	From Fukushima to the Bruce: Nuclear risk and the transition to renewables	Shawn-Patrick, a widely-respected nuclear analyst from Greenpeace, reminded us that we dwell in the contamination zone should an unforeseen event endanger our water, land (food), lives and health. He discussed the issues facing us due to an aging nuclear infrastructure and the dangerous choices governments make regarding public safety before and after a disaster.
September 7, 2016	Michael Krizanc, NWMO	The high level nuclear waste repository for Ontario	Michael described the science behind the plans to deal with Canada's growing piles of hazardous radioactive waste materials; the ideal type of host rock for the repository and the Bentonite clay, stone and concrete that would be used to mitigate the migration of radiation. Total decay is predicted at a million years, a sobering statistic to ponder. Also discussed was the possibility to retrieve the rods for future use if science improves the method of storage.

October 5, 2016	Community Visioning Session	What is sustainable tourism and what could it look like on the Bruce Peninsula?	Over 140 persons attended this meeting at the Rotary Hall. Municipal council, Parks Canada staff, tourism /service industry operators and concerned community members came together to brainstorm ideas to create a more positive experience for the summer influx of visitors and residents. The next step will be to collate the ideas proposed and maybe form working groups to explore the topics in greater detail.
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**Advertising & Promotion:**

For each meeting, distribution of information on the upcoming meeting/topic is as follows:

- Poster created and posted at various locations in Lion’s Head and Tobermory
- Posted on BPEG Facebook page
- Posted on BPEG website (bpeg.ca)
- Chairperson or webmaster sends out an email to members
- Email via Lions Headlines sent 3-5 days prior to the meeting
- Advertised in the Peninsula Press and the Wiarnton Echo.

After the event, an article on the meeting’s presentation is published in the Peninsula Press, the Wiarnton Echo and BPEG’s website.

Many thanks to our reporters - Don McIlraith, Moira Parker, Barbara Bobo, Bev Sawyer, Jan MacKie, and Donna Dilschneider (editorial services), as well as our poster maker and photographer, Dave Pierce.

**Website & Social Media:**

*Submitted by George Plhak*

BPEG was more active with Facebook this year and we are starting to build a following there and a base of potential members. We are still learning how to best use this new platform. Some cosmetic cleanup of bpeg.ca was done throughout the year and attempts made to freshen the look of our site and make both Facebook and bpeg.ca look more similar and up to date. We avoided spending money on a professional web refresh this year and do all of our web work through volunteers.

**OUTREACH & ADVOCACY**

*Submitted by Ziggy Kleinau, Co-Founder and Outreach Director*

In January 2016, I sent a letter on behalf of BPEG to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to remind her of the overwhelming opposition to the DGR, with numerous resolutions from cities and organizations both sides of the border. It was sent in anticipation of her making a decision on OPG's proposed project. Before making any decision, the Minister released a request to OPG to address three neglected issues highlighted in response to the report released by the Joint Review Panel (JRP). OPG responded to declare that they needed until the end of 2016 to address the Minister's request.

In July 2016, I felt it was necessary to address the government's invitation to comment on the Terms of Reference for the new Expert Review Panel on the review of the Environmental Assessment Act. I included a reference to BPEG in my comments.

In September 2016, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission had informed the public that OPG had asked for an amendment to its Pickering Operating Licence to permit the station to receive, manage and store tritiated heavy water from nuclear stations. This amendment was so open ended, that even Bruce Power or other Canadian nuclear plants could have transported this dangerous carcinogenic liquid across public roads to this 40 year old station just outside of Toronto. I could not resist filing a submission on behalf of BPEG. This amendment request was dealt with by the CNSC in a secret session behind closed doors, and was granted. So much for protecting public health and the environment.

Also, in September 2016, the report from the federal Commissioner for Environment and Sustainable Development was released. I was shocked to learn of the failures highlighted about the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission's (CNSC) lack of following up on its own procedures regarding safety inspections at Canada's nuclear plants. She pointed out the risks incurred by missed or undocumented inspections to certify safe operations of the reactors. I felt compelled to write a letter to the Minister of Natural Resources, who is responsible for the conduct of the CNSC, on behalf of BPEG. For the sake of public health and safety at our nuclear plants, I asked for his intervention to replace those officers responsible. It would be necessary to reinstall public trust in the Federal nuclear regulator to ensure its oversight into safe operations at our nuclear plants. After I circulated BPEG's letter and suggested an open letter to the Minister, there was instant support from an amazing number of organizations who offered to sign on. With the approval of BPEG's board, this slightly expanded letter was sent out on the Minister's 65th birthday, October 11, with 29 co-signing organizations.

I am constantly monitoring the frequent newsletters of the Solar Industry Magazine, as well as Amory Lovins Rocky Mountain Institute and the Pembina Institute's reports. In June of this year, 15 former members of my Citizens for Renewable Energy organization came together at the KW YMCA Outdoor Center for our 5<sup>th</sup> annual reunion. We congratulated one new owner of a solar powered off-grid house and another happy owner a net-zero house (Glen Estill). I made a powerpoint presentation titled "My Life With Renewable Energy". At the end of the day, we retired to the Heidelberg Inn for happy hour.

Thank you very much to BPEG's members for accepting this report.

## **OTHER PROJECTS**

### **Shoreline Naturalization & Geese Management:**

*Submitted by Rod Layman, Vice Chair & Project Lead*

In 2015, volunteers, including high school students, planted perennial beds along part of the north shore of Lion's Head beach to help control geese. The beds have grown in nicely though they did suffer storm and high water damage over the first winter. Unfortunately, because the beds don't extend along the entire shore, the birds quickly learned to walk around them. To prevent this, a temporary fence was installed along the rest of the north shore late last August. This measure has worked to keep the birds off the grass in this area, though they are still waking up onto the grass in the pavilion and campground areas. We will work on replacing the temporary fence with actual planting beds, and on finding some way to further discourage the birds from coming on-shore in the remaining areas of the beach.

### **Constitutional Review Committee**

*Submitted by Jim Kuellmer, Past Chair*

The committee to discuss constitutional issues met in September about our current and future status of the constitution based on possible procedural and legal issues. The procedural issues regarding fixed spending limits without consulting the membership were resolved when the 2013 amendment by-law was deemed to be the current constitution, taking precedence over the original document. In terms of the legal issues brought up by the 2010 law passed (by the Provincial government) required changes to our existing constitution to be legally compliant. It seems that to date this law has not been enacted due to potential glitches in the law itself and once enacted we will have several years to comply. Once enacted, in order to comply a committee would be struck to act as a go-between for the membership and the legal advisor. This is a process that could take a year possibly. It was decided that no action was necessary at this time on our part. However, if there are any members with familiarity with legal or non-profit constitutional experience, we would welcome your participation in this reviewing our documents.