

Stoco Lake Stewardship Plan- Community Update #2

May 17, 2016



In January 2015, a community meeting was held to discuss interest in working together on a Stoco Lake Stewardship Plan. A lot has happened since then! This update describes what we have been up to, and our future plans.

Why Be Involved?

The Plan is being developed using a community-based process that considers the interests of all stakeholders for Stoco Lake, including:

- Local residents – seasonal/year-round, those living on the lake and off;
- Recreational users;
- Commercial/tourism operators;
- Farmers;
- Municipal government; and
- Visitors.



The planning process will help us better understand the lake and the factors affecting it, as well as the values of community members with respect to what is important. The Plan will identify current initiatives, priorities and stewardship actions, and ways to work together to achieve our common goals:

- To ensure a healthy lake for people, fish, wildlife and plants;
- To protect wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas;
- To promote fish and wildlife populations and protect their sensitive habitats;
- To promote awareness about rare and endangered species;
- To be part of a community empowered to have a say in its future;
- To develop a greater appreciation and protection of the natural, social, and cultural heritage features associated with the Lake

The information and recommendations in the Plan will help individuals/families, organizations and government make informed decisions and undertake actions with the health of Stoco Lake in mind.

What Have We Been Doing?

A Steering Committee has been established with representatives from the Friends of Stoco Lake, the Municipality of Tweed, and Quinte Conservation. To date, the Committee has met ten times, focusing on a number of activities:

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- Implementing a communications strategy, including an email distribution list, and update of the FOSL website;
- Ongoing development of 'State of the Lake' information, led by Quinte Conservation;
- The first community workshop in September 2015 (see below);
- Launching an on-line community survey in fall 2015 (150 responses to date!);
- Reaching out to local schools to ensure youth involvement (see p.3);
- Undertaking a sampling program for spring and summer 2016 (see p. 4); and
- Exploration of potential funding activities for plan development and implementation.

Who is Contributing?

The three partner organizations are all committing significant 'in-kind' resources for the development of the Stewardship Plan. The Municipality has allocated funding in their budget: in 2015 this was used for the first community workshop; in 2016 it will be used to offset the sampling program costs (see below). There are many costs associated with the planning process, and financial assistance from the community is welcome. Individuals or businesses have the opportunity to make donations or sponsor components of the planning process (e.g., the sampling program; community workshops, printing etc.). Tax receipts will be issued and contributors recognized in the final Plan document. If you are interested in making a donation or sponsoring the Plan, please contact Maya Navrot, Conservation Education Coordinator, Quinte Conservation, at (613) 968-3434 ext. 131 or MNavrot@quinteconservation.ca . You can make an on-line donation by going to the 'Donate' tab at www.quinteconservation.ca – look for the 'Stoco Lake Plan' option!

What is the Current Schedule?

Quinte Conservation is currently assessing the 'State of the Lake' based on existing information. Data gaps are being addressed by some sampling that will occur this summer. In fall 2016, community workshop #2 will address the 'State of the Lake', survey results, and initial discussion of potential actions. The draft Stewardship Plan is scheduled for the spring 2017. Following a third community workshop, the Stoco Lake Stewardship Plan should be finalized by summer 2017.

Workshop #1 – Exploring Values, Issues & Actions



Our first workshop was held at the Kiwanis Pavilion on the shores of Stoco Lake September 26th. The purpose provided an opportunity to listen to peoples' perspectives on what they value about Stoco Lake and to gain an understanding of the potential issues

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and action items that should be addressed in the Plan. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting, representing different parts of the community – including waterfront and non-waterfront residents, and representatives from Quinte Conservation and the Municipality of Tweed.

St. Carthagh Catholic School

Youth Workshop

This April, Quinte Conservation conducted workshops with the Grade 4-5 and Grade 6-7 classes at St. Carthagh Catholic School in Tweed. Following a presentation with the watershed model, students worked in groups to identify areas on the lake or watershed where they have special memories, concerns they have about Stoco Lake, and potential actions that may address them. It is great to see local youth not only providing input to the Stewardship Planning process, but taking action....



Natural Enhanced Shoreline – Tweed Memorial Park

In late May, Grade 6-7 students from St. Carthagh will plant a natural enhanced shoreline area in the Park, using flowers and shrubs supplied by Quinte Conservation and the Municipality of Tweed. A naturalized shoreline is generally considered the best approach to protecting a lake or river's edge. Maintaining or planting a buffer zone of native plants along the shoreline will slow erosion, provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife species, and protect property and investment. Best of all, natural shorelines mean less work and more time to enjoy the water. Roots from shrubs and trees absorb wave and ice energy, stabilizing soils and preventing erosion. Shrubs and trees discourage Canada Geese – and help avoid having to deal with their waste or nuisance interactions with these birds. Plants along the shoreline slow surface runoff and filter contaminants before they reach the lake. Naturalized shorelines provide food and shelter for fish and wildlife species. Quinte Conservation also donated over 200 shoreline plants through their Seedlings for Shorelines Program that FOSL distributed locally as part of the Kiwanis Trash Bash on April 23.



2016 Sampling Program

Quinte Conservation is leading a sampling program on Stoco Lake for 2016, including:

- Marsh monitoring & amphibian/bird survey (April – July)
- Aquatic vegetation species and density survey (includes invasive aquatic species, water sampling and benthic survey)
- Fish hoop net study (sampling for 1 week in late May/June)
 - This could also be used as an opportunity to provide training for participation in the Ministry of the Environment's free 'Lake Partner Program' (<http://desc.ca/programs/lpp>)
- Surface water sampling (four tributaries; sampled by Quinte Conservation in partnership with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, as part of long-term monitoring)

This information will fill gaps in the information collected to date to assess the 'State of the Lake'.

FOSL AGM June 4 – 'Life at the Edge' - George Thomson & Elizabeth Churcher

The Friends of Stoco Lake Annual General Meeting is *Saturday, June 4, 2016, 9 am* at the Tweed Library. In addition to regular business, local naturalists/writers, George Thomson and Elizabeth Churcher will be making a presentation on shoreline wildlife – "Life at the Edge". You may see their weekly column in the Tweed News, or have attended another of their presentations – so this is not to be missed! A progress report on the Stoco Lake Stewardship Plan will also be provided.

Would You Like More Information?

For more information, contact Friends of Stoco Lake at info@friendsofstocolake.ca. The FOSL website (www.friendsofstocolake.ca) has a page dedicated to the Stewardship Plan process. Like us on Facebook  ('Friends of Stoco Lake') or follow us on Twitter  (@FOSLStoco).



Kathryn Rouse 2015