

Minutes: n'Daki Menan and Temagami Protected Lands Discussion; Saturday June 1st, 2019

Attendees: Chief Randy Becker, Councillor Cathy Dwyer, Will Kershaw, Janet Martindale, Alex Mathias, Andrea Wilson, Hap Wilson, Nick Georgiade, Tracy Georgiade, Angela Nobes, Harold Keevil, Alec Morley, PJ Justason, Chris Melanson, Jody Harrison, Geoff McQuillan, Paul Tamburro

Regrets: Councillor John Shymko, Dick Lewis, Erik Fenkell, Andrew Healy, John Kenrick, Kevin Pinkerton, Dave Wilfong

Introduction:

Tamburro opened with his belief that Temagami's natural environment and beauty is its greatest resource and should be optimized as a source of economic stimulus for the community while simultaneously respecting all users of the land and recognizing First Nations as the initial and ongoing stewards of n'Daki Menan, their ancestral territory. Unanimous comments were made on Temagami's allure and how its natural beauty pulls people back. Keevil asked why are there gaps in the park's geographical boundaries? Mathias said he supported and joined Friends of Temagami because he sees its members out on the land.

Parks Overview:

Kershaw gave an overview of Temagami's parks (hand out attached) including attendance numbers, their history and the rationale behind protecting outstanding features including Maple Mountain, Ishpatina Ridge, aurora trout lakes and old growth stands. He noted headwaters of Lady Evelyn River are not protected in Lady Evelyn Smoothwater Wilderness Park. He stated Ontario Parks currently has no appetite for increased park size. H. Wilson pointed out that 90% of archeologic sites in Temagami are not currently protected in parks.

Why do we need expanded protection?

Multiple examples of park infractions were noted along with inability of MNRF and Ontario Parks to enforce their own standards. H. Wilson pointed out multiple access violations including illegal roads and bridges and cited statistics regarding vehicular access and subsequent rapid decline of fish and moose populations. Becker stated there are mining claims in the parks, denied by Kershaw.

Justason briefed attendees on the Solace Wildlands, one of only remaining roadless Crown land regions in Temagami is surrounded by park lands and the location of the proposed 36 km Turner Road; 1.8 km has been constructed to date. Becker said Teme-Augama Anishnabai (TAA) is actively monitoring Turner Road construction.

A discussion was held related to forestry practices in Temagami. H. Wilson pointed out examples of clear cuts to shores of waterways, ignoring policy to the contrary. Becker discussed

how the practice of clear cuts, topping trees and leaving debris behind does not mimic natural regeneration after forest fires as industry claims. It was also pointed out leaving occasional seed trees in a clear cut is not effective means to regenerate forest. Councillor Dwyer said management practices have improved and recommended reading the Temagami Forest Management Plan 2020.

Protection Models:

Becker states TAA opposes parks and lacks confidence in MNR's ability to manage n'Daki Menan. He proposes revival of the Wendaban Stewardship Authority with First Nations and non-First Nations members managing and planning protection and resource utilization of n'Daki Menan. Becker emphasized importance of traditional ways and taking only what is needed from the land and that this practice is not occurring now.

Becker stated n'Daki Menan is not a wilderness and the forest has been inhabited for thousands of years. Becker provided information on Temagami First Nation (TFN) land claim negotiations. He stated federal government is interested in reopening negotiations. The Ontario provincial government is lagging. Settlement talks include reserve lands and stewardship of n'Daki Menan.

The Zones d'Exploitation Controlée (ZEC) concept of recreational and industrial uses of land managed by First Nations or Wendaban Stewardship Authority was introduced by Tamburro (hand out attached). Becker said something like this could work.

Conclusions:

T. Georgiades discussed need to maintain momentum of meeting and asked how attendees can help? Becker asked for field reports from n'Daki Menan but for no to petitions or letters to government. There was a consensus that increased protection is necessary and valuable and should be created and managed locally.

A follow up meeting was suggested for later this summer or fall, perhaps at time of Gramps Fest.

Action Items:

1. Create a group email list: Tamburro
2. Distribute Temagami Forest Management plan: Dwyer
3. Support reactivation of Wendaban Stewardship Authority
4. Monitor further construction of the Turner Road into Solace forest: Justason and Mathias.
5. Follow up meeting?? August or September: Around Gramps fest. Maybe in town.