

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROGRAM

The success of the Matabitchuan River Water Management Plan hinges on the engagement of all stakeholders and the development of an extensive and comprehensive public consultation program. This program is briefly described below.

Consultation is a significant component of the preparation of a water management plan. The approach reflected in this program is a collaborative decision making or consensus approach whereby the public and facility operators work together with technical staff to identify issues and solutions that best meet the needs of all parties.

Water management requires a proper balance between often-conflicting uses, requiring that trade-offs be made. All stakeholders need to acknowledge these conflicts and the inherent need for trade-offs in deciding on the most appropriate water management strategies. Thus, the focus of the public consultation plan will be on identifying these conflicting uses and the trade-offs required to develop a broadly accepted water management plan.

Goal and Objective of the Public Consultation Program

Goal

To develop water management plan for the Matabitchuan River Watershed with the input from key stakeholders.

Objectives

- Stakeholders will be informed of the water management plan process and their opportunities to participate;
- There will be agreement with interested members of the public on level of participation;
- Stakeholders will be sought out and flexibility in the consultation methods to facilitate participation by all interested parties;
- Stakeholder groups will be educated on the complexity of the issues;
- The consultation process will be co-operative, timely and effective;
- Communication will be open, honest and responsive;
- Consideration will be given to all issues and activities in the Matabitchuan River Watershed as raised by the public;
- MNR and the Waterpower Industry will work together with stakeholders to develop a variety of water management strategy options and an objective standard for evaluating them;
- Opportunity will be provided for public comment on the draft report; and
- Enhance relations among the public, the facility operators and government agencies.

Consultation Activities and Tasks

Phase 1

Public Notice – Matabitchuan Water Management Planning Process and Creation of the Public Advisory Committee – December 2002

Initial Public Notice

A public notice will be prepared to:

- inform the general public about the preparation of a water management plan for the Matabitchuan River;
- outline the planned consultation activities;
- invite participation on the Public Advisory Committee; and
- provide contact names for information on the preparation of the plan.

This public notice will be placed in English in the following local media: Nugget, Temiskaming Speaker and the Northern Daily.

A mailing list of interested groups and individuals, elected officials and agencies will be developed and a copy of the notice and a covering letter mailed to those on the list. At a minimum, the list will include cottage associations, outfitters, First Nations, trappers associations, elected officials, municipal governments, provincial and federal agencies. It is anticipated that the mailing list for the plan will grow as more interested parties are identified. This mailing list will be used to notify participants of opportunities for their involvement during the preparation of the water management plan.

Public Advisory Committee (PAC)

A Public Advisory Committee will be developed to provide formal public input to the plan. Activities associated with the development and effective function of this committee are described below.

Solicit Membership – Membership on the PAC will be solicited through initial public notice and the discussions/meetings with interested groups and individuals. It is anticipated that membership on the committee may include, but not limited to, the following:

- First Nations
- local business
- tourism industry
- anglers and hunters
- other industry
- municipalities
- other resource users
- recreationalists
- other interested groups
- riparian landowners, and
- the general public

Members of the PAC shall be appointed by the MNR and the facility operators on the basis of a demonstrated understanding of the problems and issues related to the Matabitchuan River Watershed, while ensuring representation from the public at large, and from a range of interest groups and from across the watershed. The PAC shall be comprised of no more than 12 members.

Prepare Terms of Reference – A draft Terms of Reference will be developed for the PAC. These Terms of Reference will guide the formation and operation of the PAC. The Draft Terms of Reference will include the following:

- the process for the initial selection of members, as well as the process for accepting new members;
- outline of the expected commitment of the PAC members (i.e. in terms of number of meetings; their role in providing information to the rest of the group they represent, etc);
- mandate and role of the PAC: what role it has, and how it relates to the Steering Committee (MNR and the facility operators) and how information received and provided to the general public is handled; and
- the administration of the committee.

A draft Terms of Reference is provided (see *Appendix A*). The draft is intended to prompt discussion concerning the make-up, format and direction of the committee.

Field Trip – A field trip to the generating facilities and control structures with the PAC will be arranged. This field trip would afford the members a first hand assessment of the different issues associated with water management in the Matabitchuan Watershed. Members of the committee can each take the opportunity to introduce the others to their particular issue and /or concern. This hands-on approach to issue identification encourages a mutual respect for different views and perceptions of the issues.

Phase 2

Invitation to Participate - Scoping Workshop for the Water Management Plan

Second Public Notice

A public notice will be prepared to:

- inform the general public of the ongoing preparation of a water management plan for the Matabitchuan River,
- invite participation to a scoping workshop at several locations in the area, and
- provide contact names for information on the preparation of the plan.

A series of scoping workshops will be held in Elk Lake, the Tri-Towns and Latchford. The purpose of these workshops will be to ensure that all issues are identified, to confirm that all interests are included in the PAC, to confirm background information, and to obtain input into the significance and priority attached to the various issues and concerns. People will be invited to attend the workshops through the second public notice. Participants will be asked to register in advance so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

At the workshops, participants will be provided with a brief description of the preparation of the water management plan and the existing operating plans, and then divided into smaller groups to discuss issues and priorities. At the end of the workshop, participants will return to the larger group for a review of the small group discussions.

Notices of the scoping workshops will be placed in the local media, with copies sent to everyone on the mailing list. Materials for the scoping workshop will be prepared with input from the PAC.

Phase 3

First Information Centre - The Options

Third Public Notice

A public notice will be prepared to:

- update the general public on the ongoing preparation of a water management plan for the Matabitchuan River,
- invite participation to a series of information centres to review the range of options,
- identify locations, dates and times of the information centre,
- provide a summary of other consultation opportunities (EBR, WEB site, etc.), and
- provide contact names for information on the preparation of the plan.

A series of information centres will be held during this phase at three locations: Elk, Tri-Town and Latchford.

The purpose of the first information centres is to:

- provide opportunity for public review of, and comment on, the analysis of management options,
- outline the preliminary preferred management options and the options and analysis for the term of the plan, and
- to request additional input to the background information and other information to be considered in the decision making.

The North Bay and Kirkland Lake MNR District Managers, the facility operators, the planning team and representatives from the PAC will attend the information centre. At the venues, a background summary of the plan and summary maps will be available for public distribution.

Notice of the information centres will be placed in the local media, with copies sent to everyone on the mailing list. Materials for the open houses will be prepared with input from the PAC.

Phase 4

Second Information Centre – Water Management Plan Draft Review

A public notice will be prepared to:

- update the general public on the ongoing preparation of a water management plan for the Matabitchuan River,
- invite participation to a series of open house to review the first draft of the Matabitchuan River Water Management Plan,
- identify locations, dates and times of the information centres,
- provide a summary of other consultation opportunities (EBR, WEB site, etc.), and
- provide contact names for information on the preparation of the plan.

A series of information centres will be held during this phase at three locations: Elk Lake, Tri-Towns and Latchford.

The purpose of the second information centre is to provide a formal opportunity for public review of, and comment on:

- the draft Matabitchuan River Water Management Plan including the options, the analysis and the area of concern prescriptions, for the term of the plan, and
- to request additional input to the background information and other information to be considered in the decision making.

The North Bay and Kirkland Lake MNR District Managers, the facility operators, the planning team and representatives from the PAC will attend the information centre. At the venues, a background summary of the plan and summary maps will be available for public distribution.

Notices of the information centres will be placed in the local media, with copies sent to everyone on the mailing list. Materials for the open houses will be prepared with input from the PAC.

Phase 5

Final Water Management Plan Inspection – April 2004

A public notice will be prepared to:

- inform the general public of an opportunity to review the Final Matabitchuan River Water Management Plan as approved by the Regional Director of the Ministry of Natural Resources,
- identify locations of Final Water Management Plans for public review,
- provide a summary of other consultation opportunities (EBR, WEB site, etc.), and
- provide contact names for information on the preparation of the plan.

Notices of the final water management inspection will be placed in the local media, with copies sent to everyone on the mailing list. Review copies of the Final Matabitchuan Water Management Plan will be made available at libraries, municipal offices in Kirkland Lake, Elk Lake, Latchford, Matachewan and the Tri-Towns, Ontario Power Generation, MNR and First Nations.

Schedule

- Phase 1 Public Notice – Matabitchuan Water Management Planning Process and Creation of the Public Advisory Committee – December 2002
- Phase 2 Invitation to Participate - Scoping Workshop for the Water Management Plan - March 2003
- Phase 3 First Information Centre - The Options – December 2003
- Phase 4 Second Information Centre –Water Management Plan Draft Review – February 2004
- Phase 5 Final Water Management Plan Inspection – March 2004

