

Elk Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes – Sault Ste. Marie District
Tuesday, August 15th, 2017 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location:	Participants in Attendance:	Absent / Regrets:
Bruce Mines Community Center, 9180 Hwy 17, Bruce Mines	Andy Penikett Bob Wheeldon Pete Descoteaux (MNRF) Ginny Post Jody Stefanich Kevin Coombs Robert Routledge Jim Trottier (MNRF) Peggy Wilson (MNRF) Andree Gagnon Robin Horwath Dale Wedgewood	Arden Brock Brad Shewfelt Dana Boyer Mark Ryckman Ray Lipinski David Trivers (OMAFRA) Wayne Fiset

Meeting opened at 7:00 pm

#	AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION (D), QUESTIONS (Q)	ANSWER (A), DECISION (D) or ACTION ITEM (I)
1a.	Welcome	Robin thanked everyone who was able to attend the meeting. He asked all members if there were any additions or deletions to the agenda that would like to be made.	
1b.	Agenda	Motion to approve agenda with no additions or deletions. 1 st – Andy Penikett 2 nd – Dale Wedgewood All in favour – Carried	Motion carried
2a.	Review of Previous Minutes – June 27th, 2017	Motion to approve June 27 th , 2017 minutes. 1 st – Bob Wheeldon 2 nd – Andy Penikett All in favour – Carried	Motion carried
2b.	Business Arising from June 17th, 2017 minutes.	<i>Municipal Meeting Update</i> - Andree and Ginette had emailed the City of Elliot Lake to set up a meeting and have been making progress on setting a date. Andree emailed Jim and Robin to find out their availability before closing on a date. - Robin attempted to contact one of Elliot Lake's councillor who was on holidays. <i>Potential Habitat Creation on Private Lands</i> - Rob estimated that there are four and a half bags of seed still available. - Peggy asked Rob if he was able to speak with Mr. Hill about planting crops on neighbouring properties. Rob acknowledged that Mr. Hill didn't seem to have an issue with the planting done to date as it tends to draw the elk away from his	Ginette to follow up with the City of Elliot Lake and Township of the North Shore to set up meeting

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		farm. - There was discussion at the last meeting about other nearby properties that may want to plant food crops for the elk. It was decided to offer seed to Mr. Johnston. Members updates - Peggy asked Dale if he was able to send out the electronic version of the report to the two new members. Dale explained he was not able to send out the electronic versions due to the length of the copies but has made paper copies to hand out to the new members. - Rob confirmed that Mr. Wiebe no longer has cameras set up on his property as he has moved to New Brunswick. He agreed to have some set up on his property. Mr. Wiebe provided Rob with pictures two years ago; Rob was surprised by the amount of activity.	Jim to provide seed to the landowner for planting Dale to hand out copies of the report to the two new members at the next meeting Rob to contact Mr. Wiebe to discuss setting up cameras on his property
3	Elk Update	Jim provided an update on recent developments with the elk herd: - Jim has received a number of photos of calves recently, and noted that at least 3 are present in the Elliot Lake herd - Jim received a photo at the end of July of a collared cow and calf, taken just west of Midway Lumber on Nestorville Road, near Thessalon - On the way to the meeting tonight, Jim, Pete and Andree stopped in the area and were able to pick up the radio collar's signal, and determined that the adult was one of the collared cows normally found at Parkinson - In early July, Jim received a message from Will Samis (retired MNR biologist) who mentioned he'd been talking with a farmer from Desbarats area who dug up a set of elk antlers while installing tile drainage about 35-40 years ago	
4	Recommendations from Wayne	- Peggy, Dave, Jim and Rob met to update the recommendations based on Wayne's comments/input. Although the updates could not be completed during the meeting, the sub-committee was able to develop an approach for the updates. - It was decided that minor changes would be made to the presentation, such as adding the WMUs to the population objective chart, but the rationale for managing at the sub-herd level would be outlined in a 1 or 2 page appendix to the presentation. It was decided by the sub-committee that the appendix should include description of elk behaviour, herd development, habitat requirements, home ranges of elk, and descriptions of wildlife management units 36, 37 & 38.	Sub-committee to complete action items and report back at next EAC meeting

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		The rationale will compare elk management to other wildlife management strategies at the WMU level. It will also include a discussion on the importance of managing elk at the sub-herd levels, and impacts on the landscape if not managing at these levels. • Action items from the meeting include: ○ Rob to work on research to support the discussion for elk behaviour & herd development; ○ David to look at the AgMaps tool to provide maps that identify active farm lands within each WMU; and, ○ Jim to draft the appendix and update the presentation. • Timeline is to try to complete action items by early fall and schedule another meeting after that to finalize the recommendations. • Rob mentioned how the AgMaps could identify the active farms, where potential conflicts could be associated with populated areas, as well as any limitations outside of the sub-herd areas. Peggy informed that the use of these maps will also help feed into the description of the WMUs.	
5	Sudbury Elk Restoration Committee	• At a past EAC meeting, Paul Leale suggested talking with Sudbury's Elk Restoration Committee to see if there are projects we can work on together or exchange ideas. • The EAC sub-committee had a phone discussion with Ivan Filion, Chair of the Sudbury Elk Restoration Committee. Committee was established in the late 90's at the time of restoration/relocation and includes a similar composition of members as the EAC, however, they do not have an OMAFRA rep. on the committee. • After the initial elk reintroductions, chronic wasting disease concerns with elk imports from Alberta put an end to further relocation projects. • The Sudbury Committee has been losing momentum in recent years, as they await the approval of population objectives to provide a fresh mandate. • Ivan also spoke about their fundraisers and how most of their money is spent on surveys as well as supporting the grad students from University and Cambrian College who work on research and studies for the Sudbury Elk Committee. • Their Committee has enough funding to cover the next three to four years but anything beyond those years are unknown. • In terms of some of the projects they have worked on in the past, a couple of their big projects involved some mortality factors with CN Rail especially in the winter with the Elk. • One of the projects Sudbury is considering is creating a maternal enclosure at	

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		Burwash where they would capture cows in mid-winter and keep them in an enclosure until after calving season and release them mid-July or so. Ivan doesn't seem to think that the proposal has been well received by OFAH or the MNRF but Jim has heard from Mike Hall (Sudbury's MNRF Biologist) and he would support the idea. • Sudbury does not experience any issues with elk agricultural nuisance, as elk are not present in farming areas. • Ivan estimated they have around 200 animals, including an estimate of maybe 50 outliers in areas where they do not regularly survey. • This past winter, they captured and collared 18 elk using Bighorn Helicopters. Their target was 23 collars but conditions were not favourable. • Robin asked Jim what the population objective for the Sudbury herd is. Jim replied that they don't have an approved objective yet, but their draft is 500 which was the original proposal. Sudbury received comments back from OFAH about their proposal and one of them was concerning habitat mapping to see how much habitat they have. Ivan received a call from one of the regional managers 3 months ago and she told him she would be back in a month or so but still hasn't heard back from her. • Robin mentioned his opinion as well as some of his experiences and advised Jim that Ivan should go and talk to the deputy minister and not be afraid to look for alternatives.	
6	Habitat Creation Project Update.	• Jody visited the habitat creation project site on Friday Aug. 11th and took pictures for Rob to show the progress of vegetation growth at the site. • Rob stopped to talk to Bob Wheeldon last week about Harvey Gamble concerning the 50 hours of heavy equipment that has been offered. He tried to contact Harvey, however he is apparently gone on vacation to Arizona. • Rob offered to meet with Harvey on-site to see exactly what work is remaining. Seeding will need to occur by late fall. As previously cautioned by David T., seeding after freeze up will impact vegetation growth in the spring. • Rob showed pictures of the site that showed how well the growth is establishing. • Dale asked Rob when everything had been planted on the site including when the pictures had been taken. Planting occurred on June 8th, and the pictures were taken on August 11th. • Jody mentioned the suckers coming up and the oak stumps lying around. • Rob plans on gathering students to the site and using brush saws to remove some of the hardwood. • Jody had talked earlier to Beamish Construction, but they had wanted more	Rob to email Harvey Gamble

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		details on what needed to be done. Peggy suggested that we should have a back-up plan in case Mr. Gamble isn't able to complete the work. Bob confirmed that Mr. Gamble was sincere with his offer and the North Shore Anglers and Hunters intends to carry out the work. • Robin asked what kind of equipment Harvey owns. Bob mentioned Harvey owning all kinds of equipment such as bulldozers, backhoes, excavators and dump trucks, just about everything you would need to build roads. • Robin didn't seem to think the bulldozers and excavators are a bad idea considering they can push a certain amount and believes it won't take more than two days for the job to be completed. • Robin mentioned if the site can't get ready by the fall that it will have to wait until the spring time. He also mentioned if Mr. Gamble is coming back from Arizona in September he can go and have a look at the site. • Bob asked Robin to attend the North Shore Anglers and Hunters meeting at the Walford Committee Center to provide details of the work that needs to be completed and show pictures of the project site. The meeting is scheduled for the 3rd Thursday of September at 7 o'clock. • Robin agreed to attend and provide a presentation at the Walford meeting.	Jody to go and take pictures of the site and put on a PowerPoint to show at the Walford meeting Bob to contact Sharron to let her know Robin will be attending the meeting Robin to attend meeting and report back to committee
7	Electric Fence Trial	• Rob contacted Mr. Hill to discuss a potential electric fence trial. Mr. Hill has not had elk issues this year as he was unable to plant his fields due to rain. Mr. Hill may be interested in participating in an electric fencing trial during the winter months to protect stored hay. This will be a small area. • Rob mentioned bringing some students to help set up the posts on Mr. Hill's property in early October before winter and before the soil begins to freeze up. • Peggy advised that MNRF may be able to provide technicians to help install the fence. • Dale advised to make sure that the farmers who are going to participate in the electric fence trials understand that they cannot keep the fences and that it is only a trial. If the fencing is successful, Dave explained they will have to be willing to buy their own material. • Ginny talked a bit about her concerns involving one of the farms on Highway 554. She explained that there isn't any fencing around the perimeter of the field and the elk have been coming in. She spoke with the landowners about a fence trial, but did not get the sense that they are interested. Ginny mentioned trying to contact the landowner again, but hasn't received any phone calls back. • Peggy thanked Ginny for following up. • Robin thanked the members for their updates on the electric fence trials.	Rob to plan for winter installation of fence

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8	Members Updates	• Pete suggested a property that could potentially be planted down the road from Williamson Road, not far from the Nagy farm. • Peggy explained that the committee had previously decided that they were going to focus private plantings on Chiblow Lake Road in an attempt to redirect the animals from the Parkinson farm areas. Three properties are already planting food plots for the deer, and a forth will be planted soon. • Peggy thanked Pete for the potential site. • Rob asked if MNRF is able to reimburse travel expenses for the students who will be working on the Laird population assessment this fall.	Peggy to follow up on funding request
9	Next Meeting Date & Adjournment	Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 5, 2017 at the Bruce Mines Community Hall. Motion to adjourn meeting at 8:35PM 1st – Bob All in favour – Carried	Motion Carried