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New video shares presentation on shoreline protection structures

Coastal engineer presents about shoreline protection structures to ABCA Board

Coastal engineer Fiona Duckett, M.Sc., P. Eng., of W. F. Baird and Associates Coastal Engineers Ltd., presented to the Board of Directors of Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA) at the board's regularly-scheduled meeting on May 18, 2017. The presentation was videotaped professionally and the video of the presentation is now posted online on YouTube. A link to the video is found at abca.on.ca on the Shoreline Management Page (abca.on.ca/page.php?page=shoreline-management) at this link: *Development of Policies and Procedures for Shore Protection Structures along the ABCA Shoreline* (<https://youtu.be/m1eHRk351Cc>).

Baird and Associates produced a *Considerations for Shore Protection Structures* document in 1994. The firm is updating that report this year. Duckett spoke to the board on shore protection structures, including current policies and procedures, and next steps to update policies and procedures. She spoke on the current mix of erosion control structures along the shoreline of the ABCA, natural hazards, shore protection types, and the existing permitting process.

In addition to the new video, there is also a video, posted online last month, of a previous presentation the board, by Dr. Robin Davidson-Arnott, Professor Emeritus, University of Guelph. A link to that video is available on the same shoreline management web page. He presented to the April 20, 2017 board meeting on the topics of shoreline processes, climate change impacts on the Great Lakes, and shoreline protection.

The two presenters, Fiona Duckett and Robin Davidson-Arnott, are also scheduled to present at two public open houses on two Saturdays in June. The first open house is June 3 in Zurich. The second open house is June 17 in Thedford. The open houses run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. noon. Presentations begin at 10:30 a.m. The open house in Thedford is at the Legacy Recreation Centre Hall, 16 Allen Street. The open house in Zurich is at the Zurich Arena, 15 East Street.

In her presentation, Duckett outlined some existing types of shore protection structures such as seawalls, revetments, beach nourishment, offshore breakwaters, groynes, and ad hoc structures. Shore protection structures are considered development and a permit is required, she said. The speaker said that shore protection structure designs should be developed on a site-specific basis, within the overall framework of the Shoreline Management Plan, by a qualified Coastal Engineer. Structures that are not designed by a coastal engineer are more susceptible to failure, she said. The presenter said there is a need to consider the types of potential impacts on adjacent properties in cases where shore protection structures are considered. If not designed properly, shore protection structures could, in some cases, remove sand from the 'sediment budget' and impact shorelines and properties downdrift, she said.

Prevention is the preferred approach, Duckett told the board, and that includes locating buildings landward of the natural hazard limit and observing hazard setbacks. If shore protection is considered for some existing properties, it is a "last line of defence" for properties located in the natural hazard zone lakeward of the natural hazard limit.

The presenter spoke to the board about the need to provide direction on applications for shore protection to ensure shoreline ecosystems and processes are not impacted and that negative impacts on other shoreline properties are not created. Referring to the Provincial Policy Statement on Natural Hazards (2014), she said development cannot result in adverse environmental impacts and can't create new hazards or aggravate existing hazards. It must happen with protection works standards and access standards. Also, people and vehicles must have a way of safely entering and exiting the area during times of flooding, erosion and other emergencies.

ABCA's current Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) has been in place since 2000. It identifies shoreline hazards for flooding, erosion, and dynamic beaches and their impact on shoreline development. The Conservation Authority started a process in 2015 to update technical information to support updates to the 2000 SMP document. The 2017 open houses provide information on the existing plan and current policies as well as an update on the progress of technical work for future updates. (The review of local development policies contained in the SMP 2000 is not expected until 2018, according to ABCA.) Updates to the Shoreline Management Plan will provide a consistent and up-to-date guide for development and municipal land use planning along the shoreline, according to the ABCA. Updates will provide newer information on shoreline recession rates, ensure that local policies and application of the Regulation conform to Province of Ontario policy, and keep policies current in light of emerging land use trends.

To learn more about shoreline management in the watershed visit the Shoreline Management Plan Update page online at abca.on.ca at: abca.on.ca/page.php?page=shoreline-management. Members of the public are invited to subscribe to a free electronic newsletter that provides updates about shoreline management in the watershed. To sign up to receive these updates you may visit this link: http://eepurl.com/bxn8_5. More than 325 people have subscribed to this online newsletter.

– 30 –

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