

Waverly Beach Restoration Roundtable

Waverly Beach, located along the Lake Erie shoreline just west of Old Fort Erie, has a serious algae problem.

On July 26, 2017, Don Lubberts and Nadine Litwin called together a group of people who care about the beach. The purpose of this first Waverly Beach Restoration Roundtable meeting was to gather information on the algae concerns and discuss what individuals/groups/agencies might do to ease the problem. Don advised that we do not want to replicate or interfere with work other groups may already have underway. Instead, we want to work toward finding a collaborative approach to our common problem. Nadine suggested that what we learn regarding the algae issue is likely to help us solve other problems along the way, e.g., creating new dunes by planting beach grass, enhancing Fowler's Toad habitat.

We asked Dr. Robin Davidson-Arnott, an expert on coastal processes and geomorphology, to join our group. He attended our July 26th meeting and undertook a tour of the beach. Soon after, he submitted his notes to the Roundtable which we are using for guidance on our next steps. Dr. Davidson-Arnott suggested that a good part of our algal growth and nutrient loading may be locally sourced. We could see from various current and historical maps that Waverly Beach is part of a rock outcropping, providing a substrate for algae. We then called on a water quality specialist to sample water from the town rainwater/runoff pipe at the west end of the beach and also sample water that bubbles up in the middle of the beach after storm events.

We are fortunate that the Waverly Beach Restoration Roundtable includes people with expertise in a variety of areas. As a result, our meetings have been very productive. We quickly learned that our algae problem is complicated and complex. To keep track of what we've accomplished so far and what needs to be done, we've set up a To-Do Table. We plan to share our findings with the Town of Fort Erie, work with the Town to clean up Waverly Beach as best we can, and find ways to keep it that way for all to enjoy.