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Proposed Framework for Cox Bay Community Plan Process

Prepared by
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Background

Cox and Pinelands Bay (herein referred to as Cox Bay) is a unique lake segment within Lake Joseph, near Port Carling, Ontario. In recent years development has occurred at an advanced rate along the shoreline of the bay. Isolated cases of construction-related contamination of the lake have been recorded. Heavy boat traffic including water skiing and wakeboarding also affects the quality of life of the bay's residents. Some residents also fear that Cox Bay is adversely affected by local hydrodynamics that bring water from other parts of Lake Joseph into the bay.

The District of Muskoka's Lake System Health Program, a planning policy adopted by District of Muskoka Council in the summer of 2006, identifies Cox Bay as "over-threshold" with respect to phosphorus concentration.

The following describes a community planning process (CPP), designed to engage local stakeholders to address stressors to the bay's ecosystem.

Rationale

Rationale for this project comes from both "bottom-up" and "top-down." At the most local level, there is a grassroots interest in coordinating efforts to improve the natural and social environment of Cox Bay. At the same time, local governments are also encouraging action to address environmental problems.

Grassroots Support

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) Water Quality Initiative (WQI) is an ecological monitoring program that has monitored the quality of nearshore waters in lakes across west Muskoka and south Parry Sound since 2001. Five sites within Cox Bay have been monitored since 2002. A comprehensive education and capacity-building program has complemented monitoring activities, also since 2002. Among other activities, this program has included seminars, workshops, articles in the MLA newsletter, articles presented in the local media, the distribution of brochures and all reports and extensive educational materials published on the MLA website.

The Muskoka Lakes community generally and Cox Bay community specifically have demonstrated knowledge of limnological principals governing their local ecosystems, how these principles are affected by local land- and water-based activities, and the current state of local ecosystems. The MLA (an association that most Cox Bay residents belong to, and sponsor of the monitoring program) itself has demonstrated an interest in leveraging community concern and involvement by supporting the creation of a comprehensive community action plan. The MLA has also demonstrated the organizational sophistication

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required to effectively communicate with all members of the Cox Bay community as well as to raise and administer funds, engage a support team etc.

A workshop held on July 15, 2006 at the Bala Community Centre hosted by the MLA focused on the need for a comprehensive action plan for Cox Bay. The workshop was open to the public, and was advertised in the local media. A flyer advertising the workshop was directly delivered to all Cox Bay residents. The report on this workshop (and the other workshops that made up the workshops series entitled *Planning for Our Lakes: Everyone's Responsibility* can be downloaded from <http://www.loganenvironmental.com/mla/Reports/Workshop%20Report.pdf>. The remainder of this proposal is based on the outcome of that workshop.

Local Government Support

Cox Bay is within the Township of Muskoka Lakes (Area Municipality) and the District Municipality of Muskoka (DMM). DMM has jurisdiction over environmental concerns including water quality. The Township is responsible for controlling development. All Township policies must be in conformity to the policies of DMM.

DMM takes its responsibility on water quality concerns very seriously. They were the only local government in Ontario to have adopted any part of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Ontario Lake Capacity Simulation Model developed in the late 1970s. In the early 2000s, DMM revisited these water quality models and associated planning policies, developing the Lake System Health Program (LSHP). Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 32, recognizing the LSHP, was approved by District Council in October 2006. Although OPA 32 is currently the subject of an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board, the appeal is not related to issues associated with community planning, and it is anticipated that the appeal will be settled shortly.

The amended Official Plan (OP) classifies Cox Bay as "over-threshold" with respect to total phosphorus concentration. The OP as amended indicates that DMM will, in collaboration with any affected Area Municipalities, the lake community and other stakeholders, undertake limits to growth analyses, facilitate and participate in remedial actions and participate in stewardship initiatives (Sections F.12, F.13 and F.15) for all over-threshold lakes and lake-segments (bays). Together, these activities form the basis for an effective collaborative community plan.

According to Samantha Hastings, Director of Policy and Programs at DMM, even though the amended District OP supports the development of community plans, DMM has not developed a formal protocol or framework for their development. Currently, DMM prioritizes lake communities for community planning based on interest shown by community groups, area municipalities and other stakeholders. Each community plan is considered individually, developed from scratch, as DMM feels that there is no standard set of policies that are appropriate for all lake communities.

The Township of Muskoka Lakes is currently reviewing its entire OP. Unfortunately, a current copy of the OP was not available for review. Exploratory discussions with planning

staff and Council should take place to gauge the support for community-based plans in the Township.

Objective

Together, the MLA and the stakeholders of Cox Bay have demonstrated the capacity to ensure that local decision-making is responsive to issues that affect local quality of life. Likewise, local governments have indicated support for the development of an action plan on Cox Bay. The specific purpose of this project is thus defined as:

- To protect and enhance the local Cox and Pinelands Bay ecosystem through the creation of a local citizen-initiated comprehensive action plan valued by the local community and formally recognized by local government agencies.

The Cox Bay Community Plan (CBCP) is intended to guide the community in making discoveries about causes of concerning symptoms, use these discoveries to design actions to address the causes, and implement an ongoing monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions. Intended outputs of the CBCP are an Official Plan Amendment to be considered by the Township of Muskoka Lakes and the District of Muskoka, a fully interactive online interpretation of the CBCP that allows the community to continue the discovery-behaviour change-evaluation process in perpetuity and a change in the community culture to better recognize environmental and social sustainability.

Implementation

This proposed plan is a dynamic document, and should always be considered a work in progress. Ideally, an interactive, web-based interpretation of the plan process will be made available to enable effective participation by all Cox Bay stakeholders during the planning process and in perpetuity.

The primary vehicle for the implementation of the planning process should be a plan committee made up of residents and other Cox Bay stakeholders. The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA), as the most prominent community group in the region, and the community group that most residents of Cox Bay are members of, should support and facilitate this committee.

The main purpose of the committee is to represent the interests of all stakeholders of Cox Bay community in the design and implementation of a community plan for the Cox Bay Planning Area. The Terms of Reference for the Plan Committee, including specific responsibilities, are found in Appendix A.

Components

Components of the plan process will be as follows:

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1. Plan Committee
2. Plan Framework
3. Issue Modules
 - a. Water Quality (phosphorus loading)
 - b. Commercial Development
 - c. Boat Traffic (including erosion)
4. Official Plan Amendment Creation
5. Communications
6. Fundraising

Components are shown in Figure 1.

Plan Framework

The first stage of the plan process after the establishment of the Plan Committee will be to develop the plan framework. This proposal forms the basis of this framework. Once the Plan Committee has agreed upon a framework, it will be presented to the community for feedback.

Issue Modules

Each issue facing the bay's natural and human communities identified by the bay community at the initial workshop held in July, 2006 will be considered in an Issue Module. Organizing the plan's activities into these modules will allow for easier communication and public participation.

The modules will each be divided into three phases: research, application and evaluation. The research phase will address the knowledge gaps identified by the community at the July, 2006 workshop. The application phase will invite participation from the entire community in determining remedial measures for addressing each concern based on the knowledge generated in the research phase. Finally, an ongoing monitoring strategy including targets and objectives will be developed for each concern in the evaluation phase. A complete provisional list of steps is given in Appendix B.

Official Plan Amendment Creation

Once the work of all modules is completed, the findings will be presented to the community for feedback. A proposed Official Plan Amendment (OPA) will then be created based on the community feedback. The OPA will then be presented to the Township of Muskoka Lakes Council for inclusion in the Township's Official Plan, and the District of Muskoka for inclusion in the District's Official Plan.

Communication

Communication is one of the most important aspects of a community-based plan. Traditional plans created by and for professionals are nearly always text-on-paper-based and require time, energy and (often) professional expertise to read and understand. An effective community-based plan however, must become entrenched in local culture, and must enjoy

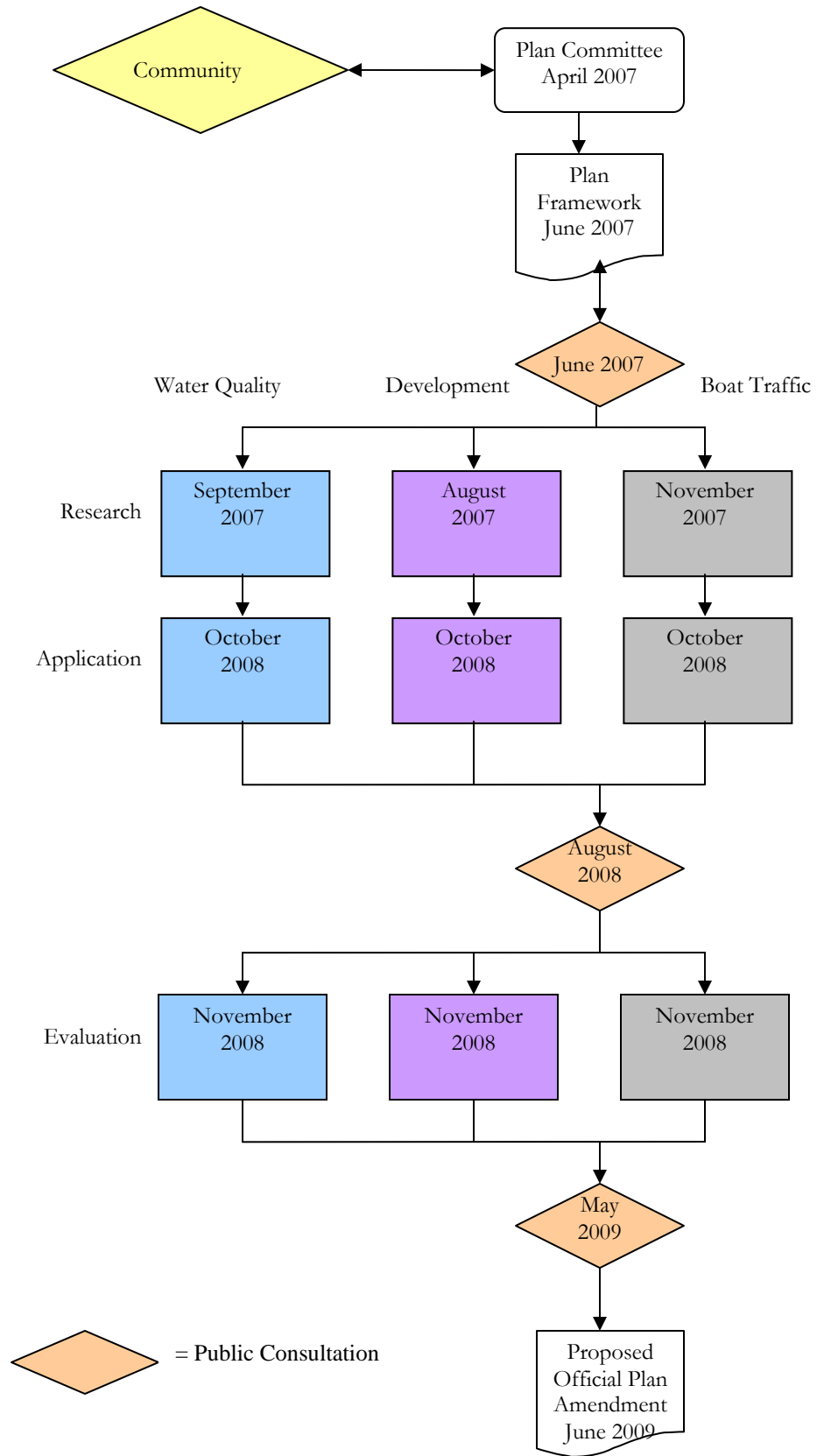


Figure 1 CBCP Components

buy-in from a vast majority of stakeholders. This calls for highly effective approaches to communication that are innovative, accessible and transparent.

The primary format of the Cox Bay Community Plan will be an interactive digital interpretation presented on the Internet where stakeholders can view progress, findings, news, upcoming events and other information related to the planning process. This web space should incorporate the concepts of common mapping, where all place-based information is displayed on a single map interface. Moreover, community stakeholders will always have the opportunity to contribute to the process.

The web space should be complimented by communication tools identified by the community at the July, 2006 workshop:

- Electronic mail bulletins
- Newsletters
- Local papers (including the results of local studies)

Fundraising

While the CBCP is administered by the MLA, it must be realized that significant investment of financial resources is necessary to support all components. A traditional consultant would no doubt charge in excess of \$100 000 for the support of such a comprehensive and involved plan. While the support of this process through CEW (a charitable entity) greatly reduces the costs, an equivalent value of this process is still estimated as almost \$35 000 (a breakdown of this evaluation is given in Appendix C).

These funds will need to be raised from local efforts. Significant investment from individuals (both in terms of money and time), businesses and other stakeholders of Cox Bay is anticipated. Specifically, local governments, individuals and businesses will be targeted for sponsorship of the community plan. Fundraising will be carried out by a joint committee of CEW and the MLA with input from the Plan Committee.

Timelines

The proposed timelines for the CBCP are shown on Figure 1. Specific target completion dates for each step is shown in Appendix B.

Research for all three of the Issue Modules should be complete by the end of 2007. Application phases (including a public workshop) are to take place during the summer of 2008, and Evaluation phases are to take place over the winter of 2008-09. A further public meeting will be hosted in the spring of 2009 to gather feedback on the final results of the study, informing the creation of the proposed Official Plan Amendment.

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A proposed Official Plan Amendment, representing the community planning process, should be presented to the Township of Muskoka Lakes and District of Muskoka for inclusion in Official Plans and other planning policies in the spring or summer of 2009.

Stakeholders

The CBCP is designed to engage the local stakeholders including residents, business owners, recreational users, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and other issue experts. The purpose of involving these stakeholders is to better address stressors to the bay ecosystem, as well as to get their support for the community plan in the form of both buy-in and resources.

A number of stakeholder groups to be invited to participate in the planning process and contribute to the Plan Committee were identified by the community at the July, 2006 workshop. These groups were:

- District of Muskoka
- Township of Muskoka Lakes
- Township of Muskoka Lakes Ratepayers' Association
- Muskoka Heritage Foundation
- Muskoka Watershed Council
- Ministry of the Environment

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Appendix A

Terms of Reference for Cox Bay Plan Committee

1.0 Name

This committee shall be referred to as the Cox Bay Plan Committee, abbreviated CPC (herein referred to as “the committee”). The committee shall to the best of its abilities, represent the interests of all stakeholders of Cox and Pinelands Bay in the design and implementation of the Cox Bay Community Plan. The Community Plan is supported by the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) and Citizens’ Environment Watch (CEW).

2.0 Type

The committee is an ad hoc committee of the MLA made up of Cox Bay stakeholders.

3.0 Purpose

The main purpose of the committee is to represent the interests of all stakeholders of Cox Bay in the design and implementation of a community plan for the Cox Bay Planning Area. The committee will create a comprehensive action plan in a way that is valued by the stakeholders and is formally recognized by local government agencies so that the local Cox and Pinelands Bay ecosystem is protected from future anthropogenic detriment and enhanced to a state that is representative of pre-development conditions.

Specific tasks of the committee may include but are not limited to:

- a. Refine the objectives of the Cox Bay Community Plan;
- b. Refine the framework and deliverables of the Cox Bay Community Plan;
- c. Define the Cox Bay Planning Area;
- d. Facilitate two-way communication with all Cox Bay stakeholders;
- e. Discuss the program with and advise the CEW project team as needed;
- f. Receive all reports of the CEW project team;
- g. Manage volunteers who participate in activities related to the development of the community plan;
- h. Contribute to fundraising efforts within the Cox Bay community; and
- i. Liaise with government agencies and subject experts as needed.

4.0 Responsibility

The committee is established by the authority of the MLA’s Environment and Land Use Portfolio (ELUP). The ELUP will appoint members of the committee, receive all reports of the committee and give direction to the committee as needed.

5.0 Composition

The committee shall be made up of a minimum of four (4) members. Positions and general responsibilities are listed in Table 1. All committee members must be either residents or employees or operators of businesses within the Cox Bay Planning Area, a jurisdiction to be defined by the committee.

Table 1 - Members of the committee

Position	Responsibilities
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair meetings of the committee • Liaise with MLA ELUP as needed • Represent the committee to the media and the public as needed
Vice Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume the responsibilities of the chairperson in the chairperson’s absence • Assist the chairperson as needed
Communications Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate all forms of communication between the committee and Cox Bay stakeholders • Maintain accuracy and ensure confidentiality of contact list for Cox Bay stakeholders
Fundraising Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with WQI Fundraising Committee • Advise and coordinate fundraising efforts within the Cox Bay community

The committee may include a maximum of five (5) additional members of the Cox Bay community. These additional positions and general responsibilities are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 - Additional committee members

Position	Responsibilities
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record notes of committee meetings • Assist Communications Coordinator and Fundraising Coordinator as needed
Water Quality Module Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the design and implementation of Water Quality Module • Advise CEW project team on Water Quality Module issues as needed • Coordinate all volunteers participating in activities related to Water Quality Module • Liaise with experts in the field of water quality
Development Module Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the design and implementation of Development Module • Advise CEW project team on Development Module issues as needed • Coordinate all volunteers participating in activities related to Development Module
Boat Traffic Module Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the design and implementation of Boat Traffic Module • Advise CEW project team on Boat Traffic Module issues as needed

Member-at-large	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordinate all volunteers participating in activities related to Boat Traffic Module• Liaise with experts in the field of boat traffic and safety• Provide support to other committee members as required
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The committee may include a maximum of six (6) additional members representing other community stakeholders. These stakeholders may include local governments, agencies of upper-tier governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions etc. It is recommended that at a minimum, planning staff from both the Township and District as well as one local Councillor act as members of the committee.

Should a committee member not be able to fulfill his or her duties to the committee, that member shall resign by giving written notice of resignation to the committee chairperson.

The Planning Liaison of the MLA Water Quality Initiative Committee shall be a member of the committee ex-officio. The chairperson of the ELUP may appoint members of the committee consistent with these terms of reference at any time for the duration of the committee's existence.

6.0 Authority

The committee shall have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the Cox Bay community in the interests of achieving the purpose of the committee.

7.0 Logistics

The committee shall operate using the rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these terms of reference and any special rules of order the committee may adopt.

The committee shall publicly advertise and host at least one meeting open to the public on or before September 30 of each calendar year, but may meet as often as necessary to effectively fulfill its purpose. Other meetings may be open to the public or in camera. The committee may conduct meetings by conference call or by way of other digital media. The committee may invite any guest (such as members of the CEW project team or outside expertise) to participate in any committee meeting.

The committee shall provide a report on the activities of the committee to the Planning Liaison of the MLA Water Quality Initiative Committee by the end of each quarter of each year (March 30, June 30, September 30 & December 31).

8.0 Resources

The committee should closely work with the CEW project team for the Cox Bay Community Plan. The project team is available to support the work of the committee by:

1. Facilitating meetings, workshops etc.;
2. Advising on scientific issues and scientific expertise resource (including creator of reports on knowledge and progress);
3. Advising on planning issues and planning expertise resource (including creator of reports on knowledge and progress);
4. Acting as a resource and support for communications; and
5. Advocating for subject communities and the local environment.

Financial resources of the committee shall be managed by CEW as part of the MLA WQI project budget.

9.0 Communications

The committee shall communicate with the MLA Water Quality Initiative Committee through the Planning Liaison.

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Appendix B

Provisional Steps for Cox Bay Community Plan

	Component	End Date
1.0	Plan Committee	
1.1	Develop terms of reference	18-Jan-07
1.2	Collect contact info	29-Jan-07
1.3	Involve stakeholders	30-Apr-07
1.4	Facilitate committee meetings (18)	1-Sep-09
2.0	Create Proposal	
2.1	Update existing preliminary Proposal	19-Jan-07
2.2	Facilitate public meeting	
2.2.1	Meeting Preparation	15-Jun-07
2.2.2	Meeting Report	19-Jun-07
2.2.3	Meeting Attendance	16-Jun-07
3.0	Fundraising	
3.1	Strategy	31-Jan-07
3.2	Grants/sponsorship	2-Feb-07
3.3	Event (cocktail party)	18-Aug-07
	Modules	
4.0	Water Quality (phosphorus loading)	
4.1	Research	
4.1.1	Design and administer survey	5-Jun-07
4.1.1.2	Compile and analyze survey results	28-Jun-07
4.1.2	Obtain, analyze and present data from TML and DMM	
4.1.2.1	Hydrodynamic data	2-Mar-07
4.1.2.2	Septic inspection results	2-Mar-07
4.1.3	Increase TP monitoring	
4.1.3.1	Design program	24-Apr-07
4.1.3.2	Identify sites	1-May-07
4.1.4	Produce homeowner/stakeholder education package on BMPs	
4.1.4.1	Research BMPs	16-Feb-07
4.1.4.2	Layout	8-Jun-07
4.2	Application	
4.2.1	Report on results of research	8-Feb-08
4.2.2	Facilitate workshop	
4.2.2.1	Meeting Preparation	11-Jul-08
4.2.2.2	Meeting Report	15-Jul-08
4.2.2.3	Meeting Attendance (2)	12-Jul-08
4.2.3	Final report - remedial action recommendations	10-Oct-08
4.2.4	Set targets - remedial actions	17-Oct-08
4.3	Evaluation	
4.3.1	Design continued monitoring program	22-Oct-08
5.0	Development	
5.1	Research	
5.1.1	Design and administer survey (common with 4.1.1)	5-Jun-07
5.1.2	Facilitate workshop	
5.1.2.1	Meeting Preparation	24-Aug-07
5.1.2.2	Meeting Report	28-Aug-07
5.1.2.3	Meeting Attendance (2)	25-Aug-07

5.2	Application	
5.2.1	Report on results of research	8-Feb-08
5.2.2	Workshop (common with 4.2.2)	
5.2.3	Final report - remedial action recommendations (common with 4.2.3)	10-Oct-08
5.2.4	Set targets - remedial actions (common with 4.2.4)	17-Oct-08
5.3	Evaluation	
5.3.1	Design continued monitoring program	31-Oct-08
6.0	Boat Traffic	
6.1	Research	
6.1.1	Design and administer survey (common with 4.1.1)	5-Jun-07
6.1.2	Survey boats coming into Bay (in kind from MLA)	29-Jul-07
6.1.3	Research affect of boat traffic on sediments	16-Nov-07
6.2	Application	
6.2.1	Report on results of research	8-Feb-08
6.2.2	Workshop (common with 4.2.2)	
6.2.3	Final report - remedial action recommendations (common with 4.2.3)	10-Oct-08
6.2.4	Set targets - remedial actions (common with 4.2.4)	17-Oct-08
6.3	Evaluation	
6.3.1	Design continued monitoring program	24-Oct-08
7.0	Communications	
7.1	Develop Website	29-Jun-07
7.2	Quarterly newsletter (7)	
7.2.1	Content	31-Dec-08
7.2.2	Layout	31-Dec-08
8.0	Other	
8.1	Research local OP	23-Feb-07
8.2	Draft OPA	3-Dec-08
8.3	Present plan to community (Town Hall)	
8.3.1	Meeting Preparation	1-May-09
8.3.2	Meeting Report	1-May-09
8.3.3	Meeting Attendance	1-May-09
8.4	Finalize plan	1-Jun-09
8.5	Present to council etc.	1-Jun-09

Specific recommendations for each Issue Module are taken from the Preliminary Proposed Community Plan Process for Cox Bay are included below.

Phosphorus Loading

- Administer survey to all Cox & Pinelands Bay watershed residents to obtain information on their usage of soaps, fertilizers and other phosphorus contributing products.
- Obtain results of septic inspection program from Township of Muskoka Lakes and post results on online map for access by community. Survey residents about their septic maintenance record and usage of outhouses.

- Increase phosphorus concentration and turbidity monitoring efforts in the nearshore zone of the bay, including upstream in tributaries and drainage ditches. Measure water level and phosphorus concentration in streams and ditches immediately after rain events in addition to regular scheduled sampling. Post results on online map for access by community.
- Consult with District of Muskoka staff about the lake basin models developed in the creation of the Lake System Health Program to understand the hydro-dynamics of Lake Joseph (and thus how phosphorus concentrations in the bay are effected by upper Lake Joseph).
- Obtain information for distribution on best practices for homeowners in reducing phosphorus loading (including information on safe soaps etc.) from Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC). Invite MWC to speak at a public meeting associated with this module.

Commercial Development

- Administer survey to all Cox & Pinelands Bay watershed residents to obtain their opinions and attitudes about development, urbanization and shoreline alterations.
- Host a public meeting associated with this module. Planning staff from the District of Muskoka and Township of Muskoka Lakes should be invited to present, as well as proprietors of the Lake Joseph Club, Port Sandfield businesses and Muskokan development. These presentations should explain:
 - Various planning policies and by-laws (including the Lake System Health Program and Waterfront Development Density By-law) and how they apply to commercial development.
 - The concept of recreational carrying capacity and how it effects commercial development on the bay.
 - Current statistics and projections regarding usage of commercial establishments and further development.

Boat Traffic (including erosion)

- Administer survey to all Cox & Pinelands Bay residents to obtain information on their attitudes towards boat traffic, number and type of boats they own, how and where they use their boats. Use MLA Marine Patrol to administer similar survey to boats entering the bay from Lake Joseph proper and Lake Rosseau.

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- Interview police agencies and local governments to find out about legislation governing boat traffic (speed, noise etc.) including barriers to enforcement. Distribute this information to bay residents.
- Consult with MLA on use of Marine Patrol to further enforce regulations on Cox & Pinelands Bays.
- Research the affect of boat traffic on sediments, phosphorus re-suspension, erosion and other environmental concerns. If adequate studies do not exist, consider primary research in subsequent years.

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Appendix C

Estimated Equivalent Value of Cox Bay Community Plan

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	Task	Cost
1.0	Plan Committee	\$ 3,860.00
2.0	Create Framework	\$ 1,600.00
3.0	Fundraising	\$ 1,400.00
Modules		
4.0	Water Quality	\$ 8,304.00
5.0	Development	\$ 2,400.00
6.0	Boat Traffic	\$ 2,300.00
7.0	Communications	\$ 5,500.00
8.0	Other	\$ 9,554.60
	Total	\$ 34,918.60

* Note that “Other” includes planning consulting (creation of the Official Plan Amendment (OPA), organization of the final Town Hall-style public meeting to present the OPA to the local stakeholders etc.), presentation of Proposed OPA to council, travel and administrative costs.