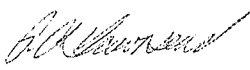




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Environment and Sustainability Committee
March 3, 2011

TO: Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Committee

SUBMITTED BY: 
Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management

DATE: February 1, 2011

SUBJECT: Blue Flag Beaches

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

This report originates from staff.

BACKGROUND

During the Outcome Area presentations, the concept of Blue Flag Beach certification was presented. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the program.

DISCUSSION

Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) provides lifeguard supervision at 23 lakes in HRM. These lakes are valuable recreation resources for the municipality. As well as being recreation resources, these lakes are excellent natural resources and good indicators of our protection of the environment.

<u>Beach</u>	<u>Lake</u>	<u>Area</u>
Albro Beach	Big Albro Lake	Dartmouth
Birch Cove Beach	Banook Lake	Dartmouth
Campbell Point Beach	Hatchet Lake	Halifax
Chocolate Beach	Chocolate Lake	Halifax
Commons Pool	Central Commons Park	Halifax
Cunard	Cunard Pond	Halifax
Government Wharf	Musquodoboit Harbour	Eastern Shore
Kearney Beach	Kearney Lake	Halifax
Kidston Beach	Kidston Lake	Halifax
Kinap Beach	Porter's Lake	Eastern Shore
Kinsman Beach	First Lake	Sackville
Lake Echo Beach	Lake Echo	Eastern Shore
Long Pond Beach	Long Pond	Halifax
Malay Falls	Sheet Harbour	Eastern Shore
Oakfield	Grand Lake	Oakfield
Penhorn Beach	Penhorn Lake	Dartmouth
Pleasant Drive Beach	Petpeswick Lake	Eastern Shore
Sandy Lake	Sandy Lake	Bedford
Saunders Paper	Mill Lake	Bedford
Shubie Beach	Lake Charles (Shubie Park)	Dartmouth
Silversides Lake	William	Waverly
Springfield Beach	Springfield Lake	Sackville
Webber's Beach	Lake Charlotte	Eastern Shore

Blue Flag Beaches (www.blueflag.ca)

Overview

The Blue Flag can be found on over 2900 beaches in 41 countries around the world. An internationally recognized environmental quality certification, administered in Canada by Environmental Defence, includes parameters around: Environment Education, Water Quality, Environmental Management and Safety. Residents will benefit from feeling safe at beaches with this certification; and the certification criteria, provides objectives for the municipality to meet beach by beach.

Blue Flag Beach Criteria 2010

- (I) Imperative Criteria – beach must comply
- (G) Guideline Criteria – encouraged to increase the standards at the beach but not mandatory

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

- 1. Information about the Blue Flag program must be displayed (I)
- 2. A minimum of 5 environmental education activities must be offered and displayed (I)
- 3. Information about bathing water quality must be displayed (I)
- 4. Information relating to local ecosystems and environmental phenomena must be displayed (I)
- 5. A map of the beach must be displayed (I)
- 6. Code of conduct for the beach area must be displayed and the laws governing beach use must be easily available to the public upon request (I)

WATER QUALITY

- 7. The beach must fully comply with water quality sampling and frequency guidelines (I)
- 8. The beach must fully comply with standards and requirements for water quality analysis (I)
- 9. No industrial or sewage related discharges may affect the beach area (I)
- 10. The beach must comply with the Blue Flag requirements for microbiological parameter faecal coli bacteria (E.coli) and intestinal enterococci/streptococci (I)
- 11. The beach must comply with the Blue Flag standards for the following physical and chemical parameters (I):
 - The pH value range is normally 6 to 9;
 - There must be no oil film visible on the surface of the water and no odour detected. On land, the beach must be monitored for oil and emergency plans should include the required action to take in case of such pollution;
 - There has to be an absence of floatables such as tarry residues, wood, plastic articles, bottles, containers, glass or any other substances.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

- 12. The local authorities shall establish a beach management committee (G)
- 13. The local authorities must comply with all regulations affecting the location and operation of the beach (I)
- 14. The beach must be clean (I)
- 15. Algae vegetation or natural debris should be left on the beach unless it becomes a hazard (I)
- 16. Waste disposal bins/receptacles must be available on/by the beach in adequate numbers, regularly maintained and emptied (I)
- 17. Facilities for receiving recyclable waste materials must be available on/by the beach (I)
- 18. An adequate number of toilet or restroom facilities must be provided (I)

19. The toilet or restroom facilities must be kept clean (I)
20. The toilet or restroom facilities must have controlled sewage disposal (I)
21. On the beach, there will be no unauthorized camping or driving and no dumping (I)
22. Access to the beach by dogs, or other domestic animals, must be strictly enforced (I)
23. All buildings and equipment of the beach must be properly maintained (I)
24. Coral reefs in the vicinity of the beach must be monitored (G)
25. A sustainable means of transportation should be promoted in the beach area (G)

SAFETY AND SERVICES

26. An adequate number of lifeguards and/or lifesaving equipment must be available at the beach (I)
27. First aid equipment must be available on the beach (I)
28. Emergency plans to cope with pollution must be in place (I)
29. There must be management of different users and uses of the beach so as to prevent conflicts and accidents (I)
30. There must be safe access to the beach (I)
31. The beach area must be patrolled (G - South & East Africa, Brazil, Chile, South Pacific, Morocco; Not applicable – Europe, Canada, Oceania)
32. A supply of drinking water must be available on the beach (G)
33. A minimum of one Blue Flag beach in each municipality must have access and toilet facilities provided for disabled persons (I)

A brief review of the criteria leads staff to believe that several of the 23 HRM supervised beaches may be able to obtain this certification. Staff would like to work on certifying a good candidate beach to evaluate the process and report back to the Committee and Regional Council on the experience.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

It is expected that any budget costs for this exploration would be nominal (under \$5,000) and handled within existing budgets. This might require signage or minor items.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was no community engagement on this report.

ATTACHMENTS

None

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/cc.html> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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