

JUNCTION CREEK SAFETY COMMITTEE

PROGRESS REPORT

Chair: Joscelyne Landry-Altmann

June 18, 2008

Introduction

"What we want to see out of all this is for the loss of life in Junction Creek to end with Adam. We helped raise a lot of the kids in the neighbourhood as did everyone else. We all looked out for everyone else's kids as if they were our own. This was evident when every Dad in the neighbourhood was by my side that day combing the shores and diving in."

Denis and Kim Croteau

On August 25th, 2007 another Sudbury child drowned in Junction Creek. Adam Dickie was the 23rd drowning death in the City of Greater Sudbury's Junction Creek. His death prompted another appeal by neighbours and family members for City Council to find solutions for stopping any further unnecessary deaths and injury.

There have been 22 recorded deaths since 1921 in Junction Creek and many unrecorded injuries and near death situations. Parents and family members are eager to finally address the safety of this oftentimes dangerous creek. Although we love the creek, it can be life threatening. It is time to recognize this waterway as 'swift water' with creek bottom areas that can create dangerous situations that influence how we address safety measures.

After Adam Dickie's death, a petition was submitted to City Council requesting that the City of Greater Sudbury erect and block off the boxed culvert along Junction Creek, or erect fencing topped with barbed wire around the boxed culvert.

This time City Council was listening and on October 10, 2007 Councilors passed a motion presented by Councilor Joscelyne Landry-Altmann and Councilor Joe Cimino to establish an Ad Hoc committee to review possible solutions for creating a safer creek area.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of a minimum of two Councillors, supported by a representative from the Nickel District Conservation Authority, a representative from Junction Creek Stewardship Committee and City Staff, be mandated to establish terms of reference aimed at developing educational and safety programs, and to review infrastructure criteria for the area along Junction Creek;

FURTHER THAT the Junction Creek Safety Committee hold a minimum of one public consultation and bring forward a report to Council by April 2008 outlining the Committee recommendations;

October 10, 2007, Council Meeting

From the five committee meetings, public consultations and research a more comprehensive understanding of the issue is now available and a number of realistic recommendations have been formulated for consideration.

The cost to our society of water-related injuries is estimated to be about 500 million dollars per year. There are innumerable programs and solutions to addressing this devastating issue.

A recent report released by the Canadian Red Cross that captured a 10-year study of drownings and other water-related injuries in Canada tells us that between 1991-2000, 5,900 people died and 3,526 were hospitalized, some with permanent brain damage. The report also tells us that the majority of drowning victims were male, and could have been prevented.

The report identified five key changes that would prevent most drowning deaths in Canada. One of those changes applies to Junction Creek. **All water safety programs should include information on how to manage river current.** With safety programs in place, they estimate being able to prevent 30% of all drownings every year.

Committee Process

The Junction Creek Safety Committee met several times during January to May 2008 and was able to formulate realistic recommendations for our community to take action on.

The general purpose for the committee was to:

- establish educational and public safety programs
- review infrastructure criteria and capacities under extreme events
- review safety/rescue procedures

To meet their mandate in a timely fashion they sub-divided into three committees (1) Infrastructure, (2) Communications/Education and (3) Safety/Rescue.

Committee members included representatives from:

- Nickel District Conservation Authority
- Sudbury and District Health Unit
- Junction Creek Stewardship Committee

- Greater Sudbury Fire Services
- Greater Sudbury Police Services
- Infrastructure Services
- Members of City Council

Terms of Reference were established for each sub-committee as follows:

1. Infrastructure

- Review infrastructure criteria including safety grates at water crossings, storm drainage inputs and examine potential safety measures along the route of the creek such as landscaping, buffer areas, fencing, signage and water course restoration.
- Explore associated problems such as the effect of new development on existing water bodies (from building to road development as well as limitation in restoration)
- Explore actual and future climate warming effects on existing water bodies.

2. Communications/Education

- Develop public education campaigns and awareness materials which promote water safety near bodies of water including interactive displays, pamphlets and swift water demonstrations
- Develop a communication strategy which targets schools and homes in localities near water bodies.
- Encourage agencies to deliver joint safety messages and programs
- Hold public consultation session(s) in affected area(s) to gain input from citizens to assist in short and long term measures.

3. Safety/Rescue

- Identify the rescue agencies/programs and recommendations: Identify that can directly and indirectly affect the rescue effort in a direct/indirect role.
- Develop programs to interact and practice with other agencies, i.e. Police Services, Emergency Medical Services.
- Review capabilities versus risks.

Site Visits

Two site visits were conducted on April 14th, 2008, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, that included several spots along Junction Creek. An additional site visit was conducted on May 1st, 2008.

Morning Visit

- 1) Maley Drive
- 2) Lasalle: adjacent to Superstore
- 3) Fabricland
- 4) Jarret Center
- 5) Agnes Street

Afternoon Visit

- 1) Twin Forks Park
- 2) Lasalle: Supermall
- 3) Fabricland
- 4) Louis Street
- 5) Martindale

May 1st, 2008

- 1) Fabricland
- 2) Louis Street: Playground and Box culvert-to Elm Street

The site visits allowed committee members to eye witness current conditions of the creek area. In many spots there were unsafe conditions.

Program Review

There were a number of existing programs that were researched and reviewed for their relevance to our community. They included:

1. Water Awareness Program
2. Bug Strategy Program - Junction Creek Stewardship
3. Lake Laurentian Program - NDCA
4. Swift Water Safety Program - North Bay
5. Red Cross Safety Programs
6. National Parks Signage
7. Risk Watch
8. Grand River, Playing it Safe, Playing it Cool
9. Safe Kids Canada
10. Children's Water Education Council
11. Swim to Survive - Lifesaving Society
12. Sudbury Kids Injury Prevention Coalition
13. Ontario Water Safety-Stay Clear -Stay Safe

From this review we were able to identify relevant programs that would address our creek safety issues and identify information gaps in the existing programs, i.e. creek bottoms and their instability need to be included.

Public Consultation

A public consultation was held on Thursday, April 17th, 2008 with 24 in attendance. The committee presented the mandate, terms of reference and recommendations from each of the sub-committees.

Individuals close to the issue brought forward their input for the committee including the grandfather of Adam Dickie, Ray Croteau, and students from Lansdowne School where he attended.

Comments included:

Marley Groves-Burke, student at Lansdowne School
Most of the students have had experience with Junction Creek; some having fallen in and some being hurt. It should be a safer place for children.

Janelle Bast, teacher at Lansdowne School
She indicated that students were eager to begin working on the education aspect of the Committee's plans.

In addition to the input by those present, there were written submissions that include comments such as:

Irene Larocque, Chair, CAN, Ward 4
Suggested that a safety check be carried out early each spring along the creek corridor for broken fences, retaining walls or other safety issues.

Recommendations

Sub Committee	Terms of Reference	Recommended Action
Infrastructure	Review infrastructure criteria including safety grates at water crossings, storm drainage inputs and examine potential safety measures along the route of the creek such as landscaping, buffer areas, fencing, signage and water course restoration.	<p>Develop policy and procedure for consistent safety fencing along the creek and open water bodies, especially areas that are populated and affected by traffic.</p> <p><i>*Conduct fencing safety assessment to determine necessary repairs.</i></p> <p><i>*Install snow fence along Louis Street to beyond playground until fencing policy is complete.</i></p> <p><i>*Locking pins and locks installed on all City owned and Sudbury Housing access gates to the creek, as was implemented at Hnatyshyn Park and assess reversing hinge action on gates to provide additional entry resistance.</i></p> <p>Develop signage design and policy for swift water.</p>
	Explore associated problems such as the effect of new development on existing water bodies (from building to road development as well as limitation in restoration)	<p>Continue developing Junction Creek Waterpark trail with attention to creating a safe buffer zone.</p> <p>Add Junction Creek to Storm Water Management Study in 2009.</p> <p>Create a Dumping By-law Roundtable to begin September 2008.</p>

Sub Committee	Terms of Reference	Recommended Action
Safety and Rescue		Explore the possibility of including Junction Creek a municipal agricultural drainage system and managed under the Drainage Act.
	Explore actual and future climate warming effects on existing water bodies.	Junction Creek Stewardship Committee to monitor water temperature and levels on a regular basis .
	Identify the rescue agencies/programs and recommendations: Identify that can directly and indirectly affect the rescue effort in a direct/indirect role.	Develop rescue procedures specifically for swift water like Junction Creek, in conjunction with rescue agencies (Fire, Police, EMS) including identifying access points using GPS and developing a common code such as <i>Child in the water</i> . <i>*Parks Department to remove fallen trees that hinder creek current and provide unsafe balance beam for children.</i> <i>*Introduce a grocery cart by-law that controls carts being stranded, specifically in the creek.</i>
	Develop programs to interact and practice with other agencies, i.e. Police Services, Emergency Medical Services.	Rescue agencies to co-develop mock rescue operations based on adopted rescue code.
	Review capabilities versus risks.	Engineering to design anchor pins and develop an installation strategy for culverts and along creek beds to allow life line to be attached for rescuers. Explore installing a wire across the culverts at an appropriate height for rescue measures.

Sub Committee	Terms of Reference	Recommended Action
Communication/ Education		Installation of emergency egress at 199 Larch Street concurrent with the Larch Street Bridge restoration.
	Develop public education campaigns and awareness materials which promote water safety near bodies of water including interactive displays, pamphlets and swift water demonstrations	Develop a public education campaign aimed at school age children and their parents, to be named after Adam Dickie and to reinforce key messages.
	Develop a communication strategy which targets schools and homes in localities near water bodies.	Lansdowne School to develop a swift water insert for the North American Risk Watch Unintentional Injuries program that is used in city-wide schools. SDHU's Children's Water Festival will participate with interactive displays . e.g. illustrate the instability of creek bottoms, e.g. jumping exercise to approximate distances. Junction Creek Stewardship Committee will include a safety message in their brochures and school programs
	Encourage agencies to deliver consistent joint safety messages and programs	NDCA to revive their spring thaw advisory program. Contact swimming courses to include a swift water survival strategy.
	Hold public consultation session(s) in affected area(s) to gain input from citizens to assist in short and long term measures.	

Conclusion

The committee members realize that the actions required to improve the safety of Junction Creek will call upon many departments and community agencies. A follow up strategy will be implemented to ensure the efforts made are realized.

Councilor Joscelyne Landry-Altmann will be taking this presentation to all agencies involved in fulfilling the recommendations over the next several months.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report from the Junction Creek Safety Committee be received.

THAT the short and long term recommendations be referred to staff and agencies for a report outlining costs and implementation dates, and that this report be submitted at the July 9, 2008 Priorities Committee meeting .

THAT the following recommendations which have been identified by the committee be implemented without delay:

**Parks Department to remove fallen trees that hinder creek current and provide unsafe balance beam for children.*

**Introduce a grocery cart by-law that controls carts being stranded, especially in the creek.*

**Conduct fencing safety assessment to determine necessary repairs.*

**Install snow fence along Louis Street to beyond playground until fencing policy is complete.*

**Locking pins and locks installed on all City owned and Sudbury Housing access gates to the creek, as was implemented at Hnatyshyn Park and assess reversing hinge action on gates to provide additional entry resistance.*

Sudbury citizens who have lost their life in Junction Creek.
(documented)

1921 - Ernest Desourdy
1930 - Garcon Berube
1943 - Carole Lauzon
1946 - Raymond Simard
1950 - William McLaughlin
1959 - Suzanne Proulx
1960 - Garcon Gervais
1961 - Real Morson
1962 - Boy no name
1967 - Marc Gagnon
1972 - Peter Paul MacNeil
2007 - Adam Dickie

1927 - Regis Brisebois
1937 - J Berton
1943 - J. Bodson
1950 - Garcon French
1951 - Claire Gervais
1953 - William Decosta
1960 - Garcon St. Georges
1962 - Butler Moraska
1965 - Garcon Guitard
1967 - Alex Dunn
1997 - Vic Guibeault

Thank you to all Committee Members and participants:

- Nickel District Conservation Authority: Paul Sajatovic
- Dr. Liette Vasseur - Laurentian University Vice president in research, member of the NDCA
- Sudbury and District Health Unit: Ghislaine Goudreault.
Shelley Westhaver,
Tina Skonsby-McKinnon,
Rachelle Gagnon
- Junction Creek Stewardship Committee: Allison Muckle, Franco Mariotti
- Greater Sudbury Fire Services: Deputy Chief Bill Battison,
Retired Safety Prevention Chief Fern Bourque
- Greater Sudbury Police Services: Inspector Todd Zimmerman
Inspector Eugene Toffoli
Staff Sgt. Eric Sanderson
Constable Coluzzi CRU.
- Infrastructure Services: Drainage Engineer Ron Norton
- Members of City Council: Joe Cimino
Joscelyne Landry-Altmann