

A Message to Waskesiu Cabin and Cottage Owners

At their respective 2007 Annual General Meetings, the members of the PANP Cottage Owners Association and the Waskesiu Cabin Owners Association asked that a representative group from both Associations meet to consider the question of potentially "combining" the two organizations in 2008. That get together took place in Waskesiu in late August of 2007. What can only be described as a "full and frank" discussion took place.

Since that time Chris Arnstead (President of the Waskesiu Cabin Owners Association) and Jim Kerby (President of the PANP Cottage Owners Association) have worked together to prepare a "Discussion Paper" on this topic, for approval by their respective Association Boards and, following such approval, for circulation to each membership group. As such, a copy of that Discussion Paper - outlining the pros and cons of forming one organization, and a proposed process leading to a vote of the two memberships - is attached. The Boards of both organizations support holding a vote in July of 2008 regarding the proposed "combination".

This is your chance to provide your thoughts and input. Please note that the Waskesiu Cabin Owners AGM is scheduled for 10 a.m on Saturday, July 12th at the Assembly Hall in Waskesiu. The PANP Cottage Owners Association AGM is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Saturday, July 12th at the Library Hall (located at the end of Montreal Drive).

Jim Kerby, President, PANP Cottage Owners Association
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Discussion Paper Combining the Waskesiu Cabin Owners and Cottage Owners Associations

Under instructions from their memberships, a working group of six directors representing the Waskesiu Cabin Owners Association and the PANP Cottage Owners Association met in August, 2007 to discuss the possibility of forming one association to represent all cottage and cabin owners in Waskesiu. After a frank and open discussion, the working group made two recommendations:

- (1) that information about the advantages and disadvantages of forming one organization be circulated to both memberships over the course of the winter;
- (2) that each Association should hold a vote on the question of "combining" the two associations at their respective Annual General Meetings in July, 2008.

The Boards of each Association have considered and accepted the working group's recommendations. As such, the memberships of both groups need to evaluate whether this is a good time to create a combined organization.

Reasons to Join:

- Members of both organizations have far more things in common than they do differences.
- The cabin and cottage areas both have a long history in Waskesiu and many cottage and cabin owners have a long family history in, and a strong attachment to, the Park.
- Both cabin and cottage owners routinely deal with Parks Canada Agency, so speaking as a united voice should prove beneficial.
- As of 2007, cabin owners now have long term leases similar to the leases cottage owners have.

- We share many common concerns and could be more effective speaking together on issues of mutual concern. By way of example:
 - Both groups have provided financial support to the Waskesiu Foundation, for spruce bud worm spraying, and to the Waskesiu Heritage Museum.
 - The Boards of both organizations supported municipal governance in Waskesiu.
 - Both groups recognize that Waskesiu's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and that we need to find ways to improve the situation (e.g. resurfacing roads in both the cottage and cabin areas).
 - Cabin and cottage areas have a common problem of mature and dead trees needing removal.
- Residents from these two areas form the core of volunteers for many groups and causes in the community.
- Having only one organization would create efficiencies in terms of volunteers needed, joint meetings, reduced costs, and shared work load.
- Many residents of Waskesiu feel that there are too many organizations in Waskesiu and that combining these two organizations would help address that concern.
- Proponents of combining the two organizations believe that lease holders in the Park we share common interests and need to rise above minor differences to work for the good of our community.

Issues and Challenges to Consider

- There are 119 cottages and 451 cabins. Some cottage owners are concerned they will become a "minority" in a combined organization. If required, a method of ensuring Board representation from the cottage area could be addressed in the bylaws of the combined organization on either a permanent or temporary basis.
- A joint organization may become preoccupied by issues of importance to cabin owners which do not affect cottage owners. By way of example:
 - Cabin owners are dealing with the future of certain lots in the cabin area which are currently occupied by common washroom facilities. These washrooms are scheduled for closure in October 2008 and, once removed, will leave bare lots throughout the cabin area.
 - Cabin owners have a set of complicated building guidelines that have been developed over many years in conjunction with Parks Canada and which must be maintained. The area has a long history of compliance issues with respect to these guidelines. On the other hand, cottage development is governed by regulations and not by guidelines like cabin owners.
 - The cabin lots are small and close together leading to issues around noise, fire, congestion, and parking. Cottage owners may not have these concerns.
 - Because there are more cabin owners, it is more difficult to communicate with all of them and arrive at a consensus on decisions.
- Although it is a difficult issue to discuss, there has been a perception among some people in the Waskesiu community that the cottage area is more affluent, desirable, and influential than the cabin area. On the other hand, the cabin area has been considered an affordable way for families, whether affluent or not, to enjoy Waskesiu. Attitudes of "them" versus "us" may have developed in some circles. These attitudes will need to be recognized, discussed and overcome. We will have to be sensitive to the fact that old attitudes and stereotypes "die hard" and may not adapt easily to change.
- Because the leases for cabin and cottage owners were negotiated at different times based on different appraisals, an obvious inequity exists in the amount of land rent currently being paid by the two groups for land use. Parks Canada Agency has expressed no willingness to deal with this issue saying that it will gradually be alleviated over time as leases come up for renewal. This is a very real financial issue for cabin owners. In turn, cottage owners are not anxious to solve the inequity if that means that everyone pays more to Parks Canada Agency.
- Some cabin owners feel that there is already enough diversity in the cabin owners group and that even more differences would be added if the cottage owners joined the group. This could lead to difficulties making decisions and operating efficiently as an organization.

Logistics

- Both organizations are non-profit organizations created under *the Non-Profit Corporations Act (1995)* of Saskatchewan.
- One method for combining would be for one organization (Organization A) to turn its funds over to the other organization (Organization B). Organization B would change its bylaws to reflect the goals, objectives and governance structure needed for a joint organization.
- Another method might be the amalgamation (merger) of the two organizations however the legal issues relating to this method would require further study.
- New bylaws would need to be established. One possibility is a system whereby a majority of “cottage area” directors would be needed for decisions affecting only that area, and a majority of “cabin area” directors would be needed in relation to issues affecting only that area. If so, a system that included representation by geographical area may need to be developed so that all areas are represented.
- An agreement would have to be reached on the pooling of existing funds. Currently the two organizations are in similar financial situations holding approximately \$20,000 each.

Cottage owners and cabin owners are all asked to consider and discuss the possibility of combining the two organizations. Questions and comments can be directed to either president. Owners are strongly urged to attend their respective 2008 Annual General Meeting to vote for their preference.

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