



Photo by Allan Oman

Vermilion River Otter – Please take care of my Home!

VERMILION RIVER STEWARDSHIP

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

11 March 2020

Prepared by:

Linda Heron, Chair



What would we do without our volunteers!! Thank You!!

2019 Annual Vermilion River Cleanup

Check out the new River CleanUp signs donated by HiaMedia!!

A BIG THANK YOU to the Basso Family and the Whitefish District Lion's Club for providing a wonderful hot lunch, and to all our volunteers for another successful Vermilion River Cleanup!

About the Vermilion River Stewardship

The Vermilion River Stewardship (VRS) is a grassroots Not-for-Profit organization serving the communities within the Vermilion River Watershed. It was formed in January of 2011 to address several development challenges that were posing a risk to the health of the Vermilion River. VRS was incorporated as a Not-for-Profit in June of 2011.

Our Vision

“Community Supporting a Healthy, Natural and Sustainable River System”

Our Mission

The VRS will act as a voice for the Vermilion River and its Watershed, and work to build partnerships and strategic alliances with all other interested parties, communities, stewardships, organizations and industry to ensure clean and healthy water quality; and a balanced and sustainable ecosystem and natural habitat.

Stewardship of the Vermilion River is a responsibility shared by all those whose actions have an impact on its water quality.

Our Goals & Objectives

Acting on behalf of the Vermilion River for a healthy, balanced and sustainable ecosystem and natural habitat, this Stewardship will actively work to:

1. Encourage and promote cooperative stewardship;
2. Ensure the river’s interests are fully represented and protected;
3. Preserve and protect its water quality, ecosystem, and natural habitat; and
4. Educate, promote and advocate for responsible and sustainable activities in the entire Vermilion River Watershed.

2019 Board of Directors:

Chair:	Linda Heron
Vice-Chair:	Sheri Johnson
Secretary/Treasurer:	Terry Little
Board Members:	Ron Basso
	Dale Kilbey
	Marc Samson
	Byron Basso
	Marte Holouka
	Betsy Little
	John Reid
	Marc Fournier

Affiliations

In the course of building alliances to advance VRS goals and objectives, we have membership and representation in the following:

- Ontario Rivers Alliance, Board of Directors
- Great Lakes Protection Act Alliance, Chair is a Working Member

What VRS is Doing to Address our Mission

1. Vermilion River Clean-up – 2019



The VRS held its 5th Annual Vermilion River Clean-up on Saturday, 29 June 2019, with about 20 volunteers coming out to help clean up Wabagishik Lake and the Vermilion River.

Unfortunately, water levels were unusually high, so we were a month late getting out on the water for the clean-up. This gave the poison ivy more growing time, and there was a lot of it – sorry to say! A bad case of poison ivy is a hard lesson learned!

Please be sure to pick up all your garbage and dispose of it properly when you're out enjoying the Vermilion River system!

A big thank you to all those who came out to help with the River clean-up, and especially to the Basso family and the Whitefish District Lion's Club for providing our volunteers with a hot and tasty lunch!

VRS is grateful to Hiamedia, 1-845 Penage Lake Road, in Whitefish for donating two River Clean-up signs, which we proudly displayed as you can see in the above photo. Thank you!!

VRS looks forward to seeing you at our 2020 Vermilion River Clean-up – date to be determined!

2. Vale - Wabagishik Generating Station

Vale has commenced a Spillway Replacement Project of the Wabagishik Generating Station at Lorne Falls on the Vermilion River.

The Vermilion and Spanish Rivers have been used for waterpower generation for more than 100 years. Vale owns and operates 15 main water control structures and 5 generating stations while Domtar owns and operates 5 main control structures and 1 generating station. The Spanish & Vermilion Rivers Water Management Plan was approved in August of 2019.

Allison Merla, Environmental Group, Vale, presented at our 19 October 2019 General Meeting to update VRS on the status of their project, as well as provide an overview of the approved [Spanish & Vermilion Rivers Water Management Plan](#) – available [here](#).

You can find Allison's presentation on our [VRS website blog](#) - [here](#).



Wabagishik Rapids Generation Station - dam and spillway area.

Proposed Project Timeline:

- 2019-2021: MNRF Class EA, LRIA, DFO, NDCA & Transport Canada permits & approvals.
- 2020: Old spillway removal – ½ spillway.
- 2021: West gravity dam, old waste gate removal.
- Ella Lake water levels will remain at their lowest level until the Project is complete.

3. Water/Wastewater Master Plan

There are 8 municipal Wastewater Treatment Facilities (WWTF), 2 industrial (mining/smelters) WWTF, 3 sewage lagoons and numerous lift stations located within the Vermilion River Watershed that release treated, undertreated and untreated effluent into the environment. 5 WWTF are on the upper arm of the Vermilion River, and upstream of a water intake located just below Cascade Falls, that services 13,000 people in Lively, Walden, Copper Cliff and Whitefish with their drinking water. The other 5 WWTF release into the lower arm of the Vermilion, through Junction Creek.

Mike Jenson, Director of Water/Wastewater Treatment and Compliance made a presentation at our Annual General Meeting on 19 March 2019 – [available here](#).

4. River Access & Parking Issues at Wabagishik Road and Ella Lake Road

Parking at some boat launch access points to the Vermilion River became a major issue in 2017 when a local landowner restricted access to a Trespass Road located at Wirtanen Road.

The closure of Wirtanen Road has forced more traffic to Wabagishik Road and has significantly increased the number of vehicles parking there. This resulted in major congestion and safety issues when emergency vehicles were having trouble accessing local properties. Consequently, the City was ticketing anyone parked longer than 4-hours at Wabagishik and Ella Lake Roads.

In response, VRS struck a Roads Committee to look at potential solutions to these parking issues.

VRS and Councillor Vagnini made a formal request to the Mayor and Council to support a Motion to maintain jurisdiction and maintenance over Wirtanen Road and its stub, as well as all other Trespass Roads throughout the Greater City of Sudbury. However, the Mayor and Council turned down our request.

VRS continues to work with local property owners, Councillor Michael Vagnini, City of Sudbury staff and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to find short-term and long-term solutions.

Progress Report – 2018:

- VRS worked with Councillor Vagnini and the City to arrange a short-term moratorium to temporarily pause the issuance of parking tickets at both Wabagishik & Ella Lake Roads.
- Nairn Hyman Council agreed to support VRS in helping with construction of a parking lot if it was within their boundaries, and to participate in a meeting with the City and MNRF.
- Councillor Vagnini presented a Motion to Council that would instruct City staff to help resolve the parking issues at both access points. Motion was unanimously adopted.
- MNRF has offered a piece of land at Ella Lake Road to resolve the parking issue.
- Awaiting response from a Wabagishik Road landowner on the potential for stakeholders to purchase a piece of land to create a parking lot.

2019:

- Roads Committee determined that a piece of Crown land on the west side of Ella Lake Road would make a suitable parking lot but will require a significant amount of fill
- Awaiting a geophysical survey to determine costs.
- Councillor Vagnini arranged with the City for a temporary moratorium on parking tickets being issued, unless there is a complaint.
- VRS submitted recommendations in April 2019 to Councillor Vagnini and City staff for another more workable short-term solution that would allow camp owners to park near the boat launch area.
- VRS met with City staff on 15 May – awaiting their response.

5. Miscellaneous Correspondence

VRS also commented on other issues of importance:

- 15 May 2019 – Request for Greater Sudbury to declare a Climate Emergency
- 15 May 2019 – Junction Creek Subwatershed & Stormwater Master Plan
- 17 June 2019 – Official Plan Review – Phase 2
- 15 January 2020 – Review of Draft 2020 – 2030 Sudbury Forest Management Plan
- 10 February 2020 – Junction Creek Subwatershed & Stormwater Master Plan

6. Mining Development

Vale:

Vale has been the primary mining company operating in the Vermilion River Watershed for many years and has taken important measures to reduce their environmental impact over the years. In 2018, Vale completed the Clean Atmospheric Emissions Reduction project (CleanAER) which will purportedly contribute to an 85% reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions, 40% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and 40% of metal particles.

Glencore – Errington and Vermilion Projects:

Glencore is redeveloping two brown-field sites on the shores of the Vermilion River – the Errington and Vermilion mines – zinc, copper, lead, silver and gold. The ore will be processed on site, rather than trucked to another location. There is no new information on the progress of this project.

Victoria Mine Project:

KGHM International is redeveloping the Victoria Mine near Worthington. One of Sudbury's oldest and most prolific mines. Victoria Mine is rich in copper, nickel and precious metals, and is now under development. Ore will not be processed at this plant, and to date there are no major concerns.

Conclusion

VRS and its volunteers continue to work to meet its Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives as set out in our Constitution and Bylaws.

I encourage you to [click here to go to our VRS website Blog](#) to check out all that we've been up to.

The VRS Board of Directors would like to thank our many volunteers and members who have continued to help with our river cleanups, joined in advocacy campaigns, and supported our efforts through generous donations and memberships.

We are grateful for our ongoing Community support!

Yours in conservation,



Linda Heron
Chair, Vermilion River Stewardship
VermilionRiverStewards.ca