



April 24th, 2017

Ms. Charley White MCIP, RPP
Director of Planning
Haliburton County
11 Newcastle Street
P.O. Box 399
Minden, Ontario
K0M 2K0

Re. Comments on the County of Haliburton's Proposed Update to the Official Plan (File No. 46-OPA-165936)

Dear Ms. White,

On behalf of the Miskwabi Area Community Association (MACA) please accept this written submission as our input to the proposed update to the County of Haliburton Official Plan (OP).

MACA represents property owners in the watershed area around Long, Miskwabi, Negaunee, and Wenona Lakes in the Municipality of Dysart et al. These lakes form the headwaters of the Burnt River system. Our area contains over 500 homes and cottages with a population of approximately 2,000 full-time and part-time residents. For more than four decades our association has worked diligently on behalf of our members to keep our lakes clean and pristine. We have developed a detailed Lake Plan for our watershed area (a copy of which was provided to the County upon completion in 2015) and we have recently participated in initiatives such as the *Love Your Lake* shoreline evaluation program.

As part of our lake planning process we undertook a comprehensive survey to understand the priorities of property owners in our area. The complete set of results from this survey is summarized in our Lake Plan¹. We note that 100% of survey respondents said water quality was either "very important" or "important" to them. Consequently, we urge the County in all respects to ensure its OP provides appropriate provisions to protect our lakes and our environment as a whole.

¹ Lake Plan Survey conducted in the 2013. The results are based on a 77% participation rate for all waterfront owners and a 70% participation overall, including backlots.

Our comments on the proposed draft OP are set out in the sections below:

Limiting Development

- We are pleased to see language in Section 5.3.12 Waterbodies of the OP that re-enforces the protection of designated Lake Trout Lakes. This is important to our members given two of our lakes are listed in Appendix B of the draft plan as being “At Capacity” Lake Trout Lakes.
- **We urge the County to acknowledge that in certain circumstances a Recreational Carrying Capacity model should be used as criteria to evaluate how much development may occur on a given lake.** This is a model that has been successfully employed in other jurisdictions (e.g. Seguin Township). This is not only important for peace and serenity on our lakes, but for safety as well. A recent U.S. study indicated that for every 1% increase in boat density there was an 8% increase in boating related accidents.

Protecting Streams/Wetlands and Recognizing Haliburton as Head Waters

- One of Haliburton County’s most important resource is the vast number of clean lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands which support a robust recreational economy. **We feel that the OP should make it clear that it is a priority of the County to protect these precious resources.**
- We encourage the County to find additional ways to protect our wetlands. **We recommend that site alterations not be allowed on wetlands or on lands adjacent to wetlands.** Further, any access road and waterway crossings should be mandated to follow MNRF environmental guidelines.
- **We recommend that the OP stipulate that all development proposals be fully assessed for impact on wetlands, including wetlands that may not have been identified or evaluated.** Section 5.3.3 of the proposed OP states, “The County of Haliburton, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and Ducks Unlimited have undertaken an extensive mapping project to clarify the boundary of wetlands. Approval authorities shall use this mapping as a screening tool when reviewing development applications.” However, we believe many of the wetlands in the County have not been formally assessed, and much of the mapping has not been supported by a “ground truth” analysis. When considering applications for development, the wetland mapping should satisfy the criteria set out by the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES).
- We believe there is value in having the OP formally recognize Haliburton County as the headwaters of the Burnt and Gull river systems. This can help to foster a greater responsibility to make sure there are robust environmental protections in place, and encourage environmentally sound planning decisions.

Septic Inspection and Quality Assurance Programs

- We are pleased to see language at Section 2.5.7 of the draft document that supports various Municipalities’ septic quality assurance initiatives. Given that

over 90 per cent of phosphorous in county lakes comes from septic tanks, proper care and ongoing monitoring of septic systems is critically important to our members, especially given their keen interest in maintaining water quality. In this regard we support the Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners' Associations in their recommendation for programs that include a "lids off" physical inspection.

Fireworks

- The noise, pollution, and dangers of fireworks is consistently a major irritant raised by our members at our Association meetings. MACA encourages the County to recognize the importance of the tranquility of our night skies and the importance of peace and quiet so that by-laws can be developed and enforced to limit the use of fireworks to certain occasions (e.g. Canada Day).

Cottage Rentals

- Problems caused by short-term cottage rentals are also frequently raised by our members. An increasing number of property owners are renting their cottages to large groups of people (often far more occupants than can be supported by the dwelling's septic system). Short-term renters are transient by nature, and consequently tend to have no vested interest in protecting the environment or respecting their neighbours, wildlife, and the tranquility of their surroundings. MACA has developed an *Owners' and Renters' Guide* to help encourage property owners and their renters to behave appropriately. However we feel that the County should investigate and consider ways to regulate or control short-term cottage rentals.

MACA appreciates your consideration of our comments. If you wish to discuss these matters further, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Yours truly,

Andy Mosher
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cc: Pat Martin
Andrea Roberts
Murray Fearrey