



MISKWABI AREA COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION

SERVING RESIDENTS & COTTAGERS ON WENONA, LONG, MISKWABI & NEGAUNEE LAKES

The Panel On The Future of the
Trent-Severn Waterway,
185 King Street, Suite 100,
Peterborough, ON,
K9J 2R8

Miskwabi Area Cottager's Association,
c/o Larry Holden,
2239 Trapper's Trail,
RR#2, Haliburton, ON,
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September 10, 2007

Dear Panel Members,

This letter is written on behalf of the Miskwabi Area Cottager's Association (MACA) which represents Lakes Miskwabi, Long, Negaunee and Wenona, 10 minutes east of the Village of Haliburton. Lake Miskwabi is a naturally spring-fed lake which drains into Long Lake. At the south-western portion of Long Lake, there is a dam which feeds into the Burnt River System and hence the Trent-Severn Waterway System.

In the "Backgrounder" page supplied by yourselves at the Public Meetings, it is stated that, "the Haliburton Highlands provide supplementary water to ensure that navigation levels are maintained."

Also, on that same informational page, the final paragraph states that, "For 200 years, its designed purpose of supporting commercial and recreational boating and community economic development continues. Through the years, it has evolved into an essential provider of outdoor recreational opportunities; a source of clean, renewable energy and an important protector of the natural and cultural heritage of the region."

While there is no disagreement with either of these two statements, there is the distinct feeling that we, in the reservoir lake areas, are being forgotten and in fact, are just being used! There are plenty of recreational activities that happen in the Haliburton Highlands – and in the Miskwabi area in particular. While we do not condemn the Trent-Severn Waterway, we do ask for more understanding, cooperation and communication regarding the total operation of the system.

We applaud Mr. Bruce Stanton, MP for Simcoe North, for introducing Private Members Motion 161 to engage an independent expert panel in an evaluation to determine the future and potential of the Trent-Severn Waterway National Historic Site of Canada. After over 100 years of operation it is time to evaluate and improve the system. To that end, we urge the Panel Members to consider more seriously, the role that the Highlands – and the Miskwabi area, in particular – play in the operation of the total system.

The attached page from the 2007 Lake Stewardship Newsletter from the Ontario Federation of Cottagers (FOCA), shows one of our lakes –Long Lake – and the effect that the drawdown of water to support the TSW has on our area. A picture is worth a thousand words! Obviously, boating, swimming and the natural habitat have all been affected. Is there a current plan for reservoir lakes or is the drawdown based only on the needs of the waterway further south?

There is a channel between Long Lake and Lake Miskwabi. In late Summer and into the Fall, this channel becomes very shallow, exposing many submerged rocks. There are some property owners on Long Lake whose lots are water accessible only, and must use this channel. It becomes a very tricky navigational manoeuver!

Our area lakes are predominantly lake trout lakes and in fact, Miskwabi is stocked by the Haliburton Outdoors Association, with a unique strain of trout. It has become known as the “Haliburton Gold” strain. However, the lower water levels and global warming in recent years in particular, have meant warmer waters; warmer waters mean that our cold loving trout are being negatively affected.

It is ironic, in a sense, that waterfront property owners are being taxed so much more heavily by MPAC in the last few years because in many cases, the waterfront cannot be used by property owners in the way in which they should be able to use it and the reason they are being so heavily taxed!

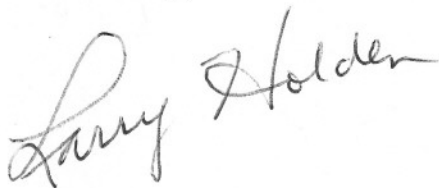
While log dams may be “quaint” and while there may be a mentality of “we’ve always done it that way”, a more sophisticated means of controlling reservoir lakes water levels is long overdue. Log dams are old and in desperate need of repair; they leak all year long. Why must water be let out of reservoir lakes in amounts equal to the thickness of the logs in the dam? What if only a couple of inches of water is required? Perhaps the water levels should be based on the needs of the reservoir lakes, not vice-versa.

It is acknowledged that the reservoir lakes region is an essential component of the Trent-Severn system as well as an important recreational and commercial area onto itself. With these facts in mind we would make two recommendations:

1. That any plan for the future of the Trent-Severn Waterway give due attention to the fundamental ecological, recreational and commercial requirements of the reservoir lakes..and
2. A “voice” be given to the recreational lakes in the new management hierarchy that will hopefully be created. As well, perhaps each watershed basin should have representatives as each watershed area is different and has different needs. Property owners in the reservoir lake areas should have contact access to someone in this hierarchy to share their questions, concerns and, yes, applause.

The Panel has a difficult job ahead of them and cannot please all of the various stakeholders. Our “voices” in the reservoir lake areas have not been given much credibility in the past. We look forward to a more active, consultative approach to the management of the Trent-Severn Waterway System in the future.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Holden". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "L".

Larry Holden,
President,
Miskwabi Area Cottager's Association

cc B. Fleischaker, Coalition for Equitable Water Flow
M. Fearrey, Reeve, Dysart et al;
D. Knowles, Councillor Ward 2, Dysart et al
L. Scott, MPP Haliburton-Victoria-Brock
B. Devolin, MP Haliburton Kawartha Lakes Brock
T. Rees, Executive Director, FOCA