

We represent 420 property owners, between the Swift Rapids Lock and the Big Chute Marine Railway. Last year our membership was 222 property owners. For the last 3 years this has been the case. About two thirds are water access.

SRAPO's Mission Statement is to inform, and to provide resources to empower our membership in the use and protection of the environs of land, water and natural habitat where we reside. We encourage and recognize our role as responsible stewards of the public waterway and are committed to promoting the enjoyment of its recreational delights without undue compromise to safety, expenses or environmental hazard. It is our purpose to liaise with other associations, governing bodies and agencies in the promotion of our mission.

Our Activities are:

A Family Regatta – on the Civic or Simcoe Day Holiday weekend.

Bi-weekly Water Testing.

Two Newsletters Spring and Fall

One Summer News Note

Active involvement with Environmental groups to protect our area.

Continual concern about Crown land Campsites in Pretty Channel and Lost Channel and the abuse by campers.

Maintain a Web Site, www.srapo.org.

There are:

- 3 Townships that we deal with, Severn, Georgian Bay and Muskoka Lakes.
- 2 Counties, or Districts, Muskoka, and Simcoe.
- 3 OPP areas (Midland, Orillia and Bracebridge).
- 2 MNR areas (Midhurst and Parry Sound).
- The Province (Queens Park).
- The Federal Government, Parks Canada (TSW, RCMP)

ISSUES

- Jurisdiction
- Wakes
- Policing
- Management
- Water Levels
- Development
- Use of Crown Land Campsites

Jurisdiction – While this is the most important issue, I'd like to leave this to the last.

We all know that when the TSW was created it was for Commercial purposes, it **NO LONGER IS THAT**, it is a Recreational Waterway, enjoyed by hundreds. It is time to make it what it is, a Recreational Waterway, that shows Central Ontario off.

Wakes - When oh when will there be some common sense regarding the wakes that boats put out. Yes, the boat owner or captain, are responsible for the damage their wakes will do, however, you try and prove it. Every year there are stories/incidents of boats that are tied to docks, being washed up on the dock and damage being done, canoes being turned over when people are out for paddles. Just this past weekend my husband and son were out in our Pontone boat and they were almost swamped by a wake that was so large it came right over the bow both were soaking wet. Now I'm sure all of you know that Pontone boats don't go fast at the best of times, so that is not the problem. The other cruiser simply was going too fast, over weight, the wrong type of hull, for the size of water way. At one time there was thought of asking the Locke employees to give out pamphlets at the Big Chute and Swift Rapids indicating this is a wake sensitive area. Speed limits are necessary in certain areas, not in the open areas, but big cruiser drivers (captains) need to understand that they really are responsible for the size of the wake that their boat puts out. TSW needs to lobby the boat manufacturers, they need to identify the big cruisers and remind them that they are the problems. It's not the water skiers, or the Sea Doo's, it's the boats that put out these big wakes that are the problem. Yes, water skiers and Sea Doo drivers need to be responsible, but their wakes at top speed do not do the damage that the Big Cruiser Wakes do. (Ask for comments from Anne & Gail).

Policing – Again there is a need for common sense. We can tell you many stories of policing issues, where the wrong people are being targeted. Anne Stock will tell you of a couple.

Anne – stories of kids swimming and people being given tickets in canoes, any other story you know of.

After Anne finishes: I have been on this river for over 40 years. I've never seen a big boat stopped by the police, but I have seen cottage owners stopped and tickets for the smallest infraction. This is not aimed at the OPP alone the MNR share some of this too. They (MNR) like to check for fishing licenses and the number of lines in the water off a dock. A brief story, one day some kids were fishing off the end of the dock and got their fishing line tangled, the father was trying to sort these lines out so too many lines were in the water, along came an MNR officer and gave him a ticket. Some COMMON SENSE PLEASE.

By all means if a water craft is going to fast in a restricted speed area or individuals are fishing incorrectly they should expect a ticket but let's not be silly. Ask for comments from Anne and Gail.

Management - The TSW areas of responsibility are very important to all of us who are Property Owners on the River. Are you aware that the Property Owners are all thought of as "others". The Property Owners are the biggest stake holders on the system but they are "others"! There needs, issues and concerns should be taken as seriously as those of merchants, vendors, and other commercial interests. There are stories of Property Owners who ask for a license to build boat houses and it takes 4 years to get answers. This past February I was preparing our Spring Newsletter and wanted to include a map that I'd seen at the TSW display at the Boat Show in Toronto. The Officers who were at the Boat Show gave me a number to phone, I did phone, I'm still waiting for it to be answered. I did phone another number and was told that is the number to call, and it was not this areas responsibility. It seems strange to me that the TSW could not do this when Environment Canada could give us materials, and from another agency we got the Safe Boating booklet all free.

The Financing of the TSW. I have had many Property Owners indicate that they would like to be able to go up or down a locks to visit friends, the way they did in the past, however, they don't because of the fees. They approach this saying the Boaters who are going thru the system should continue to pay while immediate Property Owners should be allowed just the one Locke for free. I've also had the suggestion that the gas taxes that are collected along the system should be returned to the TSW, not Parks Canada. A thought that is worth while.

As indicated to you SRAPO has actively been Water Testing for many years. For the most part the Water Quality in our area is good, however, there has been poor tests in the Lost Channel area. This is after big boats have used the Crown Land Campsite and we think they have dumped their sewage system. This is in the Water of the TSW. TSW needs to have fines in place so if we can catch boaters doing this, they can be fined.

The TSW needs to be open to all people on the system, each and every person should be treated with respect. Long term consistent plans are needed so the TSW can be seen as part of the community to be respected and involved in the Property Owners lives. Cottagers are not “others”. Again COMMON SENSE.
Ask for comments from Anne & Gail.

Water Levels - We participated in a study that was done this past January to May. We submitted a paper, were thanked, but have not heard anything. Feed back is important. It seems to us in our area that the Water level is really controlled by the two hydro power stations at either end of area. Is it?

We would like to hear how this study might impact on us? Comments from Anne & Gail

Development – Currently we are in the process of doing a “River Plan” regarding development in our area. We certainly realize that development will happen however, we want it to be a complement to what we have, not destroy Endangered Species, and we have many. What does The TSW plan, do they have any plans. Gail Carter will tell you of how we are going about this and how we expect to contact the TSW so they will be part of it.

Gail talks about development.

SRAPO will be going to considerable expense to work up the “River Plan” so we want to do it right, we will be in touch with the TSW and ask for input, we hope the phone will be answered when we call. Again we hope there will be a COMMON SENSES APPROACH.

Camping on Crown Land Campsites – Now we know that Crown Land Campsites are the responsibility of the MNR. However, they are on the TSW. The Campers do use the Waterway to get to the camp sites. We have had recent experience with campers who do not respect the land and who abuse it. MNR, OPP and Politicians at Local, Provincial and Federal levels have been involved. The TSW too has been involved, and have acted in areas of their responsibility. The problems are on going and still need to be addressed. Proper Management of these sites needs to be a priority. We feel the TSW has a better understanding of each area than other Agencies. Better COMMON SENSE.
Comments Anne & Gail.

JURISDICTION As I was preparing this it seems to me that all of the points that we have presented could be much better managed if the TSW has the jurisdiction in all of these areas. An over all agency that has the responsibility for all of these concerns.

Anne & Gail any comments.

Thank you for allowing us to make this presentation. We love our homes on the TSW, we want to keep them from generations to come.