

September 24, 2007

Mr. Douglas Downey, Chair
The Panel on the Future of the Trent Severn Waterway

Dear Mr. Downey and Panel Members:

It is high time that the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW) gave consideration to the health of the feeder lakes. We live on Jack Lake and our dwellings on McCoy Bay are our principal residences. Mr. Don Long, the former joint owner of the Forest Glenn Marina, has been on Jack Lake for over 60 years. Marie and Paul Rennick purchased property on McCoy Bay in 1992 and made it their principal residence in 2002.

Simply stated, our concerns are as follows:

- It appears that the TSW considers that the feeder lakes are “bath tubs” with the single purpose of filling the Trent Canal
- The control dam on Jack Lake is in need of repair
- The draw-down this year was sudden in early July leaving Jack Lake with “October water” in August
- There is no TSW staff person stationed locally (in Apsley for instance) with responsibility to monitor lake levels so that the draw-down is systematic, gradual and considers the health of the lake
- The ecology and the users of the lake have adapted to the 100 year draw-down thus change at this point would be detrimental
- Recent funds allocated by the Ministry of Natural Resources, Bancroft and many hours of volunteer time may be for naught due to excessive and irregular taking of water

In consideration of the above concerns, following are suggested solutions:

- That the TSW plan should be revised so that feeder lake objectives are given the same importance as the need for water in the TSW. In some cases where the feeder lake is preparing a lake plan, the objectives would be stated in these plans. In other cases, objectives would be developed in collaboration with the residents on the lake.
- The control structure of each lake should be maintained in good repair by the TSW. These structures have been in place for approximately 100 years and the ecology and use of the lakes have adapted accordingly.
- The maximum draw-down for each lake should be set at a level that sustains the water quality, the lake ecosystem, and the uses of the lake by people. The taking of water during the growing season should be gradual and should not exceed the maximum allowed until after the Thanksgiving Weekend. Stop logs should be

returned to fill the lake in the Fall so that fish have sufficient spawning habitat and the “ribbon of life” along the shoreline is not placed under stress.

- It would be preferable to have TSW staff responsible for management of the stop logs to be familiar with the local lake objectives and lake plan. If it is not possible to station a staff person locally as was the practice in the past, the TSW should train a local “volunteer” to do the job.
- Maintain a gradual taking of water over the growing season. The ecology and use of Jack Lake has adapted to the approximately 100 years of draw-down. Any change in the frequency or amount of water taking at this point would create a significant impact to the lake ecosystem and use by the residents and businesses.
- Jack Lake and other feeder lakes are important fisheries providing sport and income to many ratepayers. The Ministry of Natural Resources under the Community Fish and Wildlife Improvement program provides funding and expertise to volunteers to help sustain and enhance these fisheries. Since 2005, volunteers have been enhancing the spawning habitat for walleye on Jack Lake. Water quality and levels are critical to this management effort. Shoals that have been treated with rock cobble will be left “high and dry” by excessive taking of water making spawning impossible for these fish and other species.

In summary, an overall goal for the TSW could be worded as follows:

To provide water for effective operation of the TSW and at the same time to sustain the ecology, health and use of the feeder lakes.

We are pleased that you are reviewing the TSW and look forward to your report and a response by Parks Canada that gives full consideration to the feeder lakes.

Sincerely,

Don Long, P.O. Box 302, Apsley, Ont., K0L1A0

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