

September 25, 2007

Panel on the Future of the  
Trent-Severn Waterway  
185 King Street, Suite 100  
Peterborough, ON  
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Dear Lady and Gentlemen:

After observing but not presenting at your final public meeting in Lakefield, I felt it was important that you hear again from a **TSW reservoir lake**.

Jack's Lake feeds the system through Stoney Lake, and was particularly stressed level-wise this year due to a poor winter/spring recharge, a very dry summer, and what appeared to be a ham-fisted approach to water drawdowns by a financially hurting waterway authority.

The following are significant issues our Association hopes you can address with positive effect in the course of your obviously difficult work involving a myriad of conflicting interests and concerns.

**Panel topic – Water Management**

- ***Dam restoration and maintenance*** : the ultimate key to the preservation of the century-old reservoir lakes, (with hundred year-old dams,) now supporting thriving communities and important ecological systems
- ***Water level management*** : having effects on everything from environmental protection to property values in an enormous swath of Ontario, this begs for a holistic approach (as opposed to a "canal-first" one)
- ***The downside of hydro-electricity*** : reservoir water demand (already painful at times) would be seriously exacerbated if electric power generation became the driving force for the TSW

**Panel topic – Future Funding Frameworks**

- ***The TSW's revenues*** : with the waterway's impact now so vast, government financial allocations and cost recovery need a quantum improvement

These issues are further explained in a brief attachment hereto. And although you presumably have access to it through the *Ecoplans Limited* consultant's report, I enclose a copy of our Association's initial submission so that it becomes part of the Panel's own records. Please feel free to post it and this letter publicly with the other submissions you've received.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hugh J.M. Spence', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Hugh J.M. Spence  
Secretary  
Jack's Lake Association

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# Jack's Lake Association

## Explanatory notes – issues of concern

### Panel topic – Water Management

**1. *Dam restoration and maintenance*** : the ultimate key to the preservation of the century-old reservoir lakes. (with hundred year-old dams.) now supporting thriving communities and important ecological systems

It was evident from some of the submissions to the Panel that there are people who believe that the TSW reservoir system is just “there”, immutable, inexhaustible and available for the taking. This is of course untrue, and in fact the existing reservoir dams are critical to both shaping the lakes in question and allowing their exploitation by the TSW. Whether it is a matter of benign neglect or a lack of funds, the dams have not received the attention they might. The Jack's Lake dam has through-wall breaches in need of fixing, and its stoplogs and associated mechanisms could be improved.

**2. *Water level management*** : having effects on everything from environmental protection to property values in an enormous swath of Ontario. this begs for a holistic approach (as opposed to a “canal-first” one)

If you move into a development built next to an airport, you shouldn't complain about aircraft noise. Likewise, residents on or near reservoir lakes shouldn't complain about dropping water levels. However, there *are* grounds for complaint when the levels do not seem to be properly managed. This occurs when levels drop particularly rapidly or at a strange time of the year, or when supplied water bodies downstream are obviously overfull while the reservoir is “going dry” and the various negative effects are being felt.

It is probably fair to say that until quite recently most residents of Jack's Lake naively believed that they supplied water just to help float recreational boats in the Trent-Severn Waterway. But with reports of some 6000 water-use permits extant, it is clear that Jack's Lake and other reservoirs are now supporting an entire water-based infrastructure. This was clearly not intended when the system was initially established, so an imbalance now exists between water supply and demand, and the signs are that this will only get worse. There is a danger that the TSW will wither for lack of attention to its “roots”, to its “blood” supply.

Time was when TSW operators visited the Jack's Lake dam on several occasions throughout the drainage season, removing stoplogs in gradual increments. In 2007, apparently due in part to a need to save a pittance (water taxi fees,) the visits were cut and several logs removed all at once, causing a rapid, early lake drop.

**3. *The downside of hydro-electricity* :** reservoir water demand (already painful at times) would be seriously exacerbated if electric power generation became the driving force for the TSW

It is politically incorrect to say anything negative about “green” power sources like hydro-electric power generation, but there comes a point when there's no more fluid to extract for this purpose. Existing hydro power on the TSW is one of the infrastructure pressures on the feeder system, since of necessity it calls for a regular supply of sufficient water to maintain heads at generator intakes. This is a significant “add-on” to what the designers originally foresaw as being the water flow requirements of the Trent canal system. To add more hydro power developments would over-drive the demand for water – earlier in the season, later, and more constant in terms of maximum flow *all* season – which would over-tax reservoir lakes like Jack's.

#### **Panel topic – Future Funding Frameworks**

**4. *The TSW's revenues* :** with the waterway's impact now so vast, government financial allocations and cost recovery need a quantum improvement

When the TSW hurts financially, it doesn't just mean that recreational boats can't float – a whole aquatic infrastructure suffers in one way or another – and so there must be ways to tap into the financial resources held or generated by water consumers.

Curiously for the TSW as a federal resource, payment for water usage permits (not boating and park fees) apparently goes to a provincial ministry, cutting off a possible cost recovery avenue, (though the modest size of current consumption fees does not make this particularly useful.)

Since the province and municipalities within the TSW watershed profit immensely from the top-scale taxes levied on waterfront properties, there would seem to be room for some cost sharing as part of the bargain.