

Parks Canada, The Panel on the Future of the Trent Severn Waterway
185 King Street, Unit 100
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 2R8

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Public Consultation; Written/Electronic Submission by Michael Woolfenden

I appreciate the opportunity to submit the following to the Panel in hopes that many viewpoints will be considered in any future plans for use and operation of the Trent-Severn Waterways.

By way of introduction, I am a resident cottage owner on Eels Lake and have been since the 1960s and as such wish to comment on the management of the waterway.

Although it is recognized and entrenched that the tributary lakes are an integral part of the Trent-Severn Waterway, my assessment is that other than a source of water for downstream use the tributary lakes are not properly recognized and monitored for the ecological and environmental impact of the annual draw downs.

In particular, fish habitat, fish reproduction, and natural shoreline impacts occur annually with, what might seem, little to no thought or true concern by the people who manage the system. It has been clearly expressed to me on a number of occasions that they (the Trent-Severn System) have the rights to the water and will use it as they decide. On an annual basis, the shorelines are altered by the draw downs, the littoral zones totally dried out, the erosion of littoral zone materials drastically altering the shorelines. Where there was sand and vegetation becomes bare rock, where fish would nest they no longer do. Shorelines are supposed to be 'Protected by Law' via Conservation Authorities, Ontario's MNR, Fisheries and Oceans and quite ironically Parks Canada. Why do the Trent-Severn tributary lakes receive immunity from protection by the MNR the DFO?

One could write in extensive detail what the MNR says about shorelines, the 'Ribbon of Life' where 90% of all lake life is born, raised and fed in the area where land and water meet. Realizing this very important information how can Parks Canada and the Trent-Severn Waterway choose to ignore the fact that tributary lakes are annually drained to various low levels thereby removing this very important, this, critical to life, area. Annually the shallow littoral areas at the shoreline in front of my property are dried out at least 30 to 40 feet from the high water marks. If any private individual were to alter shoreline in this manner they would be charged, likely convicted with haste and required to rehabilitate the area. Enough said and I hope my points are clear.

The management of the water levels and the flows has changed in recent years to the further detriment of tributary lakes. Regarding Eels Lake when stop logs are pulled, more are being pulled at a time, this according to one of your water control engineers to get the water flowing... this is an unacceptable practice and removal of stop logs if anything should become more refined and with increased fine calibration not wholesale dumping of water for reasons where specific explanations are difficult to obtain.

- Why is 'increased flow' considered necessary?
- Why not smaller dimensioned stop logs so that draw-downs can be made with increased and fine control?

- Property owners on tributary lakes need to have internet access to current posted information regarding pending draw-downs so that they can adjust their docks, protect their boats

accordingly. It is a shame and disheartening to see someone's boat or motor bouncing off rocks due to sudden draw downs.

Improvements: I would suggest the basic culture within the Trent-Severn needs to be reviewed and addressed to have more ingrained processes regarding continual improvements of total water management, via manual work, computer modeling, hydrologists, simply new thinking and approaches to better assist in how the water is managed. I was shocked earlier this year to hear one of the system's water engineers say "we win some and we lose some" ... seems like an irresponsible and unprofessional approach and thought process when every effort and all work should be directed towards the improvement of water management including management of tributary lakes who take the brunt of impact as water is required. I would seriously question the need to draw as much water from the tributary lakes as is currently taken. Recently I observed strong flow over the Burleigh Falls dam into Stoney Lake yet significant water was also being taken from Eels Lake into Stoney Lake... why? and, what purpose was the water from Eel's providing? Question everything and make improvements!

Possibly the Trent-Severn Waterways already do some or all of the above. If that is the case, then it is not obvious based on physical observations of the tributary lakes. I would suggest that a project be initiated that would see every effort possible being made to decrease draw down levels on each and every tributary lake by 5% to 10% annually until substantial and measurable reductions in draw downs are achieved. Any new water usages should be curtailed and all existing usages such as power generation, agricultural usages be reviewed and questioned as we know there are not unending quantities of water.

In conclusion, I submit that the tributary lakes have taken a back seat position in the eyes of the Trent-Severn Waterway for far too long and the results are significantly poor where we see earlier draw downs, significant negative impacts on fishing and shore dwelling species, increased shore erosions. Property owners and others who have interests in tributary lakes must be given due consideration and respect as part of the management of the Trent-Severn Waterway.

I would sincerely hope , as a result of this review process, that all of the stakeholders included in Trent-Severn Waterways will, over time, be able to recognize significant improvements and benefits. Lets work together towards this very important end result!

Respectfully,

Michael Woolfenden