

To the Panel on the Future of the Trent Severn Waterway:

**Comments to the Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway –
Cumulative Effects of Development Must Be Considered Within a Sustainable
Development Framework**

In considering the future vision, mandate and management of the Trent-Severn Waterway (TSW), the Panel should incorporate the concept of sustainable development. Three relevant expressions of this concept are provided here:

*Sustainable development "meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
(Brundtland Commission, 1987)*

"We cannot simply think of our survival; each new generation is responsible to ensure the survival of the seventh generation. The prophecy given to us, tells us that what we do today will affect the seventh generation and because of this we must bear in mind our responsibility to them today and always." (a philosophy of indigenous peoples)

"... The Government of Canada seeks to achieve sustainable development by conserving and enhancing environmental quality and by encouraging and promoting economic development that conserves and enhances environmental quality." (preamble to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 1995)

The TSW has ecological, social, cultural and economic value to the people who live, work and play along its shores. In assessing the future direction for the TSW, the Panel will need to consider a range of input and perspectives within a sustainable development framework that includes the three pillars of ecology, society, and economy. Informed trade-offs will need to be made.

Our particular concern is the cumulative impact of development along the TSW. Cumulative impacts are the combination of past, present and reasonably foreseeable activities and developments on the environment (broadly defined to include biophysical, social, cultural and economic aspects). We can illustrate the potential trade-offs the Panel will be faced with using an example from our area – the Municipality of Trent Hills in Northumberland County. The McCulloch family has had property (several farms, as well as 'Slaughter Island') on the TSW north of Campbellford since the 1830s – perhaps seven generations. Our ancestors, and those of the Aboriginal people who have always lived here, would not recognize the river today. What would they think?

Recently, two major development proposals have come to light that are of concern to our family and neighbours, as they would fundamentally change the environment and quality of life for us and others in the area – and not for the better. The North Seymour Ratepayers Association made a presentation to the Panel about a development proposal

for Hardy Island on July 25, 2007¹. The Hardy Island proposal involves more than 90 homes and three marinas with a similar number of boat slips ², and is located immediately north of 'Slaughter Island' and our family farm.

Recently, a second development proposal was announced for Nappan Island, immediately to the south-east of Slaughter Island³. The proposed resort includes an 18-hole golf course, a lodge with 120 rooms, and somewhere in the neighbourhood of 700 housing units of varying styles, from cottages to townhouses to apartments. If approved, either one of these proposals would have significant impacts for the TSW.

Change is part of life, but it is increasingly evident that government, regulators, and the public must have thoughtful discussions about the vision that will guide change. The two development proposals we have mentioned here are subject to a relatively complex approval process involving a number of local, provincial, and federal authorities – each with a specific and relatively narrow mandate. Market forces will also influence whether and how these and other development proposals will unfold. Lack of an overarching sustainable development framework makes it difficult to evaluate proposals using anything but the piecemeal approval system implemented by multiple authorities. The Panel has a responsibility to provide a vision for the TSW and a framework that may assist municipalities and other decision-makers in their tasks.

In conclusion, the TSW is an important ecological, social, cultural and economic asset – locally, regionally, provincially and nationally. We simply can not afford to allow it to be compromised, to suffer a "death by a 1000 cuts". As the Panel completes its work, we ask that you please keep in mind not only the needs of those that currently live, work and play along the TSW, but the seven generations that will do so in the future.

Respectfully,

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Joan McCulloch

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Cc: Jim Peters, Municipality of Trent Hills
Shirley Sproul, North Seymour Ratepayers Association

¹ http://www.tswpanel.ca/english/downloads/25-07-07_North_Seymour_Ratepayers_Association_Inc_-_Hardy_Island_-_Don_Knowles_-_Presentation.pdf

² <http://www.indynews.ca/article.php?id=1434&from=archives&year=2007&month=8>

³ <http://www.indynews.ca/article.php?id=1462>