

SCUGOG LAKE STEWARDS INC. TO THE PANEL ON THE FUTURE OF THE TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY

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1. Introduction

The Scugog Lakes Stewards Inc. is a non-profit registered charity that is concerned for Lake Scugog and its watershed. We are involved with the Lake Scugog Environmental Management Plan and the Nonquon River Fisheries Management Plan. We have worked on shoreline naturalization; conducted workshops; designed and constructed two shoreline parks to demonstrate effective shoreline management tools for the public and have raised over one million dollars for remediation, education and research. Our primary focus is Lake Scugog and its watershed.

We commend the Trent-Severn Waterway for its historic maintenance of water levels for flood control throughout the system. The Federal regulation of the system has largely avoided inter-community disputes.

We appreciate the historic significance of the Trent-Severn Waterway and its cultural heritage. We commend the agency for its maintenance of the locks which are an important tourist attraction. We believe that there are ways to enhance recreational and eco-tourist revenues with possible improvements to the system. We believe that a healthy lake is integral to a healthy economy.

Port Perry is potentially a major gateway to the Kawartha Lakes and the Trent Severn system. With a potential population of six million in the GTA, Port Perry is the closest access point to the system.

2. Challenges to be addressed.

a. We see our greatest challenge as public and political short-sightedness. We think of the ramifications of policies for the short term (often four years or less). Long term thinking is restricted to what we will do for the next generation. We need to expand our time lines. Canada is home to some 20% of the planet's fresh water. Our national lakes and rivers are the natural reservoirs of surface fresh water. Our Great Lakes, the Kawarthas including Scugog are the legacy of the last ice age that ended about 10000 BCE when the Laurentide ice sheet melted. During that time Scugog has changed from an oligarchic lake of 50 metres to a late stage eutrophic lake averaging 1.5 metres. How do we enhance, preserve and recover our freshwater reservoirs so that they are sustained for the next 10,000

years? Entropy is natural but its effects can be mitigated.

b. The rapidly spreading Eurasian Milfoil, an invasive species, is becoming a significant problem for boaters, fishermen, businesses that depend on tourists, real estate values and lakeshore property owners. It is aesthetically unappealing; hampers navigation; hastens eutrophication and is underutilized by fauna because it is non-native.

c. Lake Scugog has an average depth of 11/2 metres. It has been reported that the depth is being reduced by 2 centimetres every ten years. The present channel depth limits access to large pleasure craft and restricts the ability of the area to become a major boating destination.

d. Our review of the 2000 Economic Impact Study of the Trent-Severn Waterway leads us to question the validity of some of its findings

3. Solutions to be explored

a. The most important issue is to construct a new paradigm for addressing the challenges. A strategy of co-operation among the four levels of government, Ngos, business and private citizens must be built. Regulatory and remedial action must be co-ordinated. Those with tax authority must come together and agree on a funding paradigm for surface and groundwater preservation and enhancement.

b. Creative solutions to the Eurasian milfoil dilemma such as the deliberate introduction of sterile grass carp or milfoil weevils should be explored.

c. We need to explore the possibility of dredging the channel, the Port Perry Bay and the Rowing Club Bay to a depth of 2.75 metres. This would open new possibilities for economic and cultural activities. Deeper water would also allow the passage of larger pleasure craft. Dredging would deepen the freshwater reservoir; provide deep water habitat for fish; lower the evaporation rates as a percentage of the total volume; lower water temperature and ameliorate Eurasian milfoil which will not grow where light does not reach.

d. In light of our need for renewable energy the Trent-Severn Waterway should explore the possibility of small run of the river hydro electric facilities.

e. There is a great need for public/private partnerships to enhance the tourism and eco-tourist industry. In order to make Scugog a destination point more accessible to cruisers and houseboats, electrical hook-ups and comprehensive signage directing visitors to important local facilities should be considered.

f. The Region of Durham and the City of Kawartha Lakes should be encouraged to undertake an economic impact study of Lake Scugog and its tributaries.