

6 September 2007

The Panel on the Future of the Trent Severn Waterway  
185 King Street, Suite 100  
Peterborough, ON  
K9J 2R8

Re: Brief on behalf of Little Glamor Lake Cottagers' Association with additional comments of Roger Young, Vice-President, personally

Mr. Chairman and panellists:

The Little Glamor Lake Cottagers' Association welcomes and appreciates the opportunity to add some thoughts to your deliberations. We trust in so doing that we do not add unbearably to your paper burden.

Firstly, we wish to go on record as supporting the input already received by you from CEWF (Coalition for Equitable Water Flow), as well as the thrust of briefs on behalf of Kennisis Lake and Loon Lake. Like them, Little Glamor is a RAFT lake; we are part of the Burnt River flow into the TSW. In the CEWF brief, we are included under the term 'Glamor Lake', but wish to point out that we are, in fact, two lakes (Big and Little Glamor), separated by a control dam, Little Glamor being the upstream of the two - somewhat smaller, but a distinct entity none the less. Along with a concern over water quality, our members share in the concern over the volume of water lost to us through the yearly 'draw-down' to feed the TSW.

Ours is but a small lake, perhaps a mile long and only a few hundred yards across. The shoreline is almost completely built up, comprising roughly 100 cottages and permanent homes. We are also a very shallow lake. To lose 6 vertical feet of water over the course of spring and summer seriously depletes our riparian pleasures. Our lake level is under threat from Victoria Day onward. By the time Canada Day comes along, we're usually down 2 feet. When Labour Day arrives, we are missing 4 feet of water and many have already begun to pull boats out. Few watercraft are still in at Thanksgiving. When Remembrance Day comes, as well as celebrating our glorious War Dead and Fallen Peacekeepers, we are down 6 feet of water and longingly trying to recall what our waterfront was like without extended beaches. We faintly remember when 'floating' docks actually floated instead of resembling beached whales, and when kids could safely jump off the ends of permanent docks into deep water rather than on to a pile of rocks.

Such is life for many in Haliburton, more and more of whom are year-round, and not simply summertime residents. We view our water as literally being stolen from us. Certainly, it is not 'borrowed' for it is never given back, and we do not receive much in the way of anything in return. We would, at least, like to be reassured that those who take our water resource for their use do so efficiently, economically and without

profligate waste. If the draw-down program is allowed to continue, it should be subject to review and periodic justification, lest those doing the taking become wasteful and those living on the 'slave' lakes become even more embittered.

Most waterfront property owners in the northern reaches of the TSW watershed recognize that there is a natural drainage to the south. In years past, when large stretches of the Highlands were far less populated than today, perhaps the drainage/draw-down was not as noticeable. That is not the case today. Data already supplied to the Panel by the Ecoplans studies and several of your 'discussion papers' reveals that there are some 35,000 estimated waterfront property stakeholders in the RAFT lakes alone. Given that the average value of re-sale cottage property in Haliburton is approaching \$400,000, this would suggest that water management/draw-down by TSW affects the value of some \$14 billion worth of waterfront land - a not insignificant amount, and perhaps ten times the capital value of the canal infrastructure proper.

In short, the TSW cannot physically/operationally function without input of water resources from the RAFT lakes. It should not administratively/managerially function without similar RAFT stakeholder input. We suggest there needs to be an over-arching authority which manages the TSW watershed as a complete entity, not simply a hodge-podge of government agencies and other bodies, all with 'personal' turf to protect and 'sectarian' interests at heart. The present system is not functioning well. It grew in bits and pieces with a purpose that is no longer relevant (i.e., commercial transportation of goods from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay). Under the present guise of operating a pleasure boating system for travel along its full length, it is, in reality, a much more grand scheme for water diversion and control. Yet it is not really administered with this 'watershed' philosophy as its core 'raison d'être'. We believe this 'global view' should be the real future of the TSW. Proper recognition of the overall value of true and complete watershed management is the need. The rest of the functions (boating, recreation, hydro, parklands, municipal water needs, etc.) are all derivative. If we do not learn to deal appropriately with overall watershed management, those individual parts will suffer.

Might I be permitted to append a few personal reflections? Although I am now a year-round resident of Haliburton, living on Little Glamor Lake, I come to my thoughts on the TSW from four intimate, past, personal perspectives: boater, daily/weekly fisherman, shoreline resident and politician. Allow me to explain:

My first experience with TSW came as a 14-year old some 52 years ago. In 1955, my Dad bought a lovely old Ditchburn cabin cruiser located at Keswick, on Lake Simcoe. We lived in Niagara, and the need was to get the "Nyoda" from Keswick to Port Dalhousie. My August summer holidays that year were spent as deck crew, seeing first-hand the wonders of the TSW. It was that memorable experience, cruising down the canal, locking through from lake to lake, that has remained with me ever since. The natural beauty drew me back to fish from time to time in my twenties and thirties, to vacation in my forties and, finally, to buy a retirement cottage on Upper Buckhorn Lake in my late fifties. I was in Paradise. (By the way, we re-navigated the TSW from the Murray Canal, Picton, etc., back up to Peterborough and down again in 1956. I enjoyed reading Wm. Dunlop's brief to you on the extended, quieter, slower pleasures of canal

cruising in those days). I fully understand the pleas of canal boaters who beseech you to maintain the waterway locks. But, at what cost?

While I was a shoreline resident at Buckhorn Lake, there was never much concern over water levels. Most there had fixed, rather than floating docks. Oh, we might notice our lake drop a few inches in mid-summer dry periods, but it always magically seemed to return in a few days. I never really appreciated the fact that we were 'stealing' water from our neighbours in Haliburton. In fact, I doubt whether many cottage owners along the Trent portion really do have much of an understanding just how severely the maintenance of their water use pleasure impacts upon those just a few miles to the north. In this day and age of 'me first', does anyone really care? My docks at Buckhorn were never left high and dry; my swimming water never disappeared from week to week. I could also boat from Buckhorn to Chemong and Pigeon Lakes without even having to use the lock system. I owned a canoe, sailboat and high-powered runabout, and used them all. Acres and acres of water! Most of my neighbours did the same and were not really users of the canal/lock system. The situation is different for me now, having moved north to a RAFT lake. Having already described above the picture of waterfront life here, I need not repeat what we endure on behalf of keeping water levels at 'navigable depth' in the TSW. I simply wish more of my former neighbours could truly appreciate what my new neighbours suffer.

This leads to a question I have not really seen addressed (possibly I have missed it amongst the mountain of written material to absorb): do we really need to continue to fully maintain the system of locks all the way from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay? I read in your studies that through-lockage is significantly down, and that most recreational boat traffic is of the smaller variety. These boats are often trailered in for short-term usage on the water. They drop into one lake and are easily hauled out and transported to another. They do not depend on the locks.

So, just how much 'large boat' traffic is there, and how much of that really traverses the full length of the canal system? It is one thing to pride ourselves on the wonders and joys of the historic canal, but just who, and how many use its full length, and at what cost? Could the canal possibly be segmented and still provide many of the benefits? Doing away with some infrastructure/services could achieve savings. Is the gain worth the loss? I do not advocate either way; I simply pose the question. Closing some locks would not destroy the waterway itself; the water will remain. It is only the possibility of unrestricted end-to-end passage that disappears. Would this help to conserve water flow?

It may not be the Panel's view that it should deal at this point with the exact details of such matters. However, any true perspective on the future of the TSW should at least try to grapple with the general question. But even more important is the Panel's need to address the issue of complete watershed management – jurisdiction, organisation, administration, purpose, goals. To that end, it seems there are a couple of very basic questions to be answered, or at least understood by all stakeholders. One, just what is the annual average volume of water flow of the TSW? Here, I particularly posit the question in terms of the Trent watershed. Just what magnitude of total water resource

do we have? Next, is there any disappearance or 'leakage' from that total by the end of the system at Trenton? If so, where does the leakage go? Evaporation? Unreturned draw-off? What? Can any organization effectively manage a natural resource without knowing how much it has and where it goes?

That leads to the question whether those who are presently drawing water are doing so efficiently and economically? As one of many Haliburtonians, I would hate to think our 'lost' water is simply being squandered by folks who have no real appreciation of our plight and of our 'gift'. Our lakes are presently managed by control dams using logs or timbers at the outflow gates. Mostly, these are one foot in depth, so when one is pulled, our lakes will drop roughly one foot. It doesn't happen overnight; my experience here suggests that it takes a week or so, then the water level stabilizes until the next log is lifted. Operating the dams to coordinate flow is a true art. Could it be improved by the conversion to sluice gates, electronically operated and centrally controlled by computer? Seemingly, water flow and lake levels should be able to be controlled and managed to the inch/centimetre rather than as now, foot by cumbersome foot. What benefit might this type of system offer to our RAFT lakes? The technology is available; we just don't employ it. Do we have a handle on conversion costs? It is a question that needs to be addressed in any comprehensive review of TSW.

Lastly, may I offer a word of encouragement through the fourth personal perspective from which I write: that of a former politician. I grew up in Niagara Falls, a city famous for its cataracts, its hydro-electric power generation, its water diversion systems, its parks and recreation, its engagement in international treaties and agreements governing flow patterns, etc. I was once privileged to be the Member of Parliament for that area (1974-79), and, as such, gained a smattering of knowledge of the complexities of these issues. Before my election to the House of Commons proper, I served as Executive Assistant to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources when that department had a lead role in developing the Canada Water Act. This involved federal-provincial agreements to deal with large water drainage basins. I was at negotiations and signing ceremonies with the four western provinces. Later, I served as Chief of Staff to the Government House Leader (1980-84) dealing with competing interests as various departments sought legislative priority on the available calendar. Such internecine wars are no picnic; I do appreciate the difficulties and struggles in trying to gain inter-departmental/inter-agency cooperation.

As an MP, I spent many countless hours serving on legislative committees, some of which dealt with Environment, Parks Canada, Fisheries, Transport, Indian and Northern Affairs, etc. I was a member of the Parliamentary Committee which studied and passed legislation for the James Bay Agreement affecting Canada, Quebec and several First Nation groups. I also became aware of the complex nature of matters surrounding the operation and continuation of the TSW and Rideau Canal. I often received mail from Canadians expressing a point of view about the TSW. I do not claim deep, definitive knowledge, just some familiarity with the issues, and an appreciation for what it is those who manage the TSW attempt to do. Solutions to problems are elusive and complicated.

That said, however, it was/is my belief that the future is best assured by some form of overall management of the watershed proper. How to get there? Well, that unenviable task has now been tossed to you for suggestions. You must attempt some sensible rationalization of competing federal, provincial and municipal interests as well as several First Nation groups. Yours is a gargantuan task indeed - far reaching, complex, and of enormous import for the stakeholders. We all most certainly will be trying to fill your ears with briefs from our own viewpoint of 'enlightened self-interest'. I believe that you have made a most commendable start, especially with the background papers and studies offered to date. You have received many cogent, well-thought-out briefs. We can only hope that your ultimate submissions to the Minister will serve as equitably as possible all of the various stakeholders involved, respecting the majority, but without neglecting the minorities.

In summary, the Little Glamor Lake Cottagers' Association hopes that the Panel will:

- *Recognize the plight of the RAFT lakes, in particular those smaller, shallower lakes disproportionately affected by water draw-down to feed the TSW;*
- *Identify means to safeguard the overall quantity and quality of Trent-Severn watershed resources while diminishing 'leakage';*
- *Recommend that there be an enforceable, coordinated program/plan of environmental stewardship and resource conservation; and,*
- *Recommend that there be established one 'over-arching' authority encompassing joint federal/provincial jurisdiction and responsibility to better coordinate and fairly manage all aspects of the Trent-Severn watershed, not simply the boating waterway.*

Thank you for your time and attention.

Roger Young  
Vice-president, Little Glamor Lake Cottagers' Association