

INPUT FOR TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY STUDY

August 8 2007

As a resident on the system and a long time user, I'd like to provide a few comments to assist in your planning activities. Earlier this summer my wife and I completed a transit of the Trent and Rideau systems from Lake Simcoe to Ottawa and return. We used a small 16 ft. boat and camped at lockstations most of the way so we have a good feel for the current situation.

First of all, I think it is important to emphasize that both canal systems are wonderful tourist attractions that bring many tourist dollars to the bordering communities and they should be properly and adequately funded. There were many American boats in the Trent System. The lock stations without exception were beautifully maintained property wise and staff was friendly and helpful. It would be a shame to see these assets be allowed to fall into the disgraceful disrepair that occurred with the Georgian Bay national picnic sites on the various islands in the bay.

Maintenance: While grounds were in good shape the locks themselves were in need of repair with masonry and stone work in poor shape in many cases. On hearing of our Ottawa destination many lockmasters asked us to make a plea to Mr. Harper for more funds.

Weeds: Heavy weed growth plagues many parts of the system, particularly in the shallower areas. We had to stop many times to clear a fouled prop.

Navigation Aids: The recent removal of around 400 navigation aids was too many. I'm an experienced navigator and there were times when I was unable to locate the proper channel and I had to stop and flag down a local fisherman to direct us. (Pidgeon Lake area.) I find it hard to believe that the removal of all those aids saved much money. As a Hawkestone resident a red buoy on the Hawkestone shoal in front of our house was removed, which was not a problem but it's hard to visualize any money saved here as the buoy remained in place summer and winter without any apparent maintenance over long periods of time.

Water levels: Late summer water levels on Lake Simcoe present problems for many. The drop in level is an inconvenience for many with docks and a more serious problem for those who can no longer launch boats from marine railways.

The Trent-Severn Waterway is a wonderful asset. Please ensure that it gets the proper attention and funding to ensure it's viability for generations to come.

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