



Lakeview Estates Cottage Owners Association Inc.

September 12, 2007

TRENT SEVERN WATERWAY PANEL

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of the Lakeview Estates Cottage Owners Association Inc. My name is Chris Gaetan and I am the president of this registered corporation. We are a community which is comprised of 144 homes located approximately 8 minutes south of Bobcaygeon on the shores of Pigeon Lake.

This community is 36 years old and we are situated on a large parcel of land which was a trailer park and converted to a planned community of cottages and year-round homes. Today approximately 50 percent of the homes are occupied year round. Approximately 33 ½ % of the homeowners are lakefront owners and the balance are located on streets behind the lake. Eighty percent of the homeowners access the lake through a large park which is maintained by the corporation.

We have reviewed the documentation on your website and wish to comment on a subset of issues which have been raised. Those issues are as follows:

- 1) Environmental/weed control/water quality
- 2) Safety on the Waterway
- 3) Infrastructure
- 4) Water depth
- 5) Fees/usage
- 6) Marketing
- 7) Organizational structure
- 8) The future

1) ENVIRONMENT/WEED CONTROL/WATER QUALITY

When this corporation was established 36 years ago there were no weeds in the lake. Only a few cattails and lily pads graced the shores of lower Pigeon Lake. Since that time there has been a dramatic rise in the number and variety of weeds growing in the lake. Indeed wild rice has been introduced into the lake by an organization established to encourage hunting. The wild rice has taken over large

portions of the lake and indeed some lakeside owners have great difficulty accessing the lake through the mass of weeds.

This growth of weeds hampers tourism and impedes the recreational use of the lake. The weed growth must be controlled or it will simply close over the lake and boats will be unable to move up and down the lake.

We do understand that some of the weed growth results from septic tanks which are leaking and which flow sewage eventually into the lake. In addition, we understand that high levels of phosphorous are now in the lake and this is mainly due to commercial pesticides which also cause algae. We have noticed an increased level of algae in the lake this year alone.

In the past the Ministry of Natural Resources would come into the lake and cut the weeds with large thrashing machines. This ended several years ago due to budget cutbacks.

Recommendation:

- a) Either the federal or provincial governments should institute weed cutting in order to get the situation under control. In addition to cutting the weeds, the Ministry of Natural Resources may wish to spray for weeds as well. Furthermore, citizens could be encouraged to cut weeds to order to help in returning the lakes and rivers to a more healthy waterway system.
- b) The Provincial Government should be encouraged to implement the Clean Water Act which was recently approved by the Provincial legislature. This would include the testing of septic systems and other water treatment plants. The benefit of this act will be felt along the TSW.
- c) Action must be taken to study the impact of land fill sites particularly those located close to the TSW. Follow up action should then be taken by municipalities.
- d) Pesticide use must be curtailed and this could be enacted by whichever level of government is most appropriate. Consideration will need to be given for farmers who must protect their crops.

2) SAFETY ON THE WATERWAY

In 2006 the Trent Severn Waterway decided to reduce the number of markers on the waterway in an effort to cut costs. Budget cuts had forced this action and this has caused many problems for boaters this year with an increase in boat damage... Cutting back on safety measures is not any way to encourage use of the system. Funding must be made available to introduce markers which will once again allow for a safe boating experience for all concerned.

Recommendation:

- a) Management of the TSW should once again meet with commercial stakeholders in order to determine the most appropriate location for additional markers. These markers should then be installed and maintained.

3) INFRASTRUCTURE

Much of the infrastructure for the Trent Severn Waterway is in need of repair or replacement. One does not have to go far to identify a deteriorating dam or lock which is in need of concrete repair. Repairs have been noted by staff and costs have been assigned to the work required. This must form part of the upgrade for the system. Deferred maintenance soon catches up and this is no exception.

Recommendation

- 1) A systematic plan should be prepared by works personnel and a timeframe for upgrade should be established with funding made available for the work required.

4) WATER DEPTH

The depth of the water in the lakes and waterways poses a problem for people who utilize the system. Errors have been made this year in terms of water management causing serious difficulties for those who would normally launch their boat into the system. A more systematic approach must be taken with appropriate resources made available to maintain a more consistent water level throughout the system.

Recommendation:

- a) A new operational body should review and establish a comprehensive plan to control water levels within the watersheds which feed into the Trent Severn Waterway system.

5) FEES/USAGE

In order to help fund work which is required it will be necessary to implement new fees to help to sustain the system. It has been suggested that part of the gas sold on the waterway should be made available for the operation of the TSW. Furthermore, analysis should be undertaken at each of the dams to determine the viability of producing electricity such as takes place at Fenelon Falls. Buckhorn and Burleigh Falls are two locations which should be considered. New technology may be available which will allow for power generation. The provincial government may provide funding for the development of such smaller generating plants to increase electrical output in the province. Additional fees should be enacted particularly for boats entering the system from the United States

It should be noted that Americans consider the Trent Severn waterway system as one of the most pre-eminent waterways in North America. They very much enjoy travelling along the 230 miles of water and more should be done to encourage additional boaters to traverse this waterway.

6) MARKETING:

It is our feeling that much more needs to be done to market the TSW. It is suggested that each of the towns on the waterway should be encouraged to have a weekend in the summer wherein they can put on a special festival. For example one town could establish a Jazz festival or a bluegrass festival. Another could have a theatre festival such as Parry Sound with their Festival of the Sound. These festivals draw hundreds and thousands of people to attend. Each town or Village should consider what their strength might be and this would include the facilities which they have available. Not all attendees will arrive by boat but the opportunity will be there for that to happen. Tourism is increasing and the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the TSW should be used as a backdrop to encourage more visitors to travel through the locks. Funds are normally made available from the Federal Government to encourage and assist in the development of such festivals. Existing events could be updated or revamped to fit into a new co-ordinated strategy to attract additional tourists. The festivals should be developed with a view to attracting participants from the Greater Golden Horseshoe as well as foreign visitors. Specific and focussed advertising should be encouraged. The Provincial and Federal Governments should emphasize the wonder of this historic waterway. A revised logo should be developed to be used in the advertising. We have been losing American visitors over the past few years but travel by boat may not be the onerous task which may soon apply at border crossings.

However, more advertising should also be focussed in Europe and or Asia. Germans and other Europeans travel considerably now as they are achieving much higher standards of living and personal wealth. New found wealth in Asia is also helping to foster dramatic increases in tourist traffic from the Far East internally and to other continents. The TSW could work with commercial outlets to facilitate this expanded tourist activity. With festivals and other such specific activity available this could draw many more visitors to the system.

The Local Business Improvement Associations should work in concert with others to provide a facilitated approach to expanded festival and related activities and new tourist initiatives.

The Trent Severn Waterway must move away from a bureaucratic mindset. Financial, recreational and cultural interest will be met through the introduction of a more commercial and businesslike approach to meeting the needs of all parties. The staid uncommunicative approach will no longer work.

The Trent Severn Waterway should be designated a heritage site. This will help to allow for additional funding as well as help in encouraging increased travel to the waterway.

7) ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Federal Government should maintain control over the Trent Severn Waterway. The political, financial, recreational and cultural influences which come from such control are essential to maintain the long term viability of the Trent Severn Waterway.

Lack of communication and the attendant inability to act are two critical faults in the operation of the Trent Severn Waterway. In order for this to be resolved, a new operational body led by the Federal Government must be created which will manage, direct, control and facilitate the operation of the Trent Severn Waterway. The new body must include critical stakeholders which should participate in making decisions to ensure the on-going viability of this system. At a minimum, the Provincial Government, municipal representation, conservation group representation as well as commercial interests should be included in this group.

Each of these stakeholders should have the authority to speak on behalf of their constituent interests and be able to commit human and financial resources as required to effect change as decided upon by the new body. Action and communication are essential to bring about necessary change for the betterment of the TSW.

Recommendation

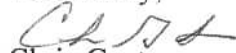
- a) A new body should be established by the Federal Government in concert with Provincial and Municipal representatives to effect the renewed operation of the Trent Severn Waterway System.

8) THE FUTURE

Previous committees have studied the operation of the Trent Severn Waterway system. The current government has taken a very positive step in establishing the Panel on the future of the Trent-Severn Waterway. Informed comments are coming forward and no doubt excellent analysis and recommendations will be developed and presented to the government for action.

It should be noted however, that the time for action is now. For numerous reasons, the government must move to make changes to address existing concerns and move the TSW in a more dramatic direction which will polish this existing jewel for all to see and appreciate as well as come to appreciate.

Yours truly,



Chris Gaetan
President