

Marlene White

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## T-SW DRAFT NOTES FOR MARLENE'S PRESENTATION

Protocol....

You have heard many presentations on the state of the Waterway and the desired outcomes from this process. Most of them can be summarized by the simple statement "We want the T-SW to be restored to the gem that it used to be". This means, of course, a restoration of the water quality and quantity as well as a greater emphasis on the incredible history associated with the T-SW watershed. These are complex issues and involve Provincial as well as Federal jurisdictions.

**Water quality** will involve both remediation and controls on future development - both Provincial responsibilities. One approach to ensuring that future development in the watershed has no negative impact would be to negotiate with the Ontario Government to amend the Provincial Policy Statement under the Planning Act. The amendment should designate the entire T-SW watershed as a "natural heritage feature" with all of the restrictions associated with provincially significant wetlands. This would result in Environmental Impact Studies being required for any development within 120 m of the high water mark and, provided that T-SW is also given the right and the resources to review and comment on these studies, some measure of control for the future.

**Remediation** is also a complex issue requiring cooperation from the Provincial health authorities. This will be an expensive process. I have been told that the Conservation Authority with responsibility for Lake Simcoe has estimated that it will cost \$140 million to clean up the lake and has so far received only \$12 million.

The issue of the **quantity of water** in the T-SW watershed will be much more difficult to solve, particularly with the uncertainties predicted with climate change. However, one principle must be respected in guiding recommendations regarding water level management and that is one of "the greatest good for the greatest number". We have allowed development of the reservoir lakes to the point where they are in themselves recreational assets. These must be managed for the optimal use of those who have invested in recreational homes on their shores. If this means greater variations in the water levels in the canal itself - so be it. The negative impact of increased level fluctuations could be greatly mitigated, in this internet age, by a sophisticated, real-time, "notice to boaters" system that warned boaters of impending level changes.

If there are undeveloped lakes in the watershed that could be added to the water management system to give greater flexibility, then they should be incorporated as part of the rebuilding of the T-SW. In rebuilding it would also be sensible to incorporate more sophisticated methods of controlling water levels and increased hydro-electric power generation capacity – all of which means even more initial capital investment.

We should give greater emphasis to **first nations cultural history** along the T-SW. Boaters on the T-SW should be encouraged to tie up for a while and explore the villages. Parks Canada has done a wonderful job in building interpretive centres in the National Parks. This talent could be usefully directed to Burleigh Falls, for example. A 10,000 year old paleo-indian site has been found there along with a more recent underwater wooden weir used by first nations people to catch fish, long before the settlers arrived ....

But most of these “solutions” you have already heard, you have a tough job ahead of you and I wish you well in your efforts. There is a lot of cynicism out there that takes the form of comments like “This is just one more exercise in window-dressing like all the others that went nowhere”. Prove them wrong and make this one stick and you will have done a great service to us all.

To do that you must address the political realities of this situation.

Significant funds to rebuild and operate the infrastructure on the T-SW will have to be provided by both the Federal and Provincial levels of government - the governments that will benefit from increased tax revenues. At present these governments are Conservative and Liberal, respectively.

I see the challenges facing the T-SW as non-partisan. A solution is as important for Liberals as it is for Conservatives - we must all pull together.

As the Federal Liberal candidate for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, I pledge to do my utmost to seek adequate funding and implementation of a plan “to restore the T-SW to its former glory”.