

Lovesick Lake Association

Written Submission of the Presentation to the Trent Severn

Panel

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My name is Ann Ambler and I represent the members of the Lovesick Lake Association as President. I also am a member of the Board of the Kawartha Lake Stewards and serve as Secretary

I appreciate being able to communicate the concerns of the Lovesick Lake Association members to the Trent Severn Panel and, after reading through many of the submissions, discussion papers and background papers, realize how complex your challenge is in determining the future of the Trent Severn Waterway. I will convey the concerns of our Lake Association which has more than fifty members, and then have remarks to follow in regard to the information posted on the TSW Panel website.

Lovesick Lake is a small volume relatively shallow lake with a mean depth of 2.3 metres, situated between two much larger lakes – Buckhorn to the west and Stoney to the east. Lovesick has one four foot landlocked lock and seven small dams controlling the flow of water from Lower Buckhorn (formerly Upper Lovesick) into Lovesick and then two dams and the Burleigh lock into Stoney. The Lovesick Lock and the seven dams are located on Wolff Island Provincial Park and this forms the division from Buckhorn. Our constitution states that our primary concern is the protection of the health and ecological environment of the lake and the safety and health of the residents – some permanent and many cottagers. Over a number of years, the Lake Association, in conjunction with the MOE Lake Partner Program has been involved in phosphorus testing and, E.coli testing with the Kawartha Lake Stewards Association since their inception.

Lovesick Lake, because it is a small microcosm of the larger Kawartha Lakes has been the site of studies for several years on excessive macrophyte (weed) growth, algae growth and nutrient loads – especially phosphorus and possibly next year nitrogen isotopes. These small

studies, which we consider to be long term, have been carried out by Dr Eric Sager of Trent University in partnership with KLSA. The Lovesick Lake Association members, to the best of their ability have contributed financial backing and in kind support for these studies in trying to determine factors affecting excess weed growth. I should also mention that the KLSA, a grassroots volunteer organization has had funding for the past couple of years to one-third their budget from TSW.

The residents of Lovesick Lake are very appreciative to be part of such a spectacular waterway as the Trent Severn and feel privileged to be able to readily access it.

We do however have three concerns that are not necessarily specific to our lake but whose conditions are likely found on other Kawartha Lakes.

The Lovesick Lake Association concerns are as follows:

❖ Fluctuating Water levels

The lake association has strong concerns about fluctuation levels especially in the early spring and late fall to winter levels. We have not had nesting loons on the lake in over a decade and we think that the fluctuation in the spring prevents nesting – either the nests are left high and dry or they are flooded. I suspect this impacts other ecological systems as well. As an association, we began last winter, an attempt to go through the permitting process to have floating loon-nesting platforms placed in appropriate places on the lake. The bureaucratic demands and the process so onerous by the TSW and the MNR, that we gave up. This is a permitting and water management problem which could be resolved with a less complex permit system and fewer jurisdictional cross interests and demands.

In regard to winter levels, we would like to be informed in a timely fashion, maybe on a dedicated page of the Parks Canada website, when to expect the winter levels and to what extent the TSW expects the lake to be drawn down. Residents need to adjust foot valves pushing them further into the lake for water sources. We realize that at times this is weather dependant. This is a communication problem.

Tree anchoring is another consideration of fluctuating water levels and there are many uprooted white pines around the lake whose roots have been upturned and exposed. There is not a lot of anchoring soil to begin with— primarily rock. Does the varying water level loosen the roots further? Is other shoreline vegetation impacted by fluctuating water levels?

❖ **Weeds**

The Lake Association encourages naturalization of shorelines and discourages lawn fertilization and other environmentally poor practices in an attempt to reduce nutrient loads to aquatic weeds. The Lovesick Lake members are concerned about excessive weed growth and algae growth covering the weeds in large blooms. These blooms or epiphytes make swimming unpleasant late in the season. Navigation through the lake is difficult at various times through the summer and large floating weed mats can be problematic. Trying to determine cause and effect of weather, nutrient content of the lake and the cyclical nature of a variety of weeds is one reason that we continue to support further study. We would ask that we be able to call on Parks Canada to give us some support and advice on curbing weed growth. Would it help to lower the water levels very significantly during the winter to help curb weed growth the following year? This is not only a problem on this lake but many other Kawartha Lakes as well. The KLSA is working on this weed issue and it appears to be a primary concern of cottagers at every meeting.

❖ **Proposed Season Lock Passes to non-motorized boats**

The Lovesick Lake Association strongly suggests that a reduced-cost season Lock Pass could be issued to non-motorized boats such as kayaks and canoes and that they be allowed through the lock, at the convenience of the lockmaster. This could be an additional (small) source of revenue in lakes where more local traffic could be encouraged and enjoyed between lakes with locks that are close together.

Other Remarks, Questions and Reflections

Just recently, my husband and I and some friends made a trip up through the system from Lovesick Lake to Parry Sound. The lockmasters and their assistants were most pleasant, friendly and helpful. Many of the locks were well kept and several had very attractive gardens. The viewing building at Port Severn was very professionally done and interesting. The TSW is a tremendous asset to Ontario and a tourist attraction on land as well as the water.

- ❖ **User Fees on the TSW and Parks Canada Waterways**—As a result of that trip, and in conversation with other cottagers on the lake I think we take for granted the navigational buoys through the system, our lakes and especially in Georgian Bay where it would be impossible to manage without them. Who pays for the privilege of having Parks Canada place and maintain the navigational markers and monitor lakes and dams? We do not want to limit the use of the waterway by introducing more fees or licences but we felt that those people enjoying the benefits of the system should bear some of the financial responsibility for its operation. Maybe it is time to require annual boat licenses for motorized boats— again as necessary additional source of income? Yearly, we need automobile and snowmobile licenses. Enforcement could be provided by the OPP marine unit and the lockmasters via a small boat sticker. It would take time to implement. Many if not all U.S. States require yearly boat licenses.

Last summer we went on a kayaking trip to the Queen Charlotte Islands and were required to buy a pass to the Gwaii Haanas National Park Preserve. This is a park administered by Parks Canada and the Haida Gwaii Council. We paid \$60 per person pass (I believe this may be equivalent to a season pass) and were there six days. We visited historic Haida villages and kayaked. The fees support visitor services and facilities.

- ❖ **Boat Gasoline Tax** what government body receives the boat gasoline tax? Is it used for water management and maintenance? Does Parks Canada receive this money?

- ❖ **Conflicting Jurisdictions** I think that jurisdiction of the TSW needs to be resolved now. It should be left to a single body – a Federal body. It should not be parcelled out to the Provincial Government who then might shunt some responsibilities off to municipalities who do not have the funds nor the expertise to manage the waterway and the whole system would be piecemeal management policies to the detriment of the TSW.

- ❖ **Federal Capital Infusion of Money** The Federal Government needs to infuse a large capital expenditure to upgrade the system – modern systems for monitoring water flow and monies for personnel and infrastructure.

- ❖ **Permitting processes** – We need a responsive and more efficient permitting process and a direct point of contact person for all water and shoreline structures and possible variances. Currently, there is an overlap of jurisdictional responsibilities of municipal, provincial and federal permitting, making this process too lengthy and onerous.
I would suggest that because of this overlap, the lack of pursuit of infractions and lack of personnel that many people ignore the permit process for docks, shoreline structures and other like issues.

- ❖ **Navigation Levels on the TSW**
We realize that help is needed for the reservoir lakes in finding a solution to their problems and their wishes in regard to low and fluctuating water levels and related implications. However even though this model has maintained flows and levels for over one hundred years, to draw down the draught through the whole Trent Severn System to the amount reservoir lakes contribute would do

irreparable damage – ecologically, recreationally and economically. The implications of reduced water level from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay are enormous and devastating.

I agree with Ian Forester’s well-written submission on behalf of the Shadow Lakes Association to the panel “that it would be totally unrealistic for one group of residents to force a change within the water management that would adversely affect residents in another part of the system.” Also in the Ecoplans study “Obligations and Expectations” under the title of Historical Practices, p.14, the statement “ the long history of past practice has created a very large public expectation that the system will continue to be operated as in the past and in a predictable way”. Predictability creates trust. And, in the same section “ residents along the waterway and in many of the reservoir lakes have adapted their infrastructure and practices to reflect a consistent history of manipulation of flows and levels.” The obligations of the TSW in water flow management have responsibilities for public safety in navigation depths. Visiting boaters to the TSW form a large part of the TSW’s business. They need guaranteed navigation levels. The Haliburton Lakes had very little development, and were used as reservoirs when the water flow management plan for the TSW was engineered. To now reduce the amount of water they wish in the TSW would destroy the whole system. We strongly recommend the water levels should be maintained at current levels.

The Trent Severn Waterway is a National Historic Landmark and a very pleasurable scenic outdoor facility. One reason it is scenic is devoid of advertising and signage and should remain so. It should be more highly promoted and marketed to boaters and tourists alike, both here and in the United States – in boating magazines, outdoor magazines, feature articles in newspapers and tourist publications that are widely distributed. The “Loopers” – those boaters covering the loop up the Mississippi – through Chicago into the Great Lakes, through the Severn System, the St Lawrence or

Hudson River and down the Inter Coastal Waterway all rave about the scenic beauty and the friendly people through Georgian Bay and the Trent Severn. This is something very worthwhile preserving.

Thank you
Ann Ambler
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