



Submission to the Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway

By

Soyers Lake Ratepayers' Association Inc.

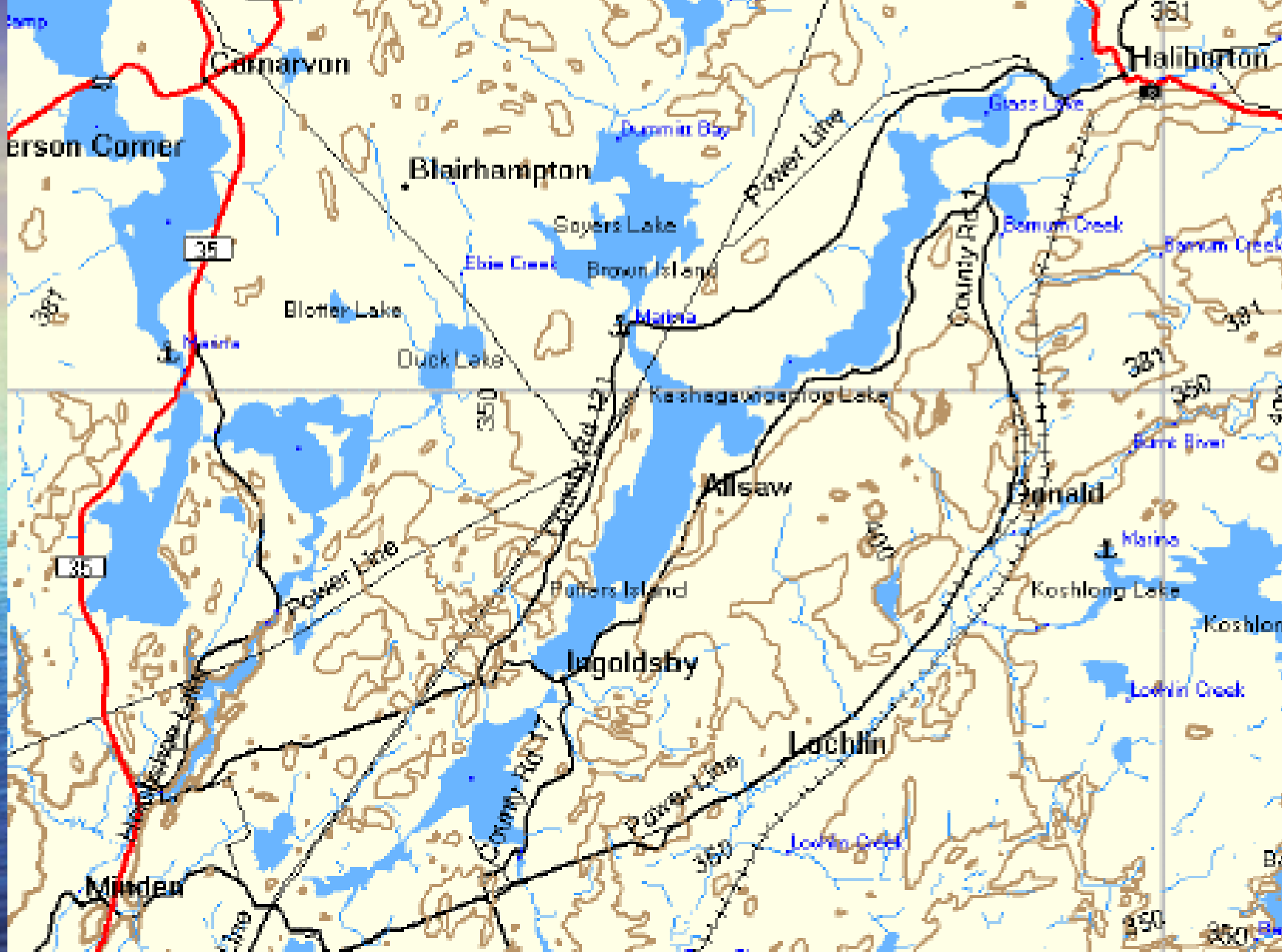
August 14, 2007

Points at issue:

1. Who we represent
2. Our Interests
3. Our Concerns
4. Response to Ecoplans Report
5. Our Recommendations
6. Thanks to the Panel

WHO WE REPRESENT:

- Over 80% of approximately 200 property owners
- Soyers Lake: Area 3.3 km², perimeter 17.4km, maximum depth 51 m, sill depth 1.5 m; fluctuation 1.1 m below high water mark to 0.32 m above.
- Part of 5-lake chain: Head, Grass, Kashagawigamog, Soyers, Canning. Level controlled at Scott's Dam, Canning Lake.
- Properties assessed from \$100k to \$1500k, average \$200-400k.



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COMMENTARY :

- The water Level in 5-lake chain (Head-Canning) was raised by Scott's Dam in 1866 for the steamer Haliburton to run between "the foot of the lake" and Haliburton in 1867. Thus these lake levels were raised well before the Trent-Severn Order-in Council of July, 1905. (L.L. Dobrzensky, 1985)

OUR INTERESTS:

- Maintenance of Acceptable Lake Levels and Water Quality; reduction of Water Level Fluctuation (WLF)
- Reasonable Water Access
- Limitation of Ecosystem Damage: wetlands, fish and waterfowl habitat, shoreline degradation and erosion
- Minimization of navigation hazards due to WLF.

OUR CONCERNS (1):

- Level drawdowns in excess of 0.5 m
- Lack of information about timing and extent of drawdowns
- Lack of access to hydrological and geographic data and models
- Rapid rate of drawdowns and flooding
- Ice damage to shoreline structures
- Increasing vegetative growth in certain areas consequent to persistent drawdowns











OUR CONCERNS (2):

- Property value loss from reduced water access
- Limitation of Soyers Lake boating activity
- Soyers Lake becomes “landlocked” at low water levels
- Lack of any assistance from TSW when we opposed an Ontario PTTW for 4.7 MI/d by a developer on Little Soyers Lake
- Jurisdictional confusion... “Who’s in Charge?”
- Impact of climate change on WLF

RESPONSE TO ECOPLANS REPORT:

- Report has identified and clarified many key issues
- Issues of the Reservoir Lakes are recognized, and the importance of their partnership in the TSW is made clear
- Continuing jurisdictional chaos and inertia, with its concomitant under-resourcing of the TSW has finally been documented.
- Need for automated data management and dam control
- Examination of similar agencies in Canada and USA show similar issues, but much more successful response to them.
- Excellent suggested governance for TSW

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Implementation of a governance model as proposed in the Ecoplans Report
- Clarify the goals and objectives of the “TSW Agency”
- Synthesize a Partnership to provide both advice and resources: Federal, Provincial, Municipal, ENGO, Lake Associations, Hydro-Electric Power generators and others.
- Identify a clear communications mandate that functions in both directions, and in a timely manner.
- Develop a clear set of indicators that can be used to assess the achievement of goals and objectives.

THANKS TO THE PANEL

SLRA is grateful for the opportunity to provide input to the Panel. We hope that our comments are taken as constructive suggestions and observations.

We also hope that this effort on behalf of the TSW and its present and future partners will not suffer the fate of many of its predecessors. It was critical to have provided the public access to the process, and we believe that this decision may have been the key to meaningful progress for us all.

Data for the Trent-Severn system survey by Ecoplans. Assembled by D. Pengelly, SLRA, January 8, 2007.



This is an extract of the 1:50,000 topographical map showing Soyers Lake. It is from the NAD83 base, which means that it is up to date as of 1983.

There are about 100 dots around the periphery of the lake at that time, indicating shoreline structures, typically cottages or residences.

The perimeter of the lake by measurement from the map is 17.4 km, or 10.8 miles. The area of the lake is 3.33 sq km or 820 acres. The amount of shoreline that is not likely to be developed because it is wetlands, etc is estimated at about 7%, or 1.2 km. The lake is deep (up to 168 ft), and is regarded as a cold water "trout" lake. It has an outlet sill depth to Lake Kashagwigamog at "The Narrows" of about 5 feet from the high water mark.

The water level in the last 30 years has varied from 3 ½ feet below usual high water mark to close to 1 foot above usual high water mark in June, 2005. The water level is usually 2 feet below high water by mid-August, and three feet down by Thanksgiving.

There are currently about 200 developed shoreline lots and about 20 undeveloped lots. The full density developed average frontage is thus $(17.4 - 1.2) / 220 = 74\text{m}$. Parts of the lake has small frontage (25m) lots, other parts have larger frontages, and there are still a few (<6) larger parcels. Back lot development is minimal, and since there is no direct public access to Soyers Lake, and marina access is from Kashagawigamog, further back lot development is unlikely.

After consultation with a real estate broker whose permanent residence is on Soyers Lake, we have made some estimates of the assessed value of shoreline properties on the Lake. Our estimate is that the lowest is \$80-100 K, the average is \$250-350 K, and the highest is in the range of \$1.0 to 1.5 M.

We estimate that most shoreline properties have at least 1 powered boat, and that the average is 2-3 powered boats, with 1 less than 9.9 hp, and 1 or more 25 hp or over. We estimate also that at least 50% have a canoe, kayak or sailboat. After consultation with a marina and boat service operator located between Soyers and Kashagwigamog, we were able to estimate on average 6-12 incidents per year of severe lower drive damage to power boats on Soyers Lake attributed to navigation hazards associated with low water levels in late summer, in addition to 20-25 incidents of moderate damage such as replacement of propellers, etc. The hazard is severe enough that the marina operator warns their clients from outside of Soyers on the 5-lake chain (Head, Grass, Kashagawigamog, Soyers, Canning) not to enter Soyers Lake after mid-August.