

## **SUBJECT: The Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway**

By way of introduction, we are Bill & Glenda Wakely, and are permanent residents of Haliburton Lake. We have lived and cottaged in the Haliburton area for the past 33 years.

We sincerely appreciate this opportunity to address some serious concerns to the Panel on the future of the Trent- Severn Waterway.

It is our understanding that the draw down of water from the lakes in the northern regions of the Trent-Severn watershed is a matter that was established in 1905 to ensure a depth of six feet was maintained in the Trent canal system.

From those early days, we have learned the ecological importance of lake and river shorelines to water organisms. It is therefore quite surprising that this panel was not created some years ago, considering the destruction wrought through the sudden and significant draw down of water from a vast area, for the sake of recreation.

Of great concern to all of us here in Haliburton County is the significant decrease in replenishing water levels in the spring. Over the past few years, we have been experiencing lower levels of snow and rain which translates into lower water levels at the beginning of spring. When you combine this with the annual water draw down to feed the Trent system, we are already experiencing a growing concern with significant changes to our natural environment.

If we plan to further reduce our water levels to improve recreational opportunities for our neighbours to the south, we are laying out a plan for short-term gain with drastic environmental and economic consequences for the lakes of the north. The growing economies of the business people in the northern reaches of the TSW watershed are as much dependent on cottagers and tourism as those communities in the south.

We urgently need to be planning to conserve our precious water reserves rather than planning to waste them. Our environment is changing and we urgently need to adopt. We need a plan that provides equitable water levels for **ALL** TSW residents. Do we really need six feet of water? Can we develop a foolproof system to ensure there are no mistakes in controlling the water levels (ie. removing logs by mistake)?

Doesn't it seem wasteful to allow one or two boats to enter the locks and drain all that water from the system? We note water conservation is currently in place in parts of Ontario restricting grass watering. Perhaps there needs to be a posted set of times when boats will be allowed to pass through the locks (perhaps 1 or 2 times each hour, particularly during the week as weekends are probably busier). Should it be open seven days a week?

Of course there are many other concerns as lower water levels can lead to boating accidents, loss of fish population, marshlands, wetlands and nesting habitat to the birds indigenous to Haliburton County.

We sincerely hope this is a wake up call for a very serious environmental issue...our depleting water levels!

Respectfully submitted,

Bill & Glenda Wakely