

**A Presentation to
The Panel on the Future of the Trent Severn Waterway
by Alan G. Appleby, Campbellford ON
July 25, 2007**

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me to make this presentation. My name is Alan Appleby, I live in Campbellford, and I am an ecologist and planner, self-employed in environmental consulting work. I have also worked in government where I undertook regional land use planning and was at one time responsible for a provincial park system for over five years including being involved in the creation and development of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System and the designation of a river. And I love to paddle, row and sail, as well as walk, bike and dream by the water.

Having read the background papers and other literature, I realize there is a huge body of information available to the Panel on the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW). I do not intend to reiterate this mass of material, but I do want to try to put some local and personal perspective on it all. This presentation will focus on some of the many values of the Trent Severn Waterway, but in particular its enormous importance to the Municipality of Trent Hills. And more so, the enormous importance and potential of Trent Hills to the TSW.

Enormous importance needs large facts, and there are many to talk about. What I have tried to do, quickly and in some cases perhaps somewhat imprecisely, is to take the big facts about the TSW and factor them down to the beautiful little bit I live on. My house is three blocks from the TSW and there is not a day goes by that I do not walk or bike or drive by it or over it.

There are 45 locks on the TSW, and 11 of the are in the Municipality of Trent Hills. That's 25% of the locks in the whole Trent Severn Waterway here in Trent Hills.

The TSW is 386 km long, and about 90 km of the length of the TSW is in Trent Hills. So close to 25% of the TSW corridor lies within Trent Hills.

There are over 4500 km of shoreline encompassed in the TSW's lakes, rivers and canals. I have no way of measuring the shoreline of the TSW in Trent Hills, but even if it was only ten per cent, we're talking about 450 km of largely natural shoreline.

There are only six parks along the waterway and Ferris Provincial Park in Trent Hills is one of those six. And yet there is no direct way for the many boaters who use this portion of the river to use the park directly, never mind know it is there.

In 2006-2007 there were 1,340,324 person-visits to the TSW. The long term average is closer to 1.5 million visitors per year. How many of those visitors utilize the facilities in Trent Hills? I wouldn't pretend it would be one quarter in proportion to the length and locks. But even if it was one percent, just one percent, that means 15,000 visitors a year, more than the total population of

Trent Hills. I'd be willing to bet it is much more than that.

The high use areas are noted to be Peterborough, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls and Big Chute, which count for 55% of visitation. Three of those hot spots, Peterborough, Bobcaygeon and Fenelon Falls are within 100 km of Trent Hills by road. The people who are travelling to these hot spots are travelling a lot more than 100 km each way. Trent Hills is not far out of the way.

Another ramification of the 1,500,000 visitors is that it makes the TSW the third (tied with the Rideau Canal) most visited of all Canada's National Parks and Historic Sites. The only sites with more visitors were Banff and Jasper National Parks, and Jasper isn't that far ahead of TSW. In other words, Trent Hills hosts one quarter, 25%, of one of the premier tourism and recreation sites in both Ontario and all of Canada. To put it another way, the TSW has the equivalent of almost 20% of the visitation to all of Ontario's Provincial Parks. That's a lot of visitors.

An Economic Impact Study of the Trent-Severn Waterway in 2000 highlighted its economic impact. In 1997, there were expenditures of \$49.7 million associated with the operation of the Trent-Severn Waterway. Approximately \$28.2 million was spent by boaters, \$10.6 million was spent by land-based visitors and \$10.9 million was spent by Parks Canada. These expenditures generated \$96.7 million of economic activity. I don't know how much of that economic activity happens in Trent Hills, but even a small percentage is obviously very important.

Now as I said in my introduction, I am an ecologist by education and training and have worked largely in environmental policy and projects. So I also want to talk about other values of the TSW, the environmental benefits and opportunities afforded by the Trent Severn Waterway.

The TSW is more than its visitors and the water based opportunities for recreation and economic development that they seek and create. The TSW is also a considerable land based corridor, including property at each lock site, and responsibility for water management all along the system. There are over 4500 km of shoreline, and most of it is still in a largely natural condition. As mentioned previously I would conservatively estimate that about 10% of this shoreline is in the Municipality of Trent Hills.

The TSW is not only habitat for boaters and cottagers. It is more importantly, given the loss of natural landscapes in southern Ontario, a large reservoir of essential habitat. A recent publication of the TSW on species at risk indicates that the region boasts one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the province, with 32 federally and 34 provincially listed species of interest as rare, threatened or endangered. Many of these species are resident in Trent Hills.

Even in the highly developed Kawartha Lakes approximately 50 percent of the TSW shoreline is still in a forested state. However, at least 65 percent of that waterfront land has been zoned for development. In Trent Hills we have a great deal of forested natural waterfront left but we too have a lot of pressure for further development and the problems that come with control.

Along the length of the Trent-Severn Waterway there are approximately 230 wetlands. One of the most significant of these, the Murray Marsh is partly in the Trent Hills area. The Murray Marsh is the largest remaining marsh in southeastern Ontario and recognized as nationally important for its flora and fauna. Overall about 10% of Trent Hills is wetland habitats.

The TSW is unique ecologically in that its path crosses several distinct ecosystems in southern Ontario. For much of its length the TSW runs literally along the borderline between two major continental ecoregions, the Mixedwood Plains of southern Ontario and the Boreal Shield to the north, the so-called Canadian Shield that to many defines much of our country.

Biologists know that these boundary areas, called ecotones, between major ecological systems are rich in species diversity due to the mixing of habitats and populations native to each. This becomes distinctly apparent in biodiversity mapping done by Parks Canada. That mapping shows this band of land that lies over most of the length of the TSW and borders on two major ecoregions has some of the highest biodiversity values in the province.

This is the so-called “land between” because of its position between the farm lands of the south and the lake and cottage country of the north, between the limestone and granite bedrock regions, and between the deciduous forest and boreal coniferous forest. This significant natural boundary is also a part of the northern edge of Trent Hills as well as the TSW.

This amazing confluence of natural features, much of it still intact, leads us to both appreciate and be concerned about maintaining its integrity in the long term. As I understand it, that is why we are here, why you are convened, what this is all about, the long term integrity of the TSW.

The *Canada National Parks Act*, the law governing national parks in Canada, defines the term "ecological integrity" as essentially the natural condition characteristic of a region along with its native species and biological communities, and supporting processes. This principal of ecological integrity is now one of Parks Canada's major management objectives. This principle is simply to allow people to enjoy national parks as special places without damaging their ecological integrity. It is a cornerstone of the concept of sustainable community development.

In other words, ecological integrity is both an endpoint for park management and one of the major measures of our success in maintaining these special places for the benefit of ourselves and of future generations. With the Trent Severn Waterway as such an important part of Canada's national system of parks, we, and now most importantly you, must ensure the continuance of the integrity of this irreplaceable resource.

It is easy to look back at the genesis of the TSW a canal that sputtered and grew only in fits and starts, got finished too late, and never really served the purpose it was intended for and think it of little value. But of course the intent of the builders is not always the aspect for which cultural treasures are ultimately valued. Just ask King Tut about that one.

Over the first century of TSW operation, over all the years the proposed but of course unimagined growth and development occurred, this apparent anachronism now gives us an opportunity to create something new from something old. It gives us an opportunity to turn the work of the past into the treasures of the future. It gives us the chance to look at new ways of living on the landscape, with the landscape, while making the transition from old ways to new ways, and keeping the best of both. For those of us who live in Trent Hills, as in most other rural areas of Canada, this is an essential problem. How do we keep the values of the past and progress into the future? The Trent Severn Waterway, intended to be our original highway for development, can still serve us in many ways to enhance the life of today's residents and the lives of our children beyond us.

We have seen over and over again what happens when special areas and features like the TSW are taken for granted, treated as just another part of the landscape, allowed to be developed under the same principles as natural areas and heritage structures of lesser importance. We all recognize the phrases "Niagara Escarpment", "Oak Ridges Moraine", and "Greenbelt". These now iconic zones of landscape are all areas whose importance was undervalued until it was too late, or almost too late. These are areas of high recreational, natural and human heritage value that were not treated as the special places they are until the threats became clear, imminent, and almost unavoidable.

So let us add to that list of iconic landscapes the "Trent Severn Waterway" and its corridor as another special place from all respects, social, natural, historical, recreational deserving of the best future we can give it so that it can give us the best future we can have.

Some Recommendations:

1. ***Make sure the TSW stays in public hands and public operation.*** This is not a business, it is our landscape, our community, and our life, and will nourish many businesses.
2. ***Make sure the TSW stays a corridor, a complete connected corridor.*** The whole depends on all its parts. Breaking it up will lead to the destruction of it all.
3. ***Make sure the TSW stays a viable, connected habitat for all the species that depend on it,*** including human beings. We have too little natural habitat left, we need to protect and manage all of what is left, for all of the life on the earth.
4. ***Make sure the TSW remains a place of integrity:*** ecological integrity, social integrity and historical integrity.
5. ***Make sure the TSW comes to enhance life in all its communities, including Trent Hills.*** Here is a basis for development of a corridor of sustainable communities.

Thank you.