

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

August 29, 2007

Chairman Douglas Downey, and members of the panel, Ms. Sandra Barrett, and Messieurs Greg Bishop, Dean Peters, Doug Rollins and Tom Symons,

By way of introduction, we are John and Judy Skinner, and are permanent residents of Haliburton Lake, where we have lived and cottaged for 34 years.

We sincerely appreciate this opportunity to address our 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.

The recent Discovery Day program held at the West Gullford Community Centre, "Life on the Edge" taught children the importance of riparian areas. The shoreline areas in the Haliburton Highlands are more natural and less developed than shorelines in the City of Kawartha Lakes and Muskoka. It is important for this panel to give significant weight to this aspect of your study. The northern area lake shorelines need protection.

This past June, two logs were pulled from the Oblong Lake dam within the space of one week. The water had not yet reached the high mark in Haliburton Lake at that time. This created a rather significant and rapid outflow from the lake, and our personal experience in damages was our pump to water the garden ran dry and required repairs due to the foot valve being left high and dry.

This brought to mind a suggestion for the panel's consideration. I (John) have visited the dam on many occasions over the years, and the logs are at least twelve inches in height, and the water leaks through the cracks, and around the ends of the logs. If all dams on the system had the logs replaced with four inch or six inch steel beams with rubber gaskets, it would significantly reduce the leakage, while permitting a more controlled drawdown. Why draw down a foot of water, when four or six inches are enough?

Another suggestion is to announce drawdown's in advance, so that weekend cottagers in particular can take measures to prevent damage to boats and docks due to the draw down. Ontario Hydro has a very efficient computer telephone system to let its customers know of scheduled power outages. Such a system should be put in place to notify all concerned of draw downs, particularly when the drawdown is early in the season and unexpected.

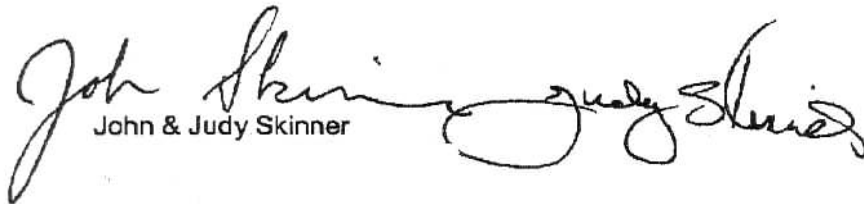
The population and business growth around the reservoir lakes in the northern area are compelling reasons enough for the equitable distribution of the available water. It is no longer a case of sparsely inhabited lakes wherein the drawdown is of little consequence. In fact, there has been a significant increase in the year round population around Haliburton Lake in the past three years, and this trend will not only continue, but will accelerate.

There are many other concerns and questions of course, such as:

- Low water levels hazardous to boating and water skiers
- Loss of marshlands, wetlands, and nesting habitat for loons, blue herons and other birds/wildlife indigenous to lakes in Haliburton County
- High and dry docks & accessibility to water
- Damage to beached boats due to no notice of drawdown
- There needs to be equitable flow and water levels to all who reside or cottage on the entire system
- Can the canal system operate on less than a six foot depth, and is the system being operated efficiently to conserve water?
- Should the canal system be closed two or three days a week to conserve water, or operate on reduced/set hours?
- The economies of the business people in the northern reaches of the TRW watershed are as much dependent on cottagers and tourism as those communities in the south.

We trust the TWS Panel will give serious consideration to the foregoing, and come to a balanced solution that will be fair to all concerned permanent residents, cottagers, and visitors who live, work, and play throughout the entire Trent Severn Watershed.

Yours truly,

  
John & Judy Skinner