

September 30, 2007

Trent-Severn Panel

Re: Water Management on Crystal Lake (Galway Township), 2007

I am a long term cottager/property owner on Crystal Lake in Galway Township and support the submission that was made on behalf of the Crystal Lake Cottagers Association. I would like to make some additional comments.

I am familiar with and understand the reasons why the Trent system was originally created, and the principals under which it has operated for the past 100+ years. However, as recognized by the panel, and the study which was undertaken by Ecoplans Limited May 2007, it is now time to review and implement the numerous recommendations. I have read thru several submissions and the material provided by Ecoplans and am extremely impressed by the quality, understanding, insight and passion about this important topic.

It is a very complex balancing act to provide safe navigation, appropriate water supply, water quality, protection of natural resources and water levels and to allow for recreational activities on our waterways.

The Ecoplans study mentions the original purpose of the Trent was to support timber harvesting and that 175 year ago, the waterways were virtually uninhabited, however, we know the permanent residents, cottagers, businesses, recreational activities, fishing has increased dramatically over the years.

The issue I'm having difficulty understanding is why the Trent and the 'big lakes' water needs supersede the reservoir lakes!! We all have similar interests and recreational hobbies and property tax base. Given that the needs of the Trent have changed over the 100+ years, the objectives of the water levels on the Trent and the navigational depth charts should also be revised.

The background information provided on the Trent panel website, outlines that usership on the Trent system has changed drastically over the years. Given the Trent is not used for commercial trade and the number of boaters using the canal system has been greatly reduced over the years, the justification for maintaining consistently high water levels in the "big canal lakes" at the expense of the reservoir lakes seems unreasonable. How can it be expected that the residents on the reservoir lakes be asked to suffer drastic and unpredictable water level fluctuations in order to ensure the water levels are consistent for the residents of "canal lakes". This current system does not reflect the principles of fairness and ecosystem sustainability.

Given that the reality of climate change is upon us, we can expect to see longer, drier, summer periods with less snow fall during the winter months. This being the case, if the water management objectives of the Trent are not drastically altered, we will have a situation where more water is required earlier and earlier from the "reservoir lakes" in order to ensure that the lakes level are maintained in the "canal lakes". Obviously this is an inequitable and untenable situation that can not be tolerated.

We must all be expected to change our lifestyles and preserve water into the future in order to ensure economic stability, quality of life and ecosystem management are maintained.

I also want to stress that 2007 was an unusual year. This has been a major concern for all cottagers this year. The early spring run-off was not captured as the logs were not placed in the dam by Trent staff in time. This resulted in lower water levels in the spring which was then exasperated with the dramatic drop in water levels in August. This has caused havoc, confusion and significant decrease in recreational activities, not to mention the damage to boats, shorelines and docks. We have been used to the winter water levels occurring in mid October and we anticipate and plan for it, however, mid to late August was completely unexpected.

Another concern, is the vast majority of cottagers rely on a pump, water line and foot valve system for their water supply instead of a well. Foot valve placement has been based on the somewhat predictable water levels and draw-down process. This year, however with the quick water draw-down foot valves were in water levels and/or exposed which could be dangerous to health due to unknown bacteria and/or whatever is harbouring in the 'muck'. Although we haul drinking water to the cottage or buy bottled water, we still rely on lake water to brush teeth, wash vegetables, dishes, laundry, shower **and** most importantly to keep our septic systems in good working order. Also, the water was smellier (fishy) and weedier then in previous years.

I greatly appreciate the panels involvement in this extremely important and valued undertaking. Thank you for taking the time to read our submission.

Yours truly,

Michael LeBlanc
Crystal Lake