

Nenad Jeremic

Sunday, September 30, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been cottaging on Eels Lake for the past 20 years. My wife's family has owned the property for over forty years. As a reservoir lake for the Trent-Severn Waterway, I understand that the water level will drop throughout the summer/fall season. We have become accustomed to the problems associated with the drop in water level. The last two cottage seasons have been out of the ordinary. Due to a lack of rain and poor management of the dam on our lake over the past couple of years, we have had to move our dock several times and it has resulted in a short boating season. This year, it would seem that the boards in the dam were not installed early enough resulting in the fact that the spring runoff was not contained and the higher water level that we typically see at the beginning of the season was not apparent. From my understanding, the TSW did not realize this was the situation until it was brought to their attention by the proprietors of Eels Lake Marina.

Historically I have been able to keep my boat in the lake until the Thanksgiving Weekend, the past two years I have had to remove my boat on the first weekend in September. I am unhappy that the boating season has been cut short so that the Trent-Severn Waterway can maintain their minimum water levels. When the Trent-Severn Waterway mandate was established in the early 1900's, the reservoir lake didn't have as many cottagers/residents as there are today. I am concerned for the cottagers and residents on these lakes as well as for the aquatic life of plants and animals. I am also concerned about the lack of communication as well as the responsiveness of communication. I personally contacted two years ago and was informed that the TSW had no obligation to inform reservoir lakes of their intentions with respect to when they would lower water levels and by how much. I also indicated that the TSW didn't work in conjunction with the MNR to establish healthy minimum water levels for the fisheries on the reservoir lakes. Much has changed since the TSW was established in the early 1900's. While I appreciate the need to keep the water levels at a certain depth, I also believe that it is time to involve all stakeholders in this process.

I believe that The Trent-Severn Waterway can exist and achieve a sustainable future from the perspective of the reservoir lakes, if they rework their mandate to encompass the welfare of all users of the Waterway and the people who cottage/reside on the reservoir lakes. They MUST work in conjunction with the MNR to maintain healthy fish populations on reservoir lakes with a better water management strategy. This strategy should encompass better use of the water resources, repair dams to minimize leakage, and, if possible, reuse the water at the locks which in turn would reduce the overall water demands of the system. The ownership and management of the Waterway should be clearly defined and a new funding structure should be considered; one that would provide enough resources to maintain the existing infrastructure and make future improvements. I think that as a society we are slowly coming to the realization that water is a limited resource; one of which we need to make better use.

The problems and possible solutions for the sustainable future of the Trent-Severn Waterway are complex, and there are many points to consider. My hope is that the concerns of all stakeholders will be heard and considered in the future.

Sincerely,

Nenad Jeremic