

**CEWF PRESENTATION FOR MEMBER LAKE ASSOCIATIONS
SPRING/SUMMER 2008**

(May or may not use slides from our presentation to the Panel. **Power point slides provided by request.**)

SLIDE NO. 1 INTRODUCTION – “They are depending on us!”

Thank you for this opportunity to briefly present the Coalition’s position that was taken with the federally appointed Panel on the Future of the TSW. I am pleased to report that the Panel has submitted to the Minister of Environment Canada an excellent report making 26 recommendations. The report, “It’s All About the Water” is available at www.tswpanel.ca where the complete written submissions of the CEWF may also be found, or www.pc.gc.ca under **Media Room**

The CEWF represents approximately 40,000 Ontario taxpayers who own property on reservoir and flow through (RAFT) lakes in what TSW refers to as the Haliburton Sector. This sector includes the Gull River, Burnt River, Nogies Creek, Eels Creek, Jack Creek and Mississauga River Watersheds most of which are in Haliburton County but the area also extends into the Township of Galway-Cavendish, Harvey, the County of Peterborough and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

In its presentation to the Panel, the Coalition made it very clear that we expected nothing less than an equitable, updated, integrated water management mandate that reflects the modern day usage of the entire TSW system including the reservoir and flow-through lakes in our region.

The Panel supported our position in 6 areas. We lost 1 and came to a draw in 2.

SLIDE NO. 2 DEFINITION OF “EQUITABLE”

The first question members of CEWF are asked is what we mean by “**equitable** water flow”.

The Coalition is seeking the implementation of an equitable water management policy for the TSW that accords equal consideration, along with fair and just treatment to everyone in the entire Trent River watershed. Reservoir and flow through (RAFT) lake communities should be considered equally with all other TSW communities where the policy applies to safe navigation, access to waterfront property, economic sustainability and the avoidance of negative environmental and economic impacts.

The Coalition recommended that “The arbitrary ‘**equal percentage**’ **drawdown of reservoir lakes should be abandoned** in favour of a management plan based on individual lake ecology and corresponding drawdown regimes. The Panel did not specifically address this point but focused almost entirely on the waterway itself. **A DRAW!**”

SLIDE NO. 3 WATER MANAGEMENT

These photographs clearly show why waterfront property owners are upset and the primary reason why the Coalition was formed.

The Panel Report emphasized the need to focus on the **two watersheds (Trent & Severn)** throughout the report. They agreed with our opinion that an “integrated water management plan” is imperative to ensure the future of the waterway.

They also stated that the present mandate for Parks Canada is outdated and that certain responsibilities such as water allotment were beyond their capability.

The Panel has recommended that an **Independent Water Management Agency** accountable to the federal Minister of Natural Resources be formed to manage water flows, levels, and allocation in the Trent-Severn Watersheds. The agreement created by the federal and provincial governments would clearly describe its mandate, jurisdiction, guiding principles and structure. The Agency would consist of a five to seven member board of water management representatives. A “stakeholder advisory committee” that would include citizens with an interest in water management relating to the environment, shoreline residence, tourism, waterpower, recreational fishing, boating and resource extraction would provide formal input to the Agency. This is a big and the Number One **WIN!**

There would be a Hydro Division within the Agency which would:

- 1) Establish a licensing regime for new hydro development that reflects a rate for water usage and embodies a “run-of-river” philosophy
- 2) Pursue the development of new opportunities
- 3) Ensure compliance with federal environment assessment legislation and policies, with a particular emphasis on cultural and natural heritage
- 4) Monitor and ensure compliance with license requirements
- 5) Renegotiate existing licenses to bring all plants under one pricing regime

The Coalition acknowledges the expertise of Ontario Power Generation and is aware that substantial taxpayer funded subsidies are provided to companies producing new sources. However, we are very concerned about the emphasis placed on hydro power generation within the TSW when it is clear that the supply of water is declining. We also have concerns about the proposed Hydro Division within the Independent Water Management Agency alongside water allocation. **A reserved WIN!**

The Coalition's recommendation to "**prioritize needs and produce a comprehensive 'water budget'**" is integral to the mandate of the IWMA, but no details aligned with the Coalition's approach were outlined. Still a **Win!**

IS FRESH WATER REALLY A 'RENEWABLE' RESOURCE?

SLIDE NO. 4 GOVERNANCE (AND JURISDICTION)

The Panel noted that the question of governance and jurisdiction is in total chaos and suggested that co-operation/collaboration between the provincial and federal policy makers is essential to guarantee the sustainability of this national treasure. The province was conspicuously absent in their lack of participation in this project.

The Coalition recommended that “**The issuance of water taking permits would immediately cease** until such time as, in accordance with the Precautionary Principle, it can be proven that sufficient water is available in excess of that required to supply the demands for flood control, safe navigation, environmental issues and power generation.” In that order! The Panel addressed this in spirit if not in substance – a **WIN** in overtime, maybe!

The latest and quite encouraging news is that a rare special caucus has been formed that includes both federal and provincial members of parliament from both parties. This is a non-partisan group of people which will try to co-ordinate the implementation of some of the political recommendations contained in the Panel’s report. Initial details of the caucus initiated by Barry Devolin can be found on his website www.barrydevolin.ca Click on “Barry’s Column” which I am told he will be updating with news of the progress of the Caucus.

SLIDE NO. 5 FUNDING

The Panel report states in Chapter 10 that **“The Trent-Severn Waterway is a federal asset and a national treasure and we believe that it must be funded, in large measure, by its owner – the federal government.”**

However, the report also suggests that all levels of government receive substantial benefit and revenue from the waterway in the form of boater fuel taxes, fishing permits and municipal waterfront property taxes and should contribute to the sustainable future of the waterway. It goes on to suggest that the most important contribution other orders of government can make will not be financial, but rather in the form of their commitment to sustainable goals and their participation in a variety of partnerships that will be essential to assuring the waterway’s future. (eg. through volunteer groups like the Coalition, etc.)

The CEWF maintains that waterfront property taxes generously compensate for owning such property.

The Minister of Environment Canada announced federal funding in the amount of \$63 million to begin the process. **A WIN** depending on where the funds are allocated. It is our understanding that these funds are for “capital” expenditures, that is infrastructure, additional personnel and training. We have been advised that \$19 million has been designated to the Haliburton Sector, (dam repairs at Eels Lake) but are currently trying to obtain more details.

SLIDE NO. 6 NAVIGATION AND RIPARIAN RIGHTS

The CEWF recommends that the water management priorities of the TSW be changed. The present mandate given to it by Parks Canada is focused on flood control and navigation in the waterway proper. We believe the priority should be as shown on this slide, that is, flood control, environment including fisheries, safe navigation including in and between the reservoir & flow-through lakes, power generation followed by community use.

The Panel did not refer to Navigation and Riparian Rights per se in their report. Nor did they prioritize needs. **A LOSS!**

However, **The Panel disagreed with the Parks Canada perception that navigation in the canals and locks trumps all other demands for water.**

SLIDE NO. 7 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

There are 117 lake communities shown on the map. As previously mentioned the lakes outside of Haliburton County, White, Crystal, Eels, Jack, Catchacoma and many others are missing. The population during peak season, in some of these lake communities is higher than the two main settlement areas.

The Panel report states on Page 10 that “This waterway system is the pillar of its watersheds’ economies. Waterfront residential property alone is worth a whopping \$23.6 billion. Seasonal and permanent waterfront residents generate more than \$1 billion in economic activity and \$240 million in municipal property taxes each year. The waterway alone supports a \$300 million recreational fishery, Ontario’s largest. And water based tourism generates tens of millions more dollars. **Boats and locks are perhaps the most visible parts of this great system, but they are only the ‘tip of the iceberg’.**”

The Panel report did not specifically refer to these lake communities even though their economic impact far exceeds that of any of the other stakeholders. Lake Associations and their members are probably the best “keepers” of the environment in our region. They chose not to acknowledge the benefit given to the large communities of abundant, clean water but without compensation to the RAFT lakes and their municipalities that make the effort to ensure the quality of that water. **A DRAW!**

SLIDE NO. 8 **COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION CPR!!**

The Coalition is particularly happy about the Panel's recommendation that a Trent-Severn Heritage Region Council be formed to promote sustainability in the watersheds.

The CEWF considers the formation of this Council top priority alongside the formation of the Independent Water Management Agency. We intend to lobby governments, both provincial and federal to act quickly in this regard.

They proposed that the council members be drawn from federal, provincial and local governments, First Nations and citizens-at-large. **A definite WIN!**

Topics of Interest to the Heritage Region Council include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Lake health & planning (e.g. water quality, shoreline development and management, aquatic habitat)
- 2) Water conservation
- 3) Cultural resources and scenic quality
- 4) Recreational access to and use of the water
- 5) Natural areas (e.g., wetlands, habitat and corridors, regional ecological links)
- 6) Co-ordination of water-based economic opportunities
- 7) Natural resource management (e.g., farming, forestry, resource extraction)

You notice that the slide includes “conservation, preservation and restoration”. All of these must be practiced by TSW but also by individuals whether they live on waterfront properties or not.

The Panel strongly advocates a public education program that is adequately funded and that reflects the history as well as the present day function of the TSW. However, the Panel seems to again focus only on the canals and locks, forgetting that the watershed regions also have a very long, interesting and equally important history. The potential for these regions to develop an environmentally and ecologically friendly future is endless.

CONSERVATION: Fresh water is our most precious natural resource. It is being squandered—over the dams, used to water lawns, excessive domestic and commercial use. Something to think about-

SLIDE NO. 8 CONT. COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION CPR!!

PRESERVATION: Wetlands are being cleared or filled to make way for development. Our lakes are stressed with pollution, excessive and new weed growth, which may be caused by lower water levels, the thousands of gas powered boats and personal watercraft, faulty septic systems, fertilizers and other chemicals that can run off or leach into the lakes and rivers.

RESTORATION: Dams are in a state of disrepair. Shorelines are hardened by waterfront development. It is the legal responsibility of the Federal Government to rectify the first. It is our individual responsibility to rectify the latter.

All three of these can be achieved through **EDUCATION**. There is a wealth of knowledge available in the numerous volunteer groups like Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association Lake Stewardship Program, Environment Haliburton, Communities in Action, Haliburton Trails & Tours Network, The Frost Centre Institute, the proposed Haliburton & District Watershed Council to name a few. Given the financial resources and incentive, these organizations would be a valuable asset to the well being and successful future of the TSW. Perhaps a partnership of like minded groups could lead to a watershed council similar to the Muskoka Lakes Council.

Those of us who live, work and visit the “land between” (contact zone between the Canadian Shield and Lake Ontario) do so to experience the natural, peaceful beauty of the area. We want to keep it that way.

Equality, Integration, Conservation, Preservation. Restoration and Education are the keys. As a TV commercial says, **we did not inherit the earth from our parents. We are just borrowing it from our children.**

SLIDE NO. 9

We owe a great deal of thanks to the people who served on the various studies undertaken as early as 1971 addressing many of the very same issues covered by the Panel on the Future of the TSW. The Panel report **"It's All About the Water"** had access to and used some of the material from these studies to help formulate their recommendations.

Thank you for listening. I would be pleased to try to answer any questions you might have.

WHERE DOES THE CEWF GO FROM HERE???

- 1) Write to Parks Canada and to the Panel congratulating them on the report "It's all About the Water"
- 2) Write to the Minister of Environment Canada to try to determine how the 63 million dollars is to be spent and in what priority. *It will be the recommendation of the CEWF that the Independent Water Management Agency and the Heritage Region status and Committee be the first two orders of business.*
- 3) Engage the TSW to determine what, if anything they will attempt to do this year to improve water management. *The CEWF will offer to stand ready, willing and able to participate in that process.*
- 4) Appear before each municipal council and county to advocate for a Water Committee with a dedicated staff person to support it with community members as participants.
- 5) Lobby for acceptance of the Panel Report by the MOE Canada by organizing a letter writing campaign to include MP's from RAFT lake property owners' ridings as well as the Haliburton MP.
- 6) Organize a letter writing campaign to Provincial Ministers (Environment & Natural Resources) and to MPP's from RAFT lake property owners' ridings as well as the Haliburton MPP. *(Perhaps also could develop an internet petition)*
- 7) Encourage the formation of a Haliburton & District Watershed Council whose first task would be to lobby the federal government to establish the Heritage Region Council. Such a watershed council would also address environmental issues like the proposed open pit mining operation.

CEWF FUNDING

It has been suggested by some of members that lake associations initiate an emergency "contingency" fund within their organizations by allocating a dedicated portion of membership dues for this purpose. At the present time, the CEWF does not foresee the need for additional funds over and above the \$_____ currently held in our account. We would like to hold these funds, at least for another year at which time we will reassess our needs and act accordingly.

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