

TRENT-SEVERN WATERWAY STUDY REPORT –*Ian Forster*

The Shadow Lakes Association Executive has been participating, over the past two years, in two Studies that the Federal Government had commissioned to Study the Trent-Severn Waterway. The first Study was completed last year and resulted in the appointment of the Panel on The Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway. This Panel undertook extensive public consultation and carried out detailed research and their resultant Study titled “It’s All About The Water”, was made public in April, 2008.

The Study and all of the submissions are available to read and/or download from the Panels’ Website: www.tswpanel.ca. The Shadow Lakes Association made both an oral as well as a written submission to the Panel and this is available to be read on the Panels’ website, as well.

When I first saw the title of the Report, I was a little apprehensive about the potential conclusions and recommendations of the Panel, but as I read the Report, I started to feel a little better. The most important conclusion, from the Shadow Lakes perspective is the recognition of the importance of the Trent-Severn Waterway to the Province’s Economy and social fabric and the realization that the Waterway has to be not only preserved, but enhanced. The Report also concludes that the Waterway and it’s infrastructure is in disrepair and that the whole System needs a very large cash infusion to repair and upgrade all of it’s facilities and management systems. The Report also concludes that the whole Waterway, including the Reservoir Watersheds, should be recognized as a nationally significant cultural landscape. This would go a long way in helping to protect the whole System from any large changes that would damage the historical and natural landscape of the Watersheds including overdevelopment and resource mismanagement. The other conclusion that is good for The Shadow Lakes is the realization of the increased potential for Hydro-electric development throughout the Waterway and the Watersheds. This would mean that there would always have to be flowing water through the System and this is good for us as long as it is managed properly.

The one potential negative recommendation in the Report, from our perspective, is that the management of the water resources be taken away from Parks Canada and given to an Independent Agency with both Provincial and Federal participation. This could be a good thing as long as the needs of the Waterway are a priority and that the process of water allocation doesn’t become politicized.

Please take the time and read the Report so that you can draw your own conclusions on what it will all mean to the Shadow Lakes and Coboconk. We will be welcoming Mr. Mike Jamieson, Assistant Superintendent of the TSW, to our Annual Meeting and he will be making a brief presentation on the TSW’s interpretation of the Report and answer any of your questions.

Last weekend, I was driving over the bridge by Thompson’s Marina, and looked over at the dock on the south side of the river. The scene of four house boats berthed together as well as all of the other dock space occupied by large boats that had used the TSW to get to Coboconk really drove home the point that the TSW has a significant economic impact on our area and it is great that it is finally being recognized.