



WHITE LAKE PRESERVATION PROJECT

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NEWSLETTER, NOVEMBER 2016

1. State of the Lake Report /White Lake Stewardship Plan

A draft State of the Lake Report for White Lake is now on our website at www.wlpp.ca. It summarizes the (mostly) published information on the characteristics of the Lake and its watershed. This includes the history of the Lake and surroundings, information on the natural environment e.g. geology, flora and fauna, and also the scientific data that has been published on the lake and its watershed. It has been peer reviewed by a number of people including experts in various areas, but is still in draft form with a target for finalization in spring of 2017. Comments are still welcome.

The study and documentation of the lake dates from as early as the 1960's. All of the reports that could be located (approximately 90) have been considered in preparing the State of the Lake Report and are referenced in the Report, which is 114 pages long with 15 chapters. In other words preparing the State of the Lake Report turned out to be a very big job!

Included are chapters on: Values and Issues, Lake and Watershed Characteristics, Local History, Climate, Geology, Water Levels, Water Quality, Environment, Fishery, Land Use, Lake Capacities, Social and Recreation and Recommendation for Lake Plan Actions.

An Open House to discuss the State of the Lake Report was held Saturday, September 10, 2016 at the Stewart Community Centre in Pakenham. There was a lot of good discussion at the meeting with many points of view presented.

Highlights from 3 of the key chapters of the State of the Lake Report follow:

1.1 Chapter 8 - Water Quality

White Lake should be considered a moderately productive lake, however, water quality results show peaks in phosphorous levels mid to late summer, bringing parts of the lake to a eutrophic state.



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The lake has been experiencing blooms of blue-green algae which can contain materials toxic to animals and humans. These blooms have been observed over three years (2013-2015), in late September/early October.

Zebra mussels were first identified in 2015. In 2016 a population explosion is happening. Their presence is already changing the lake's ecology, and may contribute to increased blue-green algae in future. It will be a few years before the full impact of the zebra mussels is understood.

1.2 Chapter 11 - Land Tenure and Land Use

Unlike other lakes, the commercial accommodation units outnumber shoreline residential units by almost 2 to 1. Currently, there are 10 resort properties with a total of 980 accommodation units, compared to 540 shoreline residential lots. From a review of vacant private shorelines and using a lot frontage of 60 m as the standard, it is estimated that at least 49 new lots could be created in total. This is an underestimate as 2 of the 4 Municipalities require only a 45 m frontage. In addition a minimum of 80 new lots could be created as a result of the Algonquin Land Claim, again calculated using the 60 m shoreline.

Most of the resort properties are developed to the maximum permitted by local by-laws, but there are some where additional development could occur.

1.3 Chapter 12 - Lake Capacity

Policy 2.2.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement requires municipalities to include policies in their official plans establishing environmental lake capacities, especially when cross jurisdictional impacts can occur as a result of four municipal jurisdictions on one lake.

The purpose of the models is to predict how much development a lake can sustain before it becomes eutrophic i.e. nutrients in higher concentrations, poor water quality, algal blooms and plant growth peaks.

The review and report of the different approaches that have been used to set Environmental Lake Capacities (specifically the Lakeshore Capacity Model, Social Density, Recreational Carrying Capacity and Angling Capacity Assessments) have indicated that none of them may be entirely appropriate for White Lake. However, it is important to note that these approaches indicate that White Lake is at or near capacity.

In fact some of the characteristics of a eutrophic lake are starting to appear regularly on White Lake e.g. regular lake-wide algal blooms and possibly an increase in plant growth (the latter from observations only, no measurements as yet). All of this is now complicated by the explosion in the population of zebra mussels.



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It is now perhaps time to stop focussing on predictive modelling and start to look into measures taken to protect other Ontario lakes that are deemed to be at capacity. White Lake seems to be a complex ecosystem, different from many other lakes that have been examined, however, having contact with other lake stewardship associations, we realize that we share many of the same issues.

2.0 Meetings with Municipalities

Presentations to the 4 Municipal Councils that are responsible for White Lake (McNab Braeside, Lanark Highlands, Mississippi Mills and Greater Madawaska) to outline the key points in the State of the Lake Report are now underway. Agreement is being requested from the Municipalities to attend a special meeting to review the State of the Lake, to examine current development standards in all 4 municipalities and to ensure the right standards are applied and enforced respecting residential and commercial development (such as retention of shoreline vegetation, protection of shoreline wetlands, setting appropriate densities and the size and placement of buildings and structures, review of septic systems etc).

As of the writing of this document, 2 of the presentations have taken place and those municipalities have tentatively agreed to participate in joint meetings.

3.0 Science Committee

The Science Committee has completed sampling for 2016 and is still awaiting some results. The program this year included an increased number of sampling sites. Measurements included phosphorous, calcium, Secchi depth, temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductance, pH, chlorophyll a and alkalinity. There was collaboration again this year with Ontario's Lake Partner Program and with the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority. Already significant changes have been observed from previous years, likely due to the presence of large numbers of zebra mussels. A full report will be out as soon as all the results are available.

4.0 White Lake Trailer Park

In the Newsletter of June 2016 (see it at wlpp.ca) we reported in detail on the status of the application to enlarge the trailer park at Hayes Bay, and on the public meeting that was held by Mississippi Mills on April 5, 2016 in order to give interested parties a chance to comment.

On June 28, 2016 the Municipality of Mississippi Mills published a new By-law, No 16-69, to amend By-law No 11-89. The new By-law is specific to the White Lake Trailer Park. The new provisions are somewhat confusing, and lacking in detail, but do seem to represent a significant



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deviation from the Municipality's original By-laws and the intent of the Official Plan. For example:

- the 30 m setback with the 15 m of vegetated zone is not to be observed
- the total number of trailers was not provided in the By-law
- the issue of what is legally non-complying was not clarified and whether the guidelines regarding legally non-complying structures would be observed
- the intent regarding number of trailers inside the 30 m setback has not been included

Because of these issues and others and because it is feared that this development might set a precedent for the lake, a request for an Ontario Municipal Board Hearing was submitted. There has been no date set for the Hearing. Until the Hearing resolves the issues no further development should be taking place on the site.

5.0 Meeting of Coordinators

A meeting for coordinators has been planned for Saturday, November 26, 2016 at 10:00 am at the airport in Arnprior. The purpose of the meeting is to review the areas that each of the Coordinators covers, to identify areas that still have no coordinator, and to plan coordinator activities for the spring/summer of 2017. If anyone is interested in becoming a coordinator or in assisting your current coordinator for your area of the Lake you would be most welcome to attend.

One activity of the meeting will be to discuss ways to get more people interested in membership. Currently our membership stands at over 100, not at all bad for an organization that has only a few years under its belt.

6.0 Proposed General Meeting

To date we have operated as an informal organization, albeit a very busy one, with no guiding documents for governance and an unelected Board. It is time to consider next steps to make this a more formal organization if we want to ensure a future for it. We are aiming to have a General Meeting with a target date sometime in the spring, probably in June of 2017. We will keep you posted as we work our way through it.

7.0 Grant from Lanark County to Watersheds Canada in support of the development of the White Lake Stewardship Plan

Watersheds Canada learned recently that they have been awarded \$4000.00 by the Lanark County Council and the Community Grants Working Group to put towards the White Lake Stewardship Plan. This is very good news as it not only helps with the substantial expenses in developing the Plan but it also means very valuable recognition and support of our efforts at the County level.