



Spring Update for Members as of March 25, 2013

PRE-NAVIGATION SEASON 2013 WATER LEVELS

Due to lower than average snowpack conditions in early February, the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW) began reinstalling logs in several Haliburton Sector dams earlier than usual in an effort to capture enough water to fill the lakes for the boating season. As a result the water levels on these 'headwater' lakes were at new multi-year highs by the beginning of March.

The potential exists for increased ice damage if the water level on a reservoir lake is unusually high by the time the ice goes out. However, if there is not enough snow-melt or spring rains to fill the reservoirs the TSW will have difficulty maintaining water levels for navigation throughout the watershed during the summer. This is the balancing act that the TSW has to manage each year.

Environment Canada's long-range forecast suggests that there will be below-average precipitation throughout the watershed for the three months ending May 31st. However fresh snow in early March has alleviated some of the earlier concerns and as of mid-March the TSW had slowed the rate of filling the reservoirs.

We encourage Coalition Members to alert CEWF of any specific concerns as the 2013 spring thaw and freshet proceeds.

REFLECTIONS ON WATER MANAGEMENT IN 2012

The lack of a significant winter snow-pack, the early spring freshet, and the unusually dry Spring made 2012 a challenging year for water managers across North America – including the TSW. For the Trent watershed, conditions were very similar to those projected by climate change models for 2040 – so 2012 may have given us a glimpse into future! Thanks to prompt action by the TSW to reinstall logs into the reservoir dams earlier than usual, water levels were not as bad as they might have been on the reservoir lakes. However the extreme conservation measures employed were a cause of grief for the flow-through lakes whose water levels dropped as soon as the flow decreased due to closing of the upstream dams. The drawdown of the reservoirs began early and at an accelerated rate causing concern that the navigation season would be curtailed on several lakes. Although the drought continued until late July, there was sufficient rain in August for the TSW to be able to reinstall logs at a number of key reservoir lakes and reduce the rate of decline of water levels on the reservoirs, but again having a negative effect on the flow-through lakes. Budget cuts at the TSW may reduce the number of staff available to take this type of corrective action in the future and the Coalition has expressed concern to TSW management in this regard. Nonetheless, the TSW 's water control engineer deserves credit for his efforts in 2012 to minimize the impact of an unusually dry year and for maintaining regular liaison with the Coalition to explain his approach.

RECENT CHANGES AT THE TSW

Parks Canada has made a number of staffing and organizational changes at the TSW. The TSW and Rideau canals are now part of an Ontario Waterways Unit with new management. Jewel Cunningham is the new Director of the Ontario Waterways Unit and Darlene Upton is the Executive Director for Ontario and Quebec canals. Dave Ness continues as Water Management Engineer for the TSW and has had the Rideau Canal added to his responsibilities.

PROPOSED FUTURE CHANGES FOR THE TSW

Those attending CEWF's annual meeting of Member representatives in September 2012 heard Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MP Barry Devolin outline his plans for a private member's bill aimed at taking responsibility for the TSW away from Parks Canada with the creation of a more independent organization possibly reporting to the federal Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities.

The Coalition met with Barry Devolin in December and has provided comments on his proposal. We were heartened by the following quote from Barry reported in the Minden Times *"The public perception of the TSW is different from the reality. The public perception is that it's mostly about boating and a little bit about water management, when the truth is, it's mostly about water management and a little bit about boating."*

These comments came at a time when other MPs were hearing concerns from the canal user community about increased user fees and reduced hours of operation. The Coalition released a Statement in February, available on the CEWF website, noting that we believe that any new approach to TSW governance must make integrated water management at the watershed level a top priority along with adequate infrastructure funding and support for canal operations.

MONITORING CURRENT AND AVERAGE WATER LEVELS

The Coalition website at www.cewf.ca contains charts of the 20-year 'average' and extreme high and low water levels for the reservoir lakes of all CEWF Members. (On the CEWF home page, top right corner, click on 'Average Water Levels' then select the lake of interest). Information on the flow-through lakes is regrettably not available.

The TSW website, updated at least weekly, contains charts showing the current water level on each reservoir lake but not the 'average'. A link to the Parks Canada TSW web site can be found on the CEWF home page at www.cewf.ca (top right corner, click on 'Parks Canada Web Site') or go to http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/on/trentsevern/visit/ne-wl/trent_e.asp

MUNICIPAL SUPPORT

Over the past year, members of the Coalition executive committee have made presentations to the municipal councils in our catchment area of Haliburton and northern Peterborough counties. The resulting resolutions of support for the Coalition and its work are posted on the website.

HOW TO BECOME ENGAGED

The Coalition is a volunteer organization with limited resources. We work primarily with the representatives appointed by our Member lake associations. If you wish to become engaged with the Coalition we encourage you to:

- Contact your designated CEWF representative and work in support of their efforts;
- Monitor the CEWF website at www.cewf.ca for news and updates; and
- Support CEWF's efforts when talking to friends and neighbours, local politicians and government agencies.

If you have any questions please direct these to cewfchair@yahoo.ca and a member of the CEWF Executive Committee will be pleased to respond.

CEWF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (2013)

The day to day business of the Coalition is managed by the executive committee which meets monthly throughout the year. Regular liaison with Coalition Member associations is handled through e-mails to the designated lake association representatives. In addition to monitoring the website, individuals have the option of signing up for e-mail alerts at www.cewf.ca. An annual meeting for Member representatives is held in mid-September.

Chris Riddle, Co-Chair Kennisis Lake
Martin Rist, Co-Chair Drag Lake
Roger Cunningham, Secretary-Treasurer..... White Lake
Ted Spence Catchacoma Lake
David Lean..... Jack’s Lake
Bruce McClennan..... Gull Lake
Bill Cornfield..... Horseshoe Lake
Carole Russell..... Halls and Hawk Lakes

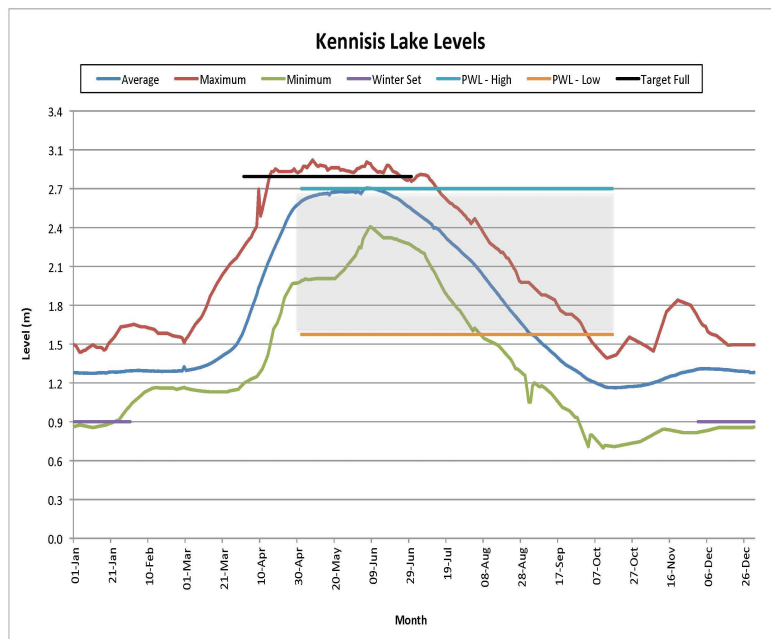
PREFERRED WATER LEVELS DURING THE NAVIGATION SEASON – AN UPDATE

The Coalition continues to work with Member lake associations to document preferred water levels during the navigation season based on measurable constraints to navigation such as bridges, marina access etc. As of March 2013, documentation has been completed for the following lakes: Crystal, Drag, Haliburton, Jack's, Kennisis, Miskwabi, and Redstone. Several other CEWF Members have preferred water level projects underway. The information contained in these lake-specific documents is provided to the TSW by CEWF for their consideration.

There are typically two phases to the annual draw-down on the reservoir lakes. First water is taken during the summer to maintain navigation on the canal portion of the TSW. Subsequently, water is taken in order to bring the lakes to their 'winter-set' level prior to trout spawning in October. The winter-set levels are designed to provide adequate capacity for the TSW to hold back spring-melt water and thereby mitigate the risk of flooding. Based on the work done to date by CEWF Member lake associations, it appears that, in general, there are few problems with the initial draw-down for navigation on the canal – except in extremely dry years such as 2012. It is only when the TSW starts to take water in order to achieve the winter-set levels that water levels on the reservoir lakes fall below the 'preferred' levels. This suggests that a review of the winter-set levels may be in order.

An example is provided below showing the preferred water level range (shaded area) during the navigation season for Kennisis Lake based on information approved by the Kennisis Lake Cottage Owners Association. For ease of interpretation it has been overlain on the TSW 20-year data. CEWF plans to review this style of analysis with the TSW for all participating lakes.

Here is one way of interpreting the data. In order to avoid flooding and allow navigation under road bridges, the preferred high water level corresponds to the multi-year average water level which is just below the TSW's target full level. The winter set level is such that the preferred lowest water level for navigation is breached in an average year by early September when the TSW has typically switched into 'winter-set' mode. If it were possible to increase the winter-set by one log the water level would probably remain within the preferred range in an average year.



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