

## **Summary of Proceedings and Feedback from the 2014 General Meeting for Representatives of CEWF Member Lake Associations**

The Coalition held its Annual Meeting for Member Lake Association Representatives on September 13, 2014 at the Haliburton Fish Hatchery.

Lakes represented at the meeting included: Jack's; Mountain; Gull; Maple/Beech/Cameron; Drag/Spruce; Big Glamor; Miskwabi/Long; Moore; Crystal; Kennisis; Cavendish Ratepayers (representing Mississagua / Catchacoma etc.); Horseshoe; Canning; Little Glamor, Eels, White, and Halls/Hawk.

Special guests included: Murray Fearrey, Reeve Dysart et al representing Haliburton County Warden Dave Burton, and from the TSW, Dave Ness, Water Control Engineer

The Haliburton Echo/Minden Times & Haliburton Highlander covered the meeting.

Presentations were tied in to a comprehensive slide presentation (see CEWF website).

CEWF Secretary/Treasurer noted that membership remained the same except for one lake which is on leave of absence for 2014. The membership represents 90% of the capacity of the Sector, which is considered excellent given that 6% of the capacity is on lakes with no association. A second slide showed the income and expenses for 2014, with major expenses associated with newspaper inserts of the CEWF Open Letter to municipal election candidates. The expected bank balance at the end of the fiscal year is \$12,300, down marginally from the opening balance.

CEWF co-chair Chris Riddle highlighted the efforts of the Executive for the 2014 year-to-date as shown in the slide presentation, noting the CEWF's 2014 priorities, communications, water levels, the wet summer, and that no two years are the same. Chris Riddle also highlighted the fact that there is basically no Conservation Authority (CA) for most of the reservoirs. The issues arising from this compared with other areas having a CA were noted and formed a major question posed to the municipal candidates in the Open Letter. The meeting attendees spoke on various aspects of the issues, and asked the CEWF to pursue the matter with the province and to see if a watershed council initiative could be undertaken.

TSW Water Control Engineer, Dave Ness, made a presentation with slides which are included in the comprehensive slide presentation. Many detailed questions arose on the background to the filling of lakes this spring and the impact of the wet summer. He indicated that drawdown is underway, and weekly forecasts are posted on the Parks Canada website usually on Wednesday. The CEWF also alerts this fact weekly on the CEWF website and by e-mail alerts.

Chris Riddle then discussed the CEWF's Preferred Water Levels initiative, and provided an update of the 11 lakes that have completed their efforts, and for which the CEWF has submitted to the TSW.

A question period followed, moderated by Ted Spence, based upon some member's written questions submitted in advance, as well as those arising at the meeting. The items covered are itemized below:

- There will be no net impact over a 24 hour period for Horseshoe Lake to provide the necessary heavy water flow for the white water course below the dam for the Pan Am games in 2015.
- The lake representatives suggested that the CEWF Executive needed to ramp up a more aggressive campaign with Ontario government officials as the latter are not engaged in the issues of the TSW watershed water management.
- The CEWF plans to follow up with all municipalities following the election, and will attempt to engage the municipalities in a more active way on water management.
- The TSW indicated the problems associated with the installation of an automatic water level gauge on Mountain Lake.
- The TSW commented that water seepage around or through a dam did not have any impact on the drawdown procedures
- The TSW assured the attendees that backup training was on-going for all critical staff.
- The Kennisis dam project is almost certain to be a complete replacement dam as the current one is not sitting on bed rock.
- The TSW was urged to post timelier website communications of their actions and planned actions that would relieve them from answering so many phone calls.

Media Coverage of the event is attached.

Next year's Annual Communication Meeting to Lake Representatives is **Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, at the Fish Hatchery.**



# **Record rainfall contributes to high water levels**

**September 16, 2014 · 0 Comments**



*Coalition for Equitable Water Flow co-chair Chris Riddle shows graphs depicting water levels of local lakes at the organization's meeting held on Sept. 13 at the Fish Hatchery. The gathering discussed water levels of area bodies of waters throughout the summer months and provided updates on water management by Parks Canada representatives.*

### **By Angelica Blenich**

It's no secret it was a wet summer.

During the past few months Haliburton County received heavy rainfall, some of which was in record amounts, contributing to high water levels throughout the area.

Members of the Coalition of Equitable Water Flow have been keeping their eyes on the lake levels and provided a report of water activity at their Sept. 13 meeting at the Haliburton fish hatchery.

With approximately 20 lakes represented, the meeting provided those in attendance with an update on the Trent-Severn Waterway's management of the area and an opportunity to ask questions.

The wet summer resulted in area lakes being quite full over the summer months, especially following a record high rainfall on June 30, where 77 millimetres of rain was recorded.

Due to the rains, the annual drawdown was delayed by about a month.

"Many lakes remained above average through July and August," said CEWF co-chair Chris Riddle.

Water management engineer for Ontario's waterways Dave Ness provided an update on how the water levels were managed this year, citing rainfall and severe events as a challenge.

"This year wasn't a record year, but it was getting up there," said Ness, who referenced flooding in June. "We got one month of rain in one day ... you've got a lot of water on your hands to deal with ... that's the trouble we ran into this year."

According to Ness a new record was set for June this year, with 245 mm of rain recorded in Haliburton County.

"On top of that they're coming in huge, heavy downpours," he said.

As a result, lake levels remained above average this year, said Ness.

Earlier this year it was reported that the federal government was investing in a rehabilitation of the Kennisis Lake dam.

Ness said the project is just one example of how the federal government is investing significant funds into infrastructure this year, a total of \$58 million.

Construction of the Kennisis Lake project is expected to start in August of 2015 and take about six months to complete.

“It sounds like this is going to be largely a complete replacement of this structure,” said Ness. “It’s a pretty big dam.”

A geotechnical investigation is currently being undertaken at the dam, said Ness.

The government was also in the process of ramping up staff, hiring new engineers and project managers, he said.

Since this summer five new engineers have joined the team.

“That’s quite a switch from a few years ago,” he said. “We’ve been eagerly anticipating resources and it’s really refreshing to see the government coming forward with resources so we can address some of the deficiencies in association with the infrastructure.”

CEWF executive member Ted Spence said one area of interest for the coalition was better communication from the TSW.

“Perhaps you can get messages out in a timely way,” said Spence. “What you’re doing almost always makes sense.”

Spence said following the flooding last year, overall communications from the TSW did see some improvement.

As a result the CEWF posted nine high water alerts or flood watches and warning on their website in recent months.

As of Aug. 28, the TSW now provides weekly forecasts online.

Due to it being an election year, both provincially and municipally, the CEWF executive is trying to better engage politicians in water management issues, said Riddle.

Provincially there has been no interest in management, which Riddle said was very discouraging.

“Ontario is missing in action on this,” he said.

At a municipal level there is significant interest, with the coalition having sent six questions through their website and the local media to area candidates about water management.

Answers to the questions have been trickling in and Riddle encouraged everyone to bring them up at the upcoming all candidates meeting.

For more information visit [www.cewf.ca](http://www.cewf.ca).



# Highlander news

## Coalition keeps watch on water levels

**By Lisa Harrison**  
Contributing writer

Trent-Severn Waterway updates, Pan Am games water flow management, lake water levels research, and a municipal election letter tapped into local interests at the recent Coalition for Equitable Water Flow (CEWF) annual general meeting.

About 20 people attended the Sept. 13 event at the Haliburton Fish Hatchery, representing almost two-thirds of the 31 lakes in the Haliburton area of the Trent River watershed, the CEWF's coverage area. It was a drop in attendance from last year when area flooding drew attendees over water flow management concerns.

The guest speaker was Dave Ness, Water Management Engineer for Ontario Waterways. Ness discussed recent Trent-Severn Waterway (TSW) water flow management and the current and future use of the two-year, \$58-million investment in the TSW announced by Parks Canada in March.

Near-record ice thicknesses last winter meant colder water temperatures and lower oxygen levels that could endanger fish, and the heavier ice could cause greater damage when breaking up in spring, said Ness. He reported the TSW successfully adjusted water flow under the ice in winter to reduce fish kill numbers and during the spring thaw to mitigate shoreline ice damage.

Then the spring rains arrived, with record rainfall in June that included the June 30 spike that registered about

76 millimetres in 24 hours, according to Ness. He noted that for the Gelert, Irondale and Maple Lake monitoring centres, 25 millimetres is considered significant. The TSW conducted multiple dam operations to discharge the water and get levels back down to normal, and continues to install automated monitoring stations to enable quicker responses to rapid water level fluctuations generated by heavy rainfall.

This year and next the TSW will use the Parks Canada investment to focus on infrastructure recapitalization and rehabilitation, Ness reported. Budgeted at \$3.5 million, the Kennis Lake dam is a key priority. Ness said it appears the dam will be almost completely rebuilt. Construction is expected to begin in August 2015 and last six months.

The TSW's other main investment focus is staffing changes to ramp up project management capacity, said Ness. Overall the funding will bring the related staff total to 10 engineers and three technologists to inspect dams and deal with consultants and public works.

"So it's all good news," said Ness. "We've been eagerly anticipating resources, and it's really refreshing to see the government coming forward with resources so that we can address some of the deficiencies [associated] with the infrastructure."

In response to a question about the Gull River system's water flow during the 2015 Pan Am Games white water events in Minden Hills, Ness said "broadly speaking" there won't be any changes to the way the TSW operates. "What it does change is local

operations," said Ness, explaining the Games are requesting a slightly higher water flow to provide a bigger challenge for games competitors.

Ness said the TSW will handle this much as it does currently, running water through the day and backing it off at night to a pond on Horseshoe Lake with "zero" effect on the lake's 24-hour volume discharge.

In a new initiative of its own, the CEWF is researching preferred water levels on member lakes to determine specific constraints such as navigation, co-chair Chris Riddle reported.

Currently water flow management in the watershed is done with a "blanket approach", according to Riddle, so information about "measurable, fact-based" lake-specific constraints will help the TSW manage water flow more precisely. To date preferred levels for 11 reservoir lakes have been tabled with the TSW's Water Management Advisory Council.

Meanwhile, the CEWF awaits more responses to the open letter it issued to local municipal election candidates this summer. The letter identifies five critical water flow management issues and poses six related questions. The CEWF is posting candidates' responses on its website, where it reported replies from only three county candidates as of Sept. 9.

The letter was posted on the CEWF website on July 11 and will be published for a second time in local print media before the election.

More information on CEWF priorities and initiatives is available at [cewf.ca](http://cewf.ca).