

# CEWF calls for ‘integrated water management’

**By Mark Arike**

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The members of the Coalition for Equitable Water Flow (CEWF) are pleased to see that the federal government is investing \$285 million into the infrastructure of the Trent- Severn Waterway (TSW).

However, they’re now asking local municipalities and the county to get on board with “an integrated approach to water management.”

“We need to focus on the watershed, not just our local area, to solve the problems and issues facing us,” Chris Riddle, executive committee member of the CEWF, told Dysart et al council during a July 27 meeting. “We’re no longer a special interest group. What we’re doing is for the benefit of everyone.”

The CEWF is a volunteer organization that was formed in 2006 to represent the interests of about 35,000 shoreline property owners in “the Haliburton sector,” which includes reservoir and flow-through lake areas.

Riddle pointed out that Dysart accounts for 42 per cent of the TSW reservoir capacity.

“Dysart has a very significant role to play in this whole initiative to protect the water,” he said.

He indicated that a large part of the municipality’s economy relies on excellent water quality and sound management of those bodies of water.

The CEWF is meeting with new municipal councils in the county and northern Peterborough counties to “expand understanding of the complexity of watershed” management

issues and “seek support for more integrated planning.” Their goal is to spark a conversation on the value of creating “a single entity on watershed-wide water management related issues for the entire RaFT (reservoir and flow-through) lakes area.”

“I think what we’ve come to learn is that the Trent-Severn does a very good job by and large managing the whole system with the resources that they have,” said Riddle. “That’s a big caveat because we think there are a number of resources that they could use to better manage the system.”

The TSW is managed by Parks Canada, an agency of the federal government.

The CEWF believes that the county and northern Peterborough counties lack “a regional voice” when it comes to watershed-wide initiatives. Their suggestion is that municipal or county levels of government take the lead on forming a watershed council to make that happen.

“We think there needs to be more municipal input,” he said.

According to the group's objectives, taking an integrated approach to water management "will improve water conservation while recognizing the environmental, public safety, social and socioeconomic constraints of managing the water resource."

Dysart Reeve Murray Fearrey felt it would be appropriate to have one voice at the county level.

"I'm thinking that for us to have a single voice, that almost should be done at the county," he said. "I wonder if we could just focus on that item and get a delegation at the county."

Riddle said his group plans on speaking to six councils, two of which are in Peterborough County. Discussions have already taken place with each reeve in the county.