

CEWF 2011 Year-end Update

by Martin Rist & Chris Riddle, CEWF co-chairs
December 2011

The cottage and boating season may be over, but CEWF continues to be busy representing the interests of shoreline property owners of CEWF-member lake associations with regard to water levels and other water management issues in the Haliburton sector of the Trent watershed. This includes all the reservoir and flow-through lakes in the Gull and Burnt River watersheds as well as the central reservoirs (Eels Lake, Jacks Lake, Crystal Lake and the Mississagua Lake chain).

Here is a brief summary of our activities following our well-attended General Meeting, which was held at the Haliburton Fish Hatchery on September 17, 2011. For those who missed it, the information on that meeting is posted on the CEWF web site: www.cewf.ca

“Preferred Water Levels”

Details of CEWF’s ‘preferred water levels’ initiative were included in the AGM presentation (available on the website). This initiative allows individual lake associations to identify specific characteristics of their lake(s) that they believe should be taken into account as part of good water management practice. Typically these are ‘constraints’ on navigation or property access that come into effect at high or low water levels. These constraints allow a ‘preferred water level range’ to be defined.

CEWF recognizes that the TSW has many ‘constraints’ to consider when managing water throughout the watershed, and so it is not expected that they will necessarily be able to keep water levels within the ‘preferred range’ during the navigation season. On the other hand, having this information will allow the TSW to take it into account when possible. Our hope is that the TSW will build the constraints identified in each lake’s preferred water level range into their overall water management model.

On December 6, 2011 CEWF formally tabled preferred water level documents that had been approved by the Kennisis Lake Cottage Owners Association and the Redstone Lake Cottagers’ Association. Several other lakes are expected to approve similar documents during 2012.

Meeting with Laurie Scott, MPP

Following the Ontario provincial election, CEWF met with Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP Laurie Scott to congratulate her on her election win and her appointment as opposition critic for the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). We were able to bring her up to date on a range of water management issues, including the recently signed federal-provincial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), for which MNR is the lead Ministry on the provincial side.

CEWF has identified a number of priorities for attention under the MOU including the need for an integrated approach to water management at the watershed level and the development of protocols for better management of water storage, water conservation, water flows and water allocation.

Laurie agreed to maintain close contact with federal MP Barry Devolin and other members of the bipartisan federal-provincial Trent-Severn Caucus, and to meet regularly with CEWF.

Meetings with TSW Operations and Management

CEWF met with TSW management and operations staff in both November and December to review a number of outstanding issues and maintain our ongoing dialogue. We discussed the many lake level concerns raised by our member associations over the 2011 season, especially the substantial water level challenges on many lakes since the middle of August.

CEWF received a favourable hearing with regard to:

- the need for timely water level information to be provided on the TSW website in 2012;
- the need to include the multi-year water level average on the water level charts;
- the need to reinstate the water level forecasts provided to CEWF in 2009 & 2010;
- the need for access to a comprehensive set of the historical water level data for all the reservoir lakes – information that CEWF can then communicate to CEWF member lake associations;
- the value of keeping CEWF advised of planned dam safety reviews and maintenance and repair work.

CEWF has requested that the next Senior Management liaison meeting occur in April – in time to provide information updates to CEWF members in advance of the 2012 season

TSW Water Management Advisory Council

The TSW Water Management Advisory Council (WMAC) is chaired by Chuck Richard (Fortescue Lake), and the Haliburton sector is represented by Keith Hodgson (Haliburton Lake) and CEWF co-chair Chris Riddle (Kennisis Lake).

At their most recent meeting on October 27, 2011 the Council received details of a 2011 Water Management Study report prepared for the TSW by AECOM consultants. This is a substantive report, with many recommendations for improved water management that are currently being reviewed by the TSW. It is hoped that adequate funding will be made available for the TSW to implement appropriate recommendations in the report and the WMAC will be working to support the TSW in that regard.

Better Days Ahead!

2011 was a challenging year for water management in the Haliburton sector, compounded by a lack of timely information from the TSW. However CEWF is encouraged by TSW management's commitment to bring new resources to bear on these problems in 2012.

Your CEWF Advisory Committee members continue to work hard to represent the interests of our member lake associations, and we always welcome your feedback and questions which should be sent to cewfchair@yahoo.ca.

Best wishes for the Holiday Season from CEWF Advisory Council members:

Chris Riddle, Co-Chair

Martin Rist, Co-Chair

Roger Cunningham, Sec/Treasurer

Ted Spence

Stephen Foster

Bruce McClennan

Bill Cornfield

Carole Russell

Kennisis Lake

Drag Lake

White Lake

Catchacoma Lake

Loon Lake

Gull Lake

Horseshoe Lake

Halls and Hawk Lakes