

CEWF Mid-July 2011 Update on TSW & Water Levels

Congratulations!

CEWF congratulates Parks Canada on its Centenary and also Roger Stanley on his recent appointment as Director of Canal Operations for the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW). In addition we wish to acknowledge the good work of Ryan Hamersma, appointed last year as the Haliburton Area Superintendent for TSW.

Water Level Update

It seems that each year brings something different with regard to water levels in the Reservoir and Flow-Through (RAFT) lakes controlled by the TSW.

A wet Spring 2011 saw lakes levels rise a little faster than normal. This combined with later than usual ice-out dates and high winds resulted in more ice damage than usual to shoreline structures.

The summer drawdown has started, and with the warm weather of the past week resulting in increased water loss due to evaporation on the shallow Kawartha lakes, we can expect the drop in water levels, especially on the headwater lakes, to be significant. On Kennisis Lake for example, the mid July water level was down 22", similar to the levels in 2001 and 2007, and 6" lower than the average for all years since 2000.

If the dry summer weather continues, as has been forecast by Environment Canada, this will be a challenging year for the TSW and for anyone with low-water navigational issues on the RAFT lakes.

TSW Water Level website

In 2008 the TSW announced the availability of 'almost real time access' to water level information on their website. This has been very helpful. CEWF proposed a number of enhancements to the website interface and content, several of which were incorporated on the site early in 2011. Unfortunately constraints at the TSW have meant that daily updates to the water level data are no longer provided, and as of July 14th most lake data are two weeks out of date, while the data for a few lakes have not been updated for 6-8 weeks. We have made TSW aware of the value placed upon the availability of timely water level data: we have also stressed the benefits of including the multi-year average water level on their graphs. In return TSW has assured us that they are working to resolve these issues.

TSW Water Level Forecasts

Another area of concern to Coalition members will be the probable reduction, or absence, of water level forecast data from TSW for 2011. This has been provided to CEWF by TSW for the past two years during the August to October drawdown period. However, senior management at TSW has indicated that staffing constraints may make it impossible for them to provide the data in 2011. Again we understand that the TSW is working to resolve this situation.

TSW Contacts

If the CEWF website does not have the answers to your water level questions, the key contacts at TSW are:

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