

Complete “As Heard” findings of the Rideau Lakes Watershed Management Plan Public Meeting

7-9 p.m. Sept 12, 2005, Westport

Question 1:

What is your vision for the Rideau Lakes/Rideau River system so that 20 years from now this is still a great place to get away to, have fun and live in? Imagine we are in this meeting room in the year 2025 and we are celebrating the success of the visioning and planning we did September 12th, 2005. The outcome has been successful beyond our expectations. What does this look like, sound like, feel like?

Recreation

Watercraft

- ◆ Accessible boat launches with healthy practices – stewardship, holding tank service, education
- ◆ Human, sail and electric craft only

Shoreline

- ◆ Shoreline development harmonious with natural environment

Water levels

- ◆ Digital display of water levels in centre of town (surface and water table)
- ◆ Yearly monitoring of groundwater table and feedback to stakeholders

Water Quality/pollution

- ◆ Clean weeds
- ◆ Potable lake water
- ◆ Free holding-tank pumping service
- ◆ Fewer geese resulting in better water quality
- ◆ Improved water quality for future generations
- ◆ Good clean water

Septic

- ◆ All septic systems are up to standard

Economy/Development

- ◆ A viable tourist and viable local economy – a healthy four season economy
- ◆ Beautiful roads throughout the area, esthetics in partnership with development
- ◆ Jobs for local people
- ◆ Large, clean public beaches for non-cottaging visitors
- ◆ Area to be maintained as is in 2005
- ◆ Lakes for all types of people to enjoy in many different ways of recreation
- ◆ Marketed as pristine
- ◆ Desired tourist region

Wildlife/Nature

- ◆ Pristine environment
- ◆ Balanced ecosystem to support both humans and wildlife
- ◆ Invasive species are controlled
- ◆ Weekly updates (information) about species health in watershed
- ◆ Lots of parks and green space
- ◆ Lakes are stocked with native local species

Social

- ◆ populace focused on water (ecosystem) as a living community
- ◆ short term visitors (campgrounds) regulated with regards to respect, vested interest
- ◆ educated residents, communication
- ◆ safe and healthy to live and play

Government

- ◆ Less government interference, more common sense
- ◆ More powerful conservation authority – some Authority regulations should supersede federal or provincial regulations
- ◆ More tax dollars stay in region
- ◆ Communication between governments and public
- ◆ Local lake control – stewardship, water levels

Question 2:

What are the major issues and challenges facing this area that can cause problems or are causing problems now?

Recreation

Watercraft

- ◆ Lack of inspection of boats (zebra mussels) being launched
- ◆ Large boats on small lakes cause safety issues
- ◆ Boat/motor size on small lakes is inappropriate to lake size

Shoreline

- ◆ Wake wash

Water levels

- ◆ Poor management of federal dams in high and low years
- ◆ Use of water to feed Ganonoque Hydro Plant
- ◆ Low water levels=increased lake temperature

Noise

- ◆ Large boats on small lakes
- ◆ PWCs

Water Quality/pollution

- ◆ Long-term effects of misuse of water systems
- ◆ Too much nutrient loading from agriculture
- ◆ Lack of control of salt and other chemicals on roads and lawns near lake
- ◆ Nutrient loading from human activity

Other pollution

- ◆ Lack of restrictions on mining operations

Economy/Development

- ◆ Inappropriate shoreline development e.g. lot size

Fishery

- ◆ Special interest groups like commercial fisherman are overfishing
- ◆ Constant commercial fishing in Upper Rideau (need to spread fishing to other lakes)
- ◆ Large boats on small lakes disturb the fish
- ◆ Not enough recreational fishing

Social

- ◆ Apathy of residents
- ◆ Lack of information about issues
- ◆ Vacationers abusing the lakes and area due to disrespect and lack of knowledge
- ◆ Lack of media coverage of watershed issues
- ◆ Negative media coverage of the area (bad fishing) affects tourism
- ◆ Lack of education of tourists and their role in water quality, etc.

Government

- ◆ Too many people/agencies in control of the watershed
- ◆ Drinking water regulations that defy common sense/are too stringent and drive small businesses out (home businesses, B&Bs)
- ◆ Over regulation of drinking water

Question 3:

What issues need to be addressed/improved now and how might we start doing this?

Recreation

Watercraft

- ◆ Boat inspection for invasives at all public launch sites
- ◆ Size of lake should determine size of boats
- ◆ Seadoos need to be banned on smaller lakes because of safety
- ◆ OPP control of watercraft speed

Shoreline

- ◆ Vegetative buffers

Water levels

- ◆ MNR should have accountability to lake associations for water levels and water quality due to water removal and changes to shoreline – tax base depends on clean usable lakes
- ◆ Local say over water level heights as it relates to year-to-year droughts e.g. if there is a dry year then everyone pays and not just the feeder lakes

Noise

- ◆ Seadoos need to be banned on smaller lakes because of noise

Water Quality/pollution

- ◆ More pump stations for boat holding tanks
- ◆ Restrict livestock access to reduce runoff

Other pollution

- ◆ Stiffer fines and penalties for dumping and other poor environmental practices

Septic

- ◆ Regulate proper replacement of damaged or old septic tanks or holding tanks
- ◆ Properly operating septic tanks
- ◆ Inspection of septic contaminating watershed “care & control”
- ◆ Septic re-inspection programs

Economy/Development

- ◆ Limit size of homes and amount of bathrooms
- ◆ Mandate cistern use for certain systems in new construction

Fishery

- ◆ More fishing regulation enforcement

Social

- ◆ Interactive website for local information
- ◆ Active lake associations
- ◆ Set up a news group and/or website devoted to the issues pertaining to this specific area
- ◆ Education of everyone
- ◆ Education of next generation through school programs
- ◆ Improved safety for all
- ◆ Education beyond the shoreline

Government

- ◆ Tell federal government to back-off control of waterways and leave control locally
- ◆ Legislation and penalties focused on water health regarding pesticides, herbicides bans, etc.
- ◆ More control of land use by municipalities

Question 4:

What issues do we need to address immediately and in the near future? “Top Priorities”

Shoreline

- ◆ Reduce wake wash

Water levels

- ◆ Studies to show how water temperature causes weed growth due to water removal in feeder lakes (Wolfe Lake) and testing in bays
- ◆ If shorelines are so important, why do we treat the sensitive part of the ecosystem like a yo-yo (water levels)?
- ◆ More monitoring and accountability of MNR and Parks Canada and their water levels of feeder lakes. In good watershed years the same amount of water is reduced. Why?
- ◆ Water levels should get equal priority

Water Quality/pollution

- ◆ Monitor dumping from vessels in Rideau system with extremely high fines
- ◆ Put in methods to control weed and algae growth
- ◆ Improve water quality
- ◆ Reduce nutrient loading
- ◆ Assess water quality to establish a baseline
- ◆ Control nutrients entering water systems

Septic

- ◆ Mandate to correct old broken systems and holding tanks from contaminating soil and shore, updating old septic beds

Economy/Development

- ◆ Balance growth and conservation
- ◆

Wildlife/Nature

- ◆ Control commercial fishing in Upper Rideau
- ◆ Improve fish habitat
- ◆ Manage invasive species

Social

- ◆ Community voice first
- ◆ Education and signage

Government

- ◆ Government assistance programs
- ◆ Holistic view of lake balancing development with other potential practices – don’t get hung up on regulating development issues only