

Environment Council- Clear, Ston(e)y and Clear Lakes.

Questions coming out of presentation to councils on February 9th, 2012- DD, SEL, GCH and NK.

1. Are we interested in a septic re-inspection program?
2. Are we interested in a establishing a committee to study this in anticipation of getting the program going?

Presentation to Douro-Dummer, Smith Ennismore Lakefield and Galway Cavendish Harvey Townships -- February 9, 2012

The Environment Council is the successor organization to the Clear, Ston(e)y and White Lake Plan Steering Committee -- the group that produced the Lake Plan, published in summer 2008.

Our volunteer group includes representatives from the four townships surrounding the lakes and the five lake associations, for Birchcliff, Kawartha Park, Upper and Lower Ston(e)y and White Lakes.

Our goal is to preserve the Clear, Ston(e)y, White Lake watershed environment for wildlife and future generations by implementing the Lake Plan recommendations.

Water Quality was the number one issue identified through the Lake Planning process, and we are currently working to influence change in four key areas that contribute to it:

- preservation and restoration of natural shorelines
- evaluation and protection of significant wetlands
- prevention of pollution from septic systems
- strengthening of municipal policies, plans, regulations and programs

Research shows there are four main causes of phosphorus and bacteria pollution in our lakes:

- upstream municipal sewage
- natural runoff
- agricultural and residential runoff (animal waste and fertilizers)
- faulty septic systems and holding tanks

Our septic study team has reviewed the results of septic re-inspection programs in other parts of Ontario. These programs have found that about 14 per cent of septics are in need of repair or replacement.

Faulty septics are one source of water pollution that can be addressed at the Township level. Peterborough County-City Health Unit and the Planning Department would support a re-inspection program. We ask you to take the steps necessary to protect a very valuable asset – water quality in our lakes.

Contact: Rob Little, email: roblit1@sympatico.ca

Your Lake Plan in Action



*Environment Council for Clear,
Ston(e)y and White Lakes*

To: The Council of the Corporation of the Township of Galway, Cavendish and Harvey

We are writing to request Council's consideration of a proposal for a septic re-inspection program for the Township of Galway, Cavendish and Harvey. Over the past several months our Environment Council for Clear, Stony and White Lakes has reviewed the relevant research and consulted with the Peterborough County-City Health Unit. We have had discussions with advisors from other Ontario municipalities in which successful re-inspection programs have already been implemented. We have examined recent legislation pertaining to septic re-inspection and source water protection in the Clean Water Act and Lake Simcoe Protection Act. Lastly, we have familiarized ourselves with the process and technical components of septic re-inspection by means of the Ontario Onsite Wastewater Association's workshop that was arranged for residents on our lakes.

Numerous inspection programs have consistently found that, in general, about 14% of septic systems are in need of repair or replacement. The impact of this pollution includes degradation of the ecosystem and of water quality. Higher percentages of phosphorus contribute to excessive algae growth and possibly unnecessary bacterial loading. Thousands of residents rely on clean water for drinking and recreation. A large proportion of the township's tax base is dependent on cottagers and lake-related businesses and services. A healthy lake (and the surrounding watershed) is a good guarantee of an enduring tax base, thus it is in the Township's interest to engage in septic inspections. Stoney Lake, for example has scores of islands and water-access-only properties. Consequently there are numerous septic systems and holding tanks, many of which are antiquated. Other lake organizations in Peterborough County have also expressed an interest in a septic re-inspection program.

It is clear that the province has no plan to implement mandatory septic re-inspections unless the geographic area falls within the source protection definition of 'municipal water supply' where mandatory inspections are required. Otherwise, for many rural areas and inland lakes, the responsibility rests with local enforcement bodies, or "principal authorities", namely the municipality, the local Board of Health or the Conservation Authority, depending on the location within Ontario. Ontario's Building Code (Ontario Regulation 350/06) was recently amended to establish and govern mandatory on-site sewage system maintenance inspection programs, to be administered in certain areas by local enforcement bodies. These recent amendments to the Building Code also govern *discretionary* on-site sewage system maintenance inspection programs established by local enforcement bodies. We are recommending this discretionary program.

A template¹ for how such programs should be conducted was recently released by the Building & Development Branch of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Septic system re-inspection is supported, in principle, by Bryan Weir, Director of Planning for Peterborough County, and by Tom Cathcart, Program Manager for the County-City Health Unit. Our proposal would target *all* township properties, *not* just lake properties.

REFERENCES:

1. Ontario Building Code amendments –Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, January, 2011
2. Clean Water Act- 2006, 2009; Lake Simcoe Protection Act – 2008
3. Lake Massawippi Water Protection Association Journal-Spring 2011
4. Septic re-inspection meeting notes. Director of Health Protection;
Peterborough-Sept '08
5. Township of Algonquin Highlands-Sewage Disposal System re-inspection – 2006
6. Sturgeon Lake Management Plan-Oct 2010
7. Lake Scugog Environmental management Plan-2010
8. FOCA newsletter-Spring 2011
9. Verbal: David Moore, resident Lake Massawippi area
Sandy Bos, Bos Engineering, Lake of Bays, Muskoka
Brian Howden, Associate re inspection Program, Haliburton Highlands
10. Websites: Rideau Lakes Management Plan
Lake Huron Cottagers Association
Lake of Bays Cottagers Association
York Region.com (Georgina Lake residents subject to septic inspection-2011)

Tim Moore, David Hough, John Platt - - on behalf of the Environment Council for
Clear, Ston(e)y and White Lakes

¹ On-site Sewage System Maintenance Inspections, March 2011.