



Image source: GBGLF

Georgian Bay Water Levels Continue Rising

by MARY MUTER

In the past two years we have seen water levels in Georgian Bay — and elsewhere — rise dramatically. It's quite a contrast to Georgian Bay's unprecedented low water levels from 1999 to 2013. In fact, a Fisheries and Oceans Canada monthly water level bulletin advises that levels for all the Great Lakes are above their all-time average for this time of year.

The recent rise can be accounted for in part by high precipitation levels and the normal cycle of water levels. But it also results from the International Lake Superior Board of Control's decision to discharge higher amounts from Lake Superior so that its water level remains within a four-foot range of highs and lows.

What about us? With no ability to control the outflow of Lake Huron and with a normal range of levels of 6.5 feet, we are part of the forgotten cousins — Lakes Michigan/Huron/Georgian Bay.

We are now about 20 inches above the long-term average while Lake Superior is about 14 inches above its long-term average. Given that all the upper lakes have experienced similar weather conditions, this difference can only be accounted for by the International Lake Superior Board of Control's increased discharges over the winter to the downstream lake — ours.

What can and should be done about this? Canada and the United States could direct the International Joint Commission, under whose authority the three control boards (Superior, Niagara and Ontario) operate, to have only one Control Board and manage all the Great Lakes in all their best interests. End of story.

But it's not that easy. The Georgian Bay Great Lakes Foundation has been working on this since 2002 with no luck. Yet inaction makes no sense because a huge range in water levels means that shoreline damage occurs when levels are high and wetlands dry up when levels are low.

What we're doing about this

The Georgian Bay Great Lakes Foundation board of directors are also founding directors of Restore Our Water International (ROWI). The Chair is a former senior hydrologist with the US Army Corps of Engineers. For many years ROWI has been advocating for measures to alleviate extreme highs and lows. Several actions could be taken now to lower lake levels and prevent shoreline damage. Since the American members of ROWI who have cottages or homes on soft sandy ridges are at extreme risk of losing their cottages completely, we are launching a media campaign by sending a press release to the *Chicago Tribune*. The American population numbers are so much higher, and they engage much more with their political leaders, and especially with the new Michigan governor, so we might be able to get the attention we need for Lakes Michigan and Huron, and Georgian Bay. Stay posted via our website georgianbaygreatlakesfoundation.com

Mary Muter is Chair of the Georgian Bay Great Lakes Foundation.

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buoys. He asked that Council discuss the issue. For more on survey results, see page 3.

On February 11, Council decided "that further information on the impacts of the installation and maintenance of speed marker buoys be obtained from staff, including the costing and enforcement implications."

GREAT LAKES WATERFRONT TRAIL:

A representative of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust spoke to Council in February about expanding the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail through Tiny Township along Tiny Beaches Road. This would provide a link from Wasaga to Penetanguishene. Council decided to support the project in principle and asked staff to report back on the matter in future.

PHRAGMITES CONTROL: See Lynn Short's article, p.5

REGIONAL CULTURE COMMITTEE PROPOSED:

In February, Fred Hacker (Chair, Culture Midland Committee) proposed that Tiny, Tay, Penetanguishene, Midland and Beausoleil First Nation form a temporary Joint Culture Committee and that each appoint one member of Council and one staff member to serve on it. This Committee would create and adopt terms of reference, and each community would appoint members. He asked each community to contribute \$10,000 per year and provide staff support for local activities. In March, Council decided on a one-year trial, subsequent involvement depending on the participation of the other four parties.

BUDGET:

On March 11, Council approved the 2019 Budget "at a 5% tax rate increase plus 1% to Capital Infrastructure Funding."

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES:

See [www.tiny.ca/Your Government/Committees](http://www.tiny.ca/Your_Government/Committees)

BLUEWATER DUNES RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION/CORPORATION COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD:

After discussing Bluewater Dunes' request for a community bulletin board, Council decided that the township would purchase the lumber, install the sign and provide basic rules of use, while the association would maintain the information posted and ensure compliance with the intent of a community board.

TOWNSHIP'S COMMENTS LETTER TO MNRF ABOUT THE EXTENSION OF THE TEEDON PIT:

For wording that was agreed upon on March 25, see April 8, Committee of the Whole Agenda / Staff Reports to Council / Planning and Development.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION RE: TEEDON PIT EXTENSION APPLICATION:

Councillor Wishart proposed additional legal representation regarding the Teedon Pit Extension Application. He was supported by Councillor Mintoff. The motion was defeated. The Township continues to be represented by Sarah Hahn of Barriston Law LLP in Barrie. (See FoTTSa's 24 March letter to Council in the Communication section of the Committee of the Whole Agenda for April 8, 2019.)

SEWAGE SYSTEM REINSPECTION PROGRAM:

C.C. Tatham & Associates provided Council with a history of the reinspection program, and a report on 2018 findings. A surprising number of basic deficiencies continue to be found (159 initially, plus many more as a result of pump out reports) as properties come up for reinspection every six years. Inspections in 2019 are to be done in Toanche, Farlain Lake and Champlain Road.

CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN:

Victoria Irvick made a presentation to Council about Sustainable Severn Sound's proposed Climate Change Action Plan and next steps. This work in progress is being refined as staff considers how to reduce Tiny's carbon emissions. By 2028, corporate emissions are to be reduced by 30% and the community's by 6%. A question from

Councillor Wishart revealed that the Action Plan does not include emissions from heating with wood stoves. This is serious in a township where many homes burn wood for heat. Also, there is no penalty if goals are not met. Information about the Action Plan is to appear on the township website, in newsletters, and the like.

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW: See page 1.

STRATEGIC PLAN WORKSHOP:

On April 17, Council and senior staff devoted a special committee of the whole meeting to updating the strategic plan that had guided the previous Council from 2015 to 2018. Once again, Karen Wiancki of Planning Solutions Inc. supplied useful guidance reminding them of the big picture against which their actions would be played out, and returning repeatedly to the idea that challenges could become opportunities. They reviewed the 13-page Strategic Plan Scorecard item by item, eventually identifying 12 priorities they hope to accomplish before the next election, namely (in no particular order):

- move forward on a new or remodelled town hall (site, design)
- move towards the goal of 50 affordable housing units (only 4 now)
- improve internet and cell service capabilities
- make strides with infrastructure needs
- get transit in place to link to Simcoe County's transit service (Uber? First Nations bus?)
- decide on and support a sewage treatment plan
- support the township's artists and artisans, possibly with a gallery
- bring human resources management in house to manage staff recruitment and retention
- support economic development in North Simcoe (i.e. jobs to keep the young from leaving the township)
- support outdoor recreation, beaches, trails, bicycle paths
- continue to develop an asset management plan (including making use of the airport)
- build in resilience and sustainability

Council decided to move items from the previous strategic plan that had already been accomplished into an appendix so that the focus of the revised plan would be on things still to be done. They directed staff to work with Wiancki on an updated draft of the plan and scorecard and have them ready for distribution to the community and for discussion at the Town Hall Meeting in May.

Anyone curious to know how Tiny's current Council views its job would find the live streamed version of this meeting revealing (and occasionally frustrating, when someone forgot to speak into a microphone).

2019 TAXES:

The total to be levied this year is \$29,176,752. This sum is shared among the Township (\$11,706,034), the County (\$10,853,338), and Education (\$6,617,380). As usual, those on municipal water systems pay an additional levy of \$200 for capital costs.

URBAN HEN KEEPING/BACKYARD CHICKENS:

This serious matter is to be considered during the public consultation process for the Township's new Zoning By-law.

BUILDING ACTIVITY SLOWS:

Where, in the first quarter of 2018, 94 permits were issued at an estimated value of \$6,768,000, in the first quarter of 2019, the permits issued fell to 65 at an estimated value of \$3,742,800.

PARTIAL ROAD ALLOWANCE CLOSURE AT THUNDER BEACH:

The passage of By-law No. 19-036, closing the part of the road allowance between Concession 18 and 19 that gives access to the beach, should resolve a long-standing problem. (The stretch to be closed is Parts 1, 2, and 3 on Reference Plan 51R-41868.)

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