

Municipal Partners in Lake and River Stewardship

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Our Mission

We work with landowners, communities, and organizations to protect lakes and rivers through developing effective, transferable, long-term solutions.

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Wollaston Township's Mission



“Wollaston Township’s Mission is to work towards its long-term Vision in a healthy natural environment by providing transparent leadership, strong communication, quality services and a welcoming community.”

Managing our Lakes and Rivers?

- The Canadian Framework around freshwater protection is one that is very complex with shared and sometimes duplicated responsibilities.
- With all the downloading of responsibility to municipalities, we are relying on municipalities in Ontario to ensure that they take responsible for creating and enforcing policy and zoning bylaws that protect our lakes and natural heritage features under direction of the PPS.
- Also private citizens and lake and river groups are stepping up to help take care of our waters.

Lake/River Level Management Issues

- So much development happens at the lake level. Increased development = increased nutrient loading, vegetation loss, increased boating etc.
- Climate change factors, lower water levels, algae blooms, etc.
- Multiple players governing a single water body = Confusion
- No clear definition of lake capacity
- Rural municipalities are left vulnerable without strong policies in place to protect their lakes. And it is happening.....

We Can't Reverse Development Once the Damage is Done - Economics



Photo: Scott Brown

The quality of a lake has a direct economic impact for Municipalities- It is essential to look at long term impacts of development. Studies show that property values decline where water quality or the natural environment has been degraded. Both residential and commercial businesses are negatively affected- which has substantial impacts to the economic development of the area.

What Municipalities Need do to Protect our Lakes and Rivers?

- Ensure policies and bylaws are in place/ use site plan control- Target 30 metre native plant buffer requirement with a limit of less than 25% clearing at shore.
(Can require landscape plan with development proposals)
- Strictly enforce bylaws on vegetation removal and ensure inspectors, during compliance inspections are **required** to report any infractions with respect to bylaws
- Ensure bylaws state “Tree and **shrub** cutting” not just tree cutting to protect understory vegetation
- Educate Landowners on ‘who is responsible for what’ and how they can protect their lakes through proper shoreline management practices. Ensure that they are provided with environmental requirements contained in by-laws

What Municipalities Need to do to Protect our Lakes and Rivers?

- Be good example...ensure municipal lands are well vegetated and use them as demonstration sites for education
- Know your lakes and rivers and protect Natural heritage features in official plans with a focus on linkages of natural areas
- Septic inspections should be mandatory for entire waterbodies
- When more than one municipalities exists on a waterbody, create consistent policies with each other and meet to discuss any potential development applications
- Partner with Conservation Groups, Lake Associations and Conservation Authorities to carryout Shoreline Stewardship Actions - Meet regularly, create committees around lake stewardship, bring in funding for restoration, education and more....

Planning for Natural Heritage Protection

- Policy should require the consideration of the role and importance of lands adjacent to natural heritage systems with an analysis of the impacts of development proposals on set criteria to include: **water quality, fisheries, storm water management, biodiversity, cumulative impacts, etc. and make recommendations for mitigation measures and improvements to natural heritage features, and enforce through site plan control.**
- Require minimum standards for environmental impact assessments by qualified consultants, **(and require peer review)** on adjacent lands to protected areas. Follow the Natural Heritage Manual for guidance

Planning for Natural Heritage Protection

- Development proposals that do not meet min policies and setbacks should result in a no net loss and ideally environmental net gain
- Minor variances should meet the 4 tests under section 45(1) of the Planning Act as follows:
 1. Is the application minor in nature?
 2. Is it desirable for the appropriate development or use of the land, building or structure?
 3. Is it in keeping with the general intent and purpose of the Zoning By-law?
 4. Is it in keeping with the general intent and purpose of the Official Plan?

Recommendations for Long Term Wollaston Lake Health Protection

- Implement long term Water Quality Monitoring
- Initiate requirements and a peer review process for env. impact assessments to ensure compliance with env. requirements (Liable for compliance under the LPAT Process)
- Restore municipal lands and educate residents and business owners on env. protection.
- Partner for environmental stewardship with all interest groups around the lake.
- Conduct a State of Lake report to better understand the health of Wollaston Lake.
- Ensure that all development meets net environmental gain-no increase in phosphorus will take place.

How to get started....

- Create steering committee of all representatives and a terms of reference
- Collaborative decision making
- Seek Funding for Action
- Ensure that all stakeholders are represented-no single group to decide how lake is managed.
- Bridge the gap between stakeholders and build good collaborative relationships
- Create a action plan for moving forward together

Remember that everyone cares about the health of Wollaston Lake!



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Thank You!

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