

Submission to
**KAWARTHA HIGHLANDS SIGNATURE SITE
LOCAL STAKE-HOLDER COMMITTEE**

Re:
**ONTARIO'S LIVING LEGACY:
PROPOSED LAND USE STRATEGY**

Presented by Ann Turner-Murphy, Saturday, November 25, 2000

I am here today authorized to speak on behalf of the Turner family. Together we own approximately 5200 feet of shoreline along the east side of lake Catchacoma, north of the Bottle Creek Dam. All of our properties either abut, or are adjacent to existing Crown Land which is to be included in the Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park. We all have water access cottages and have been Catchacoma cottagers most, if not all, of our lives, some in excess of 50 years. In fact, next summer, the Turners are celebrating 75 years as cottagers on this lake.

The Committee has asked that, in our submissions, we address what we consider to be the things that we "value" about the Kawartha Highlands. In considering this question we have developed a significant list.

What we value

We value our clean water. We all swim and play in water that, by 2000 standards, is clean and safe. There is no debris floating in the water. The water is clear and comparatively weed free. We know that when our children go swimming they aren't going to cut themselves on broken glass or even zebra mussel shells.

We value our clean, natural shoreline. With the exception of a few properties on the west shore of the lake, the Catchacoma shoreline is undeveloped and in its natural state. It is free of litter. It supports the growth of wild water iris, wild roses and wild salvia. It provides a stunning backdrop for canoeing and kayaking.

We value our **natural forest**. Again, except for those few properties on the west side of the lake, the cottagers have not cut down the forest to plant grass. We really do see the forest and the trees.

We value the **marine and wildlife** that find Catchacoma a hospitable environment - the loons, mergansers, herons, and the occasional muskrat, mink or beaver. We value Catchacoma's long stretches of **undeveloped shoreline**. There is still shoreline Crown land on Catchacoma and many of the cottage lots at our end of the lake have frontages that well exceed the minimum frontages required for building lots today.

We value our **clean forest**, the Crown land that we abut. This forest is free of evidence of human interference. We encounter no campsites, no litter, no destruction by inconsiderate people nor commercial activity.

We value our **safe forest**. During an afternoon hike, it is rare to encounter anyone else in the forest, let alone unsavory types. We have little to worry about from hunters, as they are virtually unknown in the area for most of the year.

We value the security that water access properties enjoy. As our cottages are isolated and it is impossible to reach them with a vehicle, we have had a history of good security and, in the last decade, no vandalism during the 6 months of the year that we are not at the lake.

We value our **quiet respectful neighbours**. Generally the Catchacoma cottagers are not loud or aggressive. We spend our evenings listening to the loons and the lapping of the water rather than listening to someone else's music. Transients, may not share the same respect we have for our environment and for our neighbors.

We value the **dark nights**. We can actually take in a breathtaking display of stars without interference from well-lit, high-density or commercial development.

How then do we work to ensure that all that is valuable about the Kawartha Highlands remains so for generations to come? There is no doubt that our lake is under siege from the normal increase in usage in the 21st century without even considering possible increases in use that may arise from park development.

Our Concerns

We are concerned that the ecological system has undergone noticeable deterioration over the past two decades. There has been a significant decrease in marine stock such as crayfish and snails as well as wildlife such as porcupines, skunks and chipmunks. When we (as Turner children) were growing up at the cottage we could see clear to the bottom of the lake everyday. We could see the clam trails in the sand; lift rocks to find numerous crayfish and snails clung to every rock. In the early summer huge clouds of baby bass schools provided hours of entertainment. Now we see the broken remains of the clam shells, barely ever see snails and we can't remember the last time we heard frogs croaking in the evening light. Our point is that the ecological system has already gone through significant negative changes as the lake has evolved within the last 20 years. This could only be aggravated by further development on the lake. Environmental responsibility is everyone's concern.

We are concerned that park development could bring about the destruction our forests, shoreline or lake with the rise of new residential and tourist complexes. As well, more boat traffic = more waves = increased shoreline erosion= loss of natural habitats for indigenous fauna and flora.

We are concerned with pressures on the Crown to sell Crown land for back lot development or to permit new roads or ATV trails over Crown land.

We are concerned that development has the potential to increase noxious activities and noise levels that accompany the use of personal watercraft jet skis and party boats. We often have had still nights shattered by visitors having uncontrolled beach parties that have gone on until morning. We are also concerned about the potential for an increase in number of inexperienced boaters on the lake and the attendant related safety issues.

Conclusion:

Any new designation must ensure:

- that our forests do not become littered, unsafe, overpopulated or destroyed
- that our shoreline remains in its natural state
- that water quality remains high
- that our environment be free of litter

The designation of the existing Crown land as a provincial park will help to ensure the survival of Catchacoma's natural environment.

Park land will be free of future pressures that may be placed on the Crown to sell Crown land for back lot development, or to permit new roads or ATV trails to be developed over Crown land.

In short, everything that we value about the Kawartha Highlands can be preserved by the appropriate provincial park designation.

We therefore request that,

1. There be **no buffer zone** between existing private property and the park boundaries. Such a zone may permit or facilitate future development such as roads.
2. The park be established as a wilderness park and not as a highly developed park with established campsites, etc.
3. No new roads or ATV trails be permitted anywhere in the area that will lead people to the forest area around Lake Catchacoma.
4. Existing roads and ATV trails (notably at the Beaver Lake road and the ATV trails north of Lake Catchacoma off highway 507) be controlled, and well policed by Park Wardens or other appropriate authorities.
5. Existing shoreline Crown land not be actively promoted as access points to the park from Lake Catchacoma by either the construction of parking lots, facilities, docks and launching ramps or passively by noting such shoreline access point to the park on maps.

Such access points would lead to increased transient boat traffic on Lake Catchacoma by larger boats or seadoos. Drivers of many of these vessels would cruise the lake system rather than access the park, increasing the lake pollution and shore erosion and greatly increasing the risk of introducing Zebra mussels to the lake system.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views and recommendations to the Committee.

Signed by Ann Turner-Murphy on behalf of:

Marni & George Johnson
Barbara & Marc Laperriere
Judith Turner-Macbeth & Doug Macbeth
Ann Turner-Murphy & Charles Murphy
Cathy & Ron Olynik
Laura & David Turner
Sonia & Mike Turner
Fran Turner