

## Planning Department Issue Paper # 1

Issue: Seguin Lake Water Quality Program

### Discussion:

The Seguin Official Plan was approved, with modifications, by the Ontario Municipal Board on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007. The new Official Plan recognizes the fundamental position of the Townships lakes to its economy, the quality of life of its residents, and the health of our environment. The new OP includes the following goals and objectives:

**Goal:** It is the goal of this Plan to protect and enhance significant natural heritage features and ecological functions in the Township through the adoption of an “Environment-First” principle.

#### Objectives

- To ensure that the protection of significant environmental features and their associated ecological functions take precedence over the development of such lands.
- To ensure that a thorough understanding of the natural environment, including the values, opportunities, limits and constraints that it provides, guides land use decision-making in the Township.
- To require that land use planning contributes to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of water and related resources and aquatic ecosystems on an integrated watershed management basis.
- To minimize changes to the water quality and hydrological and hydrogeological characteristics of watercourses, lakes, aquifers and wetlands resulting from human activity.
- To prohibit new development that will result in a negative impact to the critical functions and processes of watercourses, lakes, aquifers and wetlands.

**Goal:** It is the goal of this Plan that all development on the Township’s lakes and rivers must protect and preserve the quality of the water, protect the visual and aesthetic character of the lakes and rivers, protect the recreational, social, and environmental experiences, protect public safety by prohibiting development in areas subject to flooding or erosion, and respect the unique character of each lake.

#### Objectives

- To protect the unique character of the individual lakes and rivers, including Georgian Bay, and their watersheds in the Township from inappropriate development.
- To prevent lakes from being overdeveloped to a degree that will change the biological or recreational capacity of the lake.

The Township adopted the lake modeling program utilized by the District Municipality of Muskoka in its leading edge “Lake System Health Program”. As part of the Official Plan program, the Township of Seguin retained Gartner Lee Limited to model 19 of the Township’s lakes in accordance with the new model.

With the provincial approval of the new Official Plan and specifically the policies of Section B.3 of the Plan as they relate to Recreational Water Quality, the Township needs to complete the modeling work started with the Official Plan and establish a baseline of data in order to measure and track the quality and health of the lakes in the municipality. This work is vital in ensuring that over the life of the new Plan that the fundamental goals and objectives of the Plan are met in a measured and quantitative way.

Two components of a new “**Seguin Lake Water Quality Program**” are required.

First, the Township should establish an active and long term water quality monitoring and testing program to build on the historic water quality data that has already been collected through the Provincial *Lake Partners Program* and the volunteer efforts of our Lake Associations and residents. Preliminary discussions have occurred with the District, staff, and with Gartner Lee regarding the establishment of a lake monitoring and testing program. By building onto the resources of our successful septic re-inspection program (and re-branding it as part of our **Seguin Lake Water Quality Program**) and by working with the District/MOE testing program, a more comprehensive program could be developed. A set up cost for the monitoring and testing program is estimated to be about \$6,500.00. This estimate would cover the costs of a dissolved oxygen meter, secci disk, sample bottles, and the other equipment necessary to conduct the annual testing program. Labour costs would be covered within the current program budget for the summer septic re-inspection program. Staff is hopeful that by re-branding the program as an environmentally based water quality program, that additional funding assistance may be available.

The second, and largest, component of the proposed **Seguin Lake Water Quality Program** would be the completion of the modeling of the balance of the Township’s lakes in accordance with the OP model. Gartner Lee has provided a preliminary desktop estimate to complete this work at \$30,000 - \$35,000. The modeling costs could be included in a single capital budget (2008) or spread over two years (2008 & 2009 operating).

**Recommendation:**

That the Township include the \$42,000 Capital costs of the proposed **Seguin Lake Water Quality Program** in the 2008 budget. This is included in the 2008 Capital Budget.