

Closing Clark Lake to the public

To the Editor,

Some would have us believe that the only reason the town wants to block access to Clark Lake is because of the potential for zebra mussels.

I would say that if you are truly concerned about zebra mussels in our lakes, then there should be some joint communication, signage and education from all North Hastings councils and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. These for not only the year round residents but also the seasonal residents and the visitors to North Hastings.

We are known for our pristine lakes, beautiful landscapes and as a four season playground. If we want to keep that true then we need to do more to educate all people using our waterways and land.

Zebra mussels have been found in Diamond Lake, Paudash Lake, Steenburg Lake and Wollaston Lake.

Until this meeting was scheduled, and I did some research, I didn't know this.

I was under the illusion that if zebra mussels were in our local lakes that we would have been told and signage would be in place so we could all be more vigilant when going from lake to lake ? maybe a cleaning station for the whole area would have been setup.

Anyone who wishes to check out lakes in their area can go to www.eddmaps.org/ontario. It is a site that has been setup to report invasive species when they are detected. You may be as surprised as me about what you find.

To me there is a distinct difference between intent and reality. It seems that some council members want me to believe that closing public access to Clark Lake would not stop children and families from using the lake for swimming or going for a canoe ride or fishing from shore.

The reality is that a law is a law. The only way that anyone from the public could use the lake is to break the law. Do you think it would be fair for the town to have full discretion on whether or not our kids get charged for swimming in a lake? Let's also be clear that anyone who is privileged enough to own property on Clark Lake will still be able to use boats, motors, kayaks, canoes, etc. without impunity, as would anyone else they would allow to have access to the lake through their property.

I am not saying that the residents of Clark Lake are not good stewards of the lake. To me this is discrimination against everyone else. Generations of us have been stewards of the land and the waters in this area. We have always welcomed and shared our wonderful countryside and waterways with anyone who wanted to enjoy them. We take great pride in our part of the world and if we were not good stewards of the land and waters then we would not have the pristine lakes such as we do.

In my opinion, we need to start communicating with our neighbours and friends. Our council needs to start working with other local councils so we can all be good stewards of this beautiful place we call home. Don't take away our rights. Work for all of us, educate everyone on the risks of zebra mussels and if you are truly convinced that the locals cannot be good stewards of Clark Lake then apply to Transport Canada to take the motors off the lake, but do not take away the public's rights to use this lake.

I would encourage everyone to have their say and let the town know how you feel about this proposed bylaw. It would prefer to have your comments in writing.

Anyone interested in more information can contact me at wbrethour@hotmail.com.

Wilma Brethour

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