

WOLFE LAKE (WESTPORT) ASSOCIATION

News Flash | August 6, 2018

UPDATE ON THE LOW WATER LEVELS DUE TO THE COMPLETE REMOVAL OF THE LOGS FROM THE DAM ON WOLFE LAKE



The Good News



Ken Malcom shared this picture with us on July 28. THANKS, Ken



Peter Neve took this one on August 3. THANKS Peter



Anna Rijk captured this view on August 8. The boards are still in!

All the boards are in place (for now)!

Several members of our Association shared their findings with us regarding the situation at the dam, which we greatly appreciate!

Replacement of the boards is good news, although we all are disappointed Parks Canada drained our lake for such a long period of time. Several members of the Association sent letters of concern to the relevant authorities. You will find them below.

We would like to ask you to keep on writing letters, such as the ones below.

Let us know your concerns regarding the consequences the low water levels and send us pictures of how you are dealing with it, such as having to adjust your dock, taking out the boat or anything else. Send your remarks and pictures to: com-wolfelake@outlook.com

Disappointing is the answer of Parks Canada, sent to our Water Quality Director on August 2, 2018. They say:

“Unfortunately, during dry, hot periods, there is very little that can be done to maintain water levels across the system. Conservation during drought conditions is paramount and the effects are also being felt on the southern portion of the Rideau Canal which is currently operating with a reduced boating depth. It is also important to note, that water passing through the lock system does not play a significant role in water levels on the Rideau Canal and lake levels can be dramatically affected by evaporation. Water updates, as well as lake level information, can be found online on our Water Management InfoNet, available here: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/info/infonet>.”

You can read the full account of Parks Canada’s answer below as well.

LETTER 1

Ms Valerie de Winter,
Engagement, Partnering and Communications,
Parks Canada, Smith Falls, ON

Dear Ms de Winter:

Subject: LOW WATER LEVEL IN WOLFE LAKE

As property owners on Wolfe Lake, we are extremely concerned about the low water levels, unusual for this time of year. The critically low water level is due to the complete removal, by Parks Canada, of all the logs from the dam, allowing water to flow freely out of Wolfe Lake. This low water level not only prevents residents from enjoying their waterfront property to the fullest, it also creates unsafe boating conditions as it exposes the shoals, rocks and underwater hazards in some areas. This could result in serious injury or even death to those residents or visitors who are unaware of these hazards.

We urge the authorities to put back at least some of the logs in the dam so that we can continue to enjoy safe boating, fishing and water sports on Wolfe Lake. We will hold Parks Canada responsible for any accident on the lake due to the critically low water levels.

Sincerely,

Ilse and Hubert Zandstra

LETTER 2 + ANSWER OF PARKS CANADA

Daniel Spitzer
67 Wolfe Ridge Lane
Westport ON K0G 1X0

27 July 27, 2018

Dear Representative,

I am living on a waterfront property at Wolfe Lake. Currently we are experiencing extremely low water levels due to the complete removal of the logs from the dam to a waterway towards the Rideau Canal. The dam is controlled by Parks Canada. It appears that some outdated regulations/legislation or even unfounded decision making are applied regarding the water level management, without any appropriate environmental justification. Our Association (Wolfe Lake Association) has confronted Parks Canada multiple times with this issue, without satisfactory results. Reasoning of the contacted representatives of Parks Canada was not convincing.

Along with the safety issues connected with the extremely low water levels in our Lake (unsafe boating conditions, damaging docks) there are serious environmental implications induced by inconsistent water level management. Inconsistent water level management is a serious threat to the entire ecology of the Lake.

1. Low water levels cause substantial decrease of the water clarity, greatly (negatively) affecting the entire biodynamics in the water body.
2. Low water levels cause increase of unwanted nutrients (Phosphorus, Nitrogen) concentrations leading to increased nutrification of the lake and hence to spontaneous algal blooms and proliferation of the bottom vegetation.
3. Low water levels cause increase of the euphotic zone (the depth related to the unwanted bottom weeds growth) due to the general decrease of the water depth.
4. Low water levels cause increase of the water temperature in the shore zone and hence contribute to the increase of infestation by bottom weeds in the areas adjacent to the shores.
5. In particular, we have noticed that the density and spread of the fast-growing invasive Eurasian milfoil are reaching disproportionately high levels. Currently, infestation of Ontario lakes by the Eurasian milfoil is one of the key environmental concerns.

As the 'Director of the Water Quality', I kindly request you to help us and to take action to prevent further deterioration of our aquatic environment of Wolfe Lake by influencing Parks Canada to put back the logs in our dam, for now; and to apply ecologically responsible water level management policies, for any future lake water drainage.

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Spitzer
Director Water Quality, Wolfe Lake (Westport) Association
Adj. Professor Environmental Engineering, University of Windsor

ANSWER PARKS CANADA

From: valerie.dewinter@pc.gc.ca <valerie.dewinter@pc.gc.ca> **On Behalf**
Of RideauCanal.Info@pc.gc.ca
Sent: 02 August, 2018 4:00 PM
To: dspitzer@amapsenv.com
Subject: RE: Wolfe Lake Water

Dear Mr. Spitzer,

Thank you for your email. Parks Canada manages water levels on the Rideau Canal and associated lakes with a number of watershed interests that go beyond navigation needs of the canal. For instance, water management activities also consider mitigation of flooding of agricultural, private, public and commercial property; protect fish & wildlife habitat; support municipal water supply needs; support hydroelectric generation; and help maintain water quality. Many factors influence water levels along the Canal and the impact of factors such as the area of a drainage basin and the volume of precipitation or water loss due to evaporation are closely monitored and their effects mitigated as much as possible by the Ontario Waterways team.

The water management practices for Wolfe Lake are long standing and Wolfe Lake is managed in coordination with Upper Rideau Lake. Both lakes are below average levels for this time of year due to the drought conditions that are being seen throughout the region, which include much of southern Ontario. We are working to capture previous week's rainfall in both lakes and the outflow from the dam on Wolfe Lake has been reduced to retain water in the lake. At no point during the drought period were all logs removed from the Wolfe Lake Dam and the Parks Canada water management team is working hard to conserve water for reservoir lakes, such as Wolfe Lake, and the canal itself.

Unfortunately, during dry, hot periods, there is very little that can be done to maintain water levels across the system. Conservation during drought conditions is paramount and the effects are also being felt on the southern portion of the Rideau Canal which is currently operating with a reduced boating depth. It is also important to note, that water passing through the lock system does not play a significant role in water levels on the Rideau Canal and lake levels can be dramatically affected by evaporation. Water updates, as well as lake level information, can be found online on our Water Management InfoNet, available here: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/info/infonet>.

During times of drought conditions, it is essential for boat operators to practice safe boating and to be aware of the local conditions, including low levels and underwater hazards in their lakes. During dry periods, such as these, it can reasonably be expected that water levels will be lower than normal and that extreme caution should be exercised.

Thank you for taking the time to share your views with me and I appreciate having the opportunity to respond to your concerns. For questions or concerns, or to receive water management updates by email, please send an email to RideauCanal.Info@pc.gc.ca and include "Water Management" in the subject heading.

Sincerely,

General Inquiries Administrator

Administrateur général de renseignements

Ontario Waterways Unit - Rideau Canal | Unité des voies navigables de l'Ontario - canal Rideau

Parks Canada | Parcs Canada

rideaucanal-info@pc.gc.ca

Telephone | Téléphone: 613.283-5170

[www.parkscanada.gc.ca] www.parkscanada.gc.ca | [www.parcscanada.gc.ca] www.parcscanada.gc.ca

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NEWS FLASH UPDATE AUGUST 8, 2018 (next page)

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THE LOW WATER LEVELS DUE TO THE COMPLETE REMOVAL OF THE LOGS FROM THE DAM ON WOLFE LAKE?

Take action and contact the influentials below



Your association has spoken several times with Parks Canada (they control the dam for the operation of the Rideau Canal) without satisfactory results.

In addition to very much reducing our enjoyment of water front properties and contributing to lower property values, the low water level creates unsafe boating conditions as it exposes water hazards not usually present and could result in serious injury or even death to residents or visitors to our lake that are unaware of those hazards.

We invite all members to make their concerns known to:

- **The Honourable Catherine McKenna**, federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, CONTACT her at the House of Commons (Ottawa, ON):
catherine.mckenna@parl.gc.ca or by telephone at **+1 613 996 5322**
or at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change:
ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca or by telephone at **+1 819 938 3860**
- **Ms. Jewel Cunningham**, Director of Ontario Waterways, Parks Canada CONTACT her at the Peterborough office:
jewel.cunningham@pc.gc.ca or by telephone at **+1 705-750-4919**
- **Ms. Valerie Dewinter** the Engagement, Partnering and Communications office, Parks Canada at the Smith Falls office:
valerie.dewinter@pc.gc.ca or by telephone at **613-283-7199 ext 202**
- **Mr. Colin Clarke**, Water Management manager, Parks Canada at the Elgin office:
colin.clarke@pc.gc.ca or by telephone at **613-359-5620**

As discussed and proposed at the AGM (July 21, 2018), please take action and inform all that you are fed up with the extremely low water levels and want at least some of the logs put back in the Wolfe Lake dam. Otherwise **you/we will hold Parks Canada liable for injuries and/or damage resulting from any accidents that do occur.**

If you no longer wish to receive the News Flashes of the Wolfe Lake (Westport) Association, please let us know at: com-wolfelake@outlook.com, and we will unsubscribe you.