



Skootamatta District Ratepayers Association

P O Box 146 Cloyne Ontario K0H 1K0

Strategic Plan Member Feedback Summary

In August 2024 the SDRA sought input from members to the 2024 SDRA Strategic Plan. Two questions were posed for the membership.

Question 1: What is it that you and your family love about “Life at the Lake”? What are the things you most want to sustain?

Question 2: What things worry you the most that might impact “Life at the Lake” in the future?

Feedback was gathered in two ways. On August 24th the SDRA held a working session with 11 members. Members worked in groups to discuss and provide feedback to the questions. In addition, a survey was sent to members not able to make the in-person session. The survey was completed by 26 members.

The following summary reflects the views of the 37 participants. Comments have been grouped into like themes. An effort was made to keep member comments as they were written. In some cases, multiple comments having the same theme were brought together to reduce repetition.

Please review feedback received to date, if you wish to add to this feedback please complete the information via the following link.

<https://s.surveypal.com/8h4mzeav>

Thank you for your participation.
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Peace and Quiet / Traffic

What do you Love?

- We enjoy the peace and beauty we are surrounded with to relax and free our minds from the hustle and bustle of our busy lives.
- Enjoy the quiet atmosphere with lots of opportunities to see wildlife without too many motorized boats in use.
- Preservation of privacy and the right to enjoy our properties without disruption.
- I love that the majority of the population is seasonal therefore smaller and less invasive presence.
- We love the rural life because of the peaceful and natural environment.
- The relative "quietness" of the lake. It is a peaceful place to be
- The peace and quiet. City life is especially stressful. Leaving that behind promotes better health.
- Trees rustling in the wind, loons, owls, sunsets, clean air, quiet
- Fewer noisy machines
- The peaceful environment. Few jet skis, loud parties
- Peace and quiet, no loud boats or sea doos, limited boat traffic
- We love how quiet the lake is even when it's busy.
- Healthy relaxing natural environment

What Worries You?

- An increase in motorized boats, jet skis, undisciplined boaters, proximity to docks, boat wash.
- Want to sustain the build and natural balance. Respect for shorelines. Side note: helping fellow boaters understand the impact of wakes to the shoreline when driving too close to shore.
- Currently owners and visitors respect the quiet aspect of the area. This might change. Many boaters lack responsible boating knowledge. Let's promote the online boating courses
- Excessive boat wakes which erode the shoreline and cause damage to docks. It causes damage to loon nesting spots, and we want our loon population to remain plentiful.
- Increased noise and light pollution.
- Speeders on roadways. Dogs and children
- Destructive actions such as overfishing, fireworks, allowing invasive species, etc. are detrimental.
- We would like to sustain the clean water, healthy lake, and the natural environment for all of the living creatures, not just us humans.
- Enjoyment by all of the use of the lake in responsible ways, including those who use the lake for day purposes (boating, fishing, etc.)
- Protect our animal co-habitants. Learn to live and respect their sanctuary as best possible.

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Crown Land Camping / Non-Residents / Short Term Rentals

What do you Love?

No Comments

What Worries You?

- Campers not respecting the cottagers property and not obeying the posted signs. They can become difficult to deal with.
- We have no issue with people camping on the lake in appropriate sites. We do have an issue with garbage (toilet paper, broken glass in water, packaging) being left behind
- Non-resident visitors such as campers, renters, fishermen, boaters, etc. Using the water and land irresponsibly without respect for residents on the lake i.e. - fishing in front of private docks casting at residents, bringing invasive water species, leaving garbage, illegal fireworks, loud partying. etc.
- Increase in "day-use" activity. We recognize that the public has and should have access to our lake/s for recreation. However, with more people using the lake for the day, we have increased the boat traffic, increasing pollution from motors. We have found garbage floating in the lake on numerous occasions. And what are these people using for washrooms?
- Unregulated day use and crown land camping: associated concerns pertain to garbage, noise, lack of respect/application of sustainable, legal fishing practices (taking fish over the slot), taking species out of season, destruction of shoreline habitat, fires and fireworks during fire and fireworks restrictions, etc.
- Rowdy campers. Too many day use people who disregard the sharing of the lake (courtesy towards others, speeding, big wakes, garbage)
- Increased usage of crown land for untidy campers. Crap left all over
- The privacy and prevention of illegal camping. Many of these people have no respect for our lake. The issue is out of control on the upper lake and Bible island.
- As private owners and stewards of this lake we should try to control the non-resident fishermen, renters, campers, etc. because they are not as respectful our lake and lands as we are.
- With ownership (and as tax payers) we have earned our way out of the violence, noise, crime and conflicts of the city. Non-owners have no "skin in the game".

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- Campers at boat launches and 'make shift' sites. Boat launch campers are in the way of people enjoying the lake. Rogue campsites (such as the ones at the feet of the eagle's nest!) disrupts natural habitats.
- Illegal camping and latrines within a few meters of the shore. They are clearing the shoreline and putting in docks. We pay tax and protect the shoreline. This problem has to be curtailed
- Shoreline camping on crown land. Not all campers respect the lake and the lake environment. Some campers leave behind garbage and don't properly douse campfires. This activity can be a hazard to wildlife and a risk of wildfires.

- Renters. Influx of people who don't have the same sense of responsibility as landowners. Increase in noise, boat traffic.
- Short term rentals. They have the potential to cause "disturbances" and reduce the sense of community
- Impact of air bnbs
- Noise, commotion
- Increased rental properties. Not only does this bring boats that may not be properly transported from lake to lake, but also folks that are not familiar with lake life and take unnecessary risks on the water.

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Crown Land / Development

What do you Love?

- I love that the majority of the land surrounding the lake is crown land and I want to maintain this ratio.
- Under populated, lots of crown land “it’s not Muskoka”
- The low cottage density. I would be sad to see the crown land waterfront opened up to more cottages.
- Maintain crown land.
- High percentage of crown land. Keeps boats and people low for peace and quiet.
- Love the balance between cottages/homes and crown land. Integration with nature and a beautiful way to share with past, present and future generations.
- The natural beauty of the upper lake. The majority of the shoreline in the Upper Lake does not have any cottages.
- Sustaining the crown land and peacefulness of the area is important to us

What Worries You?

- An opening of crown land as a moneymaking opportunity for the government.
- If more Crown Land is sold that would perhaps change and increase the number of boats and noise. No more shoreline to be sold. We oppose the release of any crown land on the lake for development. The current level of cottages is just right.
- Development, threats to wildlife, polluted ecosystem, invasive species. We need to ensure all of these are monitored, prevented and controlled. Development, shoreline preservations, resorts, crown land roads
- Future pressure to increase land use and cottage density is a concern; the future of the walleye fishery is a concern; years ago the local guys re-stocked the walleye using the hatchery at bishops lake.; the ministry in it's wisdom stopped this activity; I believe this decision was a mistake and re-stocking needs to be re-instated. It is clear that the current walleye population spawning activity is not very successful
- The possibility of land being purchased and building restaurant or other types of businesses.
- More cottages with the worry of septic problems and more gas entering the water

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- Further development which creates more lots and cottages without compliance to our lake management plan. Delays in the AH official plan. Our cottages are fairly low density, which is one of the reasons we can keep it healthy.
- New locations, water access, permits, policing, enforcement
- The fact that the government might open more land up for cottages or commercial development.
- Release of crown land on the lake to development. More cottages would bring more boat traffic, noise and potential for water quality issues.
- Too much build up, particularly along the shoreline. Sale of existing crown land along the narrows and upper lake.
- Against large year-round housing and development of large scale rental properties

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Water Quality / Invasive Species

What do you Love?

- The pristine lake and ability to share with my family
- Water Activities. We enjoy fishing, boating (motorized and non-motorized), swimming. So, water quality is very important to us.
- The quality of the water and that there not too many boats (mostly pontoons or kayaks which don't disturb the loons or quietness)
- The quality of the water for swimming or drinking, it is clear and mostly weed free
- Clean water also makes for good fishing and a place for water animals.
- Clean water: abundance of natural shoreline (undeveloped shorelands and riparian areas. Contributes to a wide array of sporting activities incl. but not limited to swimming, boating (less traffic), fishing, picnics, etc...)
- The beautiful and healthily lake. The thriving wildlife, the sounds of the loons and the bull frogs, the great swimming, the good quality water. Many of us drink the water without treatment and I hope it will always be this way.
- The lake is clean as is the shoreline and areas around the lake.

What Worries You?

- Bio-loading that causes weed growth, Invasive species, excessive boat traffic especially high-speed boat activity. Water level management by the conservation authority needs to be supervised Ongoing dialogue with LMFI is required to ensure that our needs are included in their plans
- Invasive species control, infusion of milfoil
- Profusion of cultivated properties, lawns, gardens, weeds, fertilizer, etc.
- Garbage in the lake and shoreline
- Unsafe sewage systems, failing septic systems, old and outdated
- Water purity, increased water pollution. Water source for swimming, showering, washing
- Keep weeds to a minimum. Enjoyment of swimming. I have some concerns about the increasing presence of a variety of plant life in the lake

Maintain/ support cottagers' efforts to retain riparian zone and shore erosion efforts as per conservation authorities (I.e. discourage naked shorelines and dumping beach sand into the water (those who have disregarded these detrimental actions well known by many of the owners around the lake)

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- Impact of invasive species: in particular, Eurasian water milfoil, and risk of other invasive aquatic species (plants, fish, mollusks, and crustaceans) found in nearby water bodies such as the Bay of Quinte.
- Invasive species and shoreline erosion and non care of The Ribbon of Life essential to us all
- Concerned about water level management hurting lake ecosystem. dam was established for flood management purposes not to augment water quality for down stream politically strong residents, my concern is that dropping water levels in summer can and has caused vegetation die off, hurting lake ecosystem - concerned about walleye population, high smelt numbers affecting walleye recruitment?

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Forestry / Nature / Environment / Climate Change

What do you Love?

- We enjoy the wildlife, clean air and clean water. We enjoy the serenity of the lake and the fact that it has been kept mostly forested, without a lot of development. We want to sustain the aforementioned items.
- We love the wildlife and natural environment. Preservation of our lands and water provide a healthy ecosystem. The birds, animals and fish ARE the "Life at the Lake".
- Natural heritage: diversity of lake specific and area aquatic, terrestrial and riparian ecosystems, plants and wildlife (fish, birds, mammals, herps (amphibians, snakes and skinks), found throughout area forest, wetland, stream and lake ecosystems.
- The lake and shoreline are relatively clean.. Some members enjoy fishing.
- Clean air, clean water, green forest, The night sky and the Loons, the peace, low density especially in the south end, the million-dollar beach, the deer and the turkeys proximity to bon echo; blue berries and black berries, family time thru the generation
- The natural environment:
Birdwatching, stargazing, swimming
- Wildlife – loons, frogs, snakes, fish
- Not a lot of ambient light, being able to see the stars (Dark skies). The beautiful night sky. Lots of stars, constellations, the space station when it flies overhead. All things you can't see due to light pollution in the city.
- Environmentally sound lakeshore practices

What Worries You?

- Increase in logging too close to the shoreline.
- Clear cutting of forests without regard for the FMP requirements. Impacts wildlife, sensitive environmental areas and the view scape we enjoy today
- Logging, traffic, proper management
- Global warming and climate change: greater number of ice-free days, higher summer air and water temps, potential for occurrences of algae blooms and toxic, blue-green algae in particular, greater frequency and intensity, and costs associated with storm events.
- After the derecho ...I am concerned about the deadfall back from access. Severe fires we are unprepared for
- Climate change affects water levels and damage to properties
- Hotter climate (damage to forests, vegetation, aquatic species) and storms. Educate members (web sites, etc,) as to simple things that people can do to mitigate these climate changes for the long-term benefit of the lake
- Tornados, water quality, flooding, land erosion, shoreline Erosion, also lack of awareness / understanding / education by residents / visitors alike.
- (going to electric motors may be a good thing)



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- Enjoy seeing each of the 4 seasons as they are very different.
 - We enjoy the clean water and air, friendly and respectful cottagers, upper public beach and annual fireworks display.
- any loss of water quality over development loss of white fish and lake trout populations declining walleye population invasives high smelt populations?
 - over development health of aquatic ecosystem water level management high smelt population?

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Community / Special Place / Family

What do you Love?

- A sense of Community. I love how our lake residents look after each other, get together at lake events and want that to continue for our kids and grandkids
- Good neighbours, helping with roads, after storms, get together
- Life can be hectic but life at the lake is a change in pace. Lifelong memories are made here, whether kayaking, frolicking on the "lily pad" or playing board games at night.
- Social attributes: great neighbours, social activities, active lake association, slower cottage pace of life, a place for gatherings of family and friends, area (local) sporting activities off the water (eg. Tennis, pickleball, golf, hiking, nature appreciation).
- The sense of community we have here at the lake. I love that our grandchildren can grow up together at the lake, learning about nature, making lifelong friendships and getting together for the lake festival, fireworks and other events. They may live in different cities but are always drawn back to the lake and their friends.
- Being an "anchor" for family. Over 55 years the island has become the centre for significant family activities. Place to family reunions
- Have been on the lake for 68 years. Important to our entire family.

What Worries You?

- Dialogue with the municipal government is important so that our voice is included in the decision making as we pay most of the taxes
- Available health care close to Skootamatta, as there are many more seniors living here a lot of the time it is impossible to get care when needed.
- Need to more effectively engage existing SDRA membership, and get other lake residents, stakeholders (fishers, day users, levels of government and NGOs) educated and engaged in collective efforts to protect: lake health (sustainability), the prevention, mitigation and eradication (if possible) of invasive species, management of sustainable fisheries (in obvious decline), and address more limited government support (staff time & \$ and regulatory/compliance, education programs and services)
- Lack of communication



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- We are a small community, we know each other
- We like the news from SDRA
- Local businesses, food bank, township, SDRA events (other 2 lakes?)
- We love the community feeling of the lake- the way folks come together to help each other out and how friendly everyone is.
- Proximity to Bon Echo Park, attracts service to our area