



Media Release

Trying to acquire an amendment to the Bonnechere River Water Management Plan has been a very slow and tedious process. It has been almost 2 years since we started the work of trying to get this amendment approved. The consulting process is vast and it is important to us that we ensure that all users of the Bonnechere River system are consulted and informed.

A stakeholders group consisting of players along the Bonnechere River system was established to work through all required legislation and to be part of the solution with relation to all issues involving this amendment. The stakeholders group asked that I be the lead representor of the group and Killaloe Hagarty and Richards community members and my council agreed.

Over the months a lot of work on this amendment has been performed and accomplished. Renfrew Power Generation; Shawn Cameron, Bowfin Environmental; Michelle Lavictoire, Round Lake Property Owners Association; Rob Norris and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry staff have been working tirelessly on this project trying to meet tight deadlines. We have received cooperation from all stakeholders, as well as, funding from the townships of North Algona Wilberforce and Bonnechere Valley in the amount of \$5,000 each and a commitment from Round Lake Property Owners Association and the Golden Lake Property Owners Association to assist with costs. The Algonquins of Ontario and Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation worked closely with stakeholders to ensure their concerns were addressed. We held public meetings to ensure participation from the community was offered, as well as, to hear all concerns and mitigate issues. Killaloe Hagarty and Richards council has set up a dispute resolution committee to provide the community with an avenue to have their concerns addressed. The Honorable John Yakabuski, Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry signed the order to approve the amendment.

The Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks took over the *Endangered Species Act from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry April 1, 2019*. We are working with the new Ministry (MECP) to determine the best course of action for moving forward with respect to turtles protected under this Act.

While previously, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) did not provide comments on the original Water Management Plan, the coming into force of the new legislation on August 28, 2019 they have now indicated that they will be involved. This process is now beginning, and we are working closely with them to address their requests.

These changes in legislation have slowed this whole process, however, we have accomplished a lot. I do want to mention that we are the first proponent to ever try and get an amendment such as this approved using the new MNRF process and we have been successful so far.

The weather this year has been dry, so the Bonnechere River system is presently very low. If in late winter – early spring, we anticipate a threat of a flood and we can request an emergency drawdown as done in 2019.

We want to thank all of those involved through this long process. We will continue to work through the legislation, and we ask for your continued patience as we move forward with this amendment.

Mayor Janice Visneskie Moore
Township of Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards