

Dysart Request for Shoreline Restoration Gets Rapid Response

The following article appeared in the County Voice on Thursday August 13, 2009 and was reproduced with their permission. The pictures were not part of the original article and were photographed at the south end of the lake past the entrance to Lipsy Bay (aka soap pond).



Protection and rehabilitation of natural shorelines has become a key issue with lake associations and a legal matter when seeking approval for development along the waterfront from municipalities. The shorelines of waterfront properties have been called the 'ribbon of life' for our lakes because it is along the shoreline that as much as 90 percent of life in the water is born, raised and fed.

Shorelines support all sort of plant life and provide habitat for fish, nesting birds and animals and the consequences of failing to comply with development regulations and municipal zoning can be dire and costly.

The Dysart et al Council was recently faced with reports that a property owner on Kennisis Lake had removed the required 30 metre shoreline vegetation buffer and cut down trees located on the shore road allowance owned by the municipality. The upshot of these actions resulted in an official request that the property owners (Steve and Mary Strugar) rectify the situation post-haste.

In a letter to the Strugars, Municipal Planner pat Martin asked for confirmation no later than July 31st that the situation be rectified and a plan, prepared by a professional forester, arborist or landscape architect, be submitted demonstrating how the vegetation buffer would be re-established.

The Plan must be submitted by September 15th and Council asked that it be based on establishing native species and that trees of reasonable height be planted to replace those cut down. Martin also advised the property owners that Council may also choose to have the plan peer reviewed by County officials.

Orders to requests like this often meet with considerable reluctance and even resistance by developers and property owners, but now so in the case of the Strugars.

Within the specified time, Strugar responded to the municipality's letter assuring Martin that it had always been their intention to remediate the property. Strugar had already been in contact with the Ministry of Natural Resources and spoken with a shoreline consultant recommended by the local cottage association.

Strugar advised Martin that the trees had been removed to allow safe access to the lake. According to Strugar, there was evidence that a number of large hemlocks were rooted in very shallow soil and many of them had already uprooted. Strugar wrote that last fall, one large hemlock had fallen directly onto their proposed building site and had taken known a number of spans of hydro lines at the back of their property: a situation that definitely created safety concerns for the family.

Strugar assured Martin that it had been their intention to remove the trees, establish proper soil depths, use native rocks as retaining walls and to replant native trees that can mature with strong root systems that will not endanger his family.

While Strugar voiced his disappointment in the municipality requiring a formal plan and suggested that the request could delay the process, he readily agreed to take the direction recommended by Council. He assured the municipality that the plan would be submitted well before the due date and asked that approval be given as soon as possible to facilitate work getting underway.

Council reviewed Strugar's letter of response at their committee of the whole meeting last week. Reeve Murray Fearrey said he was very pleased with the quick response and the opportunity for a good resolution to the problem. Councilor Janis Parker, who has a cottage on Kennisis Lake said, "This is an excellent example for people to see what can happen when the shorelines are damaged and how issues can be resolved.

The Kennisis Lake Cottage Owners Association is part of a Shoreline Advisory Program. The association has partnered with the Lakeland Alliance to assist property owners by providing advise on shoreline issues from a qualified advisor. There are no costs or obligations associated with this voluntary program; simply involvement in an education and awareness program that assists shoreline property owners in a practical way to protect and preserve a healthy lake ecosystem.