

Lake Diefenbaker Operating Plan Consultations
Recreation Sector
July 18, 2012 @ 10:00 a.m.
Park Town Hotel, Saskatoon

Recorders: Robin Tod, Heather Davies
Facilitator: Dazawray Landrie-Parker

Stakeholders:

Name	Stakeholder Municipality
Reine Janke	Hitchcock Hideaway
Christian Boyle	Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan
Angie Lagace	Lake Diefenbaker Yacht Club
Joel Perry	Parks, Culture and Sport
John Froese	Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association
Mike Heseltine	Saskatchewan Sailing Clubs Association
Peter Kingsmill	Shearwater M.S.

Meeting Notes

Dazawray Landrie-Parker started the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Participants were asked to introduce themselves.

Dazawray discussed the process and the other sectors that were being consulted in the sessions. She went over the timeline for the review of the operating plan. Participants were asked to complete the questionnaire document and submit it to Robin Tod.

The first part of the meeting was to discuss some of the challenges the downstream municipal stakeholders had related to the operation of Gardiner Dam.

Challenges

High water levels

Stakeholders indicated that they were concerned that the high water levels are causing issues, such as:

- shoreline erosion
- additional erosion on the Elbow Harbour armourment. Ministry of Environment has spent a load of money on the protection of the point at Elbow Harbour, but the current water levels are still high and look like they could continue to erode the point;
- lack of beach for recreational use and concern about eventual decline of tourism;
- safety concerns associated with children exploring “caves” along the lake’s shoreline caused by the erosion and under cutting. From a provincial parks’ point of view they may need to provide a pamphlet for tourists to indicate the safety concerns around the shoreline erosion causing these caves.

The second part of the meeting focused on the Issues Matrix component of the meeting.

Issue	Reservoir Value/Service	Frequency	Seasonality	Severity	Trend	Competing Values	Comments
High water level	Beaches and Tourism	Ongoing	Mid-June - September	This has an impact on tourism, and over time tourism may start to decline.	Increasing for the last 5 years	Hydropower	The beaches are extensive in June but the water levels increase during late June such that the beaches are eliminated with impacts on tourism.
High water level	Piping plover		Early May - late July			Hydropower	More stable water level would reduce management of piping plover. Stable water levels (increase water level in spring and reduce water level in fall) would reduce the number of plover nests that are being moved.
Fluctuating water levels	Safety concerns around the "caves" created by shoreline erosion	Ongoing	Caves created in mid-June to September, but remain for long periods of time.	Extreme - who is liable if someone is hurt?	Increasing for the last 5 years	Hydropower, Archaeology	
High water level	infrastructure (docks, boats)	Yearly - ongoing	Spring - Summer	Costly and time consuming	Getting worse	Hydropower	Douglas Provincial Park is in a cove that is silting in over time. The siltation reduces water levels at the Douglas Provincial Park boat launch. Tourists are therefore using Elbow Harbour. There is concern over how to remove siltation around the boat launch while still complying with Fisheries and Oceans Canada's guidelines.
High water level	Shoreline protection and loss of recreational land use in flooded areas	Ongoing	Open water when water levels are high	High		Hydropower	Stakeholders were concerned that the government has spent money armoring the Elbow shoreline and that high water levels may cause it to continue to erode. Stakeholders suggested reducing high water level (FSL) by 1 m, which would provide a more stable water level. High flows downstream of the Gardiner Dam are also a problem, the golf course in outlook is flooded when flow is ≥ 800 m ³ /s.
Low water level	Recreational use of Cabri Regional Park	Ongoing	Spring	Extreme	Recreational users lose around six weeks of recreational use (primarily boating) at Cabri Regional Park due to low water levels.	Hydropower	Stakeholders would like a more uniform/stable water level and not such drastic changes in water levels from spring to summer. A suggestion was raised of increasing the low water level in spring by 3 meters thus allowing recreational users to use the boat launch and water pump.
Low water level	Irrigation/drinking water	Ongoing	Spring	Extreme		Hydropower	Water levels are changing how ground water is treated. Parks, Culture and Sport are currently doing tests to assess if lake is affecting water quality of ground water wells at the provincial parks along the lake.
Need for predictable water levels	Recreational development						Long-term economic development needs require more stable water levels along the lake. A more stable water level would increase development - there is currently high demand for recreational land along the lake.
Economics/costs associated with fluctuating water levels	recreational, stable shoreline	Ongoing	spring/summer/fall	High	Increasing	Hydropower	Parks, Culture and Sport does not have much control or say about how the water levels in Lake Diefenbaker are managed. However, Parks, Culture and Sport is the one who has to pay for costs associated with fluctuating water levels (erosion, boat launches being silted in, pumps, water treatment). Stakeholders had a feeling of lack of control over how water levels are managed.

Issue	Reservoir Value/Service	Frequency	Seasonality	Severity	Trend	Competing Values	Comments
Need for consistency when dealing with various government organizations		Ongoing	Ongoing	High	Ongoing - not improving		Recreational landowner is constantly being transferred between government organizations and having to reiterate and resend documents. Being bounced between departments to answer questions - responses are not timely. Very frustrating!!
Development too close to shoreline	Recreational development	Ongoing	Yearly				There is currently an inconsistency in different departments and levels of government associated with where people can build and how close they can build to the water. Concern that if this development along the lake becomes decentralized and is taken over by the various RMs that there needs to be some sort of standardization between the various Rural Municipalities. Concern was raised that there are people out there that are acting (building) now and asking questions and forgiveness later.
Lack of long term water level/flow predictability	Economic Development						Stakeholders felt that the stability of water levels (modified range) in the operation of Lake Diefenbaker would assist developers in increasing new resort developments along the lake.
Need for a simplified regulatory process	Regulatory						Consistency between the government agencies in the management of Lake Diefenbaker shoreline areas. Stakeholders felt that all levels of government need to work together to reduce the rigmarole that developers are currently encountering.

Stakeholders discussed that the full supply level of the reservoir is the problem. Stakeholders would like to see the minimum low water level raised. There was interest in having a modified operation plan for the reservoir that stabilizes the water levels (takes out the extreme maximum and minimum water levels) of the reservoir operating plan.

The meeting broke at 10:50 a.m. and reconvened at 11:10 a.m.

The third part of the meeting focused on identifying the impact that flow; water levels; timing and other criteria had in relation to the identified issues and values associated with the Issues Matrix.

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Issue	Reservoir Value/Service	Flow Needs	Water Level Needs	Timing of Flows	Other Criteria	Comments
High water level	Beaches-Tourism	3	3	3	Water level stability	Consistent Flow
High water level	Piping plover	n/a	2	2	Water level stability	Consistent Flow
Fluctuating water levels	Safety concerns - shoreline erosion	3	3	3		
High water level	infrastructure (docks, boats)	3	3	3		
High water level	Shoreline protection, loss of recreational land use in flooded areas	3	3	3		
Low water level	recreational park at Cabri	3	3	3		
Low water level	irrigation/drinking water	2	2	2		
Need for predictable water levels	increasing development	3	3	3		Stakeholders see this as very important over the long-term
Economics/costs associated with fluctuating water levels	recreational, stable shoreline	3	3	3		
Need for consistency when dealing with various government organizations					3 - Improved communication	Lots of different agencies - inconsistencies within and between governments (federal, provincial, municipal), also inconsistencies within a branch
Development too close to shoreline	recreational development				2 to 3 – There needs to be a consistent take line	

Issue	Reservoir Value/Service	Flow Needs	Water Level Needs	Timing of Flows	Other Criteria	Comments
Lack of long term water level/flow predictability	Economic Development	3	3	3		Reservoir development area needs to be readdressed and will not be readdressed until there is some consistency with flows/water levels
Need for a simplified regulatory process	Regulatory				2 to 3 - slows down development	Depends on person who has job and how contracts are interpreted - inconsistency between staff within same department - e.g., inconsistencies between environment and health standards - big problem. Developers need a streamlined process for development with less rigmarole.
High water level	Water Treatment	3	3	3	3 - there needs to be consistent water levels	Problem that lake may be influencing ground water that may result in increased costs if they have to pump water in from Elbow

The meeting was running ahead of time so there was a discussion on what recreational stakeholders would you like to see in the renewed reservoir operating plan.

Suggestions of what to include in the renewed reservoir operating plan included:

- Lower FSL and increase low water level (increase low water level by 3m in spring for Cabri) – make the water level more stable.
- Stakeholders understood that by stabilizing the water level the revenue SaskPower obtained from electricity generation from the Coteau Creek Hydroelectric Station could decline. However, there was the suggestion that SaskPower could also look to increase their efficiency, such that an increase in their turbine output could increase their power output.
- Stakeholders also recognized that Lake Diefenbaker is a reservoir and that there will be changes in how it is managed over time as water levels change due to such things as climate change.
- The recreational users also recognized that there are other users/stakeholders that would like flood and drought control from the reservoir.
- Stakeholders felt that there is a need for SaskPower to recognize that there are other users and it isn't fair that SaskPower get full control over the water levels.
- Stakeholders felt that investing in the future/economic development of the area is something that needs to be factored into the management/reservoir operating plan. They also recognized that there is a need for safeguarding current economic investments as well.
- The stakeholders wanted to remind managers/decision makers that recreational access (boat launches) are a capital investment, and it is the recreational users/operators who bear the cost of adapting these access points when water levels fluctuate.
- Stakeholders felt that there is a need for better communication between stakeholders. Recreational users felt that they were always paying for adapting to the water levels, but they did not feel like they have a say in how the reservoir is managed.
- There was a comment that there is a need for improving access roads to Lake Diefenbaker.
- One stakeholder suggested that they would like the management/reservoir operating plan to take a look at how reservoirs elsewhere (North America, and/or worldwide) are managed and how they balance recreational and other users in these management plans. The stakeholder also felt that there is a need for ongoing consultation. South Saskatchewan Watershed is a huge watershed and the Authority may need to look at other reservoirs that operate on very large watersheds.

Dazaway introduced the Traffic Card Voting component of the response meeting as a way of prioritizing and understanding which issues were the most important to the participating stakeholders.

Traffic Card Voting

Issue	Reservoir Value/Service	# green votes	# yellow votes	# red votes	Comments associated with yellow and red votes
High water level	Beaches-Tourism	7			
High water level	Piping plover	3	4		Piping plover's will adapt to a more stable water level
Fluctuating water levels	Safety concerns - shoreline erosion	7			
High water level	infrastructure (docks, boats)	6	1		This is big on a day to day basis, but not in the long-term
High water level	Shoreline protection, loss of recreational land use in flooded areas	7			
Low water level	recreational park at Cabri	5			
Low water level	Irrigation/drinking water	3	2		would like to see proof that irrigation is environmentally and physically sustainable and viable
Need for predictable water levels	Increasing development around the lake	6	1		
Economics/costs associated with fluctuating water levels	Recreational, stable shoreline	7			
Need for consistency with dealing with various government organizations		7			
Development too close to shoreline	recreational development	6	1		Again users will adapt to being further from shoreline
Lack of long term water level/flow predictability	Economic Development	6	4		Four of the stakeholders held up both green and yellow - due to the unpredictable nature of the system
Need for a simplified regulatory process	Regulatory	6	1		It's all good to standardize process as long as there is not a change in due diligence and the level of standard care declines.
High water level	Water Treatment	6			

The group was informed that the Stakeholder Feedback Meeting would be held in November 2012. Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.