

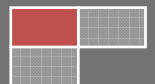
2009

# Pollution Hotline Summary

Ottawa Riverkeeper

This report contains a summary of all pollution or development-related concerns reported through the Pollution Hotline in 2009.

Jessie Corey  
Ottawa Riverkeeper  
12/14/2009



## February 2009 – Ontario

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** East of Petrie Island

**Issue:** Several concerned individuals reported development occurring at a shoreline property just off of Highway 174, slightly downstream of Petrie Island, which included expansion of existing infrastructure and the construction of a new dock. There was concern over whether or not the property owner had obtained the proper permits to carry out this work, as well as whether or not there were proper silt and erosion control measures being applied in the completion of this development. The individuals reporting this issue were also concerned about the nearby Muskie habitat in the river, and how it was being affected by the shoreline work.

**Follow-up:** The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) was contacted to determine whether or not a permit (or multiple permits) had been issued to the property owner, as well as the province of Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The Kemptville Enforcement Unit of MNR completed an evaluation of the site, property ownership details, and project specifications, and concluded that no Public Lands Act Work Permit would be required for the work being done in the specified area, so under provincial regulations, the work was approved. The RVCA then confirmed that they had issued the property owner a permit in 2007 for shoreline development which had not yet expired, but which did not include allowances for the construction of a dock. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) then examined the project from a fisheries perspective, and put forth the final approval for both the shoreline work as well as the dock construction.

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** Andrew Haydon Park, Ottawa

**Issue:** Human presence at Andrew Haydon Park may be adversely affecting a staging area for migratory birds in the area. The individual reporting this issue expressed concern over the influence of humans both on land and on the river (i.e. boaters, parasailers, etc.) on the population of migratory birds which historically have used the area in and around the park as a staging area.

**Follow-up:** The area in and around the park is not classified as a nesting area for the migratory birds, and thus would not be regulated under legislation protecting such areas. The site could be a potential area for a future restoration project, which would involve collaboration with the RVCA as well as with Environment Canada, who enforce the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*.

## March 2009 – Ontario

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** Lapasse, ON

**Issue:** The individual reporting this issue was concerned about the presence of Canada Geese in the area along the shoreline of theirs and neighbouring properties. The issue revolved around the neighbouring property owners feeding the geese, causing more geese to flock to the area and ultimately resulting in a noticeable increase in the amount of feces being washed into the river and along the shoreline. The concern is essentially about water quality in the area, and how the presence of the geese is adversely affecting the use of water for both recreational and consumptive purposes.

**Follow-up:** There are no by-laws which prohibit feeding animals on private property, and no by-laws which can protect against feces being left along the shoreline by wild animals. Several courses of action were suggested which mainly involve information sharing with neighbouring property owners and education about the adverse impacts arising from the presence of Canada Geese. It was also recommended that the individual discuss alternative options with the neighbouring property owners to prevent further degradation of local water quality, including revegetation of the shoreline to increase the buffering capacity of the riparian zone.

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** Constance Bay

**Issue:** At the end of the 2008-2009 ice fishing season, garbage and debris from ice huts which had been torn down was left behind on the ice, and there was concern over this garbage and debris being deposited directly into the river once the ice melted in the spring.

**Follow-up:** The Ontario MNR regulates the issuing of permits for ice fishing huts, and is responsible for ensuring the huts are removed before the spring thaw each year. The MNR Enforcement Unit was contacted, and while no action could be taken without knowing the hut's owner/operator, each hut must have posted its MNR registration number somewhere on the hut. It was suggested that to avoid situations in the future where garbage and debris are being left behind with no one to be held accountable, the registration number should be noted before tear-down so that MNR can follow up with the owner of the hut leaving the garbage behind. It is also necessary to have all huts torn down before the removal date indicated on the MNR website, which vary from March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>, depending on the Fisheries Management Zone in which the hut is located – with respect to the Ottawa River, any huts upstream of the Lake Temiskaming Dam must be removed by March 31<sup>st</sup> and any

huts downstream must be removed by March 15<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore, if an entire hut is left behind after ice break-up, regardless of whether removal dates and registration of the hut apply, it is considered an offence under the Ontario Public Lands Act.

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** Lefaivre, ON

**Issue:** A causeway leading out to the Presqu'île owned by the Prescott Condominium Corporation was constructed without the addition of culverts, which has led to very poor water circulation in the bay upstream of the causeway. This poor circulation of water has led to the accumulation of nutrients and sediment being transported from upstream, and the water quality in the bay is being adversely affected by this accumulation. In addition to the sediments and nutrients being transported from upstream areas through the river, the surface run-off from nearby farms and agricultural land was thought to be contributing to the nutrient loading in the bay.

**Follow-up:** The owners of the causeway, the PCC, were contacted to obtain information about the causeway, as the suspected lack of underwater culverts was the primary concern. They could not confirm whether or not a permit had been issued for the initial construction of the causeway, as it had been installed approximately 20 years ago, and thus could not confirm whether the construction of the causeway was conditional upon the installation of culverts. The MNR Enforcement Unit was then contacted, and an inspection officer was sent to complete a site inspection to evaluate the degree of concern. The results of the site inspection indicated that not only were there no visible culverts in the causeway which would allow the free passage of water from one side of the causeway to the other, but that there also appeared to be poor nutrient management on a nearby sheep farm slightly upstream of the causeway which was likely adding to the nutrient build-up in the bay. The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Farming and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) was then contacted, and a ministry representative met with the owners of the farm to develop an Environmental Farm Plan to improve on-site nutrient management practices. Regarding the causeway itself, if the quality of water upstream of the causeway continues to degrade to the point where algae blooms resulting from the high nutrient content in the water become a potential concern, the PCC will need to modify the causeway and install culverts at their own expense to prevent further upstream accumulation of nutrients and sediment.

## April 2009 - Quebec

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** Ville de Brownsburg-Chatham, QC

**Issue:** A property owner, whose property contained within its limits a wetland area and several streams draining into the river, was reported to have dug out a ditch approximately 5 feet deep to drain the wetland area into a stream which passes through neighbouring properties before reaching the river. The property owner had cleared trees up to 20 feet on either side of the ditch, and had dug a portion of the ditch on one of the neighbouring properties. The main concern was the draining of the wetland and the effects of this drainage on the water quality of both the stream and river, as well as the effects on the habitat of brook trout and carp in the stream.

**Follow-up:** The individual who reported the issue had attempted to rectify the issue on his own, and had been in touch with a municipal inspector who confirmed that no permit had been issued to the property owner, but that a site visit had been done and no issues were reported. Once aware of the issue, we contacted the Quebec Ministry of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks (MDDEP) to have a site inspection done to evaluate the risk of draining the wetland area, as well as the Municipality of Brownsburg-Chatham to send the Municipal Inspector of Construction and Environment to do an inspection as well. The MDDEP site inspection resulted in the property owner having to infill the ditch, as approval for a permit to drain the wetland area was refused by the provincial inspector visiting the site. The ditch has since been filled in, and the wetland area is no longer being drained into the stream.

## June 2009 - Ontario

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**Affected water body:** Carp River

**Location:** 1200 Diamondview Road, Carp, ON

**Issue:** West Carleton Sand & Gravel, who had previously been fined by MOE for violations of the Environmental Protection Act, had applied to the City of Ottawa's Planning and Development branch for approval of an expansion to the McGee Pit which excavates sand and gravel from below the water table. In the proposal, WCS&G outlined the operational requirements for the expansion to the pit which included an increase in the amount of water being pumped out of the pits as part of the daily de-watering activities. There were several concerns revolving around this issue, the most significant being the potential effects of the drawdown of the water table which would result from the increased overall volume of water being pumped per day, and the subsequent effects on base flow of the groundwater which could potentially affect the levels and flow of the Carp River. There were additional concerns regarding the effects of increasing the amount of surface run-off into the stream which drains the water used on-site into the Carp River, and how aquatic habitat would be affected.

**Follow-up:** The city planner in charge of the approval process for WCS & G's application was contacted and all of the Environmental Assessment reports and supporting documents were forwarded to us regarding the application, which contained the proposed changes to the pumping rate as well as the proposed change to the total volume of water being used in the dewatering activities on-site. The Ministry of the Environment was then contacted to obtain information about the site's current Certificate of Approval for Industrial Sewage Works (COA) as well as their Permit to Take Water (PTTW) to determine whether or not they would be applying for new permits and whether or not a provincial evaluation of the expansion would be required. From this information, it was determined that WCS & G will be operating within the maximum limits of their current PTTW, and thus will not need to apply to MOE for further approval on the expansion. When the initial PTTW was issued, an analysis was done by MOE to determine the impacts of the maximum allowable pumping rate on the Carp River and groundwater supply, and provided WCS&G remains within the parameters of their permit, no significant effects on the Carp River ecosystem are anticipated.

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** Near Mattawa, ON

**Issue:** An Ottawa Valley Railroad (OVR) train travelling west in the Mattawa area was derailed when it encountered a stretch of washed-out track, and the overturned engine cars led to 20,000 L of diesel fuel being spilled into the Ottawa River. The extent of the spill was originally

expected to reach as far downstream as Bisset Creek, and threatened water quality, aquatic habitat within the spill area, and soil quality along the affected shorelines.

**Follow-up:** The majority of follow-up on this issue involved monitoring both the extent of the spill and the progress of clean-up activities. The spill was reported to MOE's Spills Action Centre, and a company called AMEC, hired by OVR to oversee containment and clean-up procedures, sent clean-up crews to the spill site within a few hours of the spill being reported. Three containment booms were installed at the spill site itself, one at Deux Rivières, and one at Bisset Creek, for the physical containment of the spill. Water quality analyses were conducted throughout the affected area on a daily basis by AMEC and MOE. These analyses tested for the BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene) group of contaminants found in diesel fuel, and after a week and a half, the majority of tests were yielding non-detect results. Local Health Units offered free water quality testing to residents concerned about the safety of their water (whether for recreational purposes or for consumption) and municipalities in the area monitored municipal water supplies for signs of contamination. For the most part, after two weeks both MOE and OVR were confident that the entirety of the spilled diesel had either evaporated, dissipated, or had been collected by the absorbent pads of the containment booms. The majority of the spilled diesel was collected in an inlet about 300 m to the east and downstream of the spill site, and the rest of the diesel had been directed towards the Ontario shoreline as a result of the prevailing easterly winds. Any soil which may have been contaminated at the spill site and along the shoreline was excavated, and analyses done by MNR biologists indicated that aquatic wildlife within the reach of the spill had not suffered any adverse impacts as a result of the spill.

## July 2009 - Quebec

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**Affected water body:** Ottawa River

**Location:** Sand Bay, Clarendon, QC

**Issue:** There is a causeway which was built over 30 years ago to provide access to a small island with one cottage on it which was sold into new ownership within the past 5 years. There are no culverts in the causeway and every year, the new owners have to add fill to maintain it properly. The residents of the surrounding area are concerned about the impacts this causeway is having on the flow of the river and the health of the aquatic wildlife in the area, and have tried to enlist the help of the municipality of Clarendon to have culverts put into the causeway to allow the water to flow through with minimal obstruction of flow. They have had no success in getting the municipality involved and are now looking to see what options are available to them to have the causeway either fixed or removed entirely.

**Follow-up:** The Quebec Ministry of Natural Resources and Wildlife (MRNF) was contacted to determine whether or not there were any regulations which would require the causeway to be modified to include culverts, and to evaluate the need for a permit to carry out these modifications. The officer in charge of issuing permits for construction in aquatic environments informed that a causeway being constructed under the current regulations could potentially require a permit, depending on results of a site visit and project evaluation, and would have to have culverts installed; however, the causeway in question was constructed at a time when these regulations were not in effect, and as such, is not subject to the regulations for new construction so nothing can legally be done about the lack of culverts. If the owners of the causeway choose to have the causeway modified, the project would have to be submitted to MRNF for approval, and would have to be paid for by the owners themselves. The municipality would not be involved in the approval process, so any dealings with municipal representatives would be better directed to MRNF.

# Pollution Hotline Reported Concerns 2009

