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PETERBOROUGH REGION

Four Peterborough County townships receiving one-time provincial funding for derecho cleanup

By **Brendan Burke** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Mon., March 27, 2023 ⌚ 3 min. read

Why would Province wait 10 months to provide money to townships for CLEAN UP which was mostly done by cottagers who got no help from townships or province

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Douro-Dummer Township is receiving \$141,323 from the provincial government under one-time funding announced Monday to help with clean-up and forest regeneration in damaged areas following the devastating May 21 derecho – the most money being doled out to four municipalities impacted by the storm in Peterborough County.

The province announced Monday it is spending \$5.5 million to support 22 small municipalities across the province after extreme weather events in southern and eastern Ontario last year, including the devastating windstorm in May locally along with a tornado in July outside the Peterborough area.

Both events damaged public roads and thousands of hectares of Crown and private land. Many residents and employers in the city and county were also without power for days and dozens of homes were damaged by falling trees.

Havelock-Belmont-Methuen Township will receive the second most in funding in the county at \$115,116, followed by Otonabee-South Monaghan Township, which is set to collect \$95,068.

The province has earmarked \$59,480 for North Kawartha Township – the lowest amount in funding in the county from the province. North Kawartha declared state of emergency but HBM did not !!!!

According to Douro-Dummer Township Mayor Heather Watson, the one-time funding became available in early March from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Watson only had a few days to apply for the funding, which closed on March 13, she told The Examiner.

Watson recounted the devastation felt by many municipalities in the county that day, when Douro-Dummer, like several other county townships, declared a state of emergency.

“Many residents were left without hydro for at least a week after the storm because it was so difficult for hydro crews to get in and do the work because the damage was so bad,” recalled Watson.

Watson said she's set to receive the exact dollar amount she applied for last month.

In a press release following Monday's announcement, Natural Resources and Forestry Minister Graydon Smith said the province prioritized small communities hit hardest by the weather events.

"With today's announcement, we are ensuring municipalities are able to recover from these weather events and build a strong Ontario," Smith stated. North Kawartha only had \$4300.00 infratructure damage from the storm !!! lot of individual cottagers had far more

The funding is being provided to municipalities that sought financial support to help with the cleanup effort and forest regeneration post-storm.

After the derecho, municipalities sought to recover from substantial damages including repairs to public infrastructure, through the Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians program (DRAO), which applies to private property and allows individuals to recoup losses not covered by insurance, and the Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance program (MDRA), NK received nothing from Province under MDRA with defective application

North Kawartha Township recently heard it was unsuccessful in getting the \$280,616 it had claimed under the MDRA program. Part of this was for debris clean-up. To make up for the lack of previous funding, the township will now use its one-time funding of \$59,480 from the province for debris clean-up to prevent floods and fires caused by decaying and fallen trees. NK is buying 2 bins for transfer stations --and expecting cottagers to take debris to!!!

Meanwhile, longtime Jack Lake cottager and North Kawartha resident Ambrose Moran, whose home was damaged during the storm, is skeptical about how the money will be used. Moran, who, along with several other cottagers expressed frustration with a lack of clean-up help from the township post-storm, told The Examiner the funding is "too little, too late." Storm was 10 months ago and clean up is basically done with no help from Townships

Fellow cottager and North Kawartha resident Patricia Phillips said the funding could be "great for the municipality" but added she hopes it would come with some support for the residents in the area.

However, citing the wide gulf between the money earmarked for Havelock-Belmont-Methuen and North Kawartha, Philips said she's curious how the numbers were determined, given the widespread "devastation" in North Kawartha. looks likeJust depended on how much was applied for by each township and how much Township intend to do

"I'm surprised and I'd like to find out why there's such a huge discrepancy.

The Examiner was unable to reach North Kawartha Mayor Carolyn Amyotte on Monday for comment.



Brendan Burke is a staff reporter at the Examiner, based in Peterborough. His reporting is funded by the Canadian government through its Local Journalism Initiative.

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