

May 21 2022 Derecho Storm Anniversary update- Jack Lake

May 21,2023 is the first anniversary of the Derecho Storm ...which caused considerable damage in a path in Ontario from Windsor to Ottawa. There was significant damage in parts of Peterborough County including isolated parts of North Kawartha with widespread tree and structural damage around Jack Lake.

This link is reminder of some of the damage around Jack Lake

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/BNJdymP34pW2Qow86>

Lessons have been learned over the past year, by waterfront ratepayers whose properties were ravaged by the natural disaster and new strategies need to be developed to be better prepared for future weather events. Climate has become a reality with natural disasters occurring with increased intensity. Approaching this anniversary of the storm, a group of Jack Lake property owners met to share views and unanimously agreed **there is a real need clarify what can be expected in the future in terms of support from their local Municipalities and the Province.**

Local and provincial governments have failed to provide assistance to impacted ratepayers and real changes are required in the future. It is understood but not confirmed¹ that North Kawartha has about \$10 million dollars in reserves which is made up of 83% paid by cottagers. It is generally accepted that the concept of reserves is to have a contingency fund for a rainy-day event, which in fact happened May 21 but **North Kawartha Mayor Amyotte as the North Kawartha (NK) head of the emergency response process, did not authorize any funds or provide and direct assistance to cottagers in need of municipal help.**

Jack Lake is located within two municipal jurisdictions, North Kawartha (NK) and Havelock Belmont Methuen (HBM) . Despite cottager's request for help² to both NK & HBM, the Townships **were missing in action related to assisting cottagers with establishing practical brush disposal sites.** Not having any other practical options available, resulted in disposal of brush along ditches of private roads

¹ NK Township does not know what reserves exist e mail Clerk to Ambrose June 16 2022

² Letter to HBM June 10 2022 and e mail to NK June 10 (Posted)

contributing to **increased forest fire risk**. Last summer both Townships operated on basis of “business as usual” as cottagers struggled to deal with the challenges of storm debris cleanup.

North Kawartha Township’s Mayor Amyotte declared a **state of emergency**³ on Sunday afternoon May 23 putting herself in control of the emergency management committee which excluded other Council members involvement is the response process until the State of Emergency was lifted on June 17 2022 . There was no real need or benefit to declaring a State of Emergency as the storm in fact only impacted a very small part of the township and the Township in fact only had ...according to NK information⁴ \$4304.45 in total damage to township infrastructure directly from the storm. The City of Peterborough estimated cost⁵ up till July 4th was \$3.3 million dollars for dealing with storm damage on public and private properties. The City of Ottawa according media reports⁶ forecasted approximately \$20 million dollars for response and capital repairs.

The damages incurred in both NK were related to private waterfront properties and extensive utility damages to Hydro One and Bell Canada distribution lines...not to North Kawartha infrastructure. While we received several social media reports from NK Mayor Amyotte about the extensive damage throughout the Township and the massive cleanup NK staff were dealing with.. it was very exaggerated and misleading. The bulk of the clean-up was by private property owners and public utilities. Basically, the social media campaign from the Mayor of NK was received by cottagers and others as being a **lot of talk and no action**. **There was no real emergency** and damage cleanup was being handled on private properties by individuals and contactors without any government assistance..

Hydro One had a different approach. **Lots of action and no talk**. Hydro showed up at Jack Lake quickly with convoys of equipment, bucket trucks, all terrain equipment, boats, helicopters, and large crews working long hours till dark.

³ NK Media release

⁴ NK CAO report to Council Mar 13 2023

⁵ Peterborough CAO report July 4 2022

⁶ June 3 2022 Ottawa News

They mobilize equipment and manpower from other Provinces and even the USA to restore power as quickly as practical but did not take time to promote their achievement and efforts on social media.

PROVINCIAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Province has a disaster relief program to assist Municipalities with Infrastructure. That program is called the **Municipal Disaster Recovery Assistance Program (MDRA)** and intended to provide funding to assist municipalities in dealing with damage directly related to the storm impacting municipal buildings and infrastructure. NK effectively had only damages to 2 light fixtures at reported cost on \$4304.45⁷ but attempted to obtain funding from the Province under this program by exaggerating their total cost to infrastructure damage by including **\$249,312.00** for damage to two roads serving the North Shore of Stony Lake. The **alleged \$249,312.00** cost was for some mysterious repairs to the recently paved roads. I made two trips to inspect these roads and could not find even minimal damage that would justify ANY expenditure for repairs. The province did not support the fabricated municipal application for disaster funds and **denied the North Kawartha claim**⁸ totally under the MDRA program. Municipality had previously been advised⁹ by Ministry of Municipal Affairs that their MDRA claim would be reviewed based on completeness and documentation. Obviously, the NK claim related to the \$249,312.00 road damage could not be substantiated as road damage was not significant enough to be documented.

The province also has disaster relief program to assist eligible private¹⁰ homeowners dealing with storm damage not covered by insurance. That program is called the **Disaster Recovery Assistance for Ontarians (DRAO)** and financial

⁷ Report to Council by Cao Mar 13 2023

⁸ Report to Council By CAO dated Mar 13 2023

⁹ Letter to NK dated Oct 13 2022

¹⁰ Only Permanent resident qualify.

assistance is limited to \$250,000 per application for prescribed damages not covered by insurance.

The province dispatched 20¹¹ **Provincial Disaster Assessment Teams (PDAT)** throughout Central and Eastern Ontario to assess the damage of the Derecho storm to assist the Province with determination on which areas had significant damage to be eligible for activation of the DRAO program. According to the province, DRAO program claims to “help you in case of a natural disaster “and certainly for impacted property owners on Jack Lake, the weather event of May 21 2022 resulted in a natural disaster.

No disaster assessment team visited Havelock Belmont Methuen Township¹².

For North Kawartha, the assessment team made arrangement with Mayor Amyotte to have her, and NK staff provide a tour of NK on May31¹³ . Mayor Amyotte **DID NOT TAKE THE DISASTER RELIEF TEAM TO JACK LAKE** which was the location of one of the two major impacted damaged areas in North Kawartha ! Jack Lake devastation was a well-kept secret in the period that the province was determining which area would qualify for assistance.

The assessment report was eventually obtained (heavily redacted for some unexplained reason)) through an application through the Freedom of Information process. The report which does not mention Jack Lake and includes a map of the storm path which erroneously shows the storm did not even cross Jack Lake!!! see MAP A below

I prepared a MAP B below .. based on photo feedback from affected property owners as to the storm path directly across Jack Lake.

Apart from the Assessment team not even visiting HB and NK mayor Amyotte not taking the assessment team to Jack Lake, there **may be a further reason Jack Lake**

¹¹ Email Aug 29 to Ambrose in response to office of Premier

¹² E mail ,to Ambrose from HBM Dated May 3rd

¹³ NK CAO report dated

did not benefit from the DRAO program intended to help eligible ratepayers impacted by a natural disaster.

Requests were submitted by myself on July 7 2022¹⁴ to both NK and HBM to pass motions requesting that the Province designate Jack lake area to be eligible for Disaster Relief Funding under DRAO. HB at a council meeting passed a motion to receive my request which basically means file it. I am not aware that HBM ever expressly requested activation of the DRAO.

NK shocked me and others! Even though the request letter was asking that a NK Council member introduce a motion asking that Jack Lake be designated for the relief funding ...the Council members never receive my letter. When establishing the upcoming Council agenda following receipt of my letter, Mayor Amyotte instructed staff not to include my request on the Council agenda as it "was redundant". The Council members were never provided with my letter! The matter of whether the Mayor of a municipality has authority to intercept a letter from a ratepayers and not provided for intended Council members is of ongoing concern to be resolved.

Eventually on August 29 2022¹⁵ in response to communication with Premier Ford's office regarding status of consideration for Jack lake being eligible for provincial disaster assistance, I was advised that the program was completed and in effect our Jack Lake area was not determined by the province as being eligible for assistance.

Even though the program was basically over, NK Council passed a motion¹⁶ in Sept asking for the Province to activate the provincial disaster relief program for North Kawartha. My request was not redundant in July but certainly the NK Council motion request in September after the program was over in August was redundant.

¹⁴ Posted 2022 07 07

¹⁵ E mail to Ambrose form DRAO

¹⁶ Nk Council Motion 22-345

ANOTHER PROVINCIAL STORM DAMAGE FUNDING PROGRAM

In March 2023 the **Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)** contacted certain municipalities in eastern Ontario inviting applications for a **one-time grant for municipalities** to deal with post storm flooding, reforestation and fire risk reduction. It is remarkable, that after the Provinces does not provide assistance through in place disaster relief programs dealing with natural disasters, that 10 months after a storm, another Provincial Minister can find \$5.5 Million¹⁷ to hand out to certain townships to deal with a storm that was 10 months earlier. **Both NK and HBM made applications and were granted exactly what was applied for¹⁸ being \$115,116 for HBM and only \$59,480 for NK which was lowest allocation to any Township in Peterborough County.**, This was clear confirmation that Mayor Amyotte did not accomplish any funding advantage by declaring a state of emergency.

The province offered municipalities funding to reduce forest fire hazards and townships could have obtain funds to remove brush debris in ditches of cottage roads but did not and conte to operate based on business as usual.

Efforts are being made to determine whether either Township intends to allocate any municipal budget money or provincial grant money ..in the Jack Lake area... to reduce forest for risk by removing storm debris along road leading to cottages which would be consistent with the intent of the new funding.

Based on ongoing discussion with certain interested affected Jack Lake cottagers, it has been agreed

- to continue to clarify the roles of the municipality and Provinces in dealing with Natural disasters.
- further clarify issues associated with debris management--- reduction of forest fire risks—communication gaps—communication responsibilities of utilities.
- develop a post storm audit study of experiences of cottagers on Jack Lake

¹⁷ News Release MNRF One time funding Mar 27 2023(Posted)

¹⁸ Peterborough Examiner Mar 27 2023 (Posted)

- develop recommendations to Municipalities of NK and HBM, Province and Utilities on required improvements to deal with future natural disasters relative to needs of ratepayers in anticipation of climate change leading to frequency and intensity of natural disasters.

Prepared by



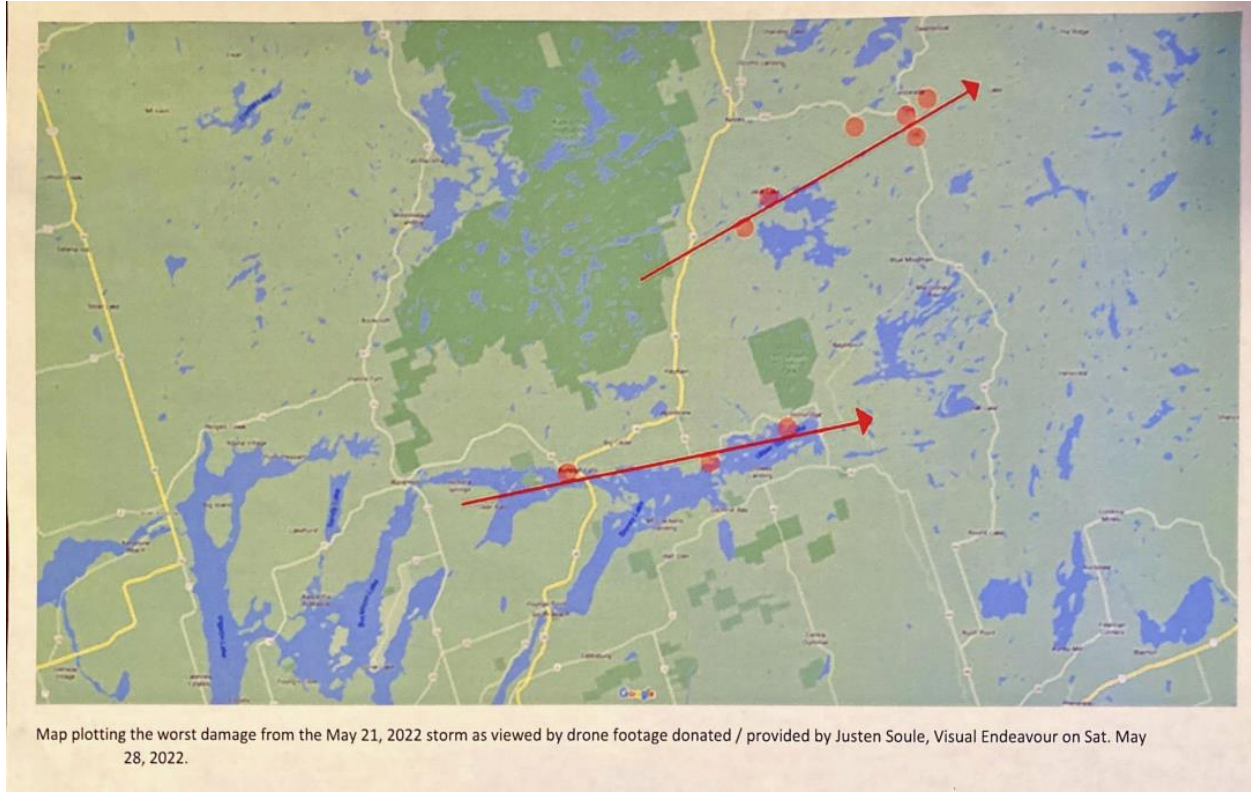
Ambrose Moran--- with input from others

239 Fire Route 52 North Kawartha

705 656 2000

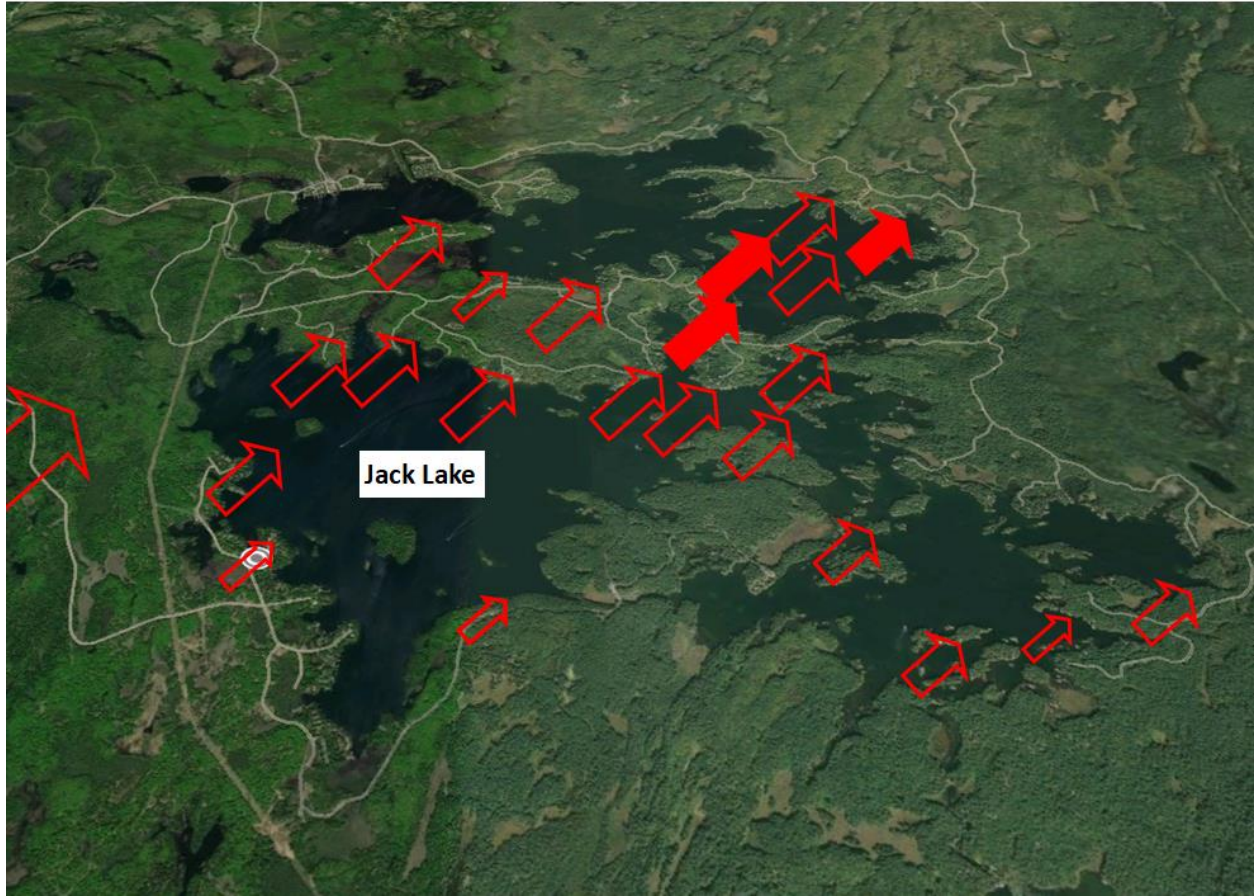
This map included in the assessment team report indicates that the storm did not pass over Jack Lake

MAP A



MAP B

This map below prepared by Ambrose Moran illustrates the storm impact on Jack Lake based on photo feedback from property owners.



Additional information available on Web Site
www.ApsleyWatch.com ---→ Storm Damage