

‘Forgotten’ Jack Lake cottagers unhappy with townships’ storm response: The lake spans two Peterborough County townships

Part 1 of a two-part series looking at the aftermath of the May 21 derecho.



By **Brendan Burke** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
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On May 21, a powerful windstorm swept across eastern Ontario and through the Peterborough region, leaving a trail of unprecedented destruction in its wake.

For photo album of destruction on Jack Lake www.ApsleyWatch.com-----> Storm Damage

On Jack Lake, part of a cluster of area lakes hit hard by the storm, scores of trees were toppled, cars were crushed and some summer homes sustained significant damage.

In the days and weeks that followed, **Jack Lake cottagers** — **left with heaps of tree limbs and brush on their properties** — **grew increasingly frustrated, lamenting an “inadequate” response from North Kawartha Township and Havelock-Belmont-Methuen Township that’s left them feeling “forgotten” and overlooked.**

Campbell is frustrated. He says he and fellow cottagers **have received little support from the municipalities.**

“What’s happening here is absolutely brutal,” he said.

Following the storm, both North Kawartha and Havelock-Belmont-Methuen townships set up transfer stations as drop-off locations for storm debris.

Havelock-Belmont-Methuen moved to open up the Shady Lane/Jack Lake Transfer Station in a bid to make drop-offs more convenient for cottagers. Hours for the station were extended, but the site is still closed for two days of the week.

In North Kawartha, there are two main transfer stations: Anstruther Transfer Station at 400 Anstruther Lake Road in Apsley, and Haultain Transfer Station at 6879 Highway 28 in Woodview. Just Business as usual and locations not practical for tons of tree debris

But Campbell and fellow cottagers say the **transfer stations are inconvenient and impractical: they’re located too far away,** and they fail to consider that most area cottagers don’t have trailers or trailer hitches to load storm debris.

Campbell, along with several other Jack Lake cottagers, is calling on the townships to bolster support by allowing them to pile their debris at alternative drop-off locations. Ideally, **he wants cottagers to be allowed to drop off their green waste at the end of private roads.**

Alternatively, he’s suggesting debris could be dumped at junctions between private and municipal roads; at the North Kawartha Community Center; or on Crown lands.

Asked whether the township could potentially adopt any of the proposed alternatives, **Martin told The Examiner “everything is on the table.**

Nothing done or intended to be done

“It would be nice if we could get some more drop off zones, but it’s not as easy as it sounds. We’re doing everything we’re capable of with the small Public Works department we have — about seven employees,” Martin said.

Martin said the ongoing effort is a “huge venture” and that the storm’s destruction reached “right across the township.”

While he sympathizes with Jack Lake cottagers, Martin stressed **many residents are in the same boat.**

No other part of Twp impacted as much as Jack Lake

“We’ve got problems on Oak Lake, Belmont Lake, Cordova Lake — every lake got hit and all the private roads. It’s unfortunate they can’t seem to see they’re just one of many and we’re trying to work with the whole township to get some assistance in cleaning this up,” said Martin.

almost 2 months after storm and no assistance provided

Patricia Phillips, a Havelock-Belmont-Methuen resident and a Jack Lake cottager on Sharpe’s Bay, says she’s concerned about a **heightened risk of wildfires due to the post-storm mess.**

Citing wildfire hot spots mapped out in Peterborough County’s official draft plan, Phillips notes that the **Jack Lake region had already been deemed a high-risk area for fires.** Now, with mounds of brush left in the area, she’s worried the already-vulnerable zone has become a tinderbox — waiting to ignite.

“It’s a public safety concern,” she said. “I don’t think people understand the level of waste and debris that is an offshoot of this and the municipalities are really not showing compassion. **It’s business as usual.**”

Campbell agreed.

“The fire risk has gone up exponentially,” he said, adding that the heightened hazard makes the need for a bolstered cleanup effort all the more urgent.

In an interview, Amyotte said the municipality is “very aware” of the potential fire risks created by the storm. Amyotte said she’s been in close contact with the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry and that North Kawartha is looking at bringing in a logging company to salvage debris and remove debris from the area.

MNR is doing this not North Kawartha as it is on Crown Lands

“We haven’t heard back but we’re hoping the ministry will find someone who will take on a salvaging permit. It’s still going to be a while before we get a lot of this cleaned up. We do completely understand the incredible challenges and the enormity of the cleanup efforts that all residents are facing.”

Look for Part 2 in Monday’s Examiner.

But North Kawartha has not contributed to any practical solutions to simply allow property owners to take brush to convenient brush depots which has resulted in most brush being deposited in ditches leading to increased fire hazards and negatively affecting natural beauty of our areas

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.