

Shalom M. Mandaville

From: Gloria McCluskey [mcclusg@halifax.ca]
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2007 2:13 AM
To: Peter Kelly; Scott Mawdsley
Cc: Shalom M. Mandaville; Tony Blouin; Ben Jenkins; Russell Lake Residents Association
Subject: Re: Russell Lake Preliminary Results - Fecal Coliform

Your Worship

When I was first elected to Dartmouth City Council in 1985 and up until amalgamation in 1996, I was always so proud to tell people from out of town about our 23 lakes in Dartmouth. I would tell them that we protected them and that they were all safe for swimming. I am upset and disgusted by the state of Morris and Russell Lakes because of development agreements that were either too lax or were not followed. I know you share the same concerns.

We must get to the bottom of these recent fecal coliform results. It is time for us to sit down and address this again, but this time with everybody at the table. Are those responsible doing their job and more importantly do they understand the seriousness of the condition of these lakes? Why have the residents not been advised? During the past weeks several lakes in HRM have been closed for periods because of high coliform counts. Why have these lakes not been closed?

Gloria

Gloria McCluskey
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>>> "Scott Mawdsley" <smawdsley@ns.sympatico.ca> 03/09/2007 9:11 pm

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Mayor Kelly,

I wanted to make sure that you were aware of these recent fecal coliform results. I'm sure your aware of the potential human health risk that exists if residents "unaware" of these results continue to swim, canoe, fish, and allow their small children to play at the waters edge, especially along the new HRM trail system in this area. These levels are well above what is considered safe for "minimal water contact" and most authorities would recommend that the lake be closed to fishing, boating, and swimming. Signs should be posted along the trail warning residents not to have any water contact.

Our association, and local residents who swim in this lake, have conducted fecal coliform testing for years, and before recent watershed activity, to my knowledge, values in the last twelve years have never exceeded 10 MPN/100ml, and often were well below. As you are aware, recent results were quite high, especially at the North inlet where levels were recorded as >10,000 MPN/100ml. The outlet was also elevated at 3,000 MPN/100ml with the in-lake station at 300 MPN/100ml.

I do not have an explanation as to why fecal coliform levels are so high. Our association expressed concern about diversion of surface runoff to the northern pond several months ago, and you are well aware that sewage overflow and cross-connections continue to occur in the HRM.

Ultimately someone needs to take responsibility for these results, investigate the source properly, and mitigate the problem. Until that time, however, I feel very strongly that the public who use this lake should be properly warned. I have heard in the past that it is not HRM's role to inform the public, and instead it is a Provincial responsibility; that HRM does not have to inform residents as Russell Lake is not a designated swimming

beach; that it is unfair to notify residents of one lake when another may be equally contaminated; or that all HRM "urban" lakes should be considered "contaminated" and precautions therefore taken all the time. Personally, I don't understand the logic behind any of that thinking. I worry that nothing will be done until a child becomes very ill, or perhaps even dies from water contact. If the HRM, and yourself, are aware of a potential human health risk that could be avoided with appropriate public notification, I don't feel that there is any ethical justification in keeping quiet about it.

I've included a link to a CBC news report from September 2000 simply to highlight the fact that public notification has occurred before.

http://www.cbc.ca/news/story/2000/09/06/ns_leak000906.html

I leave this in your hands Mayor Kelly. I am quite fed up and astonished by what I have witnessed from your Environmental department over the past few years. Everyone seems to "pass the buck", and in the end nothing is properly investigated or mitigated. The only time I saw quick action was when it appeared that HECC may approve the Dartmouth Lakes Advisory Board's recommendation in regards to setting an CCME threshold level. Your Environmental Department acted quickly, in that instance, to convince our elected officials to "disregard" the DLAB's recommendation and instead set a level that was much higher, and in my opinion, not in keeping with the CCME framework. An appropriate CCME threshold, as outlined in our Regional Plan and development agreement, would have protected this freshwater resources if changes were noted during watershed development. As you may recall, when the phosphorus threshold level is exceeded, community council must immediately formally review the existing development plans and environmental safeguards in place. However, the high level that was subsequently approved by council, instead of acting as the intended environmental safeguard, virtually assured that no meaningful action would be required during the development phase in this watershed. By the time that threshold was exceeded the lake would be profoundly affected and development would be complete. I remain deeply disturbed that the DLAB's recommendation was disregarded by HECC and the public in attendance were not allowed to speak on the issue before the final vote.

The lake looks horrible today, Monday September 3rd, almost a murky brown. Obviously, this lake is currently being impacted despite the best intentions and environmental safeguards in place. Lake water quality is significantly reduced, the lake bottom is now slimy, there is new aquatic weed growth along much of the shoreline that never existed before, and we no longer see freshwater turtles, eels and the fish, including spawning species, that once were quite abundant. I have lived on this lake for almost 12 years and have never seen water quality this bad. Unfortunately it appears that protection of our freshwater resources is not a priority of the HRM, but perhaps the very real human health risk of elevated fecal coliforms will provide the much needed incentive to formally investigate and mitigate the damage being allowed to occur to this community freshwater resource.

Please confirm receipt of this e-mail. I would appreciate any updates as they become available.

Yours truly,

Scott Mawdsley

----- Original Message -----

From: "Tony Blouin" <Blouint@halifax.ca>
To: <ben@jenkinsgroup.ca>; <smawdsley@ns.sympatico.ca>
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2007 3:13 PM
Subject: Fw: Russell Lake Preliminary Results - Fecal Coliform

> ** High Priority **

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> I wanted to make you aware of the high Fecal coliform results noted
> below, which seem to be associated with the north inlet. These
> results
> have been referred to the Halifax Regional Water Commission, who are
> now
> responsible for storm and sanitary systems, for investigation.

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> Tony
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> Message originates away from my office via Blackberry.
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