

# Still waters belie CIP lagoon clean-up progress

By André Dumont

HAWKESBURY — The fenced-up CIP wet lagoon may look idle, but a lot is going on just below the surface.

The fate of what is still officially a waste disposal site next to Hawkesbury's downtown core is being looked after not only by municipal and provincial government officials, but also by divers.

Two weeks ago, five divers were called in to locate and inspect a five-foot-wide outlet pipe connecting the lagoon to the depths of the Ottawa River. According to Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) project officer Suzanne Lafrance, the fiberglass pipe was laid when

the Canadian International Paper (CIP) built the lagoon in the sixties.

About half of the 400-foot-long pipe extends into the river. "The pipe is now partly buried in the riverbed. It took divers one hour to locate it," Lafrance told The Review from her Alfred office.

The pipe is still in its original state. Because it is made of fiberglass, it is neither corroding nor disintegrating in any way, Lafrance explained.

However, the MNR suspects it to be clogged up with debris and sludge. The divers were hired to determine whether water from the lagoon could still find its way into the river.

Divers could not in-

spect the part of the pipe inside the lagoon, because the water is currently too shallow, due to dry weather. The MNR is now expecting the diving team's report.

## Access to the site

Last week, Hawkesbury council examined a request from the MNR, which wants to gain access to the lagoon via Water Street.

The MNR is willing to pay to reopen Water Street and maintain it. According to Lafrance, funds would come from the amount already allocated for the completion of studies and the drafting of a remediation plan.

MNR staff and contractors currently use parking

lots located at Main Street West businesses such as Goodies Restaurant and Nettoyeur Steph. An agreement with Hawkesbury Riverfront Estates, which owns a part of the CIP's former property, resumed in November 2006.

## "Option C"

The Review has also obtained more detailed information about "Option C," which is Hawkesbury council's preferred option in a 2006 report from environmental consulting firm Conestoga, Rovers & Associates (CRA).

Option C involves removing and treating the water from the lagoon. The sludge in the bottom would then dry out, before

being either trucked out to be recycled or piled on the site and covered on permanent basis.

The dikes that link four islands would be removed and the whole property would become a green space for use as a public park. In the end, the MNR would transfer the lagoon property to the town of Hawkesbury.

CRA has estimated the price tag for this remediation option at \$19 million. According to Lafrance, the job could cost a lot less, especially if a commercial use for the sludge can be found.

Lafrance said the MNR also favours Option C.

>>21

# CIP lagoon clean up progress update

<<10

However, nothing has yet been determined as to how exactly to proceed.

A lot of work remains to be done before the MNR can go ahead with a formal public consultation on a proposed remediation plan, Lafrance said. In the meantime, the town of Hawkesbury is considering organizing a public information meeting to bring everyone up to speed on what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

"There has been enormous progress in the last six months," Lafrance said. "We are enjoying excellent collaboration with the municipality."