

# We will take full responsibility for CIP lagoon : Minister

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HAWKESBURY

**The clean-up of a former CIP waste lagoon in Hawkesbury will move another step forward when a public information session is held in September.**

That will be followed by a call for plans on the rehabilitation of the site, a legacy of the paper mill that closed down in 1980.

The Ontario government will foot the entire bill for the clean-up of the 40-acre government-owned lagoon, Natural Resources Minister Donna Cansfield reiterated during a visit Thursday. Town council had been pressing for a financial commitment from the ministry, which had in the past said that it was exploring "additional partnership opportunities."

But Cansfield stressed that the province would not rely on a possible partnership with the private sector to remove the wastes from the lagoon. "This is our problem and we are going to take care of it," the minister said, noting that the "integrity of the ministry" was at stake. "Deal with it we will, deal with it we must."

The MNR is spending about \$1 million on an intensive study of the lagoon which is situated beside the Ottawa River on the north side of Main Street and is considered to be a major impediment to the development of the area.

Trow Associates Inc. was hired by the MNR to complete the mandatory Class Environmental Assessment process. The public will be provided the opportunity to comment on the closure plan during the public information sessions. The bilingual meetings will soon be advertised in local newspapers and on the CIP Lagoon Remediation Website at:

www.hawkesbury.ca. The next step will be a request for proposals to carry out the actual work.

The town has opted for a \$19,680,000 plan to partially excavate the site which contains sludge left over from the former CIP mill. Once the sludge has been dewatered and the site cover with a berm, the land would be turned over to the municipality. However, the property would still have to be monitored.

Cansfield observed that a detailed plan of action will be determined once the study

has been completed. The wastes in the lagoon, which often emit unpleasant smells during the summer, are blocking development of large tracts of riverfront land, noted Glengarry-Prescott-Russell M.P.P. Jean-Marc Lalonde. However, once the wastes have been removed, the waterfront property would have great potential, a study presented to town council in late 2007 concluded.

"That lagoon has been stopping the development of Main Street in the west end," said Lalonde, recalling that the clean-up

has been his top priority since 1995. "Hawkesbury has one of the most beautiful downtowns in eastern Ontario but that lagoon is an eyesore."

Complaints have been aired lately at the council table about the length of time it has taken for the project to get underway. Councillor Gilles Roch Greffe had suggested that more pressure be exerted on the MNR in order to get the clean-up started.

But Mayor Jeanne Charlebois has been pleased with the progress that has been made in recent months. Cansfield said that the mayor's efforts were a factor in the clean-up's advancement. "We have a moral obligation to do the right thing," Cansfield commented. "And you also have a forward-looking mayor who wants the site developed."

Charlebois predicted that when the lagoon has been rehabilitated, "Our waterfront should blossom." A development strategy calls for the establishment of housing and commercial ventures, such as a marina and a theatre, over the next 30 years on the waterfront. The plan is earmarked for the 40-acre government-owned wet lagoon at Main Street and McGill Streets, and the 254 acres of privately-owned land west of the former mill. These properties include dry lagoons, some of which are situated in Champlain Township. The lagoon contains 312,700 cubic metres of sludge, including 215,300 cubic metres of compressed sludge, which is 79 per cent water and 97,400 cubic metres of "light" sludge, which is 92 per cent water. The existing berm is not impermeable and some water from the wet lagoon discharges to adjacent water bodies, mostly Mill Creek, according to an April, 2006 report prepared by the consulting firm of Conestoga-Rovers.



Photo Richard Mahoney

**Donna Cansfield and Glengarry-Prescott-Russell M.P.P. Jean-Marc Lalonde reiterate province's commitment to lagoon clean-up.**