
Pontiac County Internet Project

David L. Prentice

Over the winter, the first subscribers in Sheenboro were hooked up to the county-wide wireless Internet system. These people tend to be concentrated where the antenna towers are: in the village, within sight of Brennan's Hill, and downriver from the Fort (a tower is in Petawawa). As I write, the first "neighbourhood project" to provide service to a number of subscribers who are not in direct sight of a tower is about to be set up. Nine customers (six year-round, and three seasonal) in Meehan's Bay, including one cottage far from the Bay but with a clear line of sight, got together and made a pitch and are shortly going to receive a signal bounced from a cottage on the south side of the Bay that can see the Tower on Brennan's Hill.

I hope that this may be the first of several such neighbourhood projects. It is quite possible that other groups of people, say in a bay or all along in a row on the waterfront, will get together and launch their own effort as we did. Given Sheen's topography, it is likely that some kind of a tower may have to be built, but perhaps several such groups can come up with a way to receive and bounce signals around local areas. I urge you to canvass your neighbours, ask around, and try to come up with some numbers of people who would be interested, and then get in touch with WePC and Picanoc to find out how a plan can be put into action. Email me for contact information and news on other projects that may be under way.

We would like to remind you that there is a significant high-speed Internet service at the Municipal building in Sheenboro. As this building and its computer are locked most of the time, we realize that access can be an issue, but if you are laptop-enabled, you can cruise up to the door facing the church and go online wirelessly. (And of course we can't help asking that there be no idling of engines there to foul up our fine Sheenboro air.) As of this writing, the network is passworded (ask for it), but this restriction may be removed shortly.

Some people have reported good results with the Rogers USB Internet stick or their other option that contains a wireless router. My understanding is that Rogers will lend you one to try out for a week. The company has a store in the Pembroke Mall.

 **GOT SOMETHING TO SELL? SEE THE EXCHANGES PAGE ON THE OFWCA WEB SITE!** 

Laws That Apply To Our Shores And Beachfronts

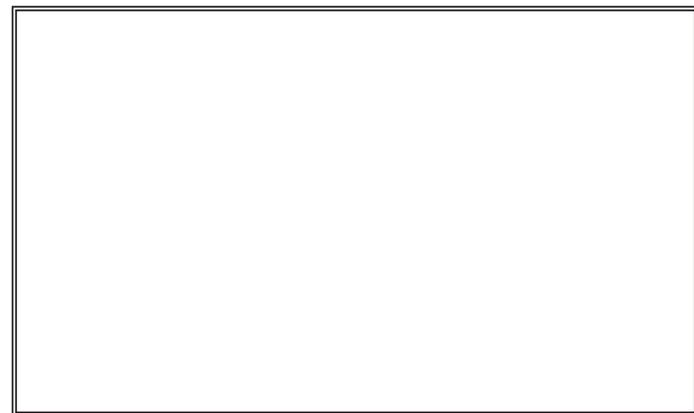
By Cathy Galligan

Did you know that there are several laws that apply to cottage owners, contractors, and others, which are aimed at protecting the Ottawa River shorelines? These will regulate what you may legally do to your shoreline. Here is a quick primer to keep you in the know so that you don't run afoul of the law:

Quebec Politic for the Protection of Shores, Littoral and Floodplains: This politic has been implemented by the Sheen Municipality through its by-laws, and in particular, Zoning By-Law 14-2003. This by-law protects shore/banks and the littoral of the Ottawa River by prohibiting the cutting of trees and vegetation along the shore except in rare circumstances, or for a small opening to access the water. It prohibits the dumping of fill.

In addition, the dumping of fill and the cutting of trees and vegetation within the high-velocity zones of floodplains (0-20 years) violate article 22 of the Quebec Environment Quality Act and are prohibited by article 4. 2 of the Regional County Municipality of Pontiac by-law number 117-2006 (By-law to deal with the determination and Protection of the Floodplains along the Ottawa River). Violation of this by-law makes one liable to pay significant fines. A violation of the Environmental Quality Act also renders one liable to significant fines and the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs can fix the damage at the expense of the owner.

Article 6.2 of the Regional County Municipality of Pontiac by-law number 117-2006 provides that the Regional County Municipality of Pontiac "may, upon being informed that this By-law has been violated, exercise all other recourses available to it under civil



law and, without limitation, all other forms of recourse provided for in Articles 227 to 233 of An Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development” (Quebec). These later articles allow both the Regional County Municipality of Pontiac and the Quebec Attorney General (for the Ministère du Développement durable, de l’Environnement et des Parcs) to obtain an order of the court requiring the owner of the property to cease all activity and to demolish the work and return the property to its former state. If the owner will not, the Regional County Municipality of Pontiac can do the work and charge the cost of the work to the owner. If the owner refuses to pay, then the cost of the work becomes a charge (like a mortgage) upon the property that will be collected by the Regional County Municipality of Pontiac upon the sale of the property (voluntary or forced).

Finally, under the federal Fisheries Act no one may carry out a work or undertaking that will cause the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of fish habitat unless it has been authorized by Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. Those who do not comply with the Fisheries Act may be liable to penalties, and even criminal prosecution under the Fisheries Act. Elsewhere on the Ottawa River in Ontario, the Federal Ministry of Natural Resources and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans investigated an individual who was eventually convicted and fined \$6,000 for harming fish habitat on the river by filling in a section of the river with soil. The individual was also ordered to restore the habitat that was destroyed by the infill. In addition the contractor he hired was fined \$8,500.

A useful directive by the Quebec Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Parks called “The Lakes and Rivers: a Living and protected Habitat” dated February 2, 2005, sets out the following type of forbidden works:

- Cutting vegetation (trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants) inside the 10-meter-wide (sometimes 15-meter) shore strip alongside any lake, river or stream (except for a 5-meter wide pedestrian access to the water and the removal of dead or sick trees). The usual practice of putting lawn on the shore down to the water is strictly forbidden;
- Digging or filling inside the shore strip and in the bed of any lake, river or stream;
- Laying boat launches for private purposes;
- Adding sand to create a beach



- Removing aquatic plants...;
- Laying wharfs on cribs or casing (only floating wharfs or those on wheels, poles, or piles are allowed);
- Building boathouses.

A helpful resource for landowners with shorelines is the The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority’s LandOwner Resource Centre. See its notes on shorelines at: «http://www.lrconline.com/Extension_Notes_English/pdf/shrlns.pdf».

These notes explain that the natural vegetation along the shoreline protects water quality, prevents soil erosion, and preserves the ecological balance of aquatic environments. Vegetation within the water provides much needed habitat for fish and other marine life. Indeed, shorelines sustain 90 percent of the life found in any lake or river. The following extract from the notes sets out benefits to our natural shoreline and the harm you can cause by altering it:

Natural Shoreline Vegetation —

- provides shelter and food for wildlife
- supports spawning beds for fish
- enhances water quality
- traps runoff and excess nutrients
- shades and cools water
- discourages growth of algae and aquatic plants

Having no Shoreline Vegetation —

- does not provide shelter and food for wildlife
- degrades spawning beds for fish
- decreases water quality
- increases runoff and excess nutrients
- warms water
- encourages growth of algae and aquatic plants

This may help to explain why there are so many laws to prohibit activity on the river that may seem benign but in fact is not.

