

Presentation by David Murray, Inaugural Chair, Kawartha Conservation October 21, 2009, Lindsay Golf and Country Club

When one reaches their mid-eighties and attempts to remember back 30 years, some of the details are difficult to recall, especially names and dates. Please bear with me as I attempt to take you back to the time when Kawartha Region Conservation Authority became a reality.

A number of citizens, like Ted Hill and the late Reese Williams, attended council meetings across Victoria County and Durham Region to promote the formation of a conservation authority. These regions were, in fact, part of a very large watershed that included the Kawartha Lakes.

Before the Minister of Natural Resources would petition the provincial government to create an order-in-council, there needed to be a vote by representatives of the municipalities.

That vote was taken and it failed to get 2/3 of the majority. I must confess that I was one of the Reeves who voted against the motion, not because we were against a conservation authority, but because the proposed watershed map did not include a small area in Haliburton County that drains into Balsam and Cameron lakes.

The ministry told us they would look at a possible expansion in the future if we would support the mapping as presented. A second vote was taken and was carried with only one Reeve opposed, thus the Kawartha Region Conservation Authority was born.

The first board meetings were held in Lindsay, in my dining room, and eventually in Fenelon Falls. It was very apparent that the new authority required a location for an administrative headquarters. Ideally, we would locate the headquarters on some acreage in a natural setting that contained wildlife, wetlands, forests and room to create an interpretive centre.

We felt very strongly that children in our education system should have the opportunity to have a "hands on experience" with nature and learn the role of conservation, the environment and water in their lives.

It happened at that time that Fenelon Township Council was talking with one of our taxpayers about a subdivision development near Sturgeon Lake and McLaren's Creek. Mr. Ken Reid was the owner of a large tract of land near the proposed subdivision. We discussed the 275 acres adjoining his subdivision. He related to me that it was his wish that this acreage be preserved in its natural state and not to be commercially developed in any way.

I do not need to tell you that our manager, Ian Macnab, and the board members started talking about this property and how we could obtain the necessary funding to establish a home for Kawartha Conservation. The price, all costs including lawyer fees, would be \$202,000. We had to somehow find these funds. The government, county and municipalities were going to help, but a large amount of money was still needed to complete the purchase.

I remember Mr. Macnab talking about the Nature Conservancy of Canada and how a gentleman named Charles Sauriol sometimes, if he was sold on a new venture, would recommend financial help from the Conservancy. Mr. Macnab and Mr. Sauriol paddled by canoe along the Sturgeon Lake

frontage and up McLaren's Creek. We showed him the wetlands and forests, and where walking trails could be established. A long story short, Mr. Sauriol said, "I will get you the money." He did and we now have Ken Reid Conservation Area.

This area, over the years, has been enjoyed by literally thousands of people. We owe a great deal of thanks to the many people who made it happen.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thank-you for letting me share some history.