



Ontario Waterway's Directors Office
34 Beckwith Street, S
Smiths Falls, Ontario
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October 31st, 2017

Mr. Bruce McIntyre
Chairman
Christie Lake Association Water Level Committee
Christie Lake Association Inc.
brucegmcintyre@gmail.com

Dear Mr. McIntyre:

I am writing in response to your email to the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, regarding water management on Christie Lake and the Bobs Lake Dam.

Parks Canada is committed to delivering safe and responsible water management. I appreciate the issues experienced this spring by the many residents and property owners affected during the period of high water levels along the Rideau Canal National Historic Site of Canada and its reservoir system.

Parks Canada's water management regime and dam operations are guided by established rule curves for Bobs Lake and Christie Lake, as well as the water use requirements of the Rideau Canal, the Town of Perth and others in the watershed. These rule curves are target water levels that vary over the year to accommodate normal hydrologic patterns and water management priorities and were developed in consideration of recreational and navigational purposes, ecological integrity and flood mitigation.

This past spring, the Rideau Canal staff worked diligently to manage significant volumes of water and were prepared to deal with the increased water levels normally associated with the season. As average snow accumulation was experienced in 2017, the storage controlled by the Bobs Lake Dam was sufficient to deal with spring runoff and mitigate associated flooding. Unfortunately, the region experienced the wettest spring on record, which was confirmed by Environment and Climate Change Canada climatologists. The amount of rainfall for the months of February and March were well above average, with 79.2 millimetres in March, over two thirds more than the average 57.5 millimetres. By mid-month, the rain had significantly raised the levels of both Bobs Lake and Christie Lake.

Repeated precipitation events in late April and early May contributed to a further increase in the water level in both lakes. From April 29 to May 7, the area received 161.4 millimetres, nearly double the precipitation average for the entire month of May. This abundant and sustained rainfall contributed to a further increase in water levels in both lakes. While part of Parks Canada's role is to maintain water levels and flows to permit safe boat navigation on the



Rideau Canal, its primary consideration during these events was to lessen flood events at both Bobs Lake and Christie Lake to the extent possible.

Parks Canada did not lose control of the Bobs Lake Dam during any recent flooding events. The dam was accessible during the flood events and was inspected and operated during the course of the flood to try to control rising water levels. Regarding your concerns about the state of the Bobs Lake Dam, please note that no engineering inspections have led to the conclusion that it is unsafe. The structure requires replacement due to its age and to satisfy modern guidelines for dam safety.

Since 2015, Parks Canada has been undertaking necessary preparatory work to deliver a fully replaced dam upstream of the existing structure. A rigorous process of investigation and review is underway to provide direction for construction. Due to the in-water nature of the project, the environmental impact assessment is multi-jurisdictional and will include separate but complementary reviews by Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources. The scope of the environmental impact assessment process includes the construction of, and changes caused by, the new Bobs Lake Dam. As the new dam will not in itself alter the projected water management strategy, this aspect of Parks Canada's operations are outside of the scope of the assessment. The Agency's water management strategy and dam operations will continue to be guided by the existing rule curves for the upstream and downstream lakes.

As part of the community engagement associated with this project, Parks Canada has participated in five public forums to provide project updates and has provided additional e-mail updates to lake associations, the Municipality of Perth and other stakeholders. Additional engagement will take place in spring 2018 in anticipation of construction. Project updates are available on-line at www.parkscanada.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/rideau/visit/infrastructure. To join the community engagement list and receive e-mail updates regarding this project, please send an e-mail message to rideaucanal.info@pc.gc.ca and include "Bobs Lake Dam" in the subject heading.

Should you have any further questions or concerns about water management or dam safety, please contact me at jewel.cunningham@pc.gc.ca or by telephone at 705-750-4919.

I trust this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

Jewel Cunningham
Director of Ontario Waterways
Parks Canada