

Good evening Mayor Cartier-Villeneuve and Councillors,

Over the last several months, the GORA Board and the Ad Hoc Committee on Boat Washing have discussed how to move forward on our strategy to protect our lakes.

The purpose of this letter is to encourage Council to consider instituting a by-law to require all boat users to wash their boats before launching them into our lakes. The by-law would also control access to the public boat launch on Farm Lake.

As you know, invasive species can spread from one lake to another through boat hulls, motors, trailers and live bait. Invasive species cause serious harm to water quality, fish, and natural plant life. One of the most effective ways for municipalities to help prevent invasive species is to require mandatory boat washing and regulate access to lakes.

Attached to this letter are two examples of current by-laws in the Municipality of Val-des-Monts and the Township of Wentworth for consideration.

Drawing from the examples in other jurisdictions, we propose that a by-law be implemented that would apply to boat users on Farm Lake, Hughes Lake, Little Hughes Lake, and McCuaig Lake. Boat washing could be free for taxpayers (including year-round residents and owners of cottage property). However, fees could be charged for non-taxpayers. A fine could be imposed for non-compliance. This approach would require "access permits" to be issued to boat users who are taxpayers. This makes it simpler for taxpayers; they would sign an attestation that their boat is not being used in other lakes. For non-taxpayers bringing boats in from other lakes, they would be issued a "wash certificate" that would show they have used the boat washing station and have made a payment. The "wash certificate" would be valid for one day. The fees charged to non-taxpayers for washing their boat and having access to the lakes could be determined according to size of motor or a flat fee. The revenue that is generated could be used to offset the cost of maintaining the boat washing station.

In addition, we propose that the by-law would control access to Farm Lake. The literature tells us that the lakes that are most vulnerable to invasive species are those with public and accessible boat launches. From GORA's point of view, attention to the public boat launch on Farm Lake should be a priority given that it is centrally located and relatively easy to access for any boat user. We propose two options to consider: 1) hire a student to work at the boat launch and ensure that boaters have a "wash certificate" or "access permit" before launching, or 2) install a gate at the boat launch which would require either a key to enter or a swipe card.

We understand that controlling access to Farm Lake would require financial resources and we are willing to do whatever we can to support this venture. Possible sources of funding could be government grants, fund-raising, corporate sponsorship, etc.

We look forward to working with you on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Quaile

President, Greater Otter Lake Residents Association