

No Water this Year?

February 2007

On Monday February 19th, 2007 London City Council approved a recommendation that reconstruction of the Springbank Dam continue this summer on July 1st following the fish spawning season in April, May and June.

The impact of this is severe.

It means that there will be no paddling or rowing on the Thames River this summer.

This closure will have its greatest impact on the hundreds of children who use our facilities every summer. Children from the Boys and Girls Club, Community Living London and our own Childrens Day Camp will be affected. Many other groups also use our facilities during the summer. Our Olympic paddling program, growing dramatically until last year, will suffer greatly. High performance athletes who cannot train properly, cannot compete at high levels and risk injury.

There are two main reasons for this decision:

- 1/ The contractor hired to do the reconstruction of the dam was unable to stay on schedule primarily due to the large amount of rain during the fall and winter of 2006/07.
- 2/ During fish spawning season (April/May/June) the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will not allow construction to continue.

The Springbank Dam is made up of four gates. Two of these will be complete by the end of March 2007. Apparently the remaining two gates cannot be closed during July, August and September, because the logs normally used to close these gates are no longer available.

Currently your board of directors is attempting to put contingency plans in place but we realize that nothing we can do will be as convenient and effective as having the Thames reservoir filled for the summer. We ask for your understanding and help while we are dealing with this issue.

The Springbank Dam has been part of the landscape since 1929 and many Londoners do not realize it but having the Thames River readily available to us is a jewel.

Visitors from other provinces and states marvel at the amount of sheltered flat water we have running through the middle of our city.

Some groups have been advocating that the summer season should be shortened or removed entirely to allow fish to migrate freely. We should point out that presently fish cannot get past the Fanshawe Dam on the north branch of the Thames. Neither can they swim past the weir at Labatts on the south branch once water levels drop in May.

Having the Thames River available to the people of London from May to September is an important part of our lives. Many of our tax dollars are spent on recreational facilities. If we don't let our governments know how much we value this treasure it could easily be lost.

As we make plans and as new information becomes available we will post it on this website.

Attached to this notice is a list of your provincial and municipal representatives for the city of London. Please let them know how you feel about having the Thames River accessible for recreation during the summer. If we act together we can ensure that our voice is heard.

Provincial Representatives

London North Centre	Deb Matthews	dmatthews.mpp.co@liberal.ola.org
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