

COKL Council Wild Rice Resolution

By Pat Warren

City of Kawartha Lakes Council has voted to receive and not support the Selwyn Township resolution regarding Wild Rice.

As reported by Glenn Burns, our neighbouring municipality is demanding Parks Canada and the Honourable Catherine McKenna give a progress report on the issue of wild rice harvesting.

A working group was formed in 2013 to help resolve issues between property owners and First Nations treaty rights (Williams Treaty).

The Selwyn resolution asks Parks Canada for a specific method for harvesting wild rice that considers the needs of adjacent waterfront property owners because the noise from the mechanical method is affecting their enjoyment of their property. It also asks for the establishment of limits on mechanical harvesting and that there be no harvesting on Sunday.

Further, they've asked that Parks Canada continue to consider applications for aquatic vegetation removal in this area to allow waterfront property

Rice Harvest Resolution

By Glenn Burns

The Manomin (wild rice) harvest has been under way in the Kawarthas and along with the harvest come complaints from lakefront property owners.

This year the Township of Selwyn has entered the fray by issuing a resolution which is making the rounds of other municipal governments.

The 'Wild Rice Resolution', addressed to Parks Canada and the Minister in charge, the Honourable Catherine McKenna, demanded the Federal government 'working group' with the seven Williams Treaty First Nations clarify their progress to the public.

The 'resolution' also complained that mechanical harvesting of Manomin was disturbing lakefront property owners and 'affecting the enjoyment of their property'.

Trent Lakes Council determined that the 'resolution' was worth supporting but with some amendments offered by Councillor Peter Raymond. He asked that Parks Canada release what "accomplished milestones had been achieved to-date, identify any regulation, process and procedure changes, identify current plans and associated timelines and commit to regular updates to the public, municipalities and agencies."

This contentious issue has not been lost on Curve Lake First Nation resident, playwright and author Drew Hayden Taylor. He is currently working on a production for Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, entitled 'Cottagers and Indians' focusing on the Manomin harvesting dispute.

Manomin is a plant that holds great significance not only as an edible, nourishing food source and medicine but as a living symbol of First Nation renewal of culture, spirit and pride. It flourishes in clean, shallow water and combats invasive species like the 'water soldier'. Manomin provides economic and health stability for both First Nation harvesters and users.

Once again, this virtuous plant has become a lightning rod for bad feelings, misunderstanding and political manoeuvres.