

Fairy Lake's future debated at meeting

Those who visualize a Fairy Lake, bordered by green lawns sweeping down to sparkling waters that invite aquatic activities such as swimming, boating and fishing, may have to wait a few years if the findings of the Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) are right.

At a meeting called by Friends of Fairy Lake on Tuesday, March 28, the need to nurture the lake back to its "beautiful, natural state and improve its health for all to enjoy and treasure," was emphasized. The history, health and future of what has been called a "treasure in the heart of Acton" was summarized and solutions proposed to rescue it from further damage.

Friends of Fairy Lake is an association of people anxious to preserve the lake. It was organized by Stan and Valerie Slater, newcomers to Acton, who see Fairy Lake as a jewel which could be brought back to its original lustre by a co-operative effort from the community. "We got lots of support from the Town," Stan Slater told the meeting. Research from CVC and the MNR has given them direction to clean and improve the water.

It was noted earlier efforts organized by Counsellor Rick Bonnette to clean out debris and pull purple loose strife was a start but a campaign to clean up the shore around the lake's perimeter would be advantageous as well as enlightening for volunteers.

Stan Slater noted that now a new dam had been constructed and funds available for rehabilitation, a concerted effort by volunteers could do a lot in one day. "We need suggestions," he told the meeting, noting there were positions open both on the executive and volunteers of Friends of Fairy Lake.

Both the CVC and MNR representatives at the meeting, Bob Morris and Warren May respectively, said that indigenous shrubs and trees should be planted along the shorelines along with long grass to create a buffer zone. This coincides with the Town's Master Plan for Fairy Lake, noted Warren Harris, of the Town staff. It should improve both the water's edge and discourage large numbers of Canadian Geese whose "poop" often fouls the shore.

Meeting chairman Councillor Norm Elliot wearing a private citizen's hat, noted that the first dam that created

the lake was built in 1830 on the Black Creek in order to run the mill which is still operating at Mill St. W. The creek widened along the creek's course but when the dam was installed 89 acres of land was flooded. The mill pond as it was called then was christened Fairy Lake in the middle 1800's by a resident, Sarah Augusta Secord, as a more "euphonious" name for such a pristine body of water.

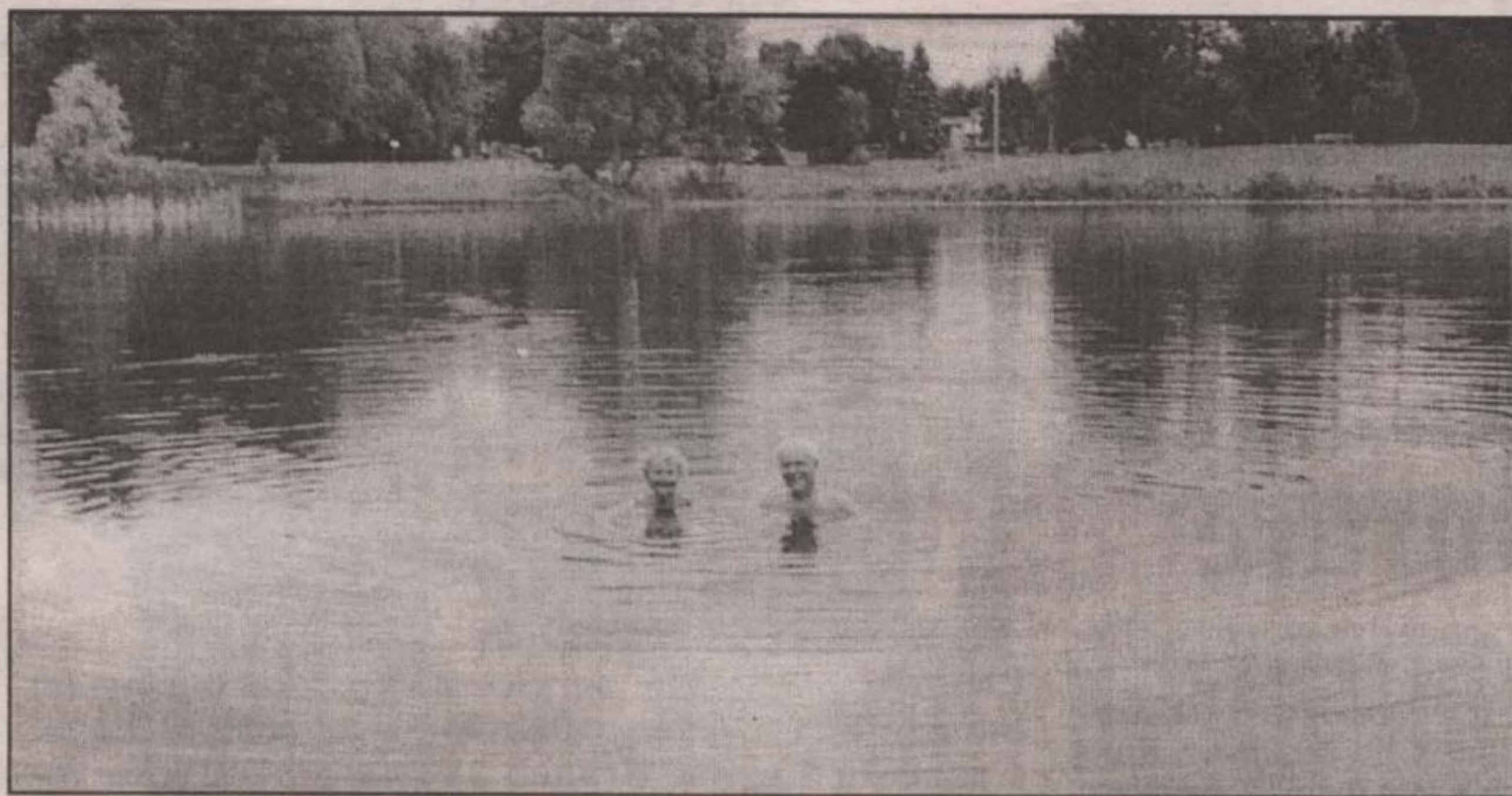
The lake was purchased by Beardmore and CO. around the turn of the century and its water used for the tanning process by means of a large pipe at the dam which followed the contours of the Black Creek into the tannery. Beardmore used as much 500,000 gallons a day of lake water and officials are scratching their heads where that water has disappeared since lake levels reached new lows last year.

Dredging of the lake in 1966-67 was sparked by a report on reservoirs in the Credit Valley watershed and it improved water quality. However in the intervening years ground water and storm sewer water have contributed to the lake's problems. The Town inherited the problems when Beardmore deeded Fairy Lake to the Town in 1990.

Bob Morris of the CVC, which is responsible for 11 different municipalities on the Credit River system, said



SUPER SKATER: Acton's Emily Vickery, 7, is the Acton Figure Skating Club's Skater of the Year and will represent the club at the Canadian awards next month. Emily accepted this bouquet during the club's season finale carnival on Saturday.



AVID SWIMMERS - Joan and Vic Morris, Prospect Park neighbours have been taking advantage of Fairy Lake for many decades. They're expected to take a dip any time now and will keep enjoying the lake well into the fall.

managing Fairy Lake means also managing all the lands that drain into it, and all the little streams that feed it. That means land use controls and sourcing and controlling fertilizers and chemicals, animal waste and septic tank as well as storm water management and wetland creation.

Warren May of the MNR said his information showed the lake only occupied about 22 acres (8.9 hectares) information challenged by Chairman Elliott who noted that 65 acres had been dredged and almost a third had not been touched. May outlined the lake problems with weeds which decompose using much need oxygen. He said the lake was small, shallow and nutrient rich. Rehabilitation would need a long term solution of controlling nutrients, etc.

Paul Nielsen spoke briefly to the crowd outline his assessment and those engineers he hired to assess the water quality in the Fairy Lake watershed. He said the lake needed more turbulence and it was partially prevented by the fact that the area drained upstream of the Churchill Rd. culvert (143 acres) was acting as a reservoir, storing water which would flow into the lake. He advised on an upstream management program to augment the flow to the lake.

A question and answer period followed the speaker.

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