

Mohawk Lake clean-up project work plan coming this fall



By Donna Durie
Writer

The Mohawk Lake clean-up project is moving full steam ahead with a work plan set to be presented to local councils this fall.

The roughly \$6 million project aims to clean up pollution in the small man-made lake resulting from decades of nearby industrial run-off.

Joy O'Donnell, chair of the Mohawk Lake Clean-Up committee, told band council's Committee of the Whole Monday that recent community meetings have revealed local residents are prioritizing recreation as part of the project's revitalization.

"More people want canoeing, walking, hiking and fishing as opposed to swimming," says O'Donnell. "Instead of a beach, we're looking at trails, lookouts and docks."

Mohawk Lake is a small body of water in the southern portion of Brantford just off Greenwich Ave. that feeds into the Grand River.

The main source of water for the lake is stormwater

run-off.

"It's not clean water coming in," said O'Donnell.

The lake and surrounding park used to be a recreational hotspot, with ferries and trolleys bringing in visitors from all over the city to swim, canoe, fish and skate on the lake at the turn of the century.

"There was all sorts of activity in the park," said O'Donnell. "We're hoping to bring back the waterway to what it used to be."

The committee has held numerous public information sessions to gather feedback from Brantford, Brant County, Six Nations and surrounding areas on what they'd like to see.

O'Donnell said people stressed they wanted the area to remain "green."

"We kept hearing: don't overdevelop."

O'Donnell said the committee is hoping to rebrand the area a great place for locals to go for a "staycation" instead of travelling outside the city to enjoy outdoor activities.

The estimated \$6 million clean-up price tag was from 1995. O'Donnell, said a

new cost analysis needs to be done.

The group is not yet sure how far to go with the clean-up.

The major pollutants in the lake are chemicals called Polyaromatic Hydrocarbons, said O'Donnell, and since those chemicals are mixed in with the sediment

at the bottom, it might be better not to disturb it.

She said the canal area is where the most pollution seems to be.

People still fish in the lake and eat the fish, she said.

A Ministry of Environment 1990 study noted despite the pollution, the fish were still edible. It needs to be

updated, she said.

The committee will develop a work plan by the fall. The group's mission statement is to "advocate for the environmental and historical restoration of Mohawk Lake."

A number of Six Nations people sit on the project committee: elected Chief

Ava Hill as an ex-officio member; community planner Amy Lickers; farmer Barry Hill; Coun. Terry General; and Six Nations Eco-Centre Manager Paul General. The project will be funded by the City of Brantford, Ontario and federal government; and fundraising will take place.