

Families begin a foundation to fund a study of water quality in Lake Eugenia

Two families are taking the step of forming a foundation and hiring a study done of the water quality of Lake Eugenia.

Sparked by no-swimming orders and blue-green algae bloom on the lake last summer, the families are hoping that others will join them.

Doug Hill spoke to council last week to inform them of issues and shared their plans.

Getting a study done, and having those who are interested pay for it seemed the most direct course of action, he said.

Mr. Hill said over the last two years he has had many conversations with residents, and with representatives of different bodies each of which have their own interest and influence on what happens at the lake.

Local people are of different opinions about how big the problem is, what the cause was and what could be done.

The hope is that this study will provide a present baseline of the state of the lake, and provide some answers.

And while the Hill family and Morgan Anderson and Scott Bumstead and their family have started the foundation, they are looking for people to join.

Mr. Hill said they're not looking for a job, but hope to involve the community and make the foundation vital.

They hope to hold a meeting, and to raise funds for the research. To that end, they plan to start a website and an online crowd fundraising page to raise an estimated \$20,000.

They plan to hire Brent Parsons, an aquatic scientist at Hutchinson Environmental Sciences Ltd. from Bracebridge to do the study, and Mr. Parsons was on the call as well.

There are mixed opinions among members of existing groups such as the Lake Eugenia Property Owners Association, Mr. Hill said.

He said that the goal isn't to make the lake "pristine," but to restore it to a usable lake in a semi-urban environment.

"We're doing this for our children and grandchildren - it's as simple as that," he said.

He said they weren't asking the municipality for money but to communicate how important the issue is to Grey Highlands.

The presentation gave an estimate of 400 homes on the lake - assessment that supports municipal spending. If water quality affects recreational uses at the lake, Mr. Hill said that will lower property values and that contribution.

The area is important to water quality in the Beaver River and to the local ecology, he said.

And even before the study results are in, he suggested that there are three common avenues that affect lake regions that can be addressed: septic system control; not permitting contractors and homeowners to apply phosphate based fertilizer and slowing down runoff into the lake during shoreline projects.

Council has proposed a lake carrying capacity study in the past, however Mr. Parsons offered the opinion

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that might not be the right approach because "it's a bit of a unique lake."

The lake was formed by the damming of the Beaver River to generate electricity and it is owned by Ontario Power Generation.

Council passed a motion asking for a staff report on a possible partnership with Grey Sauble C.A. on a Lake Eugenia Action Plan and the potential for a Lake Carrying Capacity study.

Thanks
Paul
&
Gail