

Save The Petawawa: Update #2

Feb 20, 2011



Thank-you all for your support, patience and involvement over the past two weeks. We are beginning to make positive in roads in a number of key areas. Efforts continue to influence key decisions makers, to better educate ourselves on the various processes and steps involved in the siting, construction and commissioning of these small scale- hydro projects.

In an effort to formalize our involvement and interaction with relevant agencies and political bodies, like-minded citizens have formed the Community Alliance to Save the Petawawa (CASP). Its present membership is: Al Hepburn (safety / technical issues), Roy Reed (education, design), Byron & Jean Ostrom (tourism); Philip Kompass & Brad Wipp (recreation / paddling); Skip Ross (First Nations), Alf Beck (biology / environment).

The public has become very vocal over the past few weeks, with countless e-mails from across Canada being sent to local and provincial officials, making it clear that this project is not in the best interests of the community, and there should be reconsidered.

Petawawa Council has been kind enough to forward our list of 23 very specific questions to Xeneca under their letterhead. As the Town is a recognized stakeholder, that request will be difficult for Xeneca to ignore. They are also considering the hiring of an environmental consultant to help them keep tabs on this project. If you do e-mail them, don't forget to thank them for these encouraging moves.

It has come to our notice that Xeneca has taken out a one page advertisement in the Petawawa News, and is also distributing a flyer door-to-door, so we obviously have their attention. There really is no new information here – just the usual Xeneca generalities. Please read such document with a critical eye, and look for specific answers, not generalities and empty promises. Of course, as a volunteer organization we don't have the budget to go head-to-head with them in this kind of propaganda campaign.

As always, please continue to support the efforts by telling your friends and neighbours, post a sign on your lawn, become involved in the dialogue on Facebook, and by sending your concerns to the relevant officials and agencies.

Many thanks,
Community Alliance to Save the Petawawa

More details are provided on page 2 and 3. Please keep reading.

How You Can Help:

The time has come to become more strategic in our approach. Having registered our general opposition to the project, CASP is asking that people now send more detailed questions and concerns to Xeneca and OELHydrosys, and other relevant agencies.

Step 1: Consider some specific questions you wish you had answers to. A list of possible questions are provided below. A more detailed list can be found on SaveThePetawawa.ca.

On what basis was the Notice of Commencement revised (on or about 24 Dec, 2010) to change the status of the waterway from 'unmanaged' to 'managed'?

Please provide a copy of the public safety requirements that apply to this project, bearing in mind that the area downstream, from the powerhouse is heavily used for recreation.

Is it Xeneca's intent to operate the Big Eddy plant using a modified peaking strategy as stated in the Project Overview document?

Please explain in cubic metres / second, the expected variation, and the possible frequency of this variation, in outflow from the powerhouse.

Will Xeneca commit in writing complete the design to the point that the details of all safety-related features (barriers, horns, lights, etc) are approved before construction commences?

Please provide the minimum residual flow value to be committed to for this project so we have time to carry out our own analysis of the consequences of this number.

Please provide an indication of the expected downstream extent of any area where river flow will be, even temporarily, reduced to a value below that of the river flow into the head pond.

Since no solution is available to permit sturgeon to bypass the dam, what mitigating features are proposed to make this project environmentally acceptable for the Petawawa River?

How will Xeneca protect and maintain the navigability and the quality of the recreational use of the river in the affected reach and the section of river downstream of the powerhouse?

Step 2: Cut and paste those questions you feel most strongly about. You are encouraged to add your own personal sentiments and concerns, but do so in a clear, professional manner.

Step 3: Direct it to one or more of the following:

pgillette@xeneca.com
tsugarman@oel-hydrosys.ca
nwpontario-penontario@tc.gc.ca
mayer@petawawa.ca
minister.moe@ontario.ca
perry.m@forces.gc.ca
FIT@powerauthority.on.ca
info@owa.ca

Patrick Gillette, Xeneca, VP
Tami Sugarman, OEL Hydrosys (contracted to carry out EA)
Transport Canada, Navigable Waterways
Mayor Bob Sweet, Town of Petawawa
Minister of the Environment (Provincial)
Michele Perry, CFB Petawawa Environmental Officer
Feed In Tariff Program, Province of Ontario
Ontario Waterpower Association

Step 4: Ensure you Cc: petawawa-river@hotmail.com on all correspondence.

Recent Developments:

- An Open House was held in Deep River on January 31, with roughly 40 people in attendance.
- Over 200 signs have now been distributed throughout out local communities. If you would like one for your lawn, there are a few left at Gearheads (Petawawa).
- Over 250 letters have been sent to Xeneca Power Dvlp; John Yakabuski, MPP; and Mayor Bob Sweet. They did not go unnoticed.
- Xeneca met with the various provincial and federal agencies (Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Environment, Park Canada, Ministry of Transportation, etc) to discuss the progress of the EA process. The Minutes of that meeting were released to CASP, and make it evident that Xeneca has failed to meet their expectations in a number of areas, and, still has a great deal of work to do in others. The meeting minutes are available on <http://www.SaveThePetawawa.ca>
- The Town of Petawawa has acted on our request to send a number of questions to Xeneca in an effort to gain some important answers to relatively simple questions. This is an important development as the Town is recognized as a key stakeholder in the process.
- The Town of Petawawa is considering appointing / hiring a dedicated consultant to help represent the interest of the community throughout the Class EA and approvals process.
- The CASP website – www.SaveThePetawawa.ca – has been updated to include the Waterpower Site Strategy document, the minutes from the EA, as a list of questions that you may want to consider sending to Xeneca or the relevant federal or provincial Ministries.
- CASP made a presentation to the Ottawa Valley Tourism Association (OVTA) on February 16 that outlined the project, but focussed largely on the tourism potential of whitewater and the value that it can bring to a community. They (OVTA) did not formally announce a position, although some members did state their opposition to the dam project.

We are still determining the date for the next “Open House” when the public can come and voice their questions and get a project update in person from CASP. As soon as that date is determined, we will let you know.

Thanks again for your ongoing support. You can expect another update in two weeks.