

February 2021



E-Conservation ADVISORY **SOUTH LAKE SIMCOE NATURALISTS**

SLSN Members: February – Second Notice and ACTION Information –

Lake Simcoe Protection Plan Review

It is very important for as many individuals as possible to engage in the review of the Lake Simcoe Act and Plan Review initiated by the province of Ontario. There are a number of community organizations that have been active in raising awareness of the Act and Plan, and its review especially in recent years. Again, below I have provided links on some of these organizations, some of whom in the past we have engaged and provided expertise and advise related to the lake and its watersheds.

Additional to the many past articles in the SLSN “Talon” newsletter, over many years, devoted to Lake Simcoe and its watersheds, water quality, physiography, ecology, wildlife and environmental challenges our organization was very active and instrumental among others in working to get the “Lake Simcoe Act” over a decade ago. It is important for members to become knowledgeable about the science and planning aspects related to the current and future perspectives of the lake and its watersheds. This review process is your opportunity to contribute to the future (next decade) of the health of the lake. The Ministry of Environment, Parks and Conservation has provided key links to up-to-date information below. As part of this review, we invite you to share your perspective on the plan’s

policies by completing our [public survey](#) on [ontario.ca](#). Additionally, you may submit your comments to the Ministry by email: LakeSimcoe@ontario.ca.

Fortunately, Ontario Nature has provided summarized information and opinion of key issues and suggested improvements that member organizations including SLSN, can use for comment and are below.

Paul Harpley

2021-02-25

Ontario Nature Action Alert

Lake Simcoe Protection Plan Review

The required 10-year review of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan is underway. The plan is intended to guide the Government of Ontario's actions to protect and restore Lake Simcoe. It focuses on water quality, reducing pollutants and nutrients (e.g., phosphorous), protecting natural heritage, and addressing invasive species and other emerging threats. Progress in achieving the plan's objectives, however, has been undermined by provincial funding cuts, policy changes enabling more sprawling development and a general lack of implementation. Of particular concern are rising phosphorous levels, and the continued loss of forests and wetlands in the watershed.

The **Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition** is calling on the government to uphold and, where needed, strengthen plan policies and to properly invest in achieving the plan's targets. It has identified six priorities that must be addressed:

1. Improve water quality by reducing phosphorus loads to the lake to 44 tonnes per year;
2. Protect 40 percent of the watershed's forests and wetlands;
3. Enable First Nations and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority to participate meaningfully in the plan's governance;
4. Stop the use of **Minister's Zoning Orders** (MZOs) in the watershed;
5. Increase public engagement in restoration and invasive species control; and
6. Incorporate and implement the Lake Simcoe Climate Change Adaptation Strategy policies into the plan to reduce phosphorus loads, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and increase natural cover.

The coalition has provided **detailed recommendations** for addressing each of these priorities. With respect to natural heritage, for example, the government should amend the plan to require the naturalization of shorelines, and the establishment of natural cover and restoration targets. It should also work with municipalities to identify, map and protect natural areas of 25 hectares or more. Finally, it must consult with local Indigenous communities to identify priority

lands for protection, and ensure that Indigenous voices and **Traditional Ecological Knowledge** are meaningfully included in all decisions, plans and policies.

Please join Ontario Nature and Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition in asking the Government of Ontario to identify and pursue ways to achieve the science-based objectives and targets of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. Given the ever-increasing threats to this precious watershed from phosphorous loading, climate change and loss of natural areas, political will and investment are needed to protect Lake Simcoe.

For more information from O.N.: <https://ontarionature.good.do/lake-simcoe/email/>

The deadline for public comment is March 3rd.

Other Sources of information and opinion on Lake Simcoe and it's future from community sources:

Lake Simcoe Watch: <https://lakesimcoewatch.ca/>

Lake Simcoe Living Magazine past issues: <https://www.lakesimcoeliving.com/>

Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition: <https://rescuelakesimcoe.org/>

S.O.S. Beaverton: <https://www.facebook.com/SOS-Beaverton-Save-Our-Simcoe-1797505417019699/>

Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (L.S.R.C.A.): <https://www.lsrca.on.ca/>

Ecojustice, "Protect Ontario's Lakes":

https://www.support.ecojustice.ca/page/68702/action/1?ea.tracking.id=Email_2020_10_13_BreakingNews&utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=bn_2020.10.13&utm_content=2020.10.13+Protect+Ontario%E2%80%99s+lakes+launch&ea.url.id=4949538

Background Resources: Provincial Review of the Lake Simcoe Act Announced by the Ministry of Environment Parks and Conservation - Ontario

On behalf of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, I am pleased to inform you that the 75-day engagement period for the legislated review of the [Lake Simcoe Protection Plan](#) has been launched. You may read the news release [here](#).

For more than a decade, the [province's actions](#) to protect and restore Lake Simcoe have been guided by the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, which focuses on the lake's water quality, reducing pollutants such as phosphorus, caring for natural heritage, and addressing the impacts of invasive species and other emerging threats.

As you may be aware, the government is required under the [Lake Simcoe Protection Act, 2008](#), to review of the plan every 10 years to inform the Minister's decision on whether to amend the plan as we continue to protect and restore the lake.

As part of this review, we invite you to share your perspective on the plan's policies by completing our [public survey](#) on [ontario.ca](#). Additionally, you may submit your comments to the Ministry by email: LakeSimcoe@ontario.ca.

A virtual town hall and virtual science event are being planned for early in the new year. We will send additional details and registration instructions to you in the coming weeks.

We look forward to hearing from you as we continue to work together to protect and restore Lake Simcoe.

If you have any questions regarding this email, please contact Ms. Madhu Malhotra at Madhu.Malhotra@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

Ling Mark
Director, Great Lakes Inland Waters Branch
Land and Water Division, M.E.P.C.
