

March 22, 2024

Subject: Proposed re-channelization project northeast of Nellie Lake

Dear stakeholder,

In June 2023, the Town of Iroquois Falls declared a state of emergency regarding the high-water levels being experienced at Nellie Lake. At that time, homeowners reported flooding and damage to private properties around the lake and flooding of the main access of Big Nellie Lake Road. As a short-term response, from September to November 2023, MNRF installed pumps which successfully lowered the lake level prior to freeze-up.

Project Description

To reduce the risk of future flood emergencies, the ministry is proposing to re-channelize an outflow located approximately 100 m northeast of the lake (see attached map).

The work would include re-channelizing approximately 500 metres of channel to remove obstructions and re-establish flow between the lake and downstream creek that runs eastwards into the Abitibi River. The channel is designed to allow water to flow out of the lake when the lake elevation reaches 295.8 metres above sea level (masl). This is the lake elevation that was recorded at the end of the pumping project in November 2023.

Re-channelization is not designed to manage the seasonal levels of Nellie Lake. The intent is to mitigate flooding of property above 295.8 masl. Large precipitation events may still raise lake levels above 295.8 masl, but over time, the channel will allow the lake level to moderate.

Outreach

MNRF provided a 21-day public comment period ending on February 21, 2024.

We received a range of comments from 27 parties, including:

- full support of the target elevation,
- concerns that the target lake level is too low,
- concerns that the target lake level is too high,
- concerns that the drawdown of Nellie Lake impacts Siamese Twin Lake,
- and one report of a dry sand point water intake

Despite a range of opinions on the ideal target water level, respondents overwhelmingly supported the re-channelization proposal as a long-term solution.

The Porcupine Health Unit acknowledged the importance of working to prevent another flood emergency for the residents that reside at Nellie Lake and appreciated the efforts made by the ministry.

Decision

After consideration of the comments received, coupled with the risk of private property flooding again this spring, the ministry is proceeding with the channelization project as proposed. The water will flow from the lake through the “new” channel when levels reach 295.8masl.

Next Steps

MNRF will initiate the proposed project at the end of March or early April 2024 with project completion anticipated by the end of May. During construction, existing roads and trails will be used wherever possible to minimize disruption. Some minor tree clearing will be required prior to beginning the outflow channel. The channel will be excavated using heavy equipment and lined with appropriate geotextile and rock where required for bank stabilization. The channel at the trail to the east of Nellie Lake will be designed to allow continued passage with all-terrain vehicles (ATV's) and snowmobiles.

To support continued public education around the natural change in water levels and to allow the monitoring of lake levels in a consistent way, the ministry will be installing staff gauges on Nellie and Siamese Twin Lakes.

Thank you for your valuable input and continued support throughout the implementation of this project.

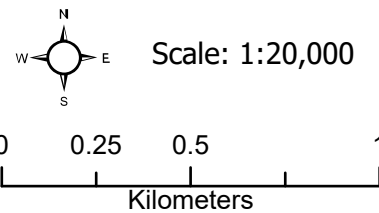
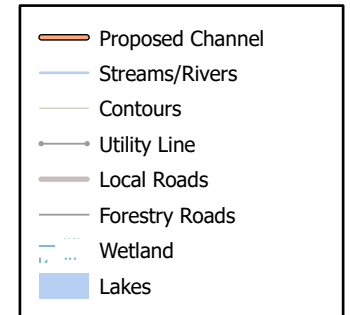
Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Wesley Woods', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wesley Woods
District Manager
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
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Enclosure: Map of Project Location

Proposed Re-Channelization Nellie Lake



This map is illustrative only. Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of privately owned land, routes, locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation. This map may also contain cartographic errors or omissions.

Map Publication Date: January 24, 2024
Spatial Reference: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
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