

Do We Know the Whole Story on Otter Lake's Future?

It was a relief in September, 2007 when North Bay City Council passed a resolution "that. . .***the City only entertain offers of purchase for the remaining Otter Lake lands from community based groups for uses that would be deemed to provide a larger public benefit***".

However, the complacency ended when it was noted that the new Official Plan for the City of North Bay does not include anything about Otter Lake. Nor is it included in the recently updated City's Parks Inventory.

When questioned, City officials responded that Otter Lake isn't included because they don't want the public to get the impression that the City intends to maintain Otter Lake. Of course, this doesn't answer why the Council resolution has been left out.

The lands around Otter Lake are currently zoned "rural". It would be more appropriate if they were re-zoned to "open space". According to Planning Department documents, "***Open Space shall be defined as an undeveloped, publicly owned, property that provides opportunities for passive recreational and leisure activities in a natural setting. In general, Open Spaces are not maintained by the City of North Bay.***"

The lack of a suitable response from City officials gives the impression that there are some other plans for Otter Lake that have not yet been made public. Since Otter Lake won't be covered by the consultations for the Official Plan, you might consider asking City Councillors when can we expect the City to hold a public meeting to discuss the future of Otter Lake? Or is there still a possibility it will be zoned as Open Space and the Council resolution incorporated into the Official Plan?