



PROTECT OPINICON LAKE

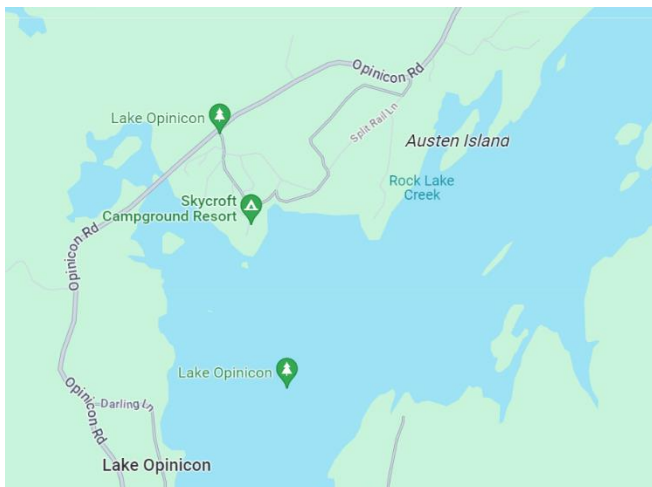
Precedent Setting Campground Expansion Proposal Denied

In August of last year, it came to the attention of the Wolfe Lake Association Westport that the owner of Skycroft Campground and Resort (on Lake Opinicon), submitted an application to the South Frontenac Township to increase the number of campsites from 50 to 231 on the waterfront of Lake Opinicon. So, why is this so important?

The zoning bylaws in place are there to protect our natural resources. This application would require an amendment to the South Frontenac Municipal Plan and bylaws and the proposed change is precedent setting. If approved, development of this kind would not be limited to Opinicon Lake but could be in the future of other Lakes in the Township including, Wolfe Lake.

The proposed changes are:

- The expansion is 4.5 times more than what the South Frontenac Official Plan permits;
- This expansion would introduce new trailers, boats and enough people to populate one of the largest towns in the region;
- Increase permitted total lot area for campsite use from 25% to 43%;
- Reduce permitted usable shoreline per site from 15.0 metres to 3.6 metres;
- Use a back lot in the calculation of the shoreline per campsite;
- Reduced side yard / reduce distances between the sites and lot lines.



A diverse collective of over two hundred community stakeholders and lake associations formed last year to resist this alarming expansion and the project was named Protect Opinicon.

The Wolfe Lake Association is dedicated to the long-term health and sustainability of Wolfe Lake and its complex ecosystem. It is satisfying to know our fellow lake associations/neighbours share the same ecological

values. Protect Opinicon has identified key environmental threats and concerns. The proposed campground expansion is in the heart of what UNESCO lists as “the most biodiverse region in Canada” - the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. A letter to Mayor and Council dated September 12, 2023 signed by nine Biology Professors identified the following impact on wildlife.

“Our research on the fish, birds, amphibians, and reptiles of Opinicon Lake and South Frontenac County conducted over more than three decades has shown that many local species are under serious and increasing pressure from human activities and development.

The population of Gray Rat Snakes (a species at risk) around Opinicon Lake is threatened by road mortality on Opinicon Road and by other sources of anthropogenic mortality. Collisions between Northern Map Turtles (a species at risk) and motorboats are unsustainably high and have doubled in recent years. This area has been designated a Canadian Important Bird Area, home to significant populations of threatened

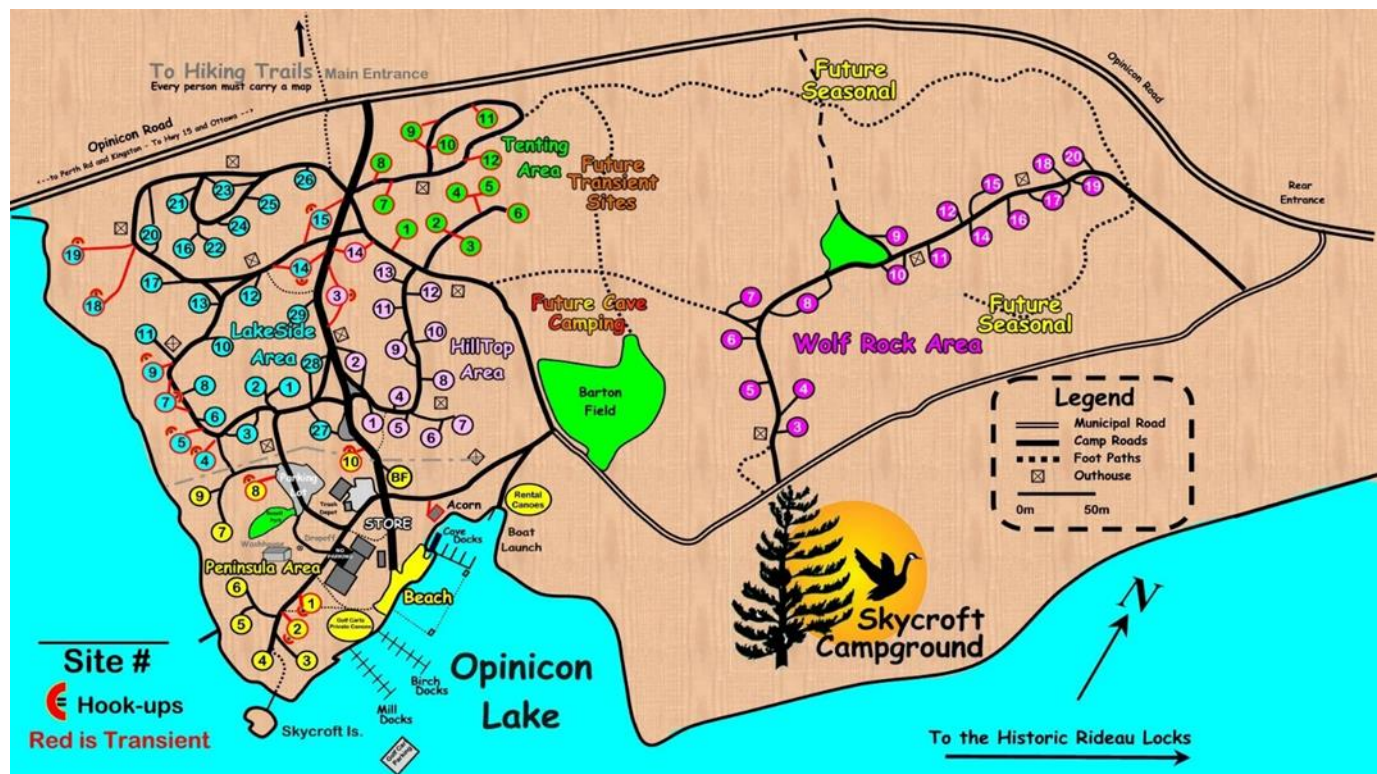
and endangered birds and providing a critical sanctuary at a time when we are losing birds by the billions. All of these species would undoubtedly suffer badly from the increased traffic on water and on roads, and from habitat degradation associated with the proposed Skycroft expansion."

The Wolfe Lake Association sent a letter to South Frontenac Township Mayor and Council strongly opposing the Skycroft campground expansion application September 27, 2023. If the expansion is allowed to proceed as proposed and it negatively impacts the environment, township, community, and individuals, there is no undo button.

Steve Pegrum our Bedford Councilor put forward the motion to deny the application. On October 17, 2023 Council voted unanimously (9-0) to reject the Skycroft application. The applicant has 20 days to appeal. If the decision is appealed, it will go to the Ontario Land Tribunal so, we need to stay vigilant.

The Township, conservation authorities and relevant provincial ministries must hold the line on lakefront density regulations to safeguard the welfare of Opinicon Lake, and other lakes in the region.

In closing it is important to foster relationships with our elected Township Officials and support them in their decision-making process by providing them with information and demonstrating lake association unity to protect our natural resources.



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