

## **Information Related to the initiative to have Professional Fire Protection for Crane Lake provided by Seguin Township Fire Department**

As a result of certain fire incidents in the past few years and Blackstone Lake voting in early 2013 to retain Seguin Township Fire Department for Fire Protection, some Crane Lake property owners again approached Councillor Ian Mead to see if Crane Lake could also enter into a Fire Protection Agreement with Seguin Township Fire Department. A survey was conducted by e-mail in the summer of 2013 and as a result of significant interest, we proceeded to the next step and an agreement has been drafted with Seguin Township Fire Department. This Agreement is virtually identical to the Agreement for Blackstone Lake property owners except for the mention of the use of our Fire Boat by the Seguin responders, and the dates of the Agreement. A copy of the Fire Protection Agreement is included in this package. The cost for this service per Crane Lake property owner of \$236 per year is the same as for the Blackstone Lake property owners. It is based on what Seguin Township property owners are charged for Fire Protection. This cost would be added to our Property Taxes and spread out over the regular installment payments. The Fire Protection Agreement will be between Seguin Township and the Township of the Archipelago (TOA) on behalf of Crane Lake property owners.

The nearest Seguin Township Fire Station is located near the intersection of Hwy 69 and Blackstone Crane Lake Road. However, they may draw manpower and equipment from other Fire Stations as required. A list of available equipment at the Fire Station is included as an Appendix to the Agreement.

Many of the road access properties on Crane Lake will be responded to by water (this is also the case for the Blackstone Lake properties currently protected by Seguin Township Fire Department). The reason for this is that the road access / driveway access for many cottages is tight, but once the equipment has arrived, which is typically a pumper truck and a water tanker, they have to be able to turn around on the property and drive out again. Seguin Township Fire Chief, Don Hood, assures us that the water access solution is the best for most cases. Seguin Township Fire Department has many properties under its protection that are water access and have the equipment to respond to all such incidents. In addition, on Crane Lake they will utilize our Fire Pontoon Boat for faster initial response. Response time for properties on Crane Lake will be similar to many of the properties within Seguin Township. Properties with easy access by road from the Fire Station will be identified by Seguin Fire Department as such.

As most of us know, The TOA has no Fire Department and provides no fire protection anywhere in the Township. As a result of this, like many other communities and Lake Associations, Crane Lake has developed a rudimentary, albeit fairly organized, Fire Response capability, with portable pumps, our pontoon Fire Boat and some willing cottagers who will respond to an incident.

However, there are serious shortcomings to this approach. First and foremost is the reality that our responders are not properly equipped nor trained in firefighting and could unknowingly put themselves in a life threatening situation. They are also not properly equipped and trained to carry out rescue operations. Secondly, at any given time there may be no one available to respond, especially midweek or during spring, fall or winter months. Seguin Township Fire Responders will respond 24 hours a day, 365 days per year and have the equipment, training and expertise to handle any situations that might arise on our lake, including specialized training for fires in non-standard circumstances that might arise involving, for example propane tanks, storage batteries for solar / wind generators, etc. They also have the equipment and breathing apparatus to get close to hot fires and also for rescue operations.

With fire and rescue services provided to us by the Seguin Township Fire Department, there is immediately a greater opportunity to save neighbouring cottages, prevent or minimize damage to the forest, perhaps even save a life, and not have to put our Crane Lake Fire committee and volunteers (our own family and friends) in harms' way.

If you are in favour of this initiative, please ensure that you send in your ballot marked "YES" and not leave it up to your neighbours to look after. As the total number of **YES** votes will be divided by the total number of eligible properties (not the total number of ballots returned) to determine if the 2/3 majority vote is attained to pass the initiative, every ballot counts! Fill in your Ballot now and return it by mail today!

It is recommended by the Crane Lake Association that Crane Lake property owners vote in favour of this initiative as we believe that it will provide a necessary and valuable service to everyone.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. We currently have Fire Protection with our portable pumps and the Fire Boat at the marina. Why should we pay for this additional protection?**

A. The Fire Protection manpower we currently have is provided by some of your fellow cottagers, a neighbour, or it could even be one of your children, parents, or siblings. These people are not trained and do not have the proper equipment to effectively fight a fire or enter a burning building (and are told not to). Each time they respond to a fire they are putting themselves in harms' way for their fellow cottagers. Also, they may not be available when an incident occurs (many of the incidents in past years have been in the spring or fall when few people are on the lake). Seguin Township Fire Fighters have the proper equipment and are trained to fight fires effectively and conduct rescue operations. They are familiar with the many different challenges that might be faced in a fire incident. Situations including

fires involving propane tanks, barbeques, cooking or heating equipment and how to prevent explosions, or how to contain a fire and prevent flare ups are a few examples of their expertise. They are also trained to work close to a hot fire with protective equipment and breathing apparatus. They will respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For water access response, they will utilize our Fire Boat, when it is in the water, saving precious minutes. Professional Fire Protection is superior in every way, and well worth the relatively small additional expense.

**Q. We access our cottage from South Crane Lake Road, therefore we are close to Mactier. Why can't we have Fire Protection from the Mactier Fire Department?**

- A. Mactier is located in Georgian Bay Township. To have multiple Townships providing Fire Protection on Crane Lake would be very complex logistically and would create confusion for the responders. Also, Georgian Bay Township responders would have the same access issues as previously mentioned. Access is tight to many driveways and there would not be room for the pumper and tanker to turn around. Furthermore, if Georgian Bay Township identified a property as not accessible by road, there is no launch point on the south side for them to provide water access. This topic has been discussed with Seguin Fire Chief, Don Hood, and he assures us that having Seguin provide response to all of Crane Lake is by far the best solution. Remember, Seguin has many water access properties to protect in their own Township and they already have the equipment to provide effective support.

**Q. If a typical response scenario with a major fire starting in my cottage would mean my cottage would likely burn to the ground, why should I pay for this support?**

- A. If the situation was reversed and it was your neighbours' cottage that was on fire and yours was at risk, would you not want professionals to respond and prevent your cottage from catching fire? Our objective with any Fire Protection response is to stop the spread of the fire to neighbouring structures, or to the forest. If a cottage burned out of control and the fire then spread to the forest, it would take several generations for the trees to reach the same level of maturity and natural canopy. In the interim, the effect would be devastating, not only with the loss of natural beauty and the enjoyment of the view, but also on local property values.

**Q. In addition to my property with a cottage on it, I also own another piece of land on Crane Lake with no buildings on it. Will I have to pay the \$236 for this property as well?**

- A. No. Eligible properties are only those with a structure (building) on them. Property owners with vacant land will not receive a ballot, do not have to pay the Fire Protection fee for it and will not be included in the total eligible property count for calculation of the 2/3rds required votes.

**Q. As a result of having Professional Fire Support, will my property insurance premiums go down?**

A. Based on the information we have heard from various property owners who have looked into this with their insurers, probably not. Most insurers say you have to be within 13 km of a fire station to be eligible. It doesn't hurt to check with your insurer to be sure. Let us know if you are successful in reducing your premiums so we can pass the information on to other owners.

**Q. The Appendix (II) mentioned in the Agreement is not attached. Is it missing on purpose?**

A. Yes. Appendix (II) which will be attached to the Agreement for the signing of both Townships is actually a complete list of all property addresses that will be serviced by the agreement, but this has been left out of our mailing for privacy concerns.

**Q. What is the cost, how is it administered and where do I sign up?**

A. The cost to have Seguin Township Fire Protection on Crane Lake is \$236 per year, fixed for 5 years. The cost will be added to your tax bill and spread out in your regular installment payments. You can indicate your agreement with this initiative by marking "Yes" on the enclosed ballot and returning it in the stamped, pre-addressed envelope. This is not an optional program, with some people paying and not others. In order for the initiative to pass for everyone, 2/3rds of all eligible property owners must return their ballots marked "Yes". If you are in agreement with the initiative, it is imperative that you return your ballot so marked. If you don't vote, it will count as a "No". Everyone must respond.

**Q. We currently pay lots of taxes. Why should we accept this additional cost?**

A. Nobody wants to pay more taxes. However, certain "essential" services such as Police response, Fire Protection and Ambulance service are worth it. The tax rate in the TOA is far lower than most municipalities because you aren't paying for things like garbage collection at your driveway, municipal water and sewers, and Fire Protection. The cost of Fire Protection supplied by Seguin Township is based on what they currently charge their own property owners.

If you have any additional questions about this initiative, please don't hesitate to contact Bruce Sanderson, the Crane Lake Association Fire Committee Chairman, at 647-402-9402 (mobile) or [brucesanderson@outlook.com](mailto:brucesanderson@outlook.com). The Crane Lake Association in general can be reached at [cranelakeassociation@gmail.com](mailto:cranelakeassociation@gmail.com) or on the website at [www.cranelakeassociation.ca](http://www.cranelakeassociation.ca).