

March 3, 1998

Greetings from Lake Matinenda:

El Nino has played a big role in weather across the world and Lake Matinenda is no exception, this winter the warm temperatures and lack of snow has been disappointing for the snowmobilers, but a much needed break for the deer and less winter damage for all the camps. Ice conditions have not been the best all winter and by all rights should mean a early break up this year, but with mother nature, who knows?

As some of you's may know, the provincial government has been down loading service on to the municipalities and the best way for me to explain it is to quote a consultation document sent to me by the Honorable Chris Hodgson, Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

" For some months, the provincial government has been working with municipalities on a package of reforms known as "Who Does What" (WDW). The WDW initiative is designed to create a new system of government for Ontario--one that will be smaller, less costly, less wasteful, and will lead to lower taxes for hardworking Ontarians.

The WDW initiative proposed to:

- remove half of the education costs now on residential tax bills
- share savings from welfare reform
- set aside \$570 million in permanent annual funding and \$800 million in transition funding to ensure the shift in responsibilities is fair

WDW gives local government the flexibility they need to take on services for which local delivery makes sense--services such as Ontario Works, child care, public health, social housing and land ambulances. The result will be savings from efficiencies which will give local governments the ability to reduce residential property taxes over time and help create a climate for job creation".

What a crock of bull!!! As most of you's already know by now, the provincial land tax has under gone a reassessment and all of us can expect an increase of about 60 to 90 percent this year. This increase is based on what the government calls FAIR MARKET VALUE, are we based on other cottages that have road access, electricity, services? Who knows, I have not been able to have this question answered and I would suggest to every member of this association, to appeal this assessment.

Now the education taxes which we have historically known will differ, with half going towards education and the other half going to the core services. Currently there is no mechanism to deliver and recover the cost of these services on an area-wide basis in Ontario's north, so a study is being conducted on the possible creation of an Area Service Board and it feasibility. But we do know that the cost of these services are coming in much higher than the provincial government had predicted, which will only mean an increase in these taxes also..

