



# Otter Lake News



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May 2016

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I love this time of year! We trade the sound of snow blowers for the sound of loons and other songbirds. We get to fall asleep listening to the waves lapping the shore. It is like an auditory sleeping pill. Everything comes back to life and the early flowers poke through the dirt. Life is good.

Our Second Annual Picnic will be held on Sunday, June 05 at Camp Otterdale – starting at 11:00 am. Mark your calendar. Keep an eye on our website for updates. The Lake Plan Committee will provide an update on “What’s New” with the Lake Plan. They will speak on what progress has been made since it was ratified at the AGM last year.

Jeff Brown (Camp Otterdale) has once again kindly offered his place for the venue. He has also offered to provide salads and coffee at his cost. Scott Fleming (Rideau Lumber Home Hardware) has again offered to provide the hot dogs. Tim Lee (Rideau Heartland Realty) will provide the cold drinks and chips. As always, if you would prefer to bring your own lunch, bring a blanket and have your own family picnic. The picnic committee is working toward some entertainment for both kids and adults to ensure it is fun for all. As we did last year, we will have a raffle to raise money for the Send-A-Kid-To-Camp. It was greatly appreciated by the kids. I would like to thank all the sponsors for their generous and continued support.

Looking forward to our AGM, our Bylaws state that it will be held on the Saturday before the August Civic Holiday. This year, it will be held on July 23 at 9:00 am with coffee and socializing to start at 8:30. The agenda will include the mandatory reports to the members plus election of new Directors. There are two Directors up for re-election and a couple of vacancies. Please consider running for a Director position. In order to keep the Board current and relevant, we encourage “new blood” to complement our dedicated Directors. There are no special qualifications to become a Director, just a willingness to help the cause.

Also in this newsletter, there is a report on updating our Bylaws. These proposed changes must be voted on during the AGM before we can incorporate them.

Let’s hope for good weather for the June 05 picnic. ☺

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# PROPOSED CHANGES to OLLA BYLAWS

After a review of the Otter Lake Landowners' Association (OLLA) Constitution and Bylaws by the OLLA Board of Directors, there are some amendment recommendations being proposed for membership approval at the next AGM. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to provide additional information, clarification and updates to improve the operation of OLLA. Below is a list of the proposed change recommendations to the Directors and Officers section of the OLLA Constitution and Bylaws. (Note: changes are shown in **bold** text)

Recommendation 1: To decrease the minimum number of Directors from seven to five.

CURRENT: Item A. The Board of Directors shall consist of not less than seven and not more than ten Directors. Of these, one shall be the immediate past President (if there is a Past President).

NEW: Item A. The Board of Directors shall consist of not less than **five** and not more than ten Directors. Of these, one shall be the immediate past President (if there is a Past President).

Recommendation 2: To clarify the language in the Bylaws that refers to the OLLA Board of the Directors as Directors.

CURRENT: Item H. The Officers shall consist of a President, Past President (when there is one), Lake Steward, Secretary and Treasurer. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined. A Vice-President may be appointed. The Board of Directors shall appoint the Officers from members of the Board.

NEW: Item H. The Officers shall consist of a President, Past President (when there is one), Lake Steward, Secretary and Treasurer. The positions of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined. A Vice-President may be appointed. The Board of Directors shall appoint the Officers from **directors** of the Board.

Recommendation 3: To add descriptions for the OLLA Officer Roles.

Addition to Item H: Officer Role Definitions:

- 1. President: The President is the Chair of the Board, the Chair of all Board of Directors meetings and the AGM. The President is charged with the general management and supervision of the affairs and operations of the Association and speaks for the Board of Directors in an official capacity. The President may delegate this authority to another person. The President is one of the three signatories for banking purposes.**
- 2. Secretary: The Secretary is the recording officer and custodian of the records, other than current Treasurer documents. The Secretary will make all records available to the OLLA Directors. The release of any documents to the public is only to be made with Board approval. The Secretary will maintain the minutes of all meetings including the AGM. The Secretary is one of the three signatories for banking purposes.**
- 3. Treasurer: The Treasurer is the banker for OLLA. The Treasurer will receive and deposit all funds, pay all outstanding invoices as directed, submit an annual report and interim reports for all Board meetings and the AGM. The Treasurer is one of the three signatories for banking purposes. Upon resignation, the Treasurer will balance the books and submit all records to the Secretary. A copy of these records will be provided to the new Treasurer.**

4. **Lake Steward:** The Lake Steward monitors water levels, water quality and conditions affecting the overall health of Otter Lake and communicates with RVCA and other agencies as needed regarding the health of the lake. The Lake Steward generates an annual Lake Steward's Report that is presented to the membership at the AGM and posted on the OLLA website.
5. **Past President:** This position is for a period of one year. The purpose is to provide advice to the new President to help with the transition. After one year, the Past President returns to a Director position subject to the three-year term limits.
6. **Vice-President (if appointed):** The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or inability of the President to act in this role.

Recommendation 4: To change the quorum requirements for the OLLA Board to transact OLLA business from sixty (60) percent to fifty (50) percent of the elected Directors.

CURRENT: Item J. Sixty (60) percent of the Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the Directors, provided a reasonable effort has been made to stage a meeting of all of the Directors.

NEW: Item J. **Fifty (50) percent** of the **elected** Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of the Directors, provided a reasonable effort has been made to stage a meeting of all of the Directors.

Recommendation 5: To ensure that all motions passed by the Board are determined by a simple majority of the votes cast.

CURRENT: Item K. Motions in the meetings of Directors shall be determined by a simple majority of the votes cast. In the event of a tie vote, the President's vote can be used to break the tie.

NEW: Item K. Motions in the meetings of Directors shall be determined by a simple majority of the votes cast. **In the case of a tie vote, the motion is automatically defeated.**

Recommendation 6: To clarify yearly meeting requirements of the OLLA Board of Directors.

CURRENT: Item M. The Board of Directors shall make every effort to meet at least three times per year.

NEW: Item M: The Board of Directors shall make every effort to meet **a minimum of** three times per year.

Recommendation 7: To allow Directors to be involved in decision-making when needed between scheduled meetings.

NEW: Item O. **In the absence of a scheduled meeting, the President, while respecting items J. and K. above, can orchestrate a vote by email.**

As voting members of the Otter Lake Landowners' Association (OLLA), please review these recommendations and attend the OLLA AGM on July 23, 2016 at 9:00 am to discuss and cast your vote to approve or oppose the motion to implement these changes to our OLLA Constitution and Bylaws.

## IT'S FISH SPAWNING TIME

Each spring, I look forward to the return of “Homer” our resident male bass who I believe returns each year to create his spawning nest beside our dock. Our first sighting of Homer is typically the middle to late May when I see the cleaned circle of rocks for the female to deposit her eggs and I continue to watch Homer protect this nest for weeks, driving any intruders away from the eggs and young bass fry when they hatch.



Bass typically create their nests in water between one to two meters in depth, on hard lake bottoms of stone, mud or gravel near some protection such as weeds, logs and large rocks that can provide shade and protection. That is why many bass pick nest sites near our docks as they provide shade and shelter for both the male protector and the bass fry that hatch. Hatching time for bass fry averages about ten days, but the male bass remains around the nest protecting the fry for another week or more until the fry are ready to leave the nest.

Pike prefer shallow, marshy areas of the lake, streams and creeks for their spawning area – our Otter Creek is one of their preferred sites. Early in spring, as soon as the ice starts to melt, pike look for their spawning sites. Females spread their eggs over vegetation through the shallows and in about two weeks, the eggs hatch without parental care. Pike fry stay near the bottom for several days and remain in shallow water for several weeks.

Brown Bullhead (also known as mud pout catfish and mud cat) spawn between April and June in shallow water, about 15 cm in depth near aquatic weeds, by a bank or under a log or stump. Both parents guard the nest and even after the fry leave the nest, the parents continue to accompany them and remain in the vicinity to watch and guard the fry against enemies. Other fish such as perch and sunfish spread their eggs over vegetation in the shallows. In most cases these eggs settle to the bottom or onto vegetation that covers the bottom.

Lake trout deposit their eggs on rocky shoals or reefs. Typically these shoals are less than 4 meters in depth, reside within 10 meters of the shoreline and are exposed to prevailing winds.

Fish are especially sensitive to environmental changes at spawning time – if there is a sudden lowering of temperatures, changes in water levels or water disturbances near their spawning areas, it can cause nests to be deserted and eggs to be exposed or destroyed.

What can you do to protect fish spawning sites in Otter Lake and Otter Creek?

1. Install your dock early before bass fish spawning season begins (early May) or wait until after the fish fry have hatched and dispersed (mid to late June).
2. Safeguard your shoreline integrity by protecting existing shallow water aquatic plants and rocks that provide cover to young fish fry.
3. Plant shoreline plant buffer strips to help prevent the introduction of detrimental nutrients into the lake system.
4. Help prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species to Otter Lake, e.g. spiny water fleas, rusty crayfish, etc.

The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) is coming to Otter Lake at the end of May to work with the Otter Lake Landowners' Association (OLLA) to survey fish spawning sites on Otter Lake. They will also observe fish and the habitat during this spawning and nursery period to develop recommendations for potential fish habitat enhancements for Otter Lake.

References:

- <http://www.rvca.ca/>
- <http://www.invadingspecies.com/>
- <http://www.ontariofishspecies.com/>
- <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/Library/168144.pdf>

## SHORELINE SURVEY RESULTS

The Otter Lake shoreline survey performed by Watersheds Canada last summer is complete. All property owners should have received a letter in the mail early in May. The letter contains a survey code, which is unique to each individual property owner, as well as the instructions to visit the link ([myreport.loveyourlake.ca](http://myreport.loveyourlake.ca)) to access your report. After accessing the 'loveyourlake' website you will receive the instructions to retrieve your personalized property report. This report contains information about the state of your shoreline along with suggestions of voluntary actions you can take to improve the natural state of their shoreline and lake health.

## SHORELINE NATURALIZATION PROGRAM

Want to help protect the health of Otter Lake? Rideau Valley Conservation Authority's Shoreline Naturalization Program is providing free shoreline planting projects in 2016/2017 for residents on Otter Lake! This program includes a site visit, custom planting plan and the native trees and shrubs. Program staff will even come out to do the planting for you if needed! Why? Natural shorelines rich in native plants provide an important service to our lake by acting as a filtering system, protecting shorelines from erosion and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat. Free projects are only available for 2016/2017 so contact Meaghan McDonald for a site visit today: [meaghan.mcdonald@rvca.ca](mailto:meaghan.mcdonald@rvca.ca) or [1-800-267-3504](tel:1-800-267-3504) ext. 1192.

## MICROBEADS – What are they?

In today's realm of environmental awareness, the majority of citizens would be unlikely to discard plastic directly into our fresh and oceanic water systems. However, environmentally conscious individuals may unknowingly be polluting our water systems by washing their face, brushing their teeth or scrubbing their body. The reason these individual actions may be polluting is due to one word, "microbeads"!

**One may ask if microbeads are so small, how are they having such a large impact on our aquatic environment?** Well, to begin, it is precisely due to their extremely small size that microbeads are having such a large and currently irreversible impact on our ecosystems. Due to their small size, microbeads from "down the drain" products are likely to enter the environment even with the most advanced wastewater treatment procedures.

Many of our body wash products in particular have these "scrubbing beads" in the product and we don't realize the impact it is having on the environment. For more information, visit the blog that Watersheds Canada has created as part of its awareness program.

<http://watersheds.ca/microbeads-not-a-very-tiny-piece-of-jewellery>

In an effort to raise awareness concerning environmental issues relating to Canada's watersheds, we are pleased to share a blog article discussing the implications and effects of society's use of "microbeads". A short introduction contained within the blog is listed below. The entire article can be accessed by clicking the following, [Microbeads - Not a Very Tiny Piece of Jewellery](#), or by accessing the blog section of our website.

## **MANDATORY SEPTIC INSPECTION - What it means?**

Virtually all dwellings on and near the shores of Otter Lake rely upon on-site sewage systems for waste disposal. The Ontario Building Code Act regulates systems since they are defined as “buildings” for the purpose of regulation. Section 8 of the Act dictates the design of the system in proportion to the dwelling it serves.

The function of traditional systems is to break down organics and significantly reduce biological contamination before it reaches surface or groundwater. They are not designed for the reduction of nutrients that flow freely into the leaching bed and, without adequate distance, soil, and vegetative breaks, can be a significant source of elevated nutrient levels in the lake.

The Clean Water Act requires some mandatory septic inspection near municipal water intakes but for private systems around a lake it is largely optional. In 2007 the Township of Rideau Lakes introduced a voluntary inspection program. The participation rate is about 29%, which is far less than neighbouring townships. Based on the voluntary program over a period of years, it was found that 45% of systems need remedial work and 3% need total replacement. There was a fear that the real failure rate might be much higher if all systems were inspected. Subsequently, the lake associations lobbied The Township of Rideau Lakes to adopt a mandatory inspection system. In the fall of 2015 Council approved a motion to move toward a mandatory system, where all systems in the Township would be inspected over a 10-year period.

The details of how the mandatory system will be introduced and managed are yet to be released. It is expected that more critical areas may take priority such as those lakes that have experienced blue-green algae blooms in the last few years. All systems however are subject to inspection including those on inland properties.

Cost of inspection is a factor as well, especially when Council is faced with cost increases from other sectors. Cost formulae may include increased building inspection fees, capturing on the tax roll or from general revenue.

More information to come in the summer of 2016.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

With your support, OLLA has achieved a very successful level of membership in 2015. Of the approximately 287 known property owners abutting on Otter Lake, **124 (43%)** joined OLLA in 2015.

Your membership has allowed us to move forward with some new initiatives such as the Lake Plan, the family picnic and the Shoreline Survey. These initiatives are in addition to the ongoing water quality testing and monitoring, lobbying of governments to ensure awareness and sensitivity of Otter Lake issues, and active participation in *Love Your Lake*, Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association, Loon Survey and Nesting Platforms.

Keeping our representation high increases our influence with the Township of Rideau Lakes. We have shared our Lake Plan with your representatives at the Township and we continue to share our Newsletters.

If you have not yet renewed for 2016, please complete the form enclosed with this email (or mailing) to renew your membership. Additionally, speak to your neighbours about the benefits of OLLA membership and help us increase our reach even further into the Otter Lake community. Ideally, we would like to have in excess of 50% of the property owners engaged in OLLA so that we can best represent your issues and concerns.

As we continue with the Lake Plan initiative, we want to ensure we have the means to communicate with as many homeowners as possible, and the best way to ensure you are involved is to renew or become a member for 2016.

## OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

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