



Otter Lake News



Website: www.otterlake.org
Email: postmaster@otterlake.org

Spring 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It is a beautiful time of year as the sun stays up longer and casts more heat our way. It was not a bad winter with the exception of some freezing rain events, which caused some anxious moments driving on the roads around our lake. We all await the lake ice leaving which usually happens in April. Life returns renewed for another season.

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We are planning our Annual Family Day Picnic. It will take place on Sunday, June 4th at 11:00 am at Camp Otterdale. Thanks to Camp Otterdale for offering their place as a venue once again. Please mark your calendar. The Lake Plan committee will discuss a variety of items including brush bundles for fish habitat and nesting boxes for the birds.

Let's hope for better weather than last year! Further updates will appear on our web page at www.otterlake.org and our Facebook page. You can access our Facebook page, from our web site or by typing 'Otter Lake Landowner's Association' while on Facebook.

I would like to welcome two new sponsors. All monies raised through this initiative goes directly to our ongoing projects. First is TS Computing, which is a local computer repair company, and they do home visits. Dire Straits will take care of all your tree issues. Thank you to all of our sponsors.

See you at the picnic!!!

Randy Hodgins
OLLA President
randyhodginskal@hotmail.com

The Origin of Toohey Bay

Those of you who have been on the lake for some time will know that the bay on the northwest shore of the lake has always been affectionately known as Toohey Bay. I have owned property on the East shore of Toohey Bay for 15+ years and have heard many tales as to how the bay got its name. However the story that follows is, to the best of my knowledge, the true facts.

The Toohey Family History

Timothy Toohey was the eldest son of Thomas and Katherine Toohey, Irish immigrants to the area who became established and respected farmers around Otter and Bass Lake. Initially Thomas and Katherine farmed land along the boundary between South Elmsley and South Burgess. Within a few years they acquired land on the North shore of Otter Lake and built a homestead in the area about three miles from the lakeshore.



Young Timothy, who was likely born around 1855, attended the Otter Lake School, which was one of many single room schoolhouses built in the late 1800's to educate the children of the early settlers in the area. Otter Lake School was located between Otter and Bass lakes, probably in the vicinity of what is

now Road B9. In 1891 Timothy Toohey married Bridget Doyle in Philipsville. Bridget Doyle was the daughter of another family of Irish settlers to the area. Between 1892 and 1912 Timothy and Bridget had two sons and 10 daughters. Timothy probably inherited the family farm on Otter Lake after the death of his parents and continued its operation along with his two sons, Thomas and Bernard.

The Tragic Event in 1921

On August 9, 1921, a typical very hot and humid August day, Timothy and Bernard went down to the lake to cut beaver hay, the tall grass that grows around wetlands and beaver ponds. In early farming days it was used as horse feed. The Toohey's eldest daughter accompanied the men, Kathleen aged 25 who had just returned from Toronto for her summer vacation with a friend, Evelyn Broscher. Along with Kathleen and Evelyn were the two youngest Toohey girls, Dorothy aged 12 and Laura aged 9. The girls were not there to work and they had gone down to what was then known as Fletchers beach to "bathe". Fletchers beach was a picturesque sandy beach on the west shore of the lake that was near a steep ledge and none of the family had ever bathed in that vicinity before. The beach rapidly sloped down to water that was 20 feet deep at this point owing to a deep channel which skirts the lake coming close to shore near the ledge.

The two youngest girls waded into deep water and immediately got into difficulty. Laura was the first to call for help, and Dorothy did likewise immediately thereafter. Kathleen, who was bathing in shallow water at the time rushed to their aid although she was unable to swim and she too soon got into difficulty. Timothy and Bernard, both of whom were good swimmers, heard the calls for help from the girls, rushed to the spot and jumped in the water fully clothed. Evelyn Broscher ran to summon help at which time, Timothy Toohey could be seen swimming to shore with Laura. When Evelyn returned with Mr. Cecil Wood, a neighbour and the first person she had met, nothing was to be seen of the Toohey family and only the hats of the father and son, floating on the surface of the water denoted that a tragedy had occurred.

The bodies were eventually recovered at a distance of 40 feet from the shore and within an area of 15 feet. Neighbours aided in the search for the bodies and two were recovered by diving, the others by grappling. The search party was composed of Alf Baker, of Smiths Falls, L.W. Wright of Lombardy, C.D. Williamson and William Miller. The first body to be recovered was that of little Laura Toohey. The body of her elder sister Kathleen, was the next brought to the surface. Coroner Dr. Anderson, who investigated the fatalities the following morning stated that it was a plain case of the men being overcome by cramps and hypothermia in the cold water after being overheated from working in the fields. No inquest was held as Dr. Anderson stated that the fatalities were accidental. The funeral of Mr. Toohey and his four children was held on Thursday August 11 in the Catholic Church at Lombardy (on Anglican Church Road) and all 5 members of the Toohey family who drowned in Otter Lake on August 9 were buried in the adjoining Catholic cemetery. The 5 headstones can still be found along with Bridget Toohey who was also buried along with her husband Timothy, Bernard, Kathleen, Dorothy and Laura. However Bridget's headstone reads 1954 whereas the other 5 all read 1921. Bridget Toohey was 82 when she died. She was survived by Thomas, her only remaining son and six daughters, Helen, Edna, May, Marguerite, Leona, and Ursula.



The author would like to acknowledge the following valuable sources of information in the preparation of this article; Ancestry.ca, South Elmsley in the Making by James R. Kennedy and Sue Warren of the Rideau Lakes Public Library Local History Centre.

Doug Franks
Lake Steward

Otter Lake Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project

We are excited to be partnering with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) to enhance the overall fish and wildlife habitat on Otter Lake.

Phase One – 2016

RVCA conducted a site visit on Otter Lake in June to survey fish spawning areas and document potential areas for enhancement opportunities for fish and wildlife on Otter Lake.



When the survey was completed and sites identified, RVCA produced a colour-coded map that can be used as a reference document for the project.

Recommendations from Phase One are:

Submerging wood structures in the lake: Underwater woody debris such as brush bundles installed adjacent to spawning habitats provide protected areas for fish to recover from spawning and for smaller fish to hide from predators;

Installing nesting boxes for wood ducks and swallows and shelter boxes for bats: Installation of these boxes around our lake will help boost local populations of these birds.



Phase Two -- 2017



Our goal this year is to assemble and submerge at least 16 brush bundles at recommended sites on the lake in the fall of 2017. Submerged wood structures will be offshore and will not interfere with boating or swimming.

We will also begin building bird nesting boxes and bat boxes for landowners who are interested in having them installed at their shoreline. Nesting boxes will only be installed with the permission of property owners.

Come to the annual picnic at Camp Otterdale on June 4th to learn more about this OLLA Sustainable Lake Plan project.

We will also demonstrate how easy it will be to help build brush bundles... and you can help assemble nesting boxes.

We Need Volunteers to Make this Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Project Successful.

Woodworking Enthusiasts – we need your help building nesting boxes



Boat Owners, Otter Lake Lovers – we need your help in the fall of 2017 assembling and/or installing brush bundles in the lake.

If you are willing to volunteer, please contact: June Finless at finless@rogers.com

If you would like to make a financial donation to this OLLA Sustainable Lake Plan project, you can do so when you pay your annual OLLA membership dues.

Otter Lake needs You!

Municipal Election 2018

Do you know that property owners can vote everywhere they own property? Unlike provincial and federal elections, if you own a home, cottage or lot in Rideau Lakes Township, you can vote here as well as in Ottawa or wherever your principal residence may be. And for 2018 the Township is introducing on-line and phone voting so it will be easy and convenient. Remember that waterfront taxpayers contribute the largest portion of municipal revenue yet voter turnout is less than 25%. So have your say and vote in the 2018 election!

OLLA Lake Plan Report Update – Spring 2017

The Lake Plan Committee is continuing to make good progress on the Lake Plan, with the goal being to help to ensure the sustainability of the lake, the lands, the natural ecosystem and the way of life that we value:

- Updates to the “Summary of Action Items” for 2016 have been posted to the Lake Plan section of the OLLA website
- Identified priority Lake Plan action items to be addressed in 2017 by the Sub-Committees, see details on the action items below.
- Submitted and presented a community grant application to Rideau Lakes Township Council for \$750 to help cover costs of a Carleton University aquatic plants survey in the summer of 2017. However as there were many applicants, some of whom have been past/continuing recipients, we were unsuccessful in securing a grant this year.

Please consider supporting the Lake Plan by helping with the work of one of the subcommittees that are of interest to you. Contact OLLA to express your interest.

Priority Lake Plan “Action Items” Being Addressed by Sub-Committees in 2017

In addition to the priority action items identified below, the Sub-Committees have on-going activities they are supporting.

2016/2017 Action Items
Water Quality, Water Levels and Shoreline Health & Protection Sub-Committee - Chair: Laurence Beaulieu
1. Support and recognize the farming and logging communities to continue best management practices within the Otter Lake Catchment Basin.
2. Promote existing stewardship programs to the lake community to protect and enhance shorelines and protect water quality.
3. Provide a summary of key insights from the Watersheds Canada “Love Your Lake” shoreline assessment.
4. Recommend that all new commercial and residential development and redevelopment uses sewage treatment systems that reduce or eliminate phosphorous to the greatest extent possible.
Aquatic Plants Sub-Committee - Chair: Judy Hodgins
1. Build on formal species list compiled by RVCA in July 2016 through possible 2017 project by Carleton University honours student.
Fish & Wildlife Sub-Committee - Chair: June Finless
1. Implement the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project with RVCA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Apply for MNR permits for Fish Habitat Enhancement Project -- Spring 2017 b. Build nesting boxes for Nesting Box Installation project -- Spring/Summer 2017 c. Build and install brush bundles in Otter Lake -- Fall 2017

On-Site Sewage Systems and Development Control Sub-Committee - Co-Chairs: Karl Fiander and Shelley Dunlop
1. Perform a field survey of lake residents and/or obtain information from township to determine type, age and numbers of systems and distribute pamphlet.
2. Summarize data arising from the 2015 Shoreline Assessment with respect to existing system setbacks and the extent of vegetative buffer strips and any sewage system within the 1:100 year flood plain.
3. Monitor township development decisions with respect to conformity to MOECC-D-5-4 guidelines.
4. To encourage the MNRF in the identification, classification and zoning of unevaluated natural areas in the Otter Lake Catchment Area.
5. Work with the Township to ensure that appropriate development standards are established, maintained and monitored, to ensure that new development and redevelopment will protect or restore water quality.
Social & Recreational Sub-Committee - Chair: Judy Hodgins
1. Develop a Boating Code of Conduct to minimize negative impacts on the lake, shoreline, wildlife, safety of swimmers and peace and quiet.
2. Post map of shoals and lake depths on website and make hard copies available for purchase (cost of printing and/or laminating)
3. Draft a fact sheet/best practices to maintain dark skies and publish in a newsletter in 2017
4. Continue to hold OLLA Annual Family Day as a social event as well as an opportunity to educate and promote lake stewardship.

Periodic updates on the status of the action items will be made to the “Lake Plan Action” document on the OLLA website: http://www.otterlake.org/lake_plan_action.pdf, please visit the site to view the status.

Work outputs from specific action items will be shared with the OLLA community through various means: website, newsletters, pamphlets, OLLA picnic and OLLA AGM.

Laurence Beaulieu
Chair of the Sustainable Lake Plan Committee for Otter Lake

Remembering Doug Good

Doug Good, Councillor for Bastard and South Burgess, passed away tragically on March 10 while working on Rideau Lake with his friend Mike Carty.



Doug represented the residents on the south end of Otter Lake and was a supporter of a greater voice for waterfront residents throughout the Township of Rideau Lakes. He leaves his wife Chris, daughter Lisa and son Frank.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in OLLA has fluctuated over the past few years with a high of 124 (43% of known property owners) in 2015 to a low of 82 in 2013. In 2016 we saw a drop in membership to 95 from the 124 the year before. Some of those who decided to not renew have chosen to be forthright with their reasons and, where possible, we have taken action to address their concerns. We encourage everyone, to provide us with their feedback on how we can be more responsive and sensitive to the needs of all property owners on the lake.

Your continued membership has allowed us to move forward with some new initiatives such as; the Lake Plan and the family picnic. Both of these initiatives have been well received by the membership. Your ongoing support allows us to continue the water quality testing and monitoring activities, 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.

Please use the enclosed membership form to renew your membership for 2017. At the request of our members, we have modified the form to provide the ability for an individual to pay their membership for several years if they so wish. We have also included an option on the form to make a donation to OLLA in addition to or instead of membership. For 2017, any donations we receive will go towards increasing the number of brush bundles we install in the lake to enhance fish habitat.

Broad representation from property owners increases our clout when lobbying to the government agencies so please speak to your neighbours about the benefits and encourage them to join. 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.



JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 21 MAY 1:00-5:00 pm

Tour the camp with your family, meet our staff, try some camp activities and enjoy a snack!

More details on the web www.campotterdale.com.

Otter Lake Landowners' Association

2017 Membership Form

This is an invitation to all landowners on Otter Lake to become members, or to renew their YEARLY membership in the Association. Your membership is important and helps meet the cost of monitoring the water quality, associated laboratory fees, as well as other water quality-related concerns. Membership also provides access to all the resources of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA).

Our annual membership fee remains at \$30.

This is a New Membership..... or renewal.....(2017)

Name(s) of Owner(s):.....

Mailing address:.....

.....

Road and Cottage/House number:

Telephone: Lake:..... Residence:

E-mail address:.....

Please send me the OLLA Newsletter by email: Yes No

Please send me the FOCA Newsletter by email: Yes No

Some members have requested to pay their dues for more than one year at a time:

Number of years:..... Amount enclosed @ \$30/year:.....

I would like to make an additional donation to OLLA! For 2017, donations we receive will go towards the lake plan fish habitat project.

Donation to fish habitat project: \$.....

Please return to the address below or give directly to one of the OLLA executive:

Otter Lake Landowners' Association (OLLA)
#32 - O10, R.R. # 1, Lombardy, ON K0G 1L0

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