



Otter Lake News

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Spring 2019

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By Marcia Maxwell

Well this has certainly been a different winter season this year. The first snowfall was in November, so yes if it seems like a long winter – it has been, as we are still seeing snow in the forecast for the next while yet.

This year the lake froze over early again on December 26th. This is only the 3rd year since we started tracking the ice in 2003 that it has frozen over in December. Right now it is not showing any signs of breaking up, and I think it will be a while as it was reported to be a minimum of 2 feet of ice.

We will be, as usual, holding our AGM on July 27th at the South Elmsley Municipal Complex. Please save the date. We are arranging a very interesting guest speaker for this year and there will be more information about it in our next newsletter. There will also be a number of opportunities for the public to participate in public meetings and open houses that the Township will be hosting in the spring and summer in regards to projects of interest to the residents of Rideau Lakes. We will keep you up to

date on meetings via email so you may find that we are contacting you a bit more than we normally do.

We will be actively working again on the European Frog-bit this summer to prevent it from spreading any further into the lake so please consider helping with this project.

For those of you who are around in the area, early in the spring, the Township has a "Pitch In" week to help clean up the winter debris during the week of April 14th. When you are out for your daily walks, if you are interested, I can arrange for special Pitch In collection bags for you to help with the clean-up.

Looking forward to a fantastic summer!

It's Municipal Tax Time Again!

Submitted by Karl Fiander

Government Liaison

Deliberations for the 2019 Municipal Budget are now finalized. Treasurer Cynthia Laprade made a presentation to the Municipal Services Committee in February and the budget was ratified at the March 4 Council meeting.

Municipal tax is a function of the property assessment (Current Value Assessment by MPAC) multiplied by the Municipal Tax Rate. The CVA is controlled by the province and the tax rate is established by the municipality. In the second draft presented by the Treasurer the CVA factor is 2.5% higher for waterfront properties and the tax rate is 1.9% higher for a total residential tax increase of 4.4%. This proposal would bring in an additional \$255,000 of tax from the increased assessment and \$199,000 from the increased tax rate.

The presentation suggested that the tax rate was established “to keep it in line with inflation” but frequently, the effect of assessment is not identified by municipalities so residents will actually see an average increase of 4.4 % in their tax bill which is well above the inflation rate of 1.75% (Stats Can).

OLLA pointed this out to the Treasurer and indicated that the operational budget has increased by 14% over the last 3 years while inflation has only increased by 5.3%. Data supplied by MPAC indicates that waterfront residents in Rideau Lakes now provide 69% of the total tax revenue based on the fact that waterfront properties are appreciating faster than non-waterfront properties.

In reality, even if the tax rate increase were zero, the increase in property values would produce an average tax bill increase of 7.7% for waterfront owners since the last CVA in 2016.

European Frogbit – Call for Support

Submitted by Judy Hodgins

Chair, Aquatic Plants Sub-Committee

Summer 2019 will be the third year that we will make a concerted effort to eradicate European Frogbit since this aquatic invasive species was first discovered in Otter Lake in 2016. It is our hope that this might be the final year that we will have to carry



out removal on a large scale. Last year we did see results from our efforts in 2017 so we are hoping that greater results will be seen this year since our efforts in 2018 were doubled over those of 2017. Given the amount of time, effort and funds spent on eradicating European Frogbit from Otter Lake in the past two years, it is prudent to continue with this project to ensure the efforts of 2017 and 2018 are not wasted.

Without efforts to remove this invasive species, Otter Lake would be adversely affected. Frogbit is

prolific and forms dense mats that can restrict boating and swimming. These mats also prevent light and nutrients from getting to native plants and the decaying mats deplete dissolved oxygen levels which has negative impacts on fish and wildlife.

OLLA would very much appreciate our members' support of this important project through volunteering to help on the work crews (send email to frogbithelp@bell.net) and/or considering a monetary donation. A donation to the Frogbit & Invasive Species Eradication Project can be done on OLLA's 2019 Membership Form (included with this newsletter) or at the OLLA Annual General Meeting in July.

Membership

Submitted by Shelley Dunlop

Chair, 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 2018 we saw a drop in membership to 87 from the 95 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 and donations has allowed us to move forward with some initiatives such as; the Lake Plan, Fish Habitat & Frog-bit & Invasive Species Eradication Projects. 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 2019. The form provides the

ability for individuals to pay their membership for several years if they so wish. Many people have chosen to do this. We already have 19 paid up memberships for 2019. The additional donations we receive will go towards the Frog-bit & Invasive Species Eradication Project. This year we are offering the option to pay your membership dues by **e-transfer** through your bank to:

otterlakeassociation@gmail.com

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.

Engineering Consultants Announced for Otter Creek Study

*Submitted by Karl Fiander
Government Liaison*

The Township of Rideau Lakes released a Request For Proposal in November which covered two projects, one for Otter Creek and one for Bass Lake. The RFP's closed on January 15 and shortly afterwards, CAO Mike Dwyer of the Township asked Lake Steward Doug Franks and OLLA board member Karl Fiander to review the proposals and provide comments. There was a diverse range of firms that bid on the contracts with several that appeared capable but Doug and Karl agreed that J2Pg Consultants of Ottawa and Perth appeared to be well-staffed and experienced in similar type projects and also happened to be the lowest bid.

Mike Dwyer recommended to the Municipal Services Committee in February that J2Pg Consultants be awarded the contract and it will be put before Council shortly.

Here are a few details about their proposal:

- An inspection of the culvert site would be done by April 26.

- A detailed review would follow with consultation with other agencies such as RVCA and MNRF.
- Consultation with upstream and downstream residents would be completed by May 10.
- A detailed recommendation would be delivered to the Township by May 31.

Conceptual solutions proposed included everything from 'do nothing' to a full replacement with a bridge. One of the concepts documented was a 'two-culvert' proposal which was initially suggested by the RVCA several years ago and endorsed by OLLA at the time.

OLLA has shared survey results with Township staff and will engage as needed as the process rolls out. When there are dates for public consultation, notices to the membership will go out by email and via the newsletter.

The Flashing Light

Some of the seasonal residents may not be aware that in December, 2014 a newly installed Bell Tower was activated on the western shore of Otter Lake and the activation also introduced a flashing light on the tower. At that time a number of complaints were received from Otter Lake residents regarding the light. During the investigation it was discovered that with a shield installed the lights on these towers could be blocked from the view of those on the ground and the light would still be visible to any aircraft flying above it. At the time, we believed that with the assistance of Mike Dwyer, a resolution was found and by April, 2015 the light was no longer visible to the residents along the eastern shore.

In September 2018, after a violent wind storm went through our area, the flashing light on the tower was once again visible to those on the ground. This tower light flashes white during the day and red at night. Since



then OLLA has been in contact with the Township, Bell and Transport Canada. We have requested that the shield be replaced or another solution found to "dim the lights".

The Caterpillar Story

Submitted by Doug Franks

Lake Steward

For those of you who were at the lake last Spring and early Summer will be aware, we had something of a caterpillar problem. What we witnessed was an infestation of the forest tent caterpillar moth (*Malacosoma disstria*). It is a North American moth found throughout the United States and Canada, especially in the eastern regions. Unlike related tent caterpillar species, the larvae of Forest tent caterpillars do not make tents, but rather, weave a silky sheet where they lie together during molting. They also lay down strands of silk as they move over branches and travel as groups along these pheromone-containing silk trails. The caterpillars are social, traveling together to feed and massing as a group at rest.

The adult moths of this species favor oak, aspen and sugar maple for egg laying in the summer. The females lay eggs in masses of up to 300, which are stuck to twigs and covered with a gluey cement called spumaline, which prevents them from desiccating and freezing. Eggs hatch the following spring. The larvae can be found feeding on many other species of deciduous trees or shrubs besides oak, aspen and sugar maple. These include ash, birch, beech, poplar and basswood. Interestingly they do not seem to like ironwood and they do not attack any type of conifer. High population density outbreaks tend to recur at reasonably regular intervals every decade or so and usually last two to three years so we may not be finished with them yet! During an infestation like the one we have just experienced, trees and shrubs can be almost completely denuded of leaves. Most trees replace the lost leaves without permanent damage, however trees are weakened by repeated defoliation, which makes them more susceptible to stresses such as drought or other pests. Two or

more years of heavy defoliation can also result in a severe reduction in the radial growth of trees and may cause considerable branch and twig mortality. The forest tent caterpillar is one of the causes of aspen decline reported in Alberta and Ontario, and tree mortality has been shown to increase with the duration of sustained defoliation.

The full-grown caterpillars are 50mm long, hairy and brownish, with a slate-blue stripe along each side and a row of keyhole-shaped white spots along the back as shown in the image on the right. After feeding voraciously for six weeks, the caterpillars spin yellowish



cocoons in a sheltered place such as beneath the eaves on siding, window frames or deck railings and then pupate inside. Fortunately, forest tent caterpillars only have one generation per year.

In late June or early July the cocoons will hatch into unremarkable adult moths that are buff-brown with



three darker bands across each forewing as shown in the image on the left. The adults are in flight from July to early August. During this time each moth will lay eggs in bands of a hundred or more, cemented together and completely encircling a twig and covered with a

glue-like protective coating. As mentioned previously eggs are capable of surviving the winter and new larvae will emerge the following spring at time of bud break and the whole cycle will begin again.

What can be done to prevent infestations like the one we just experienced? *Bacillus thuringiensis* var.

kurstaki (Btk) is a bacterial spray that can be used to protect tree health during outbreaks. Not very practical as a DIY option, but there may be companies that will do this. There are natural parasites that are also important in controlling this pest, such as the large flesh fly (*Sarcophaga aldrichi*) or the nuclear polyhedrosis virus (NPV).

Caterpillars can be brushed off the house with a stiff broom or knocked down by a stream of water. If possible, do this daily. This will not necessarily kill them, but once on the ground they may not be able to reach a tree and climb back up! Try to avoid squashing caterpillars on your siding or deck. This will definitely kill them but will leave a nasty mess that will be difficult to clean up. A dilute soap solution also works well for killing them, but you may still have to brush them off.

You can also treat lawn furniture, patios, decks, screens, etc. with either of these two methods. The longer caterpillars sit on painted surfaces, the more difficult it is to wash away any staining that may occur.

An insecticide can be sprayed on the concrete foundation of your house. Some products containing malathion are labeled for home structural

application. Don't spray onto paint or stain as the insecticide may damage the finish. Repeat applications as indicated on the product label. Commercial pesticide applicators may be able to use more effective insecticides.

To protect trees, wrapping duct tape (sticky side out) at the base of a tree will prevent the caterpillars from going any further. It will need to be replaced every few days as the adhesive will dry out. The caterpillars will often pile up above or below the duct tape and can be killed off with a blow torch, but don't try this if there is a burn ban on.

Cocoons should be removed too since if left untouched they will hatch into moths that will just lay more eggs. They may be difficult to remove by water pressure since they are very sticky. They can be brushed off the house with a stiff broom. Bag, burn, bury or compost the cocoons.



What a difference a week can make!

December 09, 2018



December 16, 2018



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Did you know?



OLLA members receive FOCA membership – Membership benefits can be found at the following link <https://foca.on.ca/member-services/benefits/>

Save the Date!

OLLA Annual General meeting 2019 - **July 27th, 2019**, South Elmsley Municipal Complex - 441 Highway 15 Lombardy, ON.

Otter Lake Landowners' Association

2019 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.....(2019)

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

Mailing address:.....

.....

Road and Cottage/House number:

Telephone: Lake: Cell: 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 2019, donations we receive will go towards the Sustainable Lake Plan project to eradicate invasive aquatic plants, like Frog-bit.

Donation to Frog-bit & Invasive Species Eradication Project: \$.....

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

Otter Lake Landowners' Association (OLLA)

#32 - O10, Lombardy, ON K0G 1L0

Or, by e-transfer through your bank to: otterlakeassociation@gmail.com

Thank you for your support