



Otter Lake News

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

FEB. 2016

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I would like to take the opportunity to wish a belated Happy New Year to all. I hope the New Year greeted you with good health and happiness.

As most of you know, the lake froze over late this year. January 21st is not a record, but it was close. While the lake was freezing, our members had sightings of a few Swans and Bald Eagles. Three out of the four groundhogs have predicted an early spring.

As per the many requests, we are again planning the Family Day Picnic. Jeff Brown has offered Camp Otterdale once again as the venue.

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Scott Fleming (Home Hardware) has once again offered to provide the hot dogs. We are aiming for the first weekend of June to hold it. You will be able to hear some briefings from the Lake Plan committee on their progress. We are working on the other details. Updates will be in the next newsletter and on our web site.

Again this year, we are gearing up for a membership drive. We set an all-time record last year and I am optimistic about this year. Please consider staying as a member and talking to your neighbours about joining. All of us are responsible for stewardship of our lake!

Best regards,

Randy Hodgins

President, OLLA

randyhodginskal@hotmail.com ☺



OLLA LAKE PLAN UPDATE

Good progress has been made on the current phase of the Lake Plan, which involves working on priority action items identified in the Lake Plan. The Chairs of the five subcommittees have achieved the following:

- Staffed the subcommittees, however more volunteers would be very much appreciated, *“Many hands make for light work”*
- Identified the top priority action items to be addressed in 2016, see list below
- Started work on action items

Priority Lake Plan “Action Items” Being Addressed by Sub-Committees in 2016

Water Quality, Water Levels and Shoreline Health & Protection Sub-Committee - Chair: Laurence Beaulieu

1. Consider expansion of testing to include periodic testing of inflow and outflow creeks.
2. Develop and deliver an awareness program on: the impacts of fertilizers, pesticides, gasoline, unmaintained on-site sewage systems, and other matters on water quality.
3. Support and recognize the farming and logging communities to continue best management practices within the Otter Lake Catchment Basin.
4. Establish a standard measuring location on the lake, the “benchmark” water level (derived from the RVCA 124.85 MASL measurement), and the measuring authority (OLLA, RVCA or either).
5. Establish a shoreline assessment program, as offered by Watersheds Canada “Love Your Lake”, to provide property owners with an assessment of the condition of their shoreline, and recommendations for improvement. (Develop action plan based on summary report at the macro level for the lake)

Aquatic Plants Sub-Committee - Chair: Judy Hodgins

1. Establish a volunteer-based committee to begin a formal species inventory listing.
2. Promote good stewardship practices and provide education and awareness about importance of phosphate-free detergents, regular septic maintenance, and fertilizer-free properties via newsletters, website, presentations and workshops.
3. Provide information on targeted, effective and approved aquatic plant removal when required.

Fish & Wildlife Sub-Committee - Chair: June Finless

1. Request the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to conduct a fish population assessment for Otter Lake.
2. Identify fish spawning areas in Otter Lake and Otter Creek.
3. Educate shoreline owners and visitors about fish habitat requirements, spawning schedules and near-shore and in-water activities that can disturb or destroy fish habitat and spawning sites, as well as importance of re-naturalization of shorelines.
4. Educate shoreline residents about best management practices to deal with species such as Canada Geese (e.g., replace grass areas with native ground cover and shrubs).

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. Educate community by providing information on when to pump out septic systems and holding tanks.
3. Review and report on the 2015 Ontario Geological Survey Groundwater Chemistry Data for the Otter Lake catchment area.
4. To encourage the MNRF in the identification, classification and zoning of unevaluated natural areas in the Otter Lake Catchment Area.

Social & Recreational Sub-Committee - Chair: Marcia Maxwell

1. Develop a Boating Code of Conduct to minimize negative impacts on the lake, shoreline, wildlife, safety of swimmers and peace and quiet.
2. Promote awareness of the importance of best practices to help maintain a dark night sky.
3. 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. This newsletter has several articles pertaining to Lake Plan actions items.

Laurence Beaulieu

Chair of the Sustainable Lake Plan Committee for Otter Lake

AQUATIC PLANTS SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Goal #4 of the Otter Lake Sustainable Lake Plan (published July 25, 2015) is “to identify, monitor and, control (wherever possible) aquatic plant species”. Two objectives of the Lake plan dealing with aquatic plants are: one for indigenous species and one for invasive species.

An Aquatic Plants Sub-Committee of OLLA volunteers chaired by Judy Hodgins with members Doug Franks and Doug Duffin, has been formed and an initial meeting was held in November 2015 to discuss and prioritize actions to be taken to meet the Lake Plan objectives. Education and awareness was identified as a key priority as well as the need to solicit expertise to help identify and control aquatic plant species in Otter Lake from universities, RVCA, and other partners and agencies.

The chair has attended two educational seminars: *Aquatic Invasive Plants Monitoring* Workshop sponsored by FOCA on March 13, 2015 and *How to Keep Our Lakes Healthy*, sponsored by RVCA on November 14, 2015 and has shared information learned with the sub-committee. Doug Franks surveyed part of Otter Lake in the summer of 2015 using a depth finder on loan from RVCA that can record plant density. In the summer of 2016 the sub-committee will be assisted by Kaitlin Brady (RVCA), and possibly at least one summer student, to inventory plant families currently found in Otter Lake. Dr. Jesse Vermaire (Carleton University) has agreed to recruit an Honours student for a comprehensive aquatic plant inventory in 2017. Improved signage that explains what can be done to prevent spread of invasive species will be posted at the boat launch and possibly the commercial camps in 2016.

For updated information on all Lake Plan Action Items for this and other sub-committees please go to http://otterlake.org/lake_plan_action.pdf

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) – Prevention is the Intention

As we experienced when zebra mussels were introduced to Otter Lake, invasive species are aggressive, adapt quickly and can rapidly spread, affecting native aquatic species, their habitats and water quality, as well as recreational enjoyment.

The Ontario Legislature in October 2015 passed into law the Invasive Species Act to address the threat that invasive species pose to the natural environment of Ontario and will outline designating criteria, as well as prevention, response and enforcement measures to be taken. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry reports that almost 200 non-native invasive species are currently present in the Great Lakes Basin.

Aquatic species considered “invasive” are introduced from other geographical areas or other parts of the world and threaten the natural environment of existing aquatic vegetation and fish. Invasive species do not typically have natural predators, are easily adaptable and thrive in disturbed systems thus reproduce quickly and out-compete native species. Early detection and rapid response is the only way to manage, and possibly eradicate, an invasive species.

You can help stop the introduction and spread of invasive species into Otter Lake or other water bodies by:

- Making sure that after using your watercraft and/or equipment (including ATVs, waders) in another water system, you:
 - always drain any water from your motor, bilge and transom wells on land, as well as remove mud and visible plant and animal material prior to leaving the other water system
 - ensure your boat/motor/trailer and equipment are washed with hot tap water (greater than 50°C), or sprayed with a high pressure water (250 psi) at least 30 meters from shore, or dried in hot/sunny weather for at least 5 days before introducing to Otter Lake or any other body of water.
- Never buying, keeping or using invasive fish for bait.
Go to <https://www.ontario.ca/faq/what-kinds-baitfish-can-i-use-live-bait> and learn what species are permitted as live bait and buy bait locally.
- Never releasing any live organisms or unused bait into Otter Lake or within 30 meters of shore.
- Never release aquarium plants or pets (e.g. goldfish, turtles) near a body of water.
- Learning to identify invasive fish, invertebrate and plant species that are a threat to Ontario water bodies.
- Reporting any sighting of invasive fish, invertebrates and plants to the invading species hotline at 1-800-563-7711, online at <http://www.eddmaps.org/ontario/> and/or report to Otter Lake Landowners' Association at postmaster@otterlake.org.

The following is a list of Aquatic Invasive Species on the Watch List that have been identified in nearby lakes and rivers: Pictures and descriptions can be found at:

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/plants-aquatic/>

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/fish/>

<http://www.invadingspecies.com/invaders/invertebrates/>

Invasive Aquatic Plants	Invasive Fish	Invasive Invertebrates
European Frog-bit European Water Chestnut Fanwort Flowering Rush Hydrilla Parrotfeather Yellow Floating Heart Yellow Iris Water Soldier <i>Note: Eurasian Water Milfoil is no longer on watch list as it's considered too entrenched.</i>	Asian Carps Eurasian Ruffe Goldfish Northern Snakehead Rainbow Smelt Round Goby Rudd Sea Lamprey Tench Tubenose Goby	Asian Clam Bloody Red Shrimp Invasive Snails Rusty Crayfish Spiny and Fishhook Water Fleas Zebra and Quagga Mussels

Submitted by:

OLLA Aquatic Plants Sub-Committee

OLLA Fish & Wildlife Sub-Committee

MEMBERSHIP

Thanks to your support, OLLA has had a very successful membership drive this past year. Of the approximately 287 known property owners abutting on Otter Lake 124 (43%) joined OLLA in 2015. This level of membership is a substantial increase from our previous best year.

Your membership has allowed us to move forward with some new initiatives such as; the Lake Plan and the family picnic. 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

Please use the enclosed membership form to renew your membership for 2016. 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 a means of communicating with as many homeowners as possible and the best way to ensure you are involved is to renew or become a member for 2015.



LAKE STEWARD'S REPORT - 2015

Water quality testing is an important diagnostic tool to help residents of Otter Lake determine the health of the lake. We need early warnings to predict important changes in the lake's ecological process. By systematic testing and monitoring over time, it is possible to evaluate if water quality is improving or declining. By selective testing at strategic sites, water quality indicators can help determine the source or cause of contamination. The ecological and trophic status of a lake is generally determined by the levels of nutrients it contains. The primary nutrient for trophic status being the level of total phosphorous, a requirement for growth of all aquatic life.

As in previous years OLLA is fortunate to have the assistance of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) in testing the water quality of Otter Lake. Thanks are due to Sarah MacLeod, Kaitlin Brady and their team of Summer students for allowing us to include their data along with ours. Both RVCA and OLLA test at least 3 to 4 times per year at different sites.

The table on the right shows the combined results of the water quality testing performed in 2015 by both OLLA and RVCA. *E. Coli* levels were low or undetectable (2 cfu/100mL is the minimum detection level) at all sites tested. Total coliforms (all types of faecal bacteria) levels were tested in May at 2 sites and significant levels were obtained, however this is not unusual in the early spring since the test sites, 04 and 07 are where there are significant inflow streams.

Water Quality Data - 2015 OLLA + RVCA																		
RVCA ID	OLLA ID	Total Coliform (cfu/100 ml)			E. Coli (cfu/100 ml)			Total Kjeldahl nitrogen (µg/l)				Total Phosphorous (µg/l)				Secchi Disk (meters)		
		May	Jun	Jul	May	Jul	Aug	May	Jul	Aug	Oct	May	Jul	Aug	Oct	May	Aug	Oct
	OLLA 02																	
RVL-26C	OLLA 03					2	2	510	420	310		37	11	14				
RVL-26D	OLLA 04	18			2			710		440		15		21				
RVL-26DP1	OLLA 05A							390	440	300	210	4	10	12	6	5.90	5.25	6.00
	OLLA 05B											7						
RVL-26DP2	OLLA 06							420	630	320	330	4	35	15	6	7.10	5.25	5.50
	OLLA 07	12			2			530		540		13		18				
	OLLA 08																	
RVL-26B	OLLA 09					2	2		450	320			7	14				
	OLLA10																	
	OLLA 11																	
RVL-26E	OLLA 12																	
	OLLA 13					2				440				5				
	OLLA 14																	
	OLLA 15																	
RVL-26A	OLLA 16																	
	OLLA 17							640		320		15		5				
RVL-26F	OLLA 18					2	2	520	380	270		7	11	14				
Average		15.00			2.00			427.83				12.75				5.83		
Std. Error		3.00			0.00			26.51				1.74				0.26		
Average (excluding outliers)		15.00			2.00			393.00				10.14				5.83		
Std. Error		3.00			0.00			20.89				0.95				0.26		
	RVCA																	
	OLLA																	

Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen levels were generally in the acceptable range of between 200 - 600 µg/L at all sites tested with a couple of exceptions. Phosphorous levels generally ranged from 5 to 18 µg except for a very high reading (37 µg/L) at site 03 in May which may have been an analysis error since this site was retested in July and August and the level was 11 and 14 µg/L.

A high reading of 35 µg/L was obtained by RVCA at site 06 in July, but this is a deep water sample and the sample may have been contaminated with bottom sediment which would be rich in phosphorous. Secchi depth readings were generally between 5 and 7 metres indicating that the lake remains very clear. Increased water clarity means that sunlight can penetrate deeper and may often result in algae blooms over the summer months however there were no really significant algae blooms last summer except for a possible reporting of a very small blue/green algae bloom in October which was not analyzed and therefore remains unconfirmed. However with an average phosphorous level of 10 µg/L and an average Secchi depth of 5.8 metres the lake remains on the borderline between oligotrophic and mesotrophic.

These levels are similar to what was reported in 2014. The low *E. coli* values at virtually all sites tested indicates that the overall health of the lake is excellent. Interestingly, Otter Lake has considerably lower total phosphorous levels than all the other neighbouring lakes in our area. Bass Lake, Otty Lake and the Big Rideau have total phosphorous levels that are considerably higher than ours. The reasons are unknown, but it is something that we would like to maintain.

Doug Franks

OPTING-OUT OF OLLA NEWSLETTER

If you no longer wish to receive the OLLA Newsletter, please send a request to:
postmaster@otterlake.org

January 16, 2016



Otter Lake Landowners' Association

Membership Form 2016

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 to meet the cost of monitoring water quality and the associated laboratory fees, as well as other quality-related lake issues. It also contributes to maintaining OLLA's membership in the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (FOCA), which represents cottagers' and landowners' interests at Queen's Park and in the scientific community.

The Otter Lake Landowners Association (OLLA) is an association of those whose property abuts Otter Lake. OLLA's objectives are simple and straightforward: to maintain the health of Otter Lake by working with local and regional governments, existing road associations, and individual landowners. To increase our effectiveness we need to increase our membership.

Please speak to your neighbours about the benefits of OLLA membership.

**Our annual membership has remained unchanged
and is still only \$30**

A small price to help keep Otter Lake a viable resource for generations to come

This is a New Membershipor renewal (2016)

Name(s) of Owner(s):

Mailing address:

.....

Road and Cottage number

Telephone Numbers:

at Otter lake: Residence:

Your e-mail address:

Please send me the Newsletter by email: ____ Yes ____ No

Amount enclosed: \$ 30.00

Please return to:

Otter Lake Landowners' Association (OLLA)

#32 - O10, R.R. # 1, Lombardy, ON

K0G 1L0

Or in person at the OLLA AGM on July 23, 2016

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