

Otter Lake Landowners' Association (OLLA)



Otter Lake News

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Spring 2020

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The COVID 19 pandemic is still with us. However, we Canadians seem to be doing things right and are faring much better than some others. Keep it up! Stay safe! With the recent opening of the boat ramps, the lifting of the burn ban and the fact that some additional stores are letting people in their doors, there is hope that we will get closer to normal soon. The Snowbirds' Operation Inspiration even touched our lake briefly. Only two planes but it is the thought behind it!

Normally, I would have started out with "Happy Spring!". But with another frost warning on the weather network it is sometime hard to believe that spring will ever be here. Just this past weekend there was snow on the ground here for a while. The loons are back. The Great Blue Heron has made an appearance. The Merlin Falcon is practicing his screechy song. It's just the sun that seems to be faltering. Regardless of the temperature though, the scene out my window is great!

This Spring the Directors of OLLA will be reaching out via the various road associations as part of a

membership drive. The Township is listening to us, but we would have even more of an impact if we increase our numbers. Talk to your neighbours and get them involved. To facilitate this contact between OLLA and the "roads", the Directors are looking into ways to hold group meetings online. So far, the simplest and least prone to security issues seems to be a telephone conferencing connection. OLLA would use this to communicate within the association and would subsidize its use by the road associations for their meetings. The Directors will be getting in touch with the contacts for each road to pursue this, but if you need more information sooner you can contact me at: INFO@otterlake.org or John McKenney at: INFO@otterlake.org.

The current restrictions on gatherings of more than 5 people obviously means meetings like our AGM can't be held in their normal fashion. This may change by July so we'll keep monitoring the situation and will get back to you with more information as it becomes available. We do have things to talk about though. One is the Association's Constitution. The Directors have spent a lot of energy reviewing and revamping the Constitution of OLLA. Both to bring it in line with other lake associations and to prepare to register the Association under the new Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. We're still working on the details, but you can expect to receive more information in the next few weeks.

This year, OLLA will again be asking for volunteers to aid in a one-day blitz in the control of European Frog-bit, an invasive species that is threatening the health of our lake. More information about Frog-bit appears later in this newsletter. You can keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates as well.

Speaking of Facebook. Did you know it is a great place to post lost & found notices for things like wayward docks and rafts and even the odd boat!

Another project OLLA will be taking on this year is related to fish habitat. You can read more about this further on in the newsletter.

We may have gotten off to a bit of a rough start this year but, hey!, we can deal with it!

Jeff Neal, President
OLLA

LE CASTOR

*Submitted by Doug Franks
Excerpted from Cottage Life
March/April, 2020*

Many articles have been published in this Newsletter about loons, that iconic symbol of cottage country, but what about that other Canadian icon depicted on the Canadian nickel coin, the beaver. The North American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) is one of two beaver species that is native to North America.

We seem to have a love hate relationship with that animal. While they are cute and fun to watch when they swim and splash off the dock, but not so much when we wake up one morning to discover that the beautiful shade birch tree by the shore has disappeared or when they dam a stream that results in flooding of our property. Nonetheless the beaver is quite a remarkable creature. Because they spend so much time in and around the water, the adult beaver has virtually no predators (except humans) and can live to a ripe old age. In fact the major cause of death for the beaver are falling trees!! The beaver is also the only animal that can change and create an entire ecosystem.



Beavers speed forest change by removing broadleaf

trees and allowing more light to reach evergreens, such as spruce and fir, coming up beneath them. When fires or insect outbreaks kill the conifers, aspens and birch may take root again and, after about five to 10 years, become large enough to support a new colony of beavers. If he builds it, they will come. Millions of beaver ponds and meadows across the country burst with an incredible diversity of species in early spring. Each typically spreading over several hectares along a stream, they are the regenerative handiwork of the beaver, an ecosystem engineer par excellence. Trees drowned by beaver dams draw hordes of bark beetles and other tiny wood eaters, speeding their demise. Woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches follow, both feasting on the insects and excavating nest holes, which later house tree swallows, owls, bats, flying squirrels, and a host of other species.



Nutrients from falling snags join with silt and organic sediment trapped behind beaver dams support several times the density and diversity of invertebrates found in un-dammed streams, from clams and crayfish to dragonflies. These, in turn, sustain a much greater abundance of fish, frogs, turtles, songbirds, and on up the food web to kingfishers, herons, otters, and mink. Water lilies, pondweed, and other aquatic succulents colonize the pond's still waters, feeding beaver, moose, and muskrat alike through the summer.

In autumn, a beaver family gnaws down several hundred broadleaf trees, mostly saplings, for their winter larder. After clearing most of the choice aspen or white birch within about 50 metres of shore, they usually leave to colonize a new stretch of stream. As

old dams gradually break apart, their mucky reservoirs drain and turn into wetlands and meadows sprinkled with low shrubs, and eventually become alder and willow thickets that again become an environment ideal for more wildlife such as butterflies, bees, warblers, sparrows, voles and even foxes, deer, and wolves.

In the United Kingdom, where beavers are now virtually extinct, they are being reintroduced in an attempt to stabilize and recreate wetlands (fens) that have been destroyed by many years of farming. They could probably have some of ours if they wish, since there seems to be an overabundance of that remarkable creature in our part of the world!!

BUY A TREE...SAVE A FISH!

Submitted by Karl Fiander

OK, what does one have to do with the other? Well your OLLA board has launched a fish habitat project this summer and one of the critical issues identified by fish habitat experts is revegetating shorelines.

So why does planting a tree or shrub help a fish?

These little guys....Bluntnose Minnows (*Pimephales notatus*), are found in Otter Lake and live and reproduce in the shady shallow waters of the shoreline areas.



Bluntnose Minnow

And these big guys.....Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*) like to munch on the Bluntnose Minnow. As do Bass, Lake Trout, and smaller panfish...all found in Otter Lake.



Pike

So providing a nice shady spot near the shoreline for

the Bluntnose Minnow, and other small fish, helps all the fish in Otter Lake stay well-fed, strong and healthy.

LET'S PLANT 100 NEW TREES IN 2020! AND SAVE PLENTY OF FISH!!

OLLA is working with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority to bring a range of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers to Otter Lake residents at cost. All of these species are well suited to shoreline conditions, help prevent erosion, and offer a nice shady place for small fish to live and grow. Here is how it works:

1. Choose your plants from the list below.
2. Send an email to Karl Fiander at INFO@otterlake.org detailing how many of each you wish to buy.
3. OLLA will order and deliver your 1 gallon plants to your Otter Lake address in early June.
4. Plant your new native selection in the summer or early fall. If you require some help with how to properly plant your trees/shrubs/wildflowers, you can contact Meaghan McDonald of RVCA at: meaghan.mcdonald@rvca.ca.

The cost is \$10 for plants in a 1 gallon container. You can send OLLA a cheque or e-transfer the funds to: otterlakeassociation@gmail.com

Trees: Silver Maple, Tamarack

Shrubs: Red Osier Dogwood, Sweet Gale, Black Elderberry

Wildflowers: Swamp Milkweed, Cardinal Flower, Blue Flag Iris



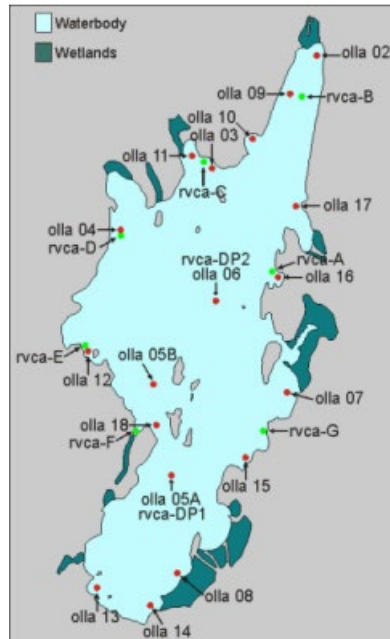
Red Osier Dogwood

PLANT YOUR TREE.....AND SAVE A FISH!

LAKE STEWARD'S REPORT - 2019

Submitted by Doug Franks

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. The ecological and trophic status of a lake is generally determined by the levels of nutrients it contains and these are what we (OLLA) and RVCA measure at different sites around the lake 3 or 4 times a year. OLLA and RVCA's test sites are shown on the map on the right. The sites have been chosen to be representative of the whole lake. Sites 05A, 05B and 06 represent the 3 deepest water sites (more than 90ft). Sites 04, 07, 08, 11 and 18 are in areas where there are known inflows from streams and wetlands into the lake. Other sites are in shallow bays where there is an increased tendency for weed and algae growth.



values do NOT present a health hazard for swimming since in Ontario public beaches are closed only when E. coli levels exceed 100 cfu/100ml.

Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen levels were generally in the acceptable range of between 200 - 500 µg/L, very similar to last year and only 3 test sites had total phosphorous values greater than 10 µg/L and the average for the year was less than 7 µg/L. Secchi depth readings were again about 6 metres indicating that the lake remains very clear but there were few algae blooms last Summer despite the hot weather.

Therefore, Otter Lake remains very close to being classified as oligotrophic which is quite unusual for lakes for this area. Oligotrophic lakes are usually found much further North.

REVISIONS TO OLLA'S CONSTITUTION BYLAWS

Submitted by Judy Hodgins

The Board of Directors has undertaken to revise and update OLLA's Constitution Bylaws to make them more clear and complete. The revised Bylaws will be presented at the next AGM for consideration and approval by voting members. The document will be made available to members for review prior to the AGM. The AGM is planned for July 25, 2020 but may have to be postponed due to the COVID-19 situation.

OUR NEW NEIGHBOUR!

Trevor Strickland managed to get pictures of a recent visitor to roads 07 and 06!



Testing in 2019 was done by RVCA. The results of water testing in 2019 are shown in table below. They indicate that the trend seen in 2018 is continuing. E. coli was undetectable at most sites tested, but were moderately high in August at sites OLLA 03 and 09.

Water Quality Data - 2019																		
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)		
		Jun	Jul	Aug	Jun	Jul	Aug	Jun	Jul	Aug	Oct	Jun	Jul	Aug	Oct	Jul	Aug	Oct
RVL-26C	OLLA 03				0		30	230		400		12		2				
RVL-26DP1	OLLA 05A							430	360	400	370	8	16	2	3	5.50	6.00	
RVL-26DP3	OLLA 06							416	300	400	430	7	12	2	2	5.00	6.50	
RVL-26B	OLLA 09				0		34	240		400		7		3				
RVL-26E	OLLA 12				0		0	300		330		8		5				
RVL-26F	OLLA 18				0		0	240		300		7		3				
Average					8.00			339.00				6.71				5.75		
Std. Error					13.89			71.07				4.32				0.65		

Both these sites are shoreline locations in shallow bays at the North end of the lake. The reason for these higher than normal values are unknown, but these sites will be retested again in 2020. These



The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry advises:

When bears are caught off guard, they are stressed, and usually just want to flee. If you encounter a black bear,

Stop. Do not panic. Remain calm.

Generally, the noisier the bear is, the less dangerous it is, provided you do not approach. The noise is meant to “scare” you off and acts as a warning signal.

Do

- Slowly back away while keeping the bear in sight and wait for it to leave.
- If the bear does not leave, throw objects, wave your arms and make noise with a whistle or air horn.
- Prepare to use bear spray.
- If you are near a building or vehicle get inside as a precaution.

Do not

- Run, climb a tree or swim — a bear can do these things much better than you
- Kneel down
- Make direct eye contact

Prevent conflicts with black bears

Bears usually avoid humans, but they are attracted into urban and rural areas in order to get food. If bears learn that they can find food where people live, they will return again and again and even try to enter

buildings. Relocation and destruction are poor ways of trying to prevent conflicts with bears.

Garbage:

- put garbage out only on the morning of garbage day, not the night before
- put garbage in containers that have tight-fitting lids and store it in a bear-proof location such as your basement or a sturdy garage
- spray garbage cans and lids with bleach or another strong disinfectant
- take garbage to the dump often, if you do not have curbside pick-up

Bird feeders:

- fill bird feeders only through the winter months
- put away feeders in the spring and instead, offer birds natural alternatives (e.g. flowers, nesting boxes, fresh water)

Barbecue:

- burn off food residue and wash the grill right away
- empty the grease trap every time you barbecue
- remove all utensils, dishes and food after eating

Fruits and berries:

- pick all ripe and fallen fruit from trees and shrubs on your property
- plant non-fruit bearing trees and shrubs

Pet food:

- do not leave pet food outdoors, in screened-in areas or porches

For more information about Black Bears and how to deal with them, please go to:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/prevent-bear-encounters-bear-wise>

EUROPEAN FROGBIT ERADICATION

– 1 DAY BLITZ 2020

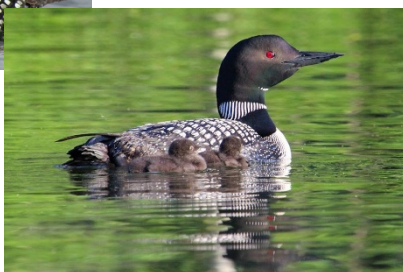
Submitted by Judy Hodgins

Following three years of concerted effort, a one-day blitz to maintain and monitor the European Frogbit invasive species in Otter Lake is being planned for this summer. To assist us, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority has committed to provide 2 or 3 summer students at no cost. With the current COVID-19 restrictions it is unclear whether we will be able to proceed with this plan. We are being optimistic and are moving forward with the planning of this one-day event. As a first step we are asking for volunteers to sign up to help. Please send an email to frogbithelp@bell.net if you are interested in volunteering. We are not setting a date yet, and realize that you may not be available on the day the event is ultimately planned. Having a list of potential volunteers will allow us to move forward quickly if the pandemic restrictions are relaxed or removed making it possible to hold this one-day blitz. Thank you for your support and commitment to the health of Otter Lake.

Loon Facts

(from an article by Jackie Davis in the May 2020 issue of Cottage Life Magazine)

- Loons are great divers because their bones are solid unlike other waterfowl.
- Loons eyes are only red during the summer. The rest of the year they are grey.
- The loon has been on the Canadian \$1 coin since 1987.



THAT OTHER NASTY BUG...

As some restrictions lift and many of us head out doors we need to be mindful that there is still another bug to worry about, the tick. Tick season is well underway and some are predicting a “whopper season”. The Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit indicates that ticks become active as day time temperatures rise above 4°C. If bitten by a tick you may be at risk of getting Lyme disease. They recommend taking the following precautions will help to reduce your risk:

- Dressing in light coloured clothing makes adult ticks and nymphs (small stage of the tick), easier to see when they are on you as they are darker in colour.
- Always remember to do a tick check when you return inside.
- Thoroughly check your body for ticks and nymphs and promptly remove and dispose of them. If possible have someone check you from behind.
- You can take a quick shower to help remove any unattached ticks.
- Putting your clothes in a hot dryer for several minutes has been found to kill ticks.

It is important to know that not all ticks carry the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Lyme disease transmission depends on the length of time the infected tick is attached. Ticks that are removed quickly and have been attached for less than 24 hours are not likely to transfer the bacteria. However if the tick has been attached for longer than 24 hours you maybe at an increased risk and it is recommended that you consult your health care provider. If you find a tick on your body, check to see if it flat or fat. A fat tick is an indication that it has been feeding for a longer period of time.

For further information, refer to the LGL Health Unit website:

<https://healthunit.org/media/2020-archive/ticks-and-lyme-disease-what-you-need-to-know/>

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Did you know?



Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

FOCA represents people who live at the waterfront in Ontario, whether seasonally or year-round, and provides many useful resources for waterfront property owners. OLLA members receive FOCA membership – Membership benefits can be found at: <https://foca.on.ca/member-services/benefits/>

Otter Lake Landowners' Association

2020 Membership Form

Your membership is important. It helps pay for water quality monitoring, associated laboratory fees, and other key initiatives. Members have 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 a renewal

Number of years being paid for: Amount of payment @ \$30/year: \$

Date of this membership payment:

Additional donation to OLLA to support an Otter Lake Fish Habitat Study: \$

Name(s) of Owner(s):

Mailing address:

.....

Cottage/House and Road number:

Telephone: Lake: Cell: Residence:

E-mail address:.....

I would like the OLLA Newsletters sent to me by: email letter mail

I **don't** want to receive an OLLA Newsletter:

I would like the FOCA Newsletters sent to me by: email letter mail

I **don't** want to receive a FOCA Newsletter:

Membership fees and this completed form can be given to any OLLA Board Director, or you can letter mail them to this address:

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

Membership fees can also be paid by **e-transfer** to **otterlakeassociation@gmail.com**. If paying by e-transfer, please send this completed form to the same email address, or letter mail it to the above address.

This membership was paid by: cash cheque e-transfer

Thank you for your support!