



Otter Lake Landowners Association

Otter Lake News

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Fall 2021

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At the time of the meeting, we had 82 members so we barely accomplished the quorum requirements of our by-laws. For those who couldn't make it, here is a brief summary:

- Of the five Loon pairs sighted on the lake it appears we only have one juvenile this year.
- Three Directors retired from the Board – Dianne Taylor, Doug Franks and Karl Fiander
- A new Director, Diana Ghent, was elected and June Finless was re-elected for another term.
- There was a presentation on the Revised Sustainable Lake Plan (available now on the website)

Message from the President

It's hard to believe that yet another summer has flown by, and we are adjusting again to the cooler temperatures. Traffic on the lake has almost stopped except for a few hardy fisherfolk out there still trying to hook that big one that got away the last time.

We are still enduring the effects of COVID, however, it has eased a bit and many folks were able to get back to the lake. Hopefully, next summer will be much better on that front. The changing situation for COVID has allowed the Board to consider an in-person AGM for next year. We will re-assess this, of course, in the spring, before any plans are finalized. In the interim, I'd appreciate your thoughts on the matter, (or any other matters concerning the lake or OLLA).

This year's Annual Meeting was held in September with 24 members present or represented by proxy.

As a member of OLLA, you are also a member of the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA), this organization has a vast amount of information on dozens of topics related to lakes, land, roads, water quality, boating and more. I encourage you to check out their website (<https://foca.on.ca/>). To access the "Members Only" portions of the site, please contact me for the username and password. There are also a number of links to courses, workshops, and seminars that can help to occupy your time until the warm weather rolls around again.

I wish you all the best for the upcoming holiday season! "See" you all in the new year.

Jeff

ollapresident@otterlake.org

2021 OLLA Board of Directors

Submitted by Susan Thum

The 2021 OLLA AGM saw a few changes to our Board of Directors. As noted in the President's message, 3 directors retired, Dianne Taylor, Doug Franks and Karl Fiander and 1 new Director, Diana Ghent was elected to the board - welcome to our team Diana!

At the next board meeting on Oct 17, 2021 the election of officers was held. The current list of officers is:

- Jeff Neal (President)
- Deb McVean (Treasurer)
- June Finless (Secretary)
- Judy Hodgins (Lake Steward)
- John McKenney (Membership & Community Liaison)
- Diana Ghent (Website)
- Susan Thum (Newsletter)
- Eric Hempell (Director at large)

We can't thank Dianne, Doug and Karl enough for the untold hours that they spent supporting Otter Lake during their time on (& off!) the board. It was truly appreciated!

To reach any of our directors with suggestions, questions or comments please send an email to: info@otterlake.org

Loon Nest Platforms – Looking For Volunteers

Submitted by Judy Hodgins

We are looking for volunteers to build two loon nest platforms over the winter months. The nests will be built with PVC piping and chicken wire (supplied by OLLA). In the early spring the nests will be covered with native vegetation and placed in locations that are favourable for loon pairs to build their nests for successful hatching of chick(s). The floating nest platforms will be anchored with cinder blocks and chains allowing the loons to have continued access to their nests regardless of any fluctuation in spring water levels. This initiative is in response to only one chick being successfully reared on Otter Lake this

past summer and to ensure we have a healthy loon population. If you are interested in helping with this project please send an email to info@otterlake.org.



Bring a Friend to OLLA!

Submitted by John McKenney

Members who encourage their lake friends to join OLLA will be entered into a draw for a free 1-year membership extension. The membership form will include a place for new members to name the OLLA friend who told them about the Association. There will be one winner for every five new members enlisted this way. The more members recruited, the more membership extensions we'll give away. Tell a friend about OLLA and you could win!

Based on a change to our Constitution, annual memberships include one AGM and are due for renewal by the next. We know how busy our members are, so we hope this will make it easier to remember the deadline for submitting your membership form and payment. Just in case, a reminder will be sent to all members ahead of the AGM that includes the membership form and instructions.

The membership form can be found on our website at <https://otterlake.org/members/membership/> or by contacting a member of the board.

Spawning Bed Restoration

Submitted by Jeff Neal

In its November 2021 Update, Watersheds Canada posted an article on the restoration of lake trout spawning beds in Diamond Lake near Combermere, Ontario in Renfrew County. It is definitely worth a look! - <https://watersheds.ca/diamond-lake-press-release/>

OLLA's Invasive Phragmites Project Completed!

Submitted by Deb McVean

In February 2021 FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association) reached out to Ontario Lake associations offering the opportunity to apply for grants to combat Invasive Phragmites.

Invasive Phragmites have become Ontario's worst invasive species. They aggressively invade wetland habitats out competing native species and transform habitats into dense monocultures that are inhospitable to most wetland inhabitants.

Unfortunately, the applications for grants had to be made before the end of February 2021. As the ice was still on our lake, OLLA was unable to get boats out to survey the lake's shorelines. However, we did detect several large stands – one on the Old Kingston Road just north of Otter Lake Road and several on Highway 15. Not knowing if we had a problem ON Otter Lake or not, we applied for a grant to educate our lake landowners about Invasive Phragmites. FOCA allowed us a \$400.00 education grant.

The good news – once the ice went out and the OLLA Board of Directors could get boats in the water, a survey of Otter Lake's shoreline revealed no stands of this invasive plant. However, we proceeded with the educational component of the project.

OLLA designed and created signage for the 5 commercial establishments on the lake – Camp Otterdale, Moonlight Bay, Otter Lake Park, Sandy Beach at Otter Lake and Twin Pines Campgrounds. Thanks to all the campground owners who enthusiastically posted the signage for us. A sign was also created and posted on the OLLA bulletin board at the boat launch.

Information about Invasive Phragmites was published in the OLLA Newsletter and on the OLLA website (have you checked out our new website? www.otterlake.org).

FOCA provided warning signs (do not cut or transplant) to post at the large stand on Old Kingston

Road. Unfortunately, we were unable to post these signs at the stands on Highway 15 due to MTO regulations.

325 information brochures were printed to distribute to all Otter Lake Landowners. Thanks to the Township of Rideau Lakes for the assistance in mailing these.

And finally, we submitted our post program questionnaire to FOCA and returned \$41.04 to FOCA as we came in under budget!

We hope to be invited to join any future FOCA programs that can benefit our lake.

Lake Trout Spawning Ground Review

Submitted by Judy Hodgins

Past OLLA Director, Karl Fiander, is continuing to be the lead on OLLA's project to identify spawning areas for Lake Trout and to establish that Otter Lake has the necessary oxygen levels to support Lake Trout with the goal of a stocking program to rebuild the population. Attempts to get the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry (MNRF) to conduct field work to help in determining whether Otter Lake can sustain Lake Trout has been hindered because of Covid protocols. Karl also reached out to Dr. Steven Cooke, a professor at Carleton University, who advised at the start of the summer he had a PhD student who could possibly come to survey our lake.

On October 7th Karl escorted Ben Hlina on a tour of the lake on Jeff Neal's boat. Several areas were identified as having the necessary characteristics for Lake Trout spawning as well as areas that are well suited for this fish species to feed and thrive. Some of the potential spawning grounds are around the northern-most islands and the shoal area opposite Sandy Beach Resort. Lake Trout spawn in the evening during the fall and hatch under the ice in January. At this time it is felt the native strain of Lake Trout that evolved in Otter Lake since the ice age, is all but gone and any remaining fish would likely be from the "Algonquin" strain that is stocked by MNRF.

Karl will be submitting a written report to OLLA to support our lobbying for an MNRF stocking program. Together with Ben's survey findings, the deep water oxygen levels recently reported by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) appear to be adequate for Lake Trout survival. The next step will be to submit the report to MNRF with a formal request for Otter Lake to be restocked with Lake Trout.

Trailered Boats Now Regulated

Submitted by Jeff Neal

For a number of years, using newsletters, boat ramp signage and other methods, OLLA has been reminding members and others about the importance of ensuring boats are drained, cleaned and dried before moving from one body of water to another. In this past year trailered boats have become regulated under the Invasive Species Act. The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry finalized amendments to Ontario Regulation 354/16 under the Invasive Species Act, 2015 to regulate watercraft as a carrier of invasive species. (The changes also classify 13 species as either prohibited or restricted invasive species.). The rules are based on the Clean, Drain, Dry practices which have been promoted through education and outreach efforts across North America, by FOCA, and others. Highlights of the change effective January 1, 2022:

- boaters are now required to remove drain plugs, drain all on board water and remove any aquatic plants upon removing the watercraft from a waterbody, and
- prior to reaching a launch site for a body of water, the watercraft, watercraft equipment and any vehicle or trailer used to transport the watercraft or watercraft equipment must not have an aquatic plant, animal or algae attached to it.

Note: watercraft includes any motorboat, rowboat, canoe, punt, sailboat, or raft. For further details about this change see:

<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-3465>

FOCA News

Rural Roads

One of the topics in FOCA's Fall Seminar for Lake Associations was a panel discussion which included the subject "Good Roads – Everything Roads Since 1984". The Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) is a municipal association dedicated to improving municipal roads and associated infrastructure in Ontario. Although they don't get involved directly with private roads some of the information they have does apply to all roads. As a member of OLLA, you can login to the FOCA site and see the entire proceedings of the seminar (for access info contact: ollapresident@otterlake.org).

On their site, FOCA has published the results of their 2019 Road Survey. You can check it out at: <https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/FOCA-Road-Association-Survey-2019PresentationFINAL.pdf>

Source Water Protection – Closing the Gaps

The recent FOCA Elert (Nov 2021), contained an article on Protecting Water, a topic which has always been of interest to our members. The article, titled "Closing the gaps: What needs to happen to protect everyone's water in Ontario?" can be found on the FOCA website under the Source Water Protection heading or by using the following link:

<https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Water-Canada-article-expanding-SWP-Nov-2021.pdf>



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

Please contact ollapresident@otterlake.org if you need the password to access FOCA member services.

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