

Otter Lake Landowners Association

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Spring 2022

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Message from the President

The snow is gone, the ice is off the lake and the temperature is above zero! Yes, once again, Spring has arrived!

The directors have been busy over the winter, and, as you read the following articles you will see why. Subjects like Loons, Lake Trout, possible social gatherings as well as news on the business side of the association.

We have started our Spring Membership Drive. The main source of funds to support the activities of the Association is membership fees. And at \$30 a year per household, we truly need more members to keep up with the activities that you, the members have told us are important to you. So, if you haven't already renewed your membership, please do so. Membership fees must be paid by the date of the AGM (which we plan to hold in person this year) for you to have the right to vote. And, if you have a chance to talk to your neighbours about joining OLLA, it will help.

We purchased some signs to inform residents of the link to membership information on the OLLA website and have posted them on the roads around the lake. A resident of Deuces Lane contacted me to say they supported the association but preferred not to have a sign so we removed it. Apparently, the signs for roads O9 and O10 have gone AWOL. It would be great if they could be returned to us. I can come and pick them up if needed. As with Deuces Lane, we do not want to put up signs where they are not wanted. If any residents on these three roads would like to volunteer to have a sign on their property please contact OLLA.

Membership with a greater voice is what OLLA would like to achieve and OLLA members are encouraged to talk to friends and neighbours about our association. Our membership numbers are climbing but we still cannot say we represent the majority of landowners on Otter Lake. If there are concerns to be raised, I urge you to become a member of OLLA and join in discussions with the Board of Directors and other members.

Speaking of roads, the Board of Directors would like to create a Roads Sub-Committee. My hope is that we can have a representative from each road and that they can work together to recommend best practices and provide the OLLA Board of Directors with any common concerns. If you are interested or

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just want to discuss the concept, you can contact me at ollapresident@otterlake.org.

And one more thing about roads, or more specifically, road O4. If you don't normally drive down Otter Lake Road, it is worth the trip just see the decorations at the entrance to O4. With every change of season or special event, there are new decorations to see! Obviously a significant amount of work and much admired by the residents of this household.

Jeff

ollapresident@otterlake.org

The Gypsy Moth 2022

Submitted by Deb McVean

THEY'RE BAAAACK!

The LDD Moth (the moth formerly known as Gypsy) is predicted to be with us again this year. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry "expects a continued outbreak with substantial levels of defoliation in the same areas that experienced it last year" – i.e. HERE! Below are some measures you can take to keep those pesky LDD larvae from destroying the foliage on your property.

• **Egg masses** – the egg masses are about the size of a loonie and may contain from 100 to 1,000 eggs. You can tell how bad the infestation is by the size of the egg mass. Smaller egg masses (about the size of a dime) mean the population is on the decline. Larger masses, the population is stable or growing. Common hiding places include the underside of branches, tree trunks, fences, firewood, outdoor furniture, swing sets, boats, trailers and under the eaves of buildings. The eggs hatch into caterpillars when tree buds begin to open so late fall and **early spring** are the time to get rid of these. Scrap off the egg masses with a knife and drop into hot water with bleach or ammonia.

• **Caterpillars** – wear gloves as the hairs on the caterpillars can cause skin irritation or allergic reactions in some people. Caterpillars can be hand picked and crushed (ugh) or trapped. To trap, wrap a 45 cm wide strip of burlap around the tree trunks at chest height. Tie a string around the centre of the burlap and fold the upper half down to form a skirt. The caterpillars will crawl under the burlap skirt to

escape the sun. Later in the day, either crush them in the burlap or lift the burlap, pick off the caterpillars and drop them in a bucket of hot water containing household bleach or ammonia. You can also make a band of sticky substance on the tree trunk. Wrap duct tape around the tree trunk at chest height. Make sure that the bark of the tree is dry and that the tape is firmly pressed into cracks. Coat the duct tape with a sticky substance like petroleum jelly or Tanglefoot. Make sure that the sticky substance does NOT touch the tree bark as this can disfigure or even kill the tree. Check the tape band periodically to make sure that it is not clogged with debris (or dead caterpillars) and apply more sticky substance as needed, especially after it has rained.

• **Moths** – are annoying but are only alive long enough to mate and lay their eggs. There are moth traps and bug zappers (note: the female gypsy moth doesn't fly, she's wingless). But the best defense is to keep your yard clean, as rotting wood and unclean surfaces are great spots for the moths to lay eggs AND SCRAPE OFF THE EGG MASSES.

• **Spraying** – the Township of Rideau Lakes is not spraying in 2022. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests recommends BTK pesticide BUT cautions that you should use a registered pesticide application company approved by the Ministry.

Information provided courtesy of the Government of Canada, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry <u>https://www.ontario.ca/page/lymantria-dispar-dispar-ldd-moth</u> and the Township of Rideau Lakes.

GOOD LUCK PROTECTING YOUR TREES THIS YEAR!

Membership Reminders

Submitted by John McKenney

We are continuing our efforts to grow our membership, and we appreciate the ongoing support of our returning members.

This is a reminder that memberships are due to be renewed on the date of our Annual General Meeting (AGM): July 23, 2022. The \$30 annual membership fee can be paid via e-transfer at <u>otterlakeassociation@gmail.com</u>. If your personal information hasn't changed, you don't need to submit another membership form. If your information has changed, or you want to mail your membership fee to us, you can find the form and payment instructions on our "Membership" page at <u>www.otterlake.org</u>.

The "Bring a Friend to OLLA" promotion is still going. OLLA members who refer a friend to the association will enter a draw for a free one-year membership extension. The OLLA Membership Form found on the "Membership" page at <u>www.otterlake.org</u> includes a section where new members can tell us who encouraged them to join OLLA, along with instructions for submitting the form and payment. We'll award a free 1-year membership extension for every five newly recruited members.

OLLA welcomes additional donations to our ongoing lake initiatives. This year's focus will be "Let's Get the Lead Out," an effort to reduce toxic lead fishing tackle that poses a threat to our local loon population. More information on this initiative is included in this newsletter. Donations can be made with your membership payment.

Your OLLA membership has many benefits, including access to Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) resources. More information on these resources is also included in this newsletter.

Lake Trout Restocking Project & Spawning Bed Restoration Submitted by Judy Hodgins

OLLA is continuing its efforts to have Otter Lake restocked with Lake Trout through the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (NDMNRF) fish restocking program. Karl Fiander continues to take the lead on this project which he began as past director.

In support of our lobbying for Lake Trout restocking, the Kemptville office of NDMNRF has been provided with data on Otter Lake's dissolved oxygen levels up to and including February 2022. The levels have increased in recent years and indicate the ability to support a Lake Trout population. NDMNRF was also provided with a report compiled by Karl with input from Ben Hlina, a Lake Trout expert and PhD candidate from Carleton University who surveyed Otter Lake in October 2021. In response, the NDMNRF has requested further information. In particular they are looking for substantiation of an existing population of trout that would benefit from a restocking program. **If you, or someone you know, catches any variety of trout in Otter Lake please email a picture of the fish to** <u>info@otterlake.org</u> along with a description of the size, weight and approximate location the fish was caught.

Subsequent to the Restocking Project, OLLA contacted Watersheds Canada about their spawning beds restoration project in Diamond Lake in Renfrew County. Fortuitously, Watersheds Canada was beginning the process to apply for a significant grant from the Environmental Damages Fund and were quite keen to include Otter Lake in its submission for lake trout spawning bed restoration. OLLA provided a letter of support to Watersheds Canada to help secure funding. Should the application be successful there would be no financial obligation on OLLA's part; we need only provide as many volunteer hours as possible to assist in the carrying out of the project over a two-year period.

A small note of interest: A one-pound Splake was caught in Otter Lake in February 2022 by a resident ice fisherman. Seven thousand Splake were stocked by NDMNRF in 2020; prior to that 27,000 Splake were stocked in 1990, 1994 and 2003 combined. Important to remember that Splake cannot reproduce as they are a hybrid fish from the speckled (or brook) trout and lake trout.

ONCA – Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporation Law Submitted by Deb McVean

Ontario has passed a new law regulating Not-for-Profits incorporated in Ontario – this includes OLLA. We must be compliant with the new law as of October 18, 2024. There is a fair amount of work involved including, but not limited to, reviewing and updating, if necessary, our Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, procedures etc.

You'll be hearing more about this at our next Annual General Meeting and in future Newsletters.

Rest assured that your OLLA Board of Directors will have all tasks completed and OLLA will be compliant by the deadline.

Let's Get the Lead Out



Submitted by Judy Hodgins

The Wolfe Lake Association (WLA) in Westport is spearheading an educational initiative "Let's Get the Lead Out" – a lead fishing tackle buyback program. OLLA met with two volunteers from WLA to get more information and a better

understanding of the rationale driving this initiative and has become a program supporter. WLA has received a substantial grant to fund the program as well as donations from supporters, including OLLA.

The science in support of the issue of lead poisoning in our lakes and rivers is very compelling. Lead fishing tackle kills loons and other wildlife – lead poisoning from lost lead tackle is a leading cause of death in adult loons and threatens our water quality and other natural resources. But not just loons are affected, eagles, swans and other waterfowl are especially vulnerable to poisoning as they ingest lead while picking up pebbles to aid digestion, catch or scavenge fish with lead tackle attached, or while foraging. Furthermore, biologists have identified that loons are dying from lead tackle being used now, so by reducing the flow of lead into the environment, loons and other vulnerable wildlife gain an immediate benefit.

The solution is simple – don't use lead fishing tackle. Lead fishing tackle has been banned from use in national parks in Canada. On the Government of Canada website it states "An average Canadian angler can lose 11 to 15 jigs and sinkers per year while fishing due to snags and other reasons. This adds up to about 460 tonnes of lead jigs and sinkers lost every year into Canada's lakes and waterways. This represents the most significant source of lead released into Canadian waters." Studies also show that lead buy back &/or tackle exchange programs, in conjunction with public awareness campaigns and stricter regulations on certain types of lead tackle, can significantly reduce the number of loons dying from lead poisoning.

The "Lead Fishing Tackle Buy Back Program," is a voluntary initiative that will serve to reduce toxic lead fishing tackle from accumulating in the environment in Ontario. To promote the use of non-lead fishing tackle an exchange of your lead fishing tackle for a \$10 voucher to be used on a purchase of lead-free tackle products can be obtained at participating retailers.

WLA has also been working closely with the townships of Rideau Lakes and South Frontenac to erect signs and tackle collection boxes at all boat launches within the two townships.

Visit <u>https://wolfelake.org/fish-lead-free</u> to learn more, including a list of participating retailers. More retailers will be added as they come onboard. Your individual support of this program is encouraged and appreciated!

Township Septic Re-Inspection Report 2021

Submitted by Judy Hodgins

The Township of Rideau Lakes Septic Re-Inspection Report has been posted on OLLA's website <u>https://otterlake.org/environment/septic-systems/</u>. A total of 310 mandatory septic re-inspections were done in 2021, of which 221 were on properties on Otter Lake. Those Otter Lake residents who participated in the voluntary inspection program before it became mandatory were not inspected which is why only 221 inspections were carried out. Of those 221 Otter Lake inspections, 26 septic systems require replacements. 43% of all systems inspected required remedial work. It was noted that many septic systems are closer to the shoreline than current regulations allow but passed inspection.

Repair or replacement of septic systems can be costly. Ensure your septic system is properly used and maintained for optimal efficiency and longevity.

Be Wake Aware

Submitted by Deb McVean

Spring is here and the ice is going out of Otter Lake. Time to start thinking about putting your boat in the water. Just a reminder before you take that first, glorious boat (or Jet Ski) ride – BE WAKE AWARE!

Lakes are fragile environments. Fish, wildlife (our loons!) and wildlife habitats, shorelines and shoreline structures are vulnerable to damage from boat wakes. Wake can create damage in an instant or over a longer period of time. Wake striking our shorelines can cause rapid and severe erosion. Wakes can rock, swamp or capsize other boats. Passengers can be thrown off balance or overboard when another boat passes too fast and too close. Wakes can damage boats secured to docks.

Tips to Reduce Your Wake

- Within 30 metres (33 yards or 98.5 feet) of shore and in narrow channels, the law mandates that you cannot exceed 10km/hour. Reduce your speed to LEAVE NO WAKE - this means LOW SPEED AND LOW BOW
- Travel 30 metres from your dock to deeper water before accelerating. It's the law.
- In the open lake far from shore, cruise at a speed that minimizes wake (Planing Speed)
- Coming off the plane, pass through the transition phase smoothly and safely, getting the boat level in displacement speed without delay
- Operate your watercraft as far away as possible from shore, docks, other boats and loons!
- When in shallow water, avoid churning up the bottom sediment
- Look (safely) behind you to see and understand the impact of your wake

Information Courtesy of Muskoka Watershed Council

For additional information and resources <u>https://www.muskokawatershed.org/wp-</u><u>content/uploads/WakeBrochure_web1.pdf</u>

www.bewakeaware.com

www.mla.on.ca "Safe and Enjoyable Boating"

www.safequiet.ca Be #Wake Aware video

<u>www.otterlake.org</u> Community & Recreation -Boating

OLLA Member Benefits through FOCA – Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association

Submitted by Deb McVean

FOCA is a not-for-profit organization representing volunteer waterfront associations and individual property owners all across Ontario and is made up of more than 500 property associations across Ontario cottage country – a total of 50,000 families.

BENEFITS & OFFERS AVAILABLE FROM FOCA TO OLLA MEMBERS

- Members only access to resources on the FOCA website (login access codes required*)
- Free Elerts (e-news) updates (sign up required)
- Attend FOCA events and webinars at reduced Member Rates
- Learn how to plan your family's cottage succession plan

SPECIAL OFFERS FROM FOCA'S CORPORATE PARTNERS

- Exclusive access to CottageFirst, the first cottage group insurance plan
- Cottage Life Magazine only \$24.95 annually
- Action First Aid special FOCA price on defibrillators (AEDs)
- Canadian Canoe Museum 30% off any Membership

*For access codes to FOCA, OLLA Members should inquire through the "Contact Us" tab on our website, <u>info@otterlake.org</u> or by contacting a member of the OLLA Board of Directors.

Lake Steward's Report - 2021

Submitted by Doug Franks, former Lake Steward and Judy Hodgins, current Lake Steward

General Comments

Overall, 2021 was a good year for Otter Lake. While there were a number of days with higher than average temperatures and periods of lack of precipitation, the lake maintained its overall healthy state. Otter Lake did not experience any blue-green algae blooms, unlike our neighbouring Bass Lake. While blue-green algae blooms appear naturally, climate change and nutrient loads caused by human activities increase the possibility of blue-green algae blooms and we must always be mindful of what impact we are imposing on Otter Lake. A blue-green algae bloom, even if it is not of a toxic variety, can have unpleasant and potentially harmful and economic effects.

As part of OLLA's Lake Trout Spawning Project, oxygen levels and water temperatures have received greater scrutiny in 2021, with an encouraging determination that Otter Lake appears to be able to support the reintroduction of Lake Trout. Our study of this data as well as potential spawning and habitat is complete and has been provided to the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry to request that Otter Lake be added to their Lake Trout stocking program.

With respect to our loon population, it was disappointing that Otter Lake saw the successful hatching/rearing of only one baby loon in 2021. This could be due to any number of factors, one of which could be water level fluctuation during nesting season (May 15-June 1 typically). OLLA volunteers have built two floating loon nests that were installed in April/May 2022 to hopefully assist with ensuring long-term positive results.

Results of Water Quality Testing in 2021

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to present challenges for both OLLA and RVCA in 2021 in respect of collecting and testing water samples. Consequently, OLLA did not sample any of its sites in 2021 and RVCA conducting a reduced sampling and testing program of surface water but Otter Lake was included. The results of RVCA water testing in 2021 are shown in the table below.

Water Quality Data - 2021																				
RVCA ID	OLLA ID	Total Coliform (cfu/100 ml)			E. Coli (cfu/100 ml)			Total Kjeldahl nitrogen (μg/l)				Total Phosphorous (µg/l)				Sechi Disk (meters)				
		Jun	Jul	Aug	Jun	Jul	Aug	May	Jun	Aug	Oct	May	Jun	Aug	Oct	May	Jun	Aug	Oct	
RVL-26C	OLLA 03				1		0		380	390			4	13						
RVL-26DP1	OLLA 05A							400	370	490	380	8	2	10	10	6.0	8.5	5.5	3.0	
RVL-26DP3	OLLA 06							400	410	480	350	9	2	10	4	6.0	6.0	3.0	3.5	
RVL-26B	OLLA 09				0		10		400	480			4	11						
RVL-26F	OLLA 18				0		4		380	400			2	10						
Average					2.50		407.86			7.07				5.19						
Std. Error						3.99		43.71				3.87				1.91				
Water Quality Recommendations			<100				<500				<20									
Oligotrophic								310 - 1160				3 - 18				5.4 - 28				
Mesotrophic							360 - 1400				11 - 96				1.5 - 8.1					
Eutrophic									390 - 6100				16 - 390				0.8-7.0			

The results indicate that the trend that has been seen for the past five years remains the same. Low levels of E. Coli were detected at some sites tested. These low 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 (TKN) levels were in the acceptable range of between 200 - 500 μ g/L, very similar to previous years. As for Total Phosphorous (TP), none of the sites tested had values greater than 13 μ g/L, below the Provincial Water Quality Objective (PWQO) – Lakes of less than 20 μ g/L.

Secchi depth readings were again between 3 and 8 meters indicating that the lake remains very clear and there were few algae blooms last summer despite the very hot weather we experienced in August.

Otter Lake continues to be one of very few lakes in the area that is classified as oligotrophic. The only other lakes classified as oligotrophic are Farren and Wolfe Lake. Most oligotrophic lakes are usually found much further North.

RVCA performed measurements of water temperature and DO in May, June, August and October at two deep water sites OLLA 5A/RVCA DP1 and OLLA O6/RVCA DP2. The results obtained by RVCA in 2021 are shown in the graphs below.

The concentration of dissolved oxygen in lakes is affected by temperature and has well-defined seasonal cycles. Cold water can hold more dissolved oxygen than warm water. The red lines indicate water temperature vs depth showing the rise/fall in temperature, particularly at the surface, while the temperature at deep water levels remains more constant regardless of the month. The blue lines indicate the dissolved oxygen levels vs depth. DO concentrations are high in early Spring but begin to decline over the Summer when the water temperature rises. Trout live in cold water below the hyperlimnion (the depth at which the water temperature drops rapidly). DO concentrations below the hyperlimnion cannot be replenished because of the layer of less dense water above it and cold water fish will not survive well if DO levels fall below 4 mg/L. A further test was done in February 2022 as the ice was safe enough to venture out on. The results of the February tests were favourable but are not included in the graphs below.



Note: For more technical information on water quality please go to our website <u>https://otterlake.org/environment/water-observation/</u>

Loon Nesting Platforms

Submitted by Jeff Neal and Judy Hodgins



Prompted by last year's successful hatching of only one loon chick, OLLA undertook a project to build two loon nesting platforms. These platforms have been shown to increase the nesting success of loon pairs that have lost nests because of changing water levels or human disturbance.

Materials for the platforms were constructed by volunteers Henry Morash and Kent Jeffreys with materials obtained through OLLA funds, a generous cash donation from a new OLLA member, as well as some materials donated by Rideau Home Hardware. A great big thank you to our members and volunteers for their support!

The nesting platforms were then made ready for launching by a party of four: Ed Wilton, John McKenney, Jeff Neal and Judy Hodgins. The nests were covered with vegetation and nest-building materials that were obtained from locations around Otter Lake to ensure we did not introduce any invasive plants. A cover was also placed over the platforms and camouflaged to

protect the eggs/chicks from predatory birds.

On a perfectly lovely May 1st the nesting platforms were placed in areas where nests have been seen in previous years. Now we just have to wait and see if any loon pairs take advantage of these rent-free homes. Signs have been placed on the nests to identify them and request that they not be disturbed.





- To benefit the Smiths Falls and Portland Food Banks
- Open to everyone on Otter Lake, so tell your neighbours who are not OLLA members about this fun summer boating activity
- A Prize will be awarded to the "Best Decorated Boat". But decorating your boat is not mandatory, we would rather see you there "unadorned" than not there at all!
- Date, time (tentatively Saturday, August 6th 2-4 p.m.) and location to be advised in July along with Sign Up sheets



HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE

