

Otter Lake Landowners Association

Otter Lake News

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www.otterlake.org

Fall 2022

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Message from the President

We are now officially into Fall. And it's quite obvious with the lower temperatures, the leaves changing colour, the reduction in boat traffic on the lake, the docks being pulled in and the loons getting ready to depart (including the FIVE juveniles). This summer was a welcome change with the return to the lake of many of our neighbours now that COVID restrictions have been reduced. We were able to open our cottages and homes to visitors again. We were able to return to a face-to-face AGM in the Community Hall. We were able to organize a "FloatOLLA" in support of our local food banks.

At this year's AGM, a number of Directors were re-elected following the end of their three-year term. As well, two new Directors joined our ranks. John Burke and Frank Croft. Welcome! John will take on responsibility for our Lake Plan and Frank will be looking after our website.

A number of residences around the lake changed hands this year. On behalf of the Board of Directors of OLLA, I bid you welcome. I encourage you to check out our website and Facebook page and should

you want more info about the lake or OLLA I encourage you to get in touch with me or one of the other Directors.

This past year was a busy one for the Association with new projects like floating loon nests and programs such as the "Get the Lead Out" campaign. We continue to work with RVCA on water testing to monitor the health of the lake and continuing our liaison with the Township. We're also continuing our work with various scientists and the Ministry of Natural Resources on spawning sites for Lake Trout and potential stocking of this species in the future. Thank you to all the directors and volunteers that make this possible.

Over the winter I'm certain many of you will be planning activities and projects for next season. Keep an eye on our website for tips as well as some of the important Do's and Don'ts that come with life on the lake.

I wish you all the best for the upcoming holiday season! See you back here next year!

Jeff Neal

ollapresident@otterlake.org



FloatOLLA 2022

Submitted by Deb McVean

We had a successful Boat Parade and Food Bank Donations on August 6, 2022. Although we did not have many boats participating in the parade, we collected 214 pounds of dry and canned goods and \$100 in cash donations. The proceeds were divided, 50/50, between the Portland and Smiths Falls Food Banks. Both were extremely appreciative of the donations. Following is a very nice Thank You note from Louise Martin, Manager of the Portland Food Bank.

August 2022

On behalf of the Portland Food Bank, I wish to thank the Otter Lake Landowners' Association for their generous donation (food & cash) during their food drive in August. It is thanks to people like your association that we at the Food Bank can assist families with their needs!

Once again thank you for your donation and your support is greatly appreciated.

Louise Martin, Manager, Portland Food Bank

The winner of the "Best Decorated Boat" was the Hillis family of O1 Road. They were presented with their prize – two OLLA T-shirts!

Thank you to all residents of Otter Lake who were so generous with their many donations!

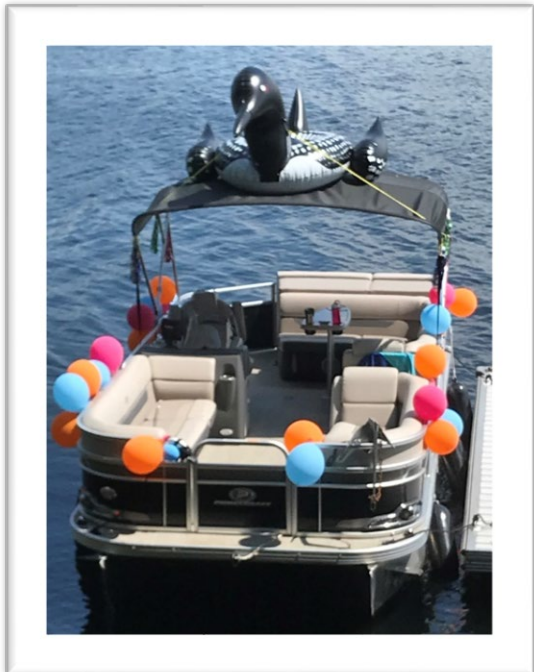


Our lake panda greeted all participants!





Big or small – we had it all!



2022 OLLA Board of Directors

Submitted by Susan Thum

As noted in the Presidents Message, the 2022 saw a few changes to our Board of Directors. As noted in the President's message, 1 new Director, Frank Croft was elected to the board at the OLLA AGM. John Burke was appointed to the board - welcome to our team Frank and John!

The current list of officers is:

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

We are all privileged to be a part of a team for a lake that we care so much about. To reach any of our directors with suggestions, questions or comments please send an email to: info@otterlake.org



Shoreline Work

Submitted by Jeff Neal

Going to Work on Your Dock or Shoreline?

Now is the time to start planning to ensure a successful, and legal, project!

The interface between your property and the lake is hugely important and extremely complicated. The

interaction between plant and animal life and humans has to be managed. And, as the landowner, the responsibility falls on you!

Maintaining a healthy shoreline is one of the best ways to ensure a healthy lake. The "Ribbon of Life" as ecologists call it, is composed of the long grass, shrubs and trees that are encouraged to grow along the shoreline. These plants serve to filter and reduce the amount of pollution that would otherwise reach the lake.

But..., you need to be able to get to the lake and you want your property to look nice. It's all possible!

Start with a plan. That's something you can work on while you sit at home this winter looking out at the snow. If you haven't already done so, take pictures of your shoreline from a few angles to remind yourself what it really looks like while you work on your plan.

There are guidelines that must be followed if any landowner is planning to undertake work along their property's shoreline. Before any work begins it is the responsibility of the landowner to obtain all approvals and permits necessary. This can also start during the winter months.

Your first contact should be the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA). Their website is: <https://www.rvca.ca/>. They can provide guidance suited to our lake and can also provide different options for your project. They can also advise you if you need to contact other departments such as the Township of Rideau Lakes, the Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Natural Resources & Forestry and/or Fisheries & Oceans Canada (Fisheries Protection Program).

Yes, this is a lot of work up front, but it can save you a lot of time and money in the future.

You can find more information on our website: <https://otterlake.org/environment/docks-shore-work/>

Loons are in Trouble

Submitted by Frank Croft

Birds Canada has released a summary report of 40 years of monitoring the Loon populations in Canada. Their Canadian Lake Loon Survey pulled together information from 4000 volunteers (including our own previous Lake Steward Doug Franks) across Canada for a total of 40 years of data to compile this report. The bottom line: **Yes, Loons are in trouble.**

The report details all the issues causing the decline in loon productivity, from man caused issues (mercury, acid rain, shoreline protection and boat traffic) to natural events (droughts, predation). There is no one main cause, but the sum of all causes is reducing the population everywhere in Canada, and especially in Ontario.

We were lucky this year on Otter Lake. We had four pairs of loons successfully reproduce. Two pairs produced one baby each and one pair produced two babies in June, and one pair produced one baby in July. This has not always been the case. Some years there were no babies or only one. Many years saw some babies born, but not reach maturity. This year, it seems all the babies have survived and are getting ready to migrate to the ocean before the ice comes in.

One interesting observation in the Birds Canada report was the positive relationship between Cormorants and Bald Eagles. The presence of these birds indicate that the lake provides a better breeding habitat and a high number of fish to support the bird population, which suggests that declines in loon productivity are not caused by eagles and cormorants. Several residents have seen Bald Eagles over Otter Lake over the last couple of years. One resident, who grew up here, never remembers seeing them on Otter Lake except over the last couple of years. So, our larger number of chicks this year along with a Bald Eagle presence is supporting Birds Canada finding!

Cottage life did a very nice summary of the report and you can find it here:

<https://cottagelife.com/outdoors/40-year-survey-sheds-light-on-the-future-of-loon-populations-in-canada/>

Or, if you want to view the full summary report which is easy reading and full of good information, it is here:

<https://birdscanada.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CLLS-40-yr-report-FINAL-EN.pdf>

Removing Beaver and Beaver Dams – What You Need To Know

Submitted by John McKenney

Section 8 of Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act dictates the rules for removing beaver and beaver dams. A person can only remove beaver or damage/destroy a beaver dam if the beaver/dam is causing damage to the person's property and the beaver and/or dam is on/adjacent to the person's property. If the person is hiring an agent to remove the dam or beaver, the agent must hold a license to trap furbearing animals.

With respect to riparian rights and drainage conflicts caused by beaver activity, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs provides some clarity. If a person's land is being flooded by a beaver dam that is located on a natural watercourse running through another person's property, the Municipality does not have the authority to remove it, although the Municipality does have the right to remove dams/beaver if their drain is blocked or threatened with damage or flooding. Likewise, the Conservation Authority does not have the authority to go onto private land to remove naturally occurring blockages at the request of upstream or downstream property owners.

Links:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/97f41#BK10>

<http://omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/drain-eref/natural.htm>



Municipal Elections – 2022

A reminder the Ontario Municipal council and school board elections will take place on Monday, October 24, 2022.

If you live in a municipality (resident elector) or own or rent property in a municipality but it is not the municipality that you live in (non-resident elector), or are a spouse of a non resident elector, you may qualify to vote in a municipality.

The Township of Rideau Lakes electors will be voting using internet and telephone. Voter Information Letters will be mailed out on October 3rd. The voting period is from October 17th to the 24th. If you have not received your package by October 17th, contact the Municipal Office at 1-800-928-2250 ext 293 or 223.

All of the information relating to the Township of Rideau Lakes Municipal election can be found at <https://election.rideaulakes.ca/>



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.

Loons 2022

Photo Credit - Frank Croft

As noted previously on our Facebook page, in late August we had five loon chicks on the lake. Frank Croft captured a few photos of the loons and we are pleased to be sharing them here with you. Beautiful!!



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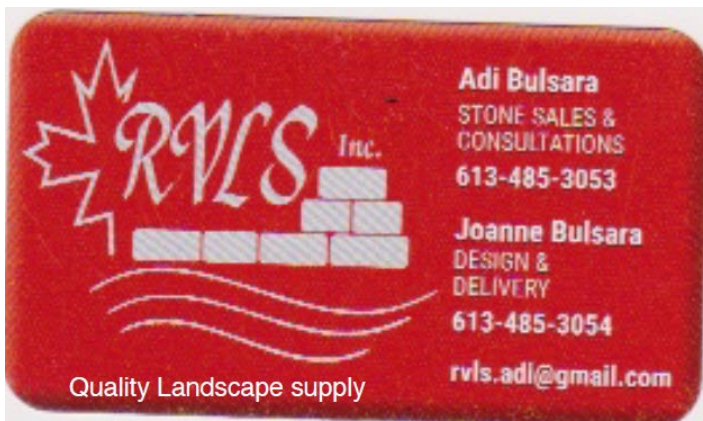
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