

Otter Lake Landowners Association

Otter Lake News

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Fall 2023

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Message from the President

Hello neighbours!

Another summer has come and gone with amazing speed. It seems like we just got the dock in and the boat out.

We had a few more participants for FloatOLLA this year. However, we have plans to change this up a bit to encourage even more participation. Stay tuned.

According to the latest report from our resident Loon expert, Laura Cashen, we ended the year with three juveniles from our 5 nesting pairs. The loons from Toohey's Bay had a very rough year, changing their nesting site twice before finding a comfortable site. Unfortunately, they didn't produce any young. And, speaking of loons, our loon nest platforms remained vacant this year but we aren't giving up. We will haul them out and do some renovations.

At this year's AGM, two of our long-time directors, Judy Hodgins and June Finless, decided to step down from the Board. We sincerely thank them both for all their efforts and years of service. They will be missed! We did, however, gain one new director, a new

resident on the lake, Betty Large. Betty will be taking on Project Management for the Association.

As you will recall, we have been trying to create a Road Contact List in case of emergencies (E. coli, blue-green algae, etc.). These contacts will, in the case of an emergency, forward messages to non-members on their roads. We are still looking for contacts for:

- O4
- O8
- O9
- Deuces Lane
- Forgotten Lane
- Merganser Lane
- McCarthy Lane
- Sandy Beach Lane
- Sabre Lane

Enjoy the fall colours! See you back here next year.

Jeff Neal, President

ollapresident@otterlake.org

Change to Membership Period

Submitted by John McKenney

A Constitutional change to the membership period was adopted at the 2023 AGM. We are returning the membership period to the calendar year. This means annual memberships expire after December 31st.

If your membership is due to expire at the end of the year, you'll receive a reminder in late December. Please watch for it.

Renewals for the next calendar year can be made at any time by sending your \$30 annual membership payment by e-transfer to otterlakeassociation@gmail.com. If your personal information has not changed, you don't need to submit a membership form. If your information has changed, you can find the membership form at the bottom of the "Membership" page at www.otterlake.org. The completed membership form can be sent to the same email address as your e-transfer payment.

Note: If your membership expires, you will not receive communications from OLLA (newsletters, newsbytes, etc.) until you've renewed your membership, so we encourage you to renew as soon as you can to stay in the loop.

Thank you for your support.

Lake Steward's Update

Submitted by Jeff Neal

This year the ice came off the lake around April 15th compared with March 31st the previous year. From January to the end of August this year, we received 27.8 inches of precipitation. We only had 24.5 during the same period last year.

We, along with the staff from RVCA, have been continuing water quality testing this year. 2023 is the 5th year in RVCA's testing cycle, which means they were testing even more sites than usual. I'm happy to say the lake is still very healthy.

Bald Eagle on Otter Lake

Submitted by OLLA Member

One of the many things I miss about our home in BC are the Bald Eagles (12 at one time) that would sit in the dead Douglas Fir in our back yard. Imagine my surprise to hear that we have a bald eagle pair nesting in a tree on an island here in our Otter Lake!! I was worried they might try for the baby loons that are born here, but recent research says that lakes with bald eagles tend to have more baby loons - something about the abundance of fish for both predators.

So, I was sitting on my dock this week (July, 2023) and saw this one sitting in a dead Eastern White Pine just 100 feet across from me on a little peninsula (O6)!! I grabbed my camera with a 1200mm lens (for comparison, the iPhones have a 13, 26 and 52mm lens), and sat for 30 min waiting for it to take off. I managed three shots that were not so bad.



Otters

Submitted by Jeff Neal

At our last Annual General Meeting (AGM), one of our members commented on the fact that we rarely talk about otters, our lake's namesake. This prompted me to do some research.

Our otters are North American River Otters. Depending on the source, their scientific name is either *Lutra canadensis* or *Lontra canadensis* with the former version being more popular.

According to Wikipedia, adult otters can weigh between 5 and 14 kg with the males being at the higher end of this range. Their length ranges from 66 to 107 centimetres with about a third of that being the long, tapered tail. The average otter can live from 8 to 13 years in the wild. The river otter's main diet is fish although they also consume amphibians, shellfish and other animals.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) lists North American river otters as "Threatened" although other sources indicate that the population in Eastern Ontario has remained reasonably stable since the early 1950's.

I spoke to some people around the lake about their experiences with otters. For the most part, that experience was positive. The main exception being the mess they sometimes leave on docks. People talked about enjoying the antics of the otters, especially in winter when they are seen playing along the shore and on the ice. Occasionally they will even make ice slides to add to their fun.

My first experience with otters here was the early spring of 2019. The ice had started to break up and three otters were diving off the ice floes to catch fish which they would bring up onto the ice to devour. I can personally attest to them having very good appetites!

I'd like to hear your stories about otters on the lake so if you are willing to share them, please send them to me (ollapresident@otterlake.org). We will publish

some in each newsletter. In addition, we will be running a photo contest, which you will read about later in this issue, so pull out your pictures and send them along.

FloatOLLA 2023

Submitted by Susan Thum

After the potential rain forecasted for Saturday, the second annual FloatOLLA got underway on Sunday August 13, 2023. Although we did not have many boats or kayaks participating in the parade, those that came out enjoyed a beautiful afternoon on the water. We collected 120 pounds of dry and canned goods and \$80 in cash donations. The proceeds were divided, 50/50, between the Portland and Smiths Falls Food Banks. Both were extremely appreciative of the donations.



For the 2nd year in a row, the winner of the "Best Decorated Boat" was an entry from Road O1, the Kinch's Maple Leaf boat were presented with their prize – two OLLA T-shirts!



Thank you to all those that contributed from Otter Lake for their generosity!

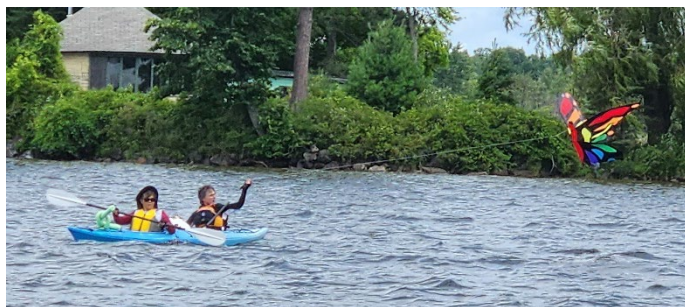
We are planning to be back again next year and hope that you will join us to make it a bigger and even better event. With so many paddlers on the lake, we are looking to include a paddle leg to the event. Stay tuned!

THANK YOU!

We at the **Smiths Falls Community Food Bank** wish to thank you for your kindness and support.

Contributions of all types and sizes are always greatly appreciated and have a significant impact on helping individuals and families in Smiths Falls and surrounding areas.

Thank you so much for your support and generosity. We truly appreciate it!
natalia



!!ANNOUNCING THE OLLA PHOTO CONTEST!!

Contest opens Jan. 1, 2024.

Otter Lake Landowners Association photo contest is for Otter Lake Landowners and their friends and family who are amateur photographers.

The photos should show nature (bonus points for otters!) in and around Otter Lake or activities in and around Otter Lake, taken after January 1, 2023.

Contest closes June 30th 2024 at midnight.

Age categories – 12 and under, 12-18, 19 and older

There will be one winner and a runner up in each category.

Winners will be announced at the AGM 2024.

Prize for the winners will be a \$50 gift certificate from Henry's Camera Store.

Include the photographer's name with the name and address of related Otter Lake Landowner. Include a Stay tuned for more details!



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Reminder: OLLA members receive FOCA membership. FOCA supports members with a wide range of services, programs, events and special offers.

Membership benefits can be found at the following link <https://foca.on.ca/member-services/benefits/>



2023-2034 OLLA Board of Directors

At the OLLA board meeting held August 12th, the roles were assigned as follows:

Jeff Neal	President; Government Liaison
Deb McVean	Secretary/Treasurer
John Burke	Lake Steward & Lake Plan
Frank Croft	Website Administration
Eric Hempell	Environment & Climate Change
Betty Large	Project Management
John McKenney	Membership
Susan Thum	Communications