



Otter Lake Landowners Association

Otter Lake News

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June 2025

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Message from the President

It's finally starting to feel like Spring here at the lake! A very welcome feeling despite the fact we're almost into Summer!

Weather permitting, this week we will be hosting a team, led by Dr. David P. Philipp, that is investigating the creation of Bass Spawning Sanctuaries in local lakes. The team will look at probable sites from both on and in the water (current water temperature is still under 15C, so the "in" part is daunting!).

As we prepare for the AGM, which will be held, as usual, in July, it's time for all of us to consider the future of OLLA. This Spring marks the end of my sixth year as President of OLLA. I truly wonder how those years flew by so quickly. And, to be brutally honest, it's time for me to decide whether or not I should step down and give someone else a chance to

lead the group in raising awareness around Otter Lake. Our current membership of 64 paid-up members certainly shows that we, the Board of Directors, haven't been able to do this very well, given there are well over 300 residences around the lake.

The current Board of Directors is down to 6 individuals despite our pleas to the Otter Lake community for more volunteers.

At the upcoming Annual General Meeting, you, the members, will be asked to determine the future of the Otter Lake Landowners' Association. Currently, the choices are:

- 1) Status quo – try to maintain the current activities with the people we have
- 2) Move OLLA to a maintenance level
 - a. eliminate all efforts to organize social events
 - b. eliminate all efforts to obtain new members
 - c. minimize follow-ups to members who have not paid their current membership fee
 - d. reduce number and size of Newsletters
 - e. provide minimal updates to the website and Facebook page
- 3) Dissolve the organization as per the Constitution and By-laws, liquidate the assets and donate them to local charities

I am well aware that I am "preaching to the choir" as many of you have been loyal members of the association for much longer than I have lived here on the lake. For that loyalty, you have my sincerest gratitude.

If you have any additional suggestions, please direct them to info@otterlake.org

For now, status quo prevails.

I ask all of you to share this Newsletter with your Road Association and neighbours and talk to them about how, for \$30 per year, they can help maintain the health and beauty of this lake. If they wish, their membership fees can go directly to, and only to, water quality testing. This will help maintain the health of the residents who enjoy being in the water and use lake water inside their home and protect the value of our properties.

Jeff
ollapresident@otterlake.org

You Otter Know

Submitted by Deb McVean with a lot of input from OLLA Member Ron Doering

Did you know that in 1945, an Otter Lake cottage housed a Russian defector and his family? It's true!

On September 5, 1945 a young Russian cipher clerk, Igor Gouzenko, working at the Soviet embassy in Ottawa, walked out of the embassy with secret papers revealing Russia's espionage activities in Canada, Great Britain and the United States. Their ultimate plan was to establish a communist dictatorship throughout the world. After trying to hand over the papers to ANYONE in the Canadian government, the RCMP finally took an interest. Gouzenko made a statement to the RCMP and then he and his pregnant wife, Svetlana, and their son disappeared! Apparently, the Ottawa police had been told to pick them up and get them somewhere safe. And they ended up here, safe at Otter Lake, with both the Russians and the RCMP searching for them.

Eventually Igor Gouzenko took on a new identity, George Brown, and he and his family moved to Port Credit, Mississauga where he and Svetlana raised 8 children. Igor died in 1982. His defection, and the information he brought with him, is often credited with triggering the Cold War and in his honour a plaque was erected in Dundonald Park, Ottawa across from the apartment that Igor and his family had stayed in while working at the Soviet embassy.

To read more about Igor Gouzenko's fascinating story at Otter Lake, as related by OLLA Member Ron Doering, refer to this link:

[Amateur historian seeks Otter Lake cottage that housed famed Soviet defector](#)

Save These Dates!

July 26 th	OLLA Annual General Meeting
Aug 16 th	OLLA Dines Out – Jimmy's Snack Shack

Member Moment

Submitted by Wendi Van Exan

Otter Lake reunion in Inverness, Scotland

Wendi Van Exan from O2 shared this story about a small world surprise.

While visiting their daughter in Inverness they met, in a random visit to a local pub, a couple who turned out to be O7 residents named the Morden's who were on a tour of Scotland. Wendi's daughter, Katie, teaches in Scotland but returns to the family cottage each summer for several weeks. You know she is at the lake when the flag of Scotland is flying. You may also see her rowing up and down the lake in her blue scull rowing boat.



If you have a member related story or suggestion for a member profile that you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter, please drop us a note at info@otterlake.org

Nature's Neighbour - Ticks and Lyme Disease

Submitted by Eric Hempell

Ticks can spread diseases, like Lyme disease, and they live at Otter Lake. By understanding them there can be better prevention.

The increasing tick population is due to the movement of birds and animals, as well as the influence of climate change. Around Otter Lake there are wood ticks and deer ticks, and it is the deer tick that develops Lyme disease from contact with a bacteria when feeding. Therefore, not all ticks carry Lyme disease.

Rodents, especially deer mice and white-footed mice, are important hosts for Lyme disease pathogens. Juvenile ticks become infected with Lyme disease bacteria when they feed on infected mice. This is why tick tubes are very effective in reducing tick populations.

Ticks can be active day or night when temperatures are above freezing, but mostly during the warmer months of the year. The times of day when ticks are most active are during the early morning and late afternoon hours.

Ticks are attracted to the heat and carbon dioxide that warm-blooded mammals give off, as well as movement and vibrations. They are slow crawling ground dwellers that climb up long grass to reach out for hosts to feed on. Mowing grass short helps keep them away, but they can be found almost anywhere. They do not jump, swim, or fly.

Most people don't feel a tick when it's on them, or when it bites. They are often unnoticed as they spend hours searching the hosts body for an ideal feeding spot and then inject a numbing agent through their saliva as they feed.

To safely remove a tick, grasp the tick with clean, fine-tipped tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Pull the tick straight out with steady, even pressure, avoiding twisting or squeezing. After removal, wash the bite area and your hands with soap and water or

an alcohol-based sanitizer. The Tick Key removal tool is also considered effective and easy to use.

There are manmade and natural products that help to keep ticks away. Some for your lawn and some for you to wear. Repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, oregano oil, thyme, citronella, and clove bud oils are highly effective. Ingesting Apple Cider Vinegar has also been known to repel ticks. Consider adding one teaspoon to your drinking water. Landscape with plants that ticks dislike, such as peppermint, lavender, geranium, rosemary, marigolds, garlic, sage, mint, lemongrass, and cedar.

Critters that devour ticks include guinea fowl and opossums. The Virginia opossums are now appearing at this latitude due to climate change, and they're beneficial in many ways.

To find the ticks on your property you can perform a tick drag. Knowing where they are will help to make the best use of resources to control them.

Lyme vaccines of the past either didn't make it to market, or didn't have enough demand to survive. However, now with the vast increase in infections, there is now a new Lyme vaccine being developed, VLA15. If all goes well, it may be available in 2026.

See www.publichealthontario.ca for more about ticks and how to deal with them.

Environmental Corner - Garden and Landscape Plantings

Submitted by Deb McVean, Article Courtesy of Ferguson Tree Nursery, Kemptville

Native Perennials

Native perennials play an important role in our landscape. They contribute to a variety of aspects in the environment such as:

- Soil stabilization
- Food and shelter for wildlife
- Food source for pollinators
- Discouragement of invasive species

- Reduced usage of water, fertilizers and special treatments
- Carbon sequestration, which is the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂). It's a way to reduce the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere, which helps mitigate climate change

They are aesthetically beautiful, although underutilised in the landscape. Planted in drifts, native perennials can create a meadow effect; or groupings in shaded areas can recreate a woodland understory; wet site plantings can enhance water filtration to our lake or to ponds your imagination is the limit!

Examples are:



New England Aster



Black-eyed Susan



Butterfly Weed



Cardinal Flower

Ferguson Tree Nursery is a not-for-profit social enterprise. All profits generated from nursery sales support the Ferguson Forest Centre programs and corporate mission, including sustainable forest management and responsible use and stewardship of the recreation and conservation lands managed by the Ferguson Forest Centre.

For additional native perennials, or for more information, contact or visit:

Ferguson Tree Nursery

275 County Rd. 44
Kemptville, ON K0G 1J0
(613) 258-0110

www.fergusontreenursery.ca

Save the Lake Partnership

Submitted by Susan Thum

Last month we shared with you an urgent call-to-action requesting your help to write to the Ontario Government, Premier, Minister of the Environment and your MPP urging them to save the Lake Partner Program (LPP). Thank you to all who took the time to submit their letters in support of this very important matter.

The following is a response received from Steve Clarke, MPP — Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes:

Thanks for your email and advocacy for the Lake Partner Program. As an MPP with many Lake Associations in my riding, I know the value of this program to monitor lake water quality in our community and across Ontario.

*Since receiving emails on this issue last week, I have been in contact with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. I'm pleased to respond to let you know the Ministry **has not** cancelled the program.*

While previous agreements with the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) and the District Municipality of Muskoka ended on March 31, 2025, the ministry has not cancelled the program. The ministry has always intended to continue the Lake Partner Program and will work closely with our partners to implement renewed agreements for the 2025 season.

Thank you again for writing and allowing me the opportunity to share this good news update with you.

Details and resources about the LPP can be found on the FOCA website at: [Lake Partner Program - FOCA answers Ontario cottage country questions](http://www.fo.ca/LakePartnerProgram)



Sponsor Spotlight

Submitted by Deb McVean & Susan Thum

OLLA is fortunate to have a number of sponsors, representing a variety of businesses in and around our community. We realized that we have not properly introduced them to you. In this edition we will begin to fix that.

First up - we are welcoming our newest sponsor the **Perth & Smiths Falls District Hospital Foundation**.



Care, Close By—When You Need It Most

Living by the lake brings us peace, joy, and a sense of community. Yet, life can be unpredictable, and when health emergencies arise, we all want to know that exceptional care is just around the corner. The Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital (PSFDH) is that lifeline for over 75,000 residents year-round, with even greater demand during the busy summer months when cottagers and visitors join our vibrant community.

In 2023-2024 alone, the hospital's emergency departments treated more than 41,900 patients. Behind these numbers lies a reality many might not realize: the Ontario government does not fund hospital equipment. Essential tools like patient beds, IV pumps, and MRI machines are only made possible through community generosity.

Whether you call the lake home seasonally or year-round, your support ensures that PSFDH remains equipped to provide the highest quality care for you, your family, and your neighbors. Together, we can safeguard this vital resource for generations to come.

Make a Difference Today Help keep our hospital strong by making a donation at www.psfdh.foundation.com.

Every donation helps ensure that vital care is available close by. Thank you for being part of this incredible community effort!

OLLA Pitches In

Submitted by Betty Large

OLLA Pitches In – Thanks to a couple of dedicated OLLA members 3 bags of garbage were collected along Otter Lake Road in April. There are still more yellow garbage bags available if people want to participate. The bags can be put out to the curb free of charge any time of the year. Contact bettyllarge@gmail.com if you would like a bag.



There's a Place on the OLLA Board for You

We welcome new additions to the board at any time of year! It's a great way to get to know your lake and your Otter Lake neighbours. Our working board meets sometimes in person and sometimes by Zoom and keeps in touch by email in between. If you would like to explore the possibility, please get in touch with our President, Jeff Neal ollapresident@otterlake.org.



Member Survey Results

Submitted by Susan Thum

In 2024 we surveyed our membership to determine what is important to you and what you want us to focus on. Thank you to those that provided your responses. Below are the results, in order of priority as voted by you:

Topic	Ranking
Test and document water quality	1
Communicate to the Otter Lake community & visitors about the lake's water quality	2
Record the input of nutrients into the lake	
Promote sense of community among Otter Lake landowners	
Protect fish and wildlife through education and partnerships	3
Educate about retaining and enhancing dark sky practices	
Encourage indigenous plant use. Protect against introduction of aquatic invasive species	4
Record water levels.	5
Encourage the re-naturalization of shorelines and maintenance of natural shorelines	6
Promote sense of community among Otter Lake landowners. (picnics, paddling, etc.)	7
Encourage responsible and respectful boating behaviour	8

Nature Activities for Family Fun this Summer

With the weather warming up, we thought this article information was timely for those of you enjoying lake time with kids of all ages this summer. The following information is courtesy of Watersheds Canada.

Wild Ideas! Nature Activities for Family Fun this Summer

Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 12pm ET / 10am MT

Looking for simple, screen-free ways to keep the kids busy (and happy!) this summer? Join us during Rivers to Oceans Week for Wild Ideas—a laid-back, idea-packed session full of nature-based activities your whole family can enjoy. Whether you are in the city, suburbs, or out at the lake, you will leave this webinar with creative, low-stress ideas to help your family connect with the outdoors all summer long. This session is perfect for parents, grandparents, and educators looking for engaging activities to connect young learners with local nature no matter the weather, your past experience level in nature, or the changes you are seeing in your community due to climate change. [Register now!](#)

Watersheds Canada website has a variety of educational resources and activity information including colouring sheets and activity books for all ages. Check out their Education Resources and the rest of their website here: [Education Resources - Watersheds Canada – Work, Live & Play in Healthy Lakes and Rivers](#)

!!The OLLA Photo Contest Returns!!

Submitted by Betty Large

A reminder - the 2nd OLLA Photo Contest **closes June 30th, 2025** at midnight.

- Winners will be announced at the AGM 2025.
- Prize for the winners will be a \$50.

Visit the OLLA Website for contest details: <https://otterlake.org/news-events/events/>

The photo below was the 2024 Winner – Jane Combe



Otter Lake / OLLA Merchandise

Submitted by Eric Hempell

Thinking of having an Otter Lake logo printed on your BBQ apron, or shirt, or whatever? We can help you with that. Even the OLLA logo is available for printing or embroidering. This is not for profit and you pay what's stated on the invoice. Together we all promote our wonderful Otter Lake.

OLLA created a new logo that represents its ongoing commitment to preserving Otter Lake and its shorelines. In the summer of 2022 that logo was put on a few t-shirts that were worn at the AGM's by those who purchased their own. If you'd like to have some merchandise with either logo let us know.

Having merchandise customised can be daunting. So, to make it easier, OLLA has provided some standard products, but others are available too. Note that the printing on fabric requires a minimum of 12 similar items with the same LOGO ink colour. Less than 12 can be ordered and we can combine it with other orders until we have 12 or more. Embroidery is also an option. Other items may vary for the minimum quantities, but you'll be notified of that when you send in your order. Payment will be required upon pick-up from an Otter Lake property. The initial quote is approximated since it may fluctuate up or down depending on the total number ordered or any changes needed to the artwork to fit the product, but it gives you a rough idea of cost. You will be emailed your actual final price when the order is ready to be submitted before you make a final decision to go ahead with the order.

Currently we're offering Hoodies, Sweatshirts, T-shirts (long and short sleeve), Ball Caps, BBQ Aprons, Tote Bags, and Drink Coasters. But tell us if you have something else in mind and we'll look into it. Send your order and/or inquiry to info@otterlake.org. We had tried a separate merchandise address in the past but it didn't work well. Better yet, see us at the AGM to discuss it in person.



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Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

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/>