



Captain Otty's Log

The Newsletter of the Otty Lake Association October 2014

President's Message

from
Robert Cosh

What an unusual summer! One of the latest ice-out dates in recent memory, lower temperatures, and more rain. Is there any connection to the apparent decrease in zebra mussels and algae, and the increase in mice and red squirrels many have been noticing?

Algae and weed problems have been both widespread and sporadic among lakes in our region in the past few years, and the OLA continues to collaborate with the RVCA and others in an effort to better understand and control excessive aquatic vegetation. The OLA Environment Committee is conducting more water testing, as well as evaluating ideas for improving lake quality. Have some thoughts? Let us know.

It has been a great summer for activities. The OLA has contributed to shoreline restoration and enhancement through the Love Your Lake Shoreline Survey and subsidized shoreline planting of shrubs and wildflowers; Fisheries and Oceans and the RVCA have offered free shoreline restoration services. We have organized and conducted groundwater testing, lake water sampling, algae and zebra mussel sampling, and the fish habitat enhancement project, and are participating in the Trillium grant Citizen Water Watch algae and aquatic plant



Photo by Beth Fisher

reporting initiative, just to name a few. On the lighter side, Otty Lakers and friends again enjoyed an afternoon at the Maple Glen recreation area for the annual Otty Lake picnic. Carol and I have been kayaking almost every day. With our lightweight paddles it's been a breeze, but we have not sailed—yet—but we're still hopeful.

Plans for 2014–15 include the Lake Links program in October, more water sampling and analysis, continuation of the subsidized shoreline planting program, and continuation of the fish habitat enhancement project in partnership with the RVCA. Stay tuned.

The OLA Board is focused on results-oriented projects and activities, with measurable outcomes: What are we trying to achieve, and how do we know when we've won? Do we need to fine-tune our short-term objectives in order to achieve

our long-term goal of a healthy and enjoyable lake?

If you have suggestions or comments on OLA plans, activities, or priorities, or wish to get involved, go to <http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca/>,

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Around the Lake



Photo by Derek Smith

AGM

The July 12 AGM featured a range of informative displays, as well as presentations from: TVT and DNE townships, RVCA (aquatic vegetation and Fish Spawning Enhancement Program), OPP Marine Unit, and the BBD&E fire department. New this year was observations on the Otty Lake housing market, by local realtor Jenn Auger. The membership unanimously accepted the Five-Year Review of the Otty Lake Management Plan and elected a new board of directors. For [minutes](#), look on the website under “About Us” and click on “Meetings.”

www.OttyLakeAssociation.ca

If you haven't already, surf over to our new website to find a mix of breaking news, Otty Lake basics, OLA business, history, and photos. We welcome your contributions. Feedback or glitches can be reported to the [webmaster Barb Hicks](#), via “Contact Us.”

Facebook

If you are a Facebook user, please ask to join the [“Otty Lake Association” Facebook group](#). The group is an informal way of sharing photos, observations, interesting lake web references and breaking OLA news. A link is also available from the [OLA website](#).

Thanks to Facebook users who voted for the RVCA in a contest by River Mission for a chance to win a \$5,000 bursary in support of a smartphone app for reporting algal blooms. Voting ended August 22, and the winner was COBAMIL, a water protection organization on Montreal's north shore.

Municipal

Elections—October 27

Ontario residents go to the polls to elect their municipal and school board representatives on Monday, October 27, for a new, four-year term. Unlike provincial and federal elections, eligible voters may cast a vote in more than one municipality. In addition to being a Canadian citizen over the age of 18, to be eligible, you must meet one of the following conditions in the municipality: be a resident, be an owner or a tenant, or be the spouse of an owner or a tenant. Visit www.voterlookup.ca to see if you are on the voters' list; cottagers may be listed as a “non-resident elector.” TVT will be offering internet or telephone voting, while DNE voters can only vote in person at the polling station.

State of the Lake Report

The 2014 [State of the Lake Report](#) has been posted on the

home page of the website. The Lake Steward and Environment Committee received the final water quality reports in late September, and collated them with accumulated data to describe physical and environmental lake conditions for the year, including: lake levels, ice-out, water chemistry monitoring results, groundwater program results, algal bloom occurrences, and zebra mussel occurrences. For more information, contact Derek Smith, at Dsmith@dpsint.com. If you do not have internet access and would like to be mailed a paper copy, please contact our Board Secretary, Christine Kilburn, at (613) 326-0493.

Citizens Algae and Aquatic Growth Monitoring

Citizens noticing green algal blooms or excessive aquatic plant growth can report it using the [Citizen Water Watch website](#). Once registered, users can report their observations to a central data base, providing location and other details, as well as a photo if they choose. The reporting application is a component of the collaborative project “People, Aquatic Plants and Healthy Lakes: Finding the Balance in Eastern Ontario's Lake Country”. Kaitlin Brady, the RVCA Algae Watch Project Coordinator, reports that there have not been a lot of sitings reported to date, likely due to the August launch, and that it was not a particularly bad year for algae blooms. While Otty Lake is not directly involved in this Trillium funded project, it has successfully applied to be one of the study lakes. As an initial step, Lake Steward Murray Hunt has collected Otty Lake's 40 years worth of water quality monitoring data into one format for the collaborative to assess.

Barb Hicks

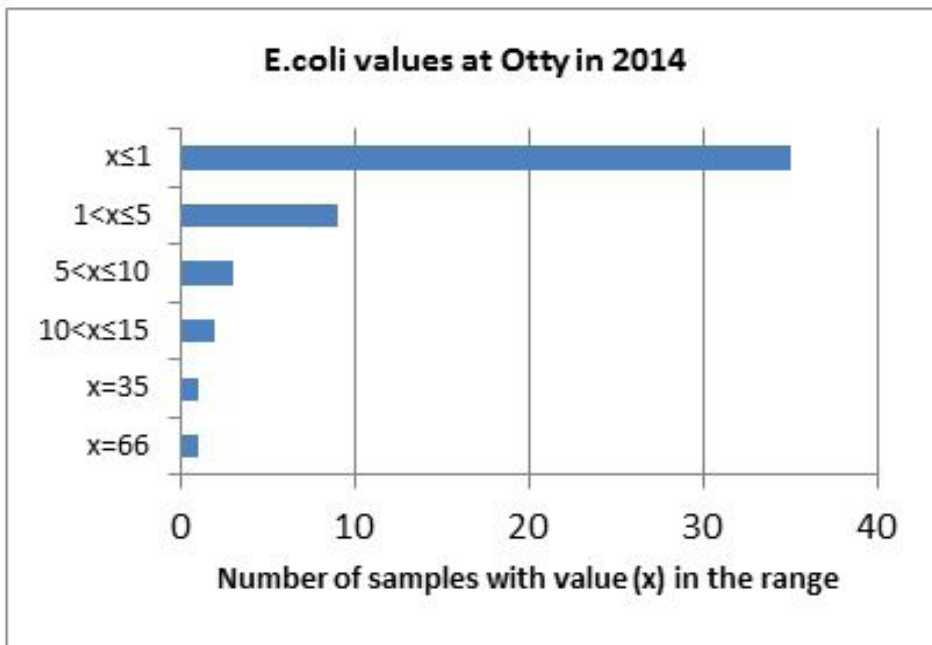
E.coli Sampling at Otty Lake

The OLA water quality sampling program was kicked off early this year. Our first nutrient samples were taken on April 28, just a few days after the lake was ice-free. We will continue this nutrient sampling into October.

Our E. coli sampling is conducted from May to August to coincide with the swimming season. A total of 51 samples were taken this year, and the results were generally good. All samples were within the provincial standard for swimming—100 colony forming units per 100 mL (cfu/100 mL). Most E. coli samples had very low values of 0, or 1 cfu/100 mL; there was one higher sample of 64 cfu / 100 mL in August. Sampling is being repeated in this area to determine if this is an ongoing situation. A chart showing the range of the recorded values of the E. coli sampling is provided. Despite these relatively good E. coli values, lake residents are cautioned against drinking untreated lake water.

The complete results of the 2014 water quality sampling on Otty will be available in a few months and will be reported in the next newsletter.

Murray Hunt



President's Message (continued from Page 1)

click on "Contact Us", and email us your thoughts. You can direct your email to the Board in general, or to an individual Board member, including new members Christine Kilburn and Derek Smith.

Thanks to those of you who have paid your 2014 dues. If you haven't yet, please consider supporting our work by sending your cheque for \$20 to the OLA, Box 20122, Perth, ON K7H 3M6.

A final thought: A fun summer on the lake may have left you feeling flushed, but don't forget your septic system. If it's due for a pump-out, have it done before the snow flies, in order to avoid unnecessary major costs Yule regret! Have a great autumn on the lake, enjoy the fall colours, and perhaps join the loons for Thanksgiving dinner at the lake.

Robert Cosh



Reducing erosion into a wetland

Otty Lake Shoreline Properties Get a Boost

Over the summer and early fall, seven Otty Lake property owners received support from the Love Your Lake Program in the form of free shoreline naturalization, with a total value of \$7,975.

The intent was to enhance or improve shoreline buffer areas and thus help protect the lake. Funding was provided by the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds through the Department of Fisheries and Oceans; shoreline work was completed through the RVCA's Shoreline Naturalization Program. This is another great example of collaboration with our community partners. Congratulations and thanks to all Otty Lake property owners who continue to enhance their shoreline buffers.

Karen Hunt



Naturalization on a developed property

Groundwater Sampling Program a Success

A groundwater sampling program, in conjunction with Caduceon Laboratory in Kingston, was announced at the AGM in July. The program's purpose was to give OLA members the chance to have their drinking water supply analyzed for its chemical properties. Nineteen people submitted samples and paid the \$100 fee. To date, I have been asked to review the water chemistry results from 14 of those analyses, which were all found to be free of contamination (septic effluents, fertilizers, etc.) and chemically potable. All analyses showed very low levels of iron and other metals, and very low concentrations of nitrate. This is a very positive result.

The Otty area produces "hard" water; hardness is a function of calcium and magnesium content. High hardness becomes evident when lime scale forms in a kettle and on bathroom fixtures. This is a nuisance, not a health hazard, and may require installing a water softener in your home. Softeners that regenerate with sodium chloride add some sodium to your drinking water, but generally in very small concentrations.

We can approach the laboratory about continuing the sampling program next spring. If interested, please contact me at dsmith@dpsint.com.

Derek Smith,
MSc Hydrogeology

Loon Report

The original snowbirds, our loons, are about to leave for their winter homes in the south after a productive sojourn on Otty. Their itinerant behaviour made them somewhat difficult to count this year, but this is what we observed:

- One breeding pair and one chick with home base near the entrance to Jebbs Creek. This area has been productive in the recent past.
- One breeding pair and one chick centred somewhere around Cloverleaf Island. This is the first year breeding has appeared in this area.
- One unsuccessful breeding pair in Little Otty.

Odds are that there was one additional lone loon, but Bird Studies Canada seems particularly interested in breeding pairs and chicks; regardless, our numbers are comparable to last year. In addition, the loon survey discovered a submerged pedal boat, which has been returned to its owner. This will NOT be reported to Bird Studies Canada.

Bill McLeish



2014 Workshop Sat., October 25th Perth Civitan Hall

*The day will focus on lake plans
and algae and aquatic growth.*

Contact Karen Ballentine
ballentine@watersheds.ca
or 613-264-1244.

\$20, payable at door, includes lunch.

www.watersheds.ca

All Generations Enjoy the Family Picnic

The annual Otty Lake Family Picnic was held on Saturday, July 26. Thanks to Maple Glen residents for sharing their lovely waterfront park with us. About 40 people attended, and in several cases, grandparents enjoyed the festivities with their children and grandchildren.

Reptile Rain Forest joined us for a second year and provided an informative, one-hour presentation. Darren Boyd showed the crowd a large variety of snakes, frogs, and lizards, describing their care, his history with them, and their interesting habits.

The OLA provided plenty of food, in the form of hamburgers and hot dogs, veggie and fruit trays, cold drinks, and tasty treats for dessert. Afterwards, everyone was invited to participate in the various games. A full-size parachute allowed adults and children to work collaboratively in playing “switch it up,” “pop-corn,” and “the camping trip.” Fris-



Photo by Chris Harrison

bee tic-tac-toe challenged people’s accuracy, as did a target game. Bocce ball was popular amongst the children, who proved to be excellent judges of distance. The “squawking chickens” made for an exciting relay game. Donuts on a string were again a hit, as participants raced to eat their sweet, suspended from

a branch of the tree. Finally, it was men vs. women in the tug-of-war, and although the men felt they deserved a rematch, the ladies were this year’s winners.

Thanks to all who participated in this year’s OLA Family Picnic.

Gail Read

Crown Islands Status Update

Otty Lake’s Crown (i.e., not privately owned) islands represent a wonderful resource for local property owners. Chief among these is Cloverleaf Island; with its good beach, it entices people to come sunbathe, socialize, and swim. Occasionally this shared space suffers from irresponsible use, resulting in trash, broken glass, unsanitary toilet activity, and unsafe campfires. This is not a new problem, and while concerned citizens and long-time users of the island have generally dealt with past instan-

ces of abuse in an informal manner, the issue has now been referred to the OLA, the only formal organization representing Otty Lake residents. Users have been contacted, and they suggest that the informal means of control currently in place seem to maintain Cloverleaf and other Crown islands in a reasonable state, although improvements could be made (e.g., signage, enhanced community awareness).

The OLA and others continue to discuss this issue. You can forward your views to billmcleish@rogers.com.



*A toilet seat on Cloverleaf Island
Photo by Evelyn Dore*

Bill McLeish

Shoreline Planting Program

Native, locally grown shrubs and wildflowers were available again this year for shoreline planting through the Otty Lake Shoreline Planting Program. Plant pickup day was Saturday, July 5. Members of the Otty Lake community arrived by vehicle and boat to take plants to 21 new homes, ten of which were new to the program. Thanks to Evelyn Dore, Gail Read, Robert Cosh, Murray Hunt, Rick Stojak, Chris Harrison, Judith Landles, and Cathy Kari, who all played various roles in picking up plants and shrubs, organizing orders, and cleaning up afterwards. Thanks, also, to Karen Hunt for co-ordinating the program.

The 75 wildflower plants were obtained through Philip Fry, of the Old Field Garden and Wildflower Nursery in Oxford Station, while the 100 shrubs were ordered from the Ferguson Forest Centre (FFC) in Kemptville, through the RVCA Shoreline Planting Program. Special thanks go out to Meaghan McDonald of the RVCA for attending our distribution day to provide planting information and advice.

The OLA subsidized 50% of the cost of all plants, and all available plants sold out quickly through advance orders.

Evelyn Dore and Gail Read have agreed to co-ordinate the program next year; an order has already been placed with Philip Fry. It will include two dozen each of marsh milkweed and cardinal flower, plus another dozen of a to-be-determined mixture of blue flag iris, obedience plant, and Canada anemone; 100 shrubs have been ordered from the FFC. Pickup day is scheduled for Saturday, July 6, 2015.

Also looking ahead, a plant sale is planned for Saturday, September 5, 2015, at Maple Glen. This will be an opportunity to share your surplus plants and get new varieties, with proceeds supporting OLA projects. In the meantime, we need a volunteer on the north shore who will receive plant donations. Contact Evelyn (edore01@rogers.com) or Gail (read2read@hotmail.com), if you can help.

Mining in BurgessWood

Editor's Note: BurgessWood, a community on the northwest shore of Otty Lake, was once the site of active apatite and mica mines. The following is excerpted, with permission, from "[BurgessWood: Evolution of a Community](#)," written by Roy Macskimming, and published by the BurgessWood Property Owners' Association in 2011. The full excerpt is available on our website's [History](#) page.

The first recorded commercial shipment of apatite in Canada came from North Burgess Township. Over the years between the 1860s and 1920s, a series of operators leased or owned the mineral rights on Lots 4, 5, and 6 of Concession 8 in North Burgess, in and around present-day BurgessWood.

The mines were of the open pit type—narrow trenches that were

normally shallow but could occasionally run as deep as 100 feet. The mineral output was usually destined for export to either Germany or Great Britain. The product was transported by scow from a bay on the north shore of Otty Lake, now called Apatite Bay. From there it travelled to the lake's south shore, then by wagon or sleigh to Rideau Ferry, whence it was shipped to Montreal via the Rideau Canal.

Of the various operators, the Anglo-Canadian Phosphate Company maintained the largest operation, employing about 20 miners on average. Eventually mica would overtake apatite as the area's main product. The mining operations came to an end in 1923, as the market for its product petered out.

While current-day volunteers were blazing hiking trails in the area, they discovered remnants of

the mica operations left behind by miners nearly a century ago. Alongside a long deep trench, they found remains of barrels and buckets, with wooden staves and rusted iron rings partially intact. There was also a piece of iron driven into a tree, part of a winch system for raising buckets of mica out of the pit. These evocative artifacts of another era can still be seen on the trail.

As well, an ore wagon was found on the old McLaren property in present-day BurgessWood, near the couple's two houses and the miners' bunkhouse. As the developer of BurgessWood, Dr. Grover Lightford donated the wagon to the Silver Queen mine at Murphy's Point Provincial Park, and members of the BurgessWood maintenance committee volunteered to restore it.

Roy Macskimming

The Otty Lake Fishery

Otty Lake houses a variety of fish species. For resident and visiting anglers, smallmouth and largemouth bass are the main attraction. Northern pike also reside in Otty, but this population is small with few fish over eight pounds. Panfish, including bluegills, black crappie, rock bass, perch, and sunfish, thrive in Otty.

Don't be surprised to see carp in Otty. Over the last decade, this population has exploded. Many carp have reached the 30- to 40-pound range. Carp are commonly seen in weedy back bays in relatively shallow water.

Over the past 20 years, the smallmouth bass population has been in decline, especially with regards to adult fish. Because of our lengthy winters, it can take up to six years for a bass to reach adult size, roughly two pounds. Consequently, the population decline

has resulted from illegal fishing during the spawn and from legal, but irresponsible over-harvesting of adult bass during the open season.

Currently, the smallmouth population is stable, but requires considerable care if it is to increase or remain at its current level.

To counteract this situation, the OLA and the RVCA have combined on a smallmouth bass spawning enhancement initiative, which began in 2013. Detailed information about this joint venture can be found on the OLA website.

Practising catch-and-release and selective harvest are two things anglers can do to protect fish populations. Catch-and-release is exactly that—all fish caught are immediately released, except when the fish has been badly hooked and there is little chance of survival if released. Selective harvest means only keeping fish smaller than two pounds for

the table. This conservation best-practice is also a healthy choice. According to Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish, bass longer than 14 inches caught in Otty are not recommended for consumption on a regular basis.

Panfish are easy to catch and are an ideal way to introduce kids to fishing. No special equipment is needed. A simple push-button spinning reel on a light rod will do the trick. Use a small hook, a split-shot sinker, and a piece of worm, then cast right from your dock. As an added bonus, panfish are absolutely delicious on the table, far superior to bass or pike.

Enjoy matching wits with the fish of Otty, but please practise catch-and-release for bass. Fish are an important link in the ecosystem, and it's up to us to respect and protect what Nature has provided.

Wally Robins

Spawning Habitat Phase II

In 2013, OLA and the RVCA partnered on a spawning habitat improvement project for smallmouth bass. This work received critical acclaim and wide coverage as being the single largest such initiative ever undertaken in eastern Ontario.

On September 14 and 15 of this year, Phase II of the project was completed by a group of volunteers from the RVCA and the Otty Lake community. The work crew shovelled and lugged pails of fist-size rock; wrestled with old Christmas trees, encasing their bases in concrete; and loaded all this material onto pontoon and other boats supplied by the volunteers. Rock was deposited in strategic locations to



create new spawning beds, and wood clusters were sunk to provide additional habitat for bass and other aquatic life. What a success! The results, not including sore muscles, was the creation of 68 spawning nests and the addition of 185 wood clusters to the underwater world; 240 hours of volunteer time were

dedicated to Phase Two work.

Summary of Phases I and II

- 175 spawning beds created
- 181 wood clusters to enhance existing habitat
- 58 cornerstones at nest sites to provide cover for guarding males

Enhancing habitat is one of the most critical things that can be done to stabilize and sustain the population of any species. Otty Lake can be rightfully proud in being on the leading edge of responsible resource management. Well done, Otty, with a huge thank-you to the RVCA.

Wally Robins

Otty Lake: Paddlepower 2014

Sunday July 13 was the second Annual PaddlePower. Despite the less than favourable weather conditions, 19 enthusiasts braved the wind, rain, and choppy water to form a raft of kayaks off the shores of Maple Glen, Mile Point, and Cloverleaf Island.

The organizers are already looking ahead to next year's event and considering relocating the rendezvous to the south end of Otty Lake off Hazard Island.

See you all next year!



Photo by Evelyn Dore

OLA 2014–15 Board Members

Changes to the OLA Board membership took place at the July AGM. First of all, our thanks to retiring Board members Rick Stojak and David Reesor for their many years of service to the OLA Board. Rick managed our website for many years, and David served in many positions, including a term as president (2008–09). Second, we welcome two new Board members: Christine Kilburn, secretary, and Derek Smith. Christine has enjoyed a career in finance and has held a wide range of volunteer positions at all levels with the United Church of Canada; she has lived on Little Otty for four years. Derek is a hydrologist, and has been assisting our lake steward, Murray Hunt, with water quality sampling. He is looking forward to studying Otty more thoroughly. Derek and his wife Ev live on the east side of the lake.

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To find out more about the OLA, or to see past issues, please see: www.ottylakeassociation.ca. Or write to: **The OLA, Box 20122, Perth ON K7H 3M6.**