



CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

OTTY LAKE ASSOCIATION • JULY 2020

President's Message

from

Reid Kilburn



Greetings everyone,

In these unprecedented times, most of us are still going through circumstances and emotions that we have never experienced in our lifetime. There is no pandemic guidebook or right way to feel and act during self-isolation. We have tried, as best we could, to understand how guidelines and restrictions applied to everyone around the lake and advocate for all members of our community while at the same time supporting our municipal and health unit's leadership.

I am pleased to see initial signs of a return to "normal" (whatever that is) around the lake. Cottages, for the most part, are occupied, boats are in the water, and paddlers and fishermen abound. One of the most common tips to practice to help you stay feeling as grounded and in control as possible is to stay active and get fresh air daily. I couldn't think of a better place to get outside and enjoy the fresh air than Otty. While enjoying our outdoor paradise remember to be safe.

It has been a challenge maintaining our normal summer programs, especially those that relied on partner programs. Good news first. Our annual shoreline planting project was a great success and you will find more information in a following article. On the disappointing side our 2020 water sampling program has been reduced due to COVID closures. The Lake Partner Program will likely be cancelled and the Dorset Laboratory remains closed. Last week, Derek Smith, our OLA Lake Steward, with

the help of resident Kit Muma collected E. coli samples from their kayaks as part of the OLA sampling program. Normally this would have been done with the help of volunteers and a pontoon boat but with physical distancing still in place even a large pontoon boat can't fully guarantee our volunteers' safety.

Another change upcoming will be a transition from our traditional Annual General Meeting (AGM) held, in recent years, at the Perth Legion to a virtual AGM supported by the video conferencing app "Zoom". The OLA will send out notice of the meeting and agenda via email shortly.

At different times in its history, the OLA has seen different phases of its work.

Through the 2000s, the OLA played an important role in bringing the neighbouring townships on board with some of the critical lake protections we now take for granted such as legislation around "Building Strong and Healthy Communities", mandatory septic inspection, and most importantly the Otty Lake Management Plan. Through this period, members of the OLA board, including the President, and volunteers played a major and ongoing advocacy role in changing the political landscape that governs Otty Lake. These efforts were largely successful, and we now enjoy a strong legislative and regulatory framework that supports ongoing improvement to the water quality on Otty Lake. Among the many who played a significant role throughout these transformative years were Karen and Murray Hunt.

After 30 years of cottaging/living and working hard for the good of Otty, Karen and Murray recently moved to Perth. I, for one, have certainly appreciated their legacy and the support from Karen and Murray I



Photo: Mary Brown

have received over my years on the OLA Board. A big OLA thank you to Karen and Murray for all their efforts over the past 30 years. You have not moved far so we will still look forward to seeing you around the lake.

Many around the lake know Karen and Murray. Please take a moment to read another tribute to Karen and Murray in this edition of Captain Otty's Log.

Thank you to everyone for your efforts to keep our lake community healthy. In these unprecedented times enjoy our beautiful lake, play safe, stay safe and stay healthy. Better days will come.

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SHORELINE PLANTING PROJECT – ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

On June 13th, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and our Otty Lake Association came together once again to offer OLA members the Shoreline Plant Sale. This year was a bit different than in years past, due to the necessary COVID-19 safety protocols, but we made it work. The plants were delivered on the 12th and placed in our secure garage safely away from any deer for the night. The next day in the early a.m., Kyla Haley and Kirsten Brouse came to help organize the plants for everyone to come and get their orders at a safe physical distance. Members were requested to come at a designated time, find their orders on our lawn, and leave their money in an envelope in a bin at the end of our driveway. The

instructions were all communicated in an email back in May and everyone to our amazement came on time, received their plants and left the correct amount. It was like watching the symphony – people came in, found their name, and left – all between 10 and 12. 55 plants are now spread out among 23 shorelines on our lake: Sugar Maples, Birch, Tamarack, High Bush Cranberry, Nannyberry, and Elderberry.

A big thank you goes out to Eileen Johnston for taking everyone's orders in early April and helping us sell out – making this year another super successful Shoreline Planting Project. Thank you Eileen, Kyla, and Kirsten!

Rachel Roth

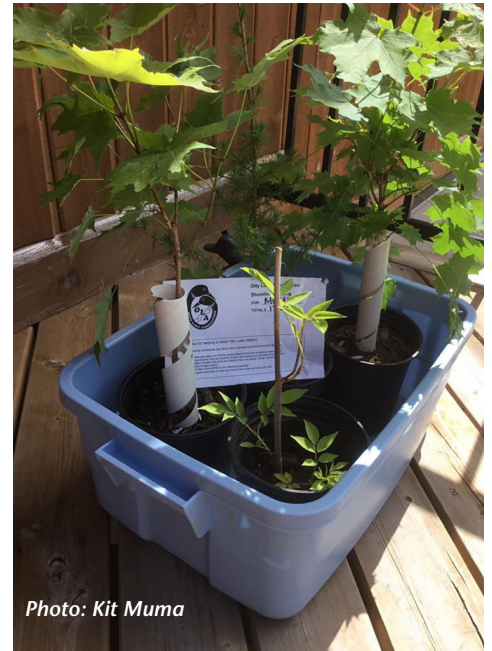


Photo: Kit Muma

JOIN THE OTTY LAKE iNATURALIST PROJECT!

If you recall from last summer's LAGM, we enjoyed a wonderful talk by Tobi Kiesewalter from Murphy's Point Provincial Park. Tobi introduced us to iNaturalist and encouraged us to consider starting a project of our own for Otty Lake. iNaturalist is a citizen science project and online social network of naturalists, citizen scientists, and biologists built on the concept of mapping and sharing observations of biodiversity across the globe. iNaturalist may be accessed via its website <https://www.inaturalist.org> or from its mobile applications and participants can post their observations (photos) of plants, animals, insects, fish, etc. as members of a par-

ticular "Community". The members of the Community can help identify or discuss each other's observations.

We have set up an iNaturalist Project to let the Otty Lake community pool our observations with other people on iNaturalist and, in that way, track the wildlife in and around Otty Lake.

Please join us in this fun and informative project. Once you have signed up for a free iNaturalist.ca account, you can start adding observations to our Otty Lake project. Start here: <https://inaturalist.ca/signup> to sign up. Once you have signed up, you can Join Otty Lake by going here: <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/otty-lake> To join, please click on the blue button at the top right (see image below).



As well, Tobi encouraged us to join the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) project tracking Species at Risk (SAR) (<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/nhic-rare-spe->

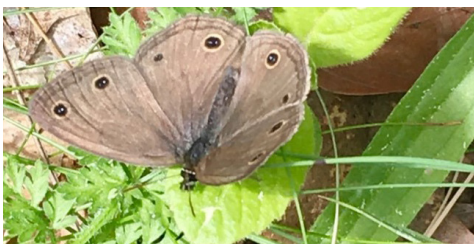


Canada Mayflower, Otty Lake

[cies-of-ontario](https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/otty-lake)). These folks are the official collectors of all the data on SAR and tracked species in Ontario. This way, any SAR that we enter into our project will also be added to the SAR database.

Then, start making observations! Here is a really clear set of instructions for getting started: <https://www.inaturalist.org/pages/getting+started> As a reminder, we encourage you to take photos of wild things (not your dog!) and things that you have not cultivated (like your Black-eyed Susans!) and please mark the location so that it will be added to our project.

Jenepher Lennox-Terrion



Little Wood Satyr, Otty Lake

ZOOM TO THE AGM TUES. JULY 28

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be taking a different form this year, as large gatherings are prohibited due to Covid-19. We will be having a virtual AGM, conducted online via Zoom. You will need a computer or other mobile device in order to participate. This format also gave us an opportunity to rethink the original date of Sunday, July 12 in the afternoon. An Ontario Order in Council has given clearance for organizations to delay their mandated AGM's for up to 90 days after the period of declared emergency, but we really don't want to wait that long! Organizers are hoping a weekday evening meeting will not take away from precious weekend hours, and the online format will make it possible for members who spend their weeks outside the Perth area to attend. Email and snail mail notices will be



Participants in May 23, 2020 OLA Board Meeting

sent out shortly. Those who RSVP will be sent a link and instructions for signing on to the meeting that Tuesday. Note you do not have to have a Zoom account to do this. You will need to be a paid up Otty Lake Association member in order to vote, however. We are hoping to record the proceedings for those unable to attend.

Barb Hicks

BENEFITS OF FOCA MEMBERSHIP TO INDIVIDUALS

The OLA greatly benefits from being a member of FOCA (the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations). But did you know there are also various discounts FOCA makes available to individuals and families who are members of the OLA as a result?

- A discount on the Cottage First! insurance, a program available exclusively to FOCA members
- 18% discount from Action First Aid for a Phillips home defibrillator (AED, automated external defibrillator)
- 5% discount on Separett Waterless Toilets
- 10% discount from DockinaBox for a dock frame system or boat lift
- Discount on Cottage Life magazine new subscriptions or renewals
- 30% off memberships to the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough



- 50% off digital subscriptions to the National Observer
- A time limited offer from Sawmill Structures to donate \$350 to a local food bank if you purchase a shed or Bunkie during the pandemic

Read more on the FOCA website <https://foca.on.ca/member-services/benefits/>. To access the offers, you will need a logon and password from the OLA Secretary, who will verify that you are a paid-up member.

AREA COUNSELLORS 2020

In previous years, your Area Counsellor would visit in May or June and deliver a Summer Information Package. Due to COVID-19 a computer-based set of communications is being used this year.

We hope that you received an email in early May providing access to your Summer Information Package 2020 of great resources: announcements, updates, informative readings, membership payment and an RVCA presentation. All of these materials have been posted on www.ottylakeassociation.ca for your reference. Your Area Counsellor has contacted/will be contacting you by email as a follow-up to answer questions and provide assistance. Please keep these contacts available and reach out if this team can be of help.

We understand that a visit is a friendlier approach but social distancing is critical at this time!

A sincere thank you to the many who shared positive emails and phone calls regarding this year's pandemic approach. As well, the perseverance shown by some in overcoming technical challenges has been remarkable.

Thank you to residents and Area Counsellors for your shared efforts in making this year's process a success!"

Gail Read

CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG is produced by the Otty Lake Association (OLA) three times a year, and is distributed by e-mail or Canada Post to all OLA members. Contributions to the Log are welcome.

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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.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Thanks to all of you who have paid your \$25 for your 2020 OLA membership. It is greatly appreciated. As with everything, collecting membership dues for the Otty Lake Association under the restrictions of the pandemic has been a bit of a challenge. We thank so many of you for embracing the new way of renewing, and sending your fees in via e-Transfers. By cheque is of course also fine.

In normal years, the majority of our dues are collected via the Area Counsellors (AC) or at our Annual General Meeting (AGM). Since our Counsellors are restricted in the amount of visiting they can do, this year, an electronic information package was circulated, as covered in Gail Read's article. Thanks so much to Gail for all her work to keep the communication lines open amongst the AC's, and organizing the electronic information packages, with the help of Barb Hicks, our ever diligent communications person. Some of you have given your dues to your AC's and we appreciate that.

Our AGM will be virtual this year, so there will not be an opportunity to pay your membership dues at that venue. Many of you have already sent in your renewals, recognizing that this is the case. Thank you! Here are some interesting statistics:

- This year, memberships have been received from 189 of you. THIS IS AMAZING!

- Of those, 119 came in via e-Transfer. That's 63% of memberships received to date. Awesome!! This method saves your volunteer treasurer trips to the bank teller (deposits cannot be made at the ATM, only at a teller – that has been complicated during this time of COVID-19, with the Perth branch closed)

- In 2019, memberships were received from 276 property owners.
- Of those, 43 were paid via e-Transfer. That's about 16%.
- In 2019, 22 membership renewals were received at the AGM.

Thanks to everyone who supports the work of the Otty Lake Association.

Christine Kilburn

LIVING LAKESIDE IN HARMONY

(A compilation of several articles from cottagelife.com and safeboater.com)

Lakeside living is precious, whether you are seasonal or a full time resident. Water is relaxing and bigger lots offer greater privacy. The wildlife on our lake, along the shoreline and in the forests is diverse and provides special viewings on a daily basis of water birds drifting by, turtles retreating to land to lay eggs or spotted fawns munching on your flowers! If this isn't enough, water offers the most beautiful of natural features.

Lake fun means different things to different people. Many enjoy their peaceful walks, others appreciate cycling where traffic is more manageable. Quiet deck meals and socially distanced chats are even acceptable in our current COVID environment! Water is known to help people to relax whether you are gazing out a window, horizontal under a tree, or actively swimming, fishing or boating. Respect and tolerance become

key in such a diverse community. Noise can become grating as it carries across water and is likely to be amplified. Property maintenance machinery must even be used at the lake, but early-mornings and lengthy periods of engine revving aren't appreciated by neighbours! Likewise, Mozart enthusiasts and Metallica fans won't irritate one another if their volumes are low.

Watercraft can be a joy to see passing by at a safe distance, at slow speed, and aware of swimmers, paddlers and waterfowl. No wake zones are especially important where loons and other waterfowl may be nesting. Many of our residents own and enjoy the operation of their boats while remaining aware of others. Waterskiing and boarding enthusiasts as well as jet ski operators have many open areas in which to travel and enjoy their water fun responsibly.

There are regulations that apply to all types of watercraft. Be sure to know the law before leaving shore in a kayak or a motorboat, on a SUP or jet ski. Refer to safeboater.com for the

continued on page 5

PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING: GO PADDLING, PART 2!!



Although paddling is a great way to maintain social distancing while

on the water, we continue to have limitations on group sizes in Ontario. As a result, Otty Paddle Power has been cancelled this summer.

It is wonderful to see the number of kayaks, canoes and stand up paddleboards (SUPs) out enjoying this beautiful weather. Please post a picture of one of your adventures. Be sure to include some portion of your boat and whatever fun or viewing you included on this trip.

Pictures can be posted on Otty Lake Association Facebook or emailed to read2read@outlook.com. A compilation will be created and posted at www.ottylakeassociation.ca for community enjoyment as the season draws to an end. Keep the pictures coming!!

For some tips on social distancing while paddling, see this [item](#) from our Summer Information Package.

Gail Read

SAFE GATHERINGS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Adapted from: How to safely have friends and family over amid COVID-19 by Brooklyn Neustaeter, CTV News, June 9, 2020

Limits on social gatherings are easing as provinces continue to relax COVID-19 restrictions, but that doesn't mean people can get together like they used to.

With careful planning, experts say getting together with a limited number of friends and family members can safely be done.

Have Your Get-Togethers Outside

- Having friends in the house even for a short time remains a bad idea. Get together outside.
- Outdoor transmission is unlikely because of the wind and the dilution effect.
- If you do gather inside, restrict the time to no more than an hour.

Assess Your Risk Level Before Visiting Others

- If you are being bothered by a health symptom of any kind, such as respiratory, headache, or fever, stay home.
- Assess the risk level for a gathering based on the community spread in your area.

Establish Safe Distancing

- Stick to the gathering size limits outlined by public health officials.
- Set out physical distancing guidelines before guests arrive.
- People should be far enough apart that a conversation should feel slightly awkward.
- Use tape or chalk to mark the distance between people.
- Remember that when people are drinking they have a tendency to get overly social and they may start to disrespect physical distancing.
- The host should warn guests who are not following physical distancing measures.
- Signs to remind guests to keep their distance and to maintain good hygiene may be helpful.

Limit the Number You Invite

- Gathering limits may make it difficult for a host to decide who to invite.
- Consider multiple smaller gatherings instead of a large gathering
- Get creative to incorporate more people, perhaps by inviting some people in person and some people virtually.

B.Y.O. Supplies

- Consider having guests bring their own supplies including dishware, cutlery, glassware, food and drinks to limit sharing that could cause the virus to spread.
- If guests do not bring their own dishware, make sure they are not sharing dishes, glasses or cutlery
- Consider marking everyone's glasses with their names or uniquely.
- The risk of sharing food is low, but not advisable.
- Try putting out snack size portions, e.g. small bowls of chips instead of one big bowl.

The Bathroom Isn't a Big Risk

- Having guests go into one's home to use the bathroom is not a big risk.
- Do away with hand towels that can harbour bacteria and use paper towels or serviettes.
- The host should clean and disinfect the bathroom before guests arrive and after they leave.
- Leave out disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer to make guests feel more comfortable.
- Use a tissue on the door handle on your way out.
- Address the bathroom situation before guests arrive as it may be a deciding factor in whether they attend.

Hosts should be mindful that their guests may have different feelings about get-togethers right now. There is nothing wrong with choosing not to attend a gathering amid the pandemic. "Like with any event, if you're not comfortable it's totally appropriate to decline and you don't need to give an excuse. If it's someone close to you that you'd

feel would be really hurt by you not attending, you could politely let them know that the comfort level is just not there." Read the entire story at <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/how-to-safely-have-friends-and-family-over-amid-covid-19-1.4976360>

Living Lakeside continued from page 4

expectations of safe boating which include:

- Acquire a boat license when operating a powered water vehicle.
- Be safe and prudent by staying well clear of swimmers and properties.
- Be aware of speed limits to ensure your wash does not cause injury to people, erosion or damage to properties (10 km/h within 30 metres).
- Use courtesy and common sense not to create a hazard, a threat, a stress, or an irritant to others.
- Alcohol, drugs, and controlled substances don't mix with boating and as such are an offense for drivers and passengers.
- Have a look-out and be shoreline conscientious whenever towing.
- "Careless Operation" can result in charges under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Noise pollution can result from lengthy periods of engine operation as noted below:

- Jet skis (80 dB if passing by well offshore)
- Because jet skis often travel at full throttle and stay in a limited space, they seem louder and may be considered more annoying.
- Motorboats (70-100 dB, depending on speed)
- Motorboats get louder and take longer to stop the faster they go. They tend to be the noisiest out on the open water but distance from the shoreline limits wave erosion. Know your wake!

Love your lake! Nurture the environment. Appreciate your neighbours' perspective. Nip concerns in the bud.

We're all at the lake to enjoy ourselves!

KAREN & MURRAY HUNT



It is with great sadness I am writing this article today. I have to say goodbye to our double arm-waving neighbours – Karen and Murray Hunt – who have decided to leave Otty Lake and move into Perth.

These two have been our lake's biggest advocates and proactive members

since they bought property on Otty in 1992; Karen and Murray played a large role on our Otty Lake Association for many years, as both our President and our lead Lake Steward. They have educated us all on so many important issues concerning our lake, from Eurasian milfoil and zebra mussels to shoreline erosion. As well Murray documented over 40 years of water testing data throughout our lake; and Karen helped put Otty Lake forefront on both municipal agendas as well as creating many local and national organization partnerships (Watersheds Canada, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations). Even after leaving the OLA presidency role, Karen still continued to advocate for lakes in our area on the Lake Networking Group and ensures we are all up to date on the latest best practices and Provincial projects.

Murray knows this lake better than most; and understands the science behind making this lake safe to swim in and enjoy. He would often be found

swimming out from his dock daily for lengths at a time, enjoying the evening air and chill of the water. They both loved our lake so much – and kayaked and putted around in their little aluminum boat as much as they could.

When we first moved here; Karen was the first to drop off muffins, invite us over for dinner and flood our children with books and kindness. We were overjoyed by having such caring and knowledgeable neighbours beside us here on Otty. Having them beside us made it feel like home again. They will be greatly missed and have left some pretty big shoes to fill! They will always have a place here at our dock when they feel like coming back and getting out on the lake – and I hope you all agree – if Karen and Murray Hunt want to come back and visit our beloved lake, they have the green light at your dock as well!

*Respectfully and sad,
Rachel Roth*

LOON REPORT JUNE 30, 2020

I found a nesting pair of loons at the north end of the lake on June 3. They were outside their normal breeding area, probably because they couldn't find a suitable spot this year. Instead, they found an excellent site in a shallow, quiet bay nearby. I began watching their faithful care as they sat through some very warm weather.

I suspected they would probably do the same as last year and return to home territory as soon as the chicks hatched. The non-nesting loon would often come into their traditional bay, fishing during the day.

Their new twin chicks hatched Jun 25, and I first saw them about 4 p.m. They spent the first night there.

The next day I watched them moving along the shoreline, heading for their home bay.

They have settled in well and are keeping busy feeding the little ones.

We are looking forward to watching the raising of these two loon chicks to successful fall migration. Hopefully they'll survive the numerous challenges they'll face.

On June 5, a kayaker spotted another nesting loon in exactly the same spot as last year. That loon is still nesting at this point in time. Watching for success there, too, in the imminent future. Last year that pair had twins but they disappeared after only two days.

A third pair nested in Maple Glen, just to the left of the communal dock, in full view of the public! This nest was found on June 6 and occupied until June 15, when the nest was abandoned. After waiting 24 hrs, a closer look revealed that the nest was empty with no sign of egg(s) or crushed shell(s).

When boating, please be alert to the presence of loons on the water. Be respectful in distance and speed so loons, especially those with chicks, will not become stressed and sound an alert.



Photo: Gail Read

Good news from Bird Studies Canada! They recently announced they will be accepting loon observation data for the 2020 summer after all! This fall we will submit data about loon pairs and any young they have in addition to listing the birds that live on our lake through the summer. Please physically distance from those not in your household/bubble while out on the lake and please also keep your distance from all birds while observing them. If you see babies, please forward information about your sightings on to Kyla at ottylakeloon-survey@gmail.com.

Lanark County Turtle Watch.

The Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists (MVFN) have initiated a project using iNaturalist called “Lanark County Turtle Watch”. They write: “We are looking for photos of turtles. Turtles crossing the road, turtles nesting or turtles sunning themselves on a log or a rock. And, sadly we would also ask you to include photographs of turtles that did not make it across the road.” By photographing turtles and uploading the images to the project, you provide important data on the location and population of turtles. To participate, simply open an account on [iNaturalist](#). See the story on page 2 of this newsletter for more. You can call the Ontario Turtle Centre at 705-741-5000 immediately if you come across an injured turtle.



Tay Valley and Wild Parsnip.

Tay Valley Township will not be conducting a roadside spraying program to control the spread of Wild Parsnip in 2020 along Township roads and properties. Tay Valley will continue its roadside mowing program, as in past years, along Township roads.



Tay Valley will be monitoring the Wild Parsnip situation in 2020 and making note of areas of infestation so that we can make informed decisions on this issue in future years.

[Read the entire news release.](#) Drummond-North Elmsley Township is not spraying this year either, based on constituent opposition.

Lanark County. The County of Lanark’s controversial practice of spraying County roads with herbicide to kill Wild Parsnip and some other of Ontario’s identified 25 noxious plants will be underway in the field beginning in late June. While the County has made progress in recent years in reducing the amount of herbicide sprayed and the total length of roads sprayed, 275 kilometres are nonetheless targeted for spot (localized) spraying this summer, and 12 kilometres for boom spraying. See this link <http://cgis.com/cpal/Default.aspx?CLIENT=LANARK&MAPTY-PE=Roadside> Vegetation Control, for a colour-coded map indicating roads to be sprayed. No pesticide should be sprayed near water, but it seems that some marshy areas on Elmgrove Road and Rideau Ferry road are marked to be sprayed. Pesticide spraying is also contraindicated on fractured rock, on which Lanark County sits, and local scientists feel spraying compromised groundwater quality.

Lanark County takes steps to protect turtles. Road mortality and habitat loss are two major factors in the reduction of turtle species in Ontario,” explained Hillary Fleming, Lanark County’s Climate/Environment Intern. “At this time of year, as nesting is taking place, we see more turtles along our roadways, which increases the demand for us to help in saving them in order to decrease the loss.” This year, Lanark County Public Works has added new practices to assist in saving injured, non-injured and nesting turtles on county roads. The county has partnered with Tammy MacKenzie from Observing Understanding Rescuing (OUR) Turtles to create policies, install nest protectors, transport injured turtles, and report turtle movement by public works employees. If you see an in-

jured turtle, visit <https://ontarioturtle.ca/ourmission/drop-off/> for information and instructions. [Read the Inside Ottawa Valley story.](#)



Blue-Green Algae. So far, none of the algae blobs you see on Otty Lake have been determined to be blue-green algae or cyanobacteria. The green slime accumulating on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa was found to be green filamentous algae, but Parks Canada began using a harvester June 19 to clean it up and impede future growth. The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit also issued a news release about blue-green algae on June 19 in warning as blue-green algae is toxic to humans and pets, and so water affected by it should not be used as drinking water or even recreationally. “Residents are encouraged to contact the Spills Action Center at 1-800-268-6060 to report any new potentially harmful algae blooms. If possible take pictures of an active bloom as this may help identify the type of algae. This way the location and number of blooms can be monitored.” [See the full news release here.](#) Another option is to contact Lake Steward Derek Smith at dsmith@dpsint.com or 267-5225, as he has been monitoring the situation on Otty Lake.

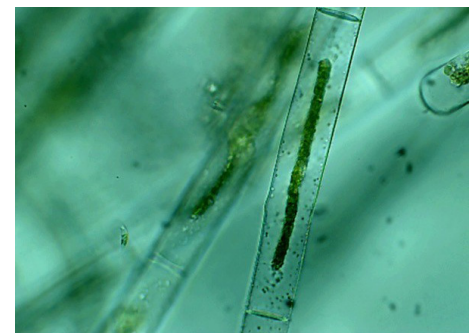


Photo: Derek Smith

THE IMPORTANCE OF VEGETATED SHORELINE BUFFER ZONES AROUND OTTY LAKE

Otty Lake is a “mesotrophic” lake. Mesotrophic lakes are characterized by abundant beds of submerged aquatic plants and high nutrient concentrations. They generally support warm water fish species such as bass, perch and pike. A “eutrophic” body of water has been degraded due to excessive nutrient inputs and is subject to algal blooms. Our great challenge is to stop Otty from deteriorating into the eutrophic category.

Otty Lake is heavily populated and it does not need more nutrient inputs from any source. Vegetated lakeshore buffer strips inhibit the movement of nutrients into the lake and are one important way we can all help improve the water quality in Otty. Good water quality is essential to our use and enjoyment of the lake, and to the preservation of high property values.

Otty Lake was glaciated during at least four major glacial ice advances and was at times covered by a thickness of as much as 1.5 km of glacial ice. The last major glacial period, called the Wisconsin, left Otty Lake about 11,500 years ago as it receded north. The north-east to south-west orientation of the Rideau lakes attest to the ice flow direction during the last glacial period and the intense scouring of the bedrock it produced. This left the Otty Lake watershed with a very thin and very permeable soil cover. Precipitation flows into it and through it very readily.

One of the ways Otty Lake receives water is by near-surface groundwater flow. How does this work?

The upland rocky areas that surround Otty Lake are areas where rain and snowmelt infiltrate into soil and bedrock. This process is called “groundwater recharge”. Once water has entered the soil horizon it either moves along the rock surface downhill towards and into the lake, or it enters into the fractures in the bedrock and moves downward until it reaches the water table. Fractured rock forms an “aquifer” if it holds and transmits water, and aquifers provide the water source for the wells drilled at homes within the Otty Lake watershed.

Any chemical substances that we use on our properties that are water soluble will move with the near-surface groundwater flow and will discharge into the lake along our waterfronts.

These substances include:

- Lawn and plant fertilizers (phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium compounds)
- Septic tank effluent
- Pesticides and herbicides used in our gardens
- Gasoline, solvents, and paints.

Let me outline one example. If you fertilize your lawn in the spring, you are adding nutrients to the lake and helping degrade Otty’s water quality. Phosphate in groundwater is “attenuated” as it flows through iron-oxide rich, reddish sand by a number of geochemical processes. However, there is essentially no attenuation of nutrients in the thin soils or in the fractured bedrock that surrounds Otty Lake.

Photo: RCVA



Before



After

Certain native plants are very effective at cleaning groundwater as it moves downslope and discharges into Otty. These attenuation processes include filtration processes in root systems and nutrient uptake by plants.

A 1.5 metre buffer zone of natural vegetation along our shorelines is all that is required to aid this process. Buffer zones will re-vegetate naturally in a short time. Many species of grasses and wildflowers are species that are attractive, will not block your view of the lake or access to it, and are obviously not expensive.

*Derek Smith M.Sc.
Hydrogeologist*

LAKE STEWARD UPDATE

As of June 21st the surface water temperature of Otty is 25 degrees C. While I have been limited to monitoring in my kayak I am noticing floating green algae in shallow areas around some islands and in some bays. The algae sample I took for further examination under my microscope confirmed that the filamentous green algae is “Mougeotia sp.” with elongated cells, smooth cell walls, single chloroplast and is not toxic.

There is almost no flow out of Jebbs creek (.14 m3/sec) and the total lowering of Otty Lake since the spring high is now at 41 centimetres.

Water sampling through the Lake Partner Program has been suspended indefinitely and will likely be cancelled this year and the Dorset Laboratory remains closed. Fortunately we can continue our own bacteria sampling program and the first two bacteria samples, which we have analyzed at Caduceon Labs in Kingston, produced zero or one colonies of e. coli which is a good result. Otty Lake’s water sampling program will continue in July.

Derek Smith