



CAPTAIN OTTY'S LOG

OTTY LAKE ASSOCIATION • OCTOBER 2020

OLA BOARD HAS NEW LOOK, BUT NO NEW FACES

The 2020-2021 OLA Board will be looking a little different. With the retirement of three directors, and no new directors nominated, the board will have just 12 members. At the 2019 AGM members approved a change to the Constitution to allow the Association to be managed by a Board composed of 10 to 15 members, so our current number is still in the acceptable range. The three director positions are still open if anyone is interested. There is no need to wait until the July 2021 AGM to join: just send an email explaining your interest and a brief bio to membership@ottylakeassociation.ca, and it will be forwarded to the Nominating Committee.

Reid Kilburn is retiring after five years as President. So far, no one has stepped forward to take this job. In the interim, the board will be directed by a Leadership Team of Kirsten Brouse, Rachel Roth and Barb Hicks. The duties are roughly divided into water quality (Kirsten), partnerships (Rachel) and Communications (Barb). Reid, as Past President, will be able to provide advice and support when necessary. We do hope, moving forward, to assign various tasks undertaken by the President to other board members so that the workload is better distributed and the task is less daunting.

Finance and Membership will also be handled as a team with Anne Scotton as Treasurer and Cathy Kari maintaining the membership database. As Anne lives in Ottawa, Linda Cuthbertson will be assisting her with some of the local errands. Jacquie Mallory will continue as Recording



Photo: Jackie van der Veen-Oving

and Communications Secretary. Kyla Haley will continue to oversee the loon survey and serve as Vice President, and Ian McDonald will look after Lake Activities Project planning. Robert Cosh and Kevin Terrion will round out the team.

Our sincere thanks to Christine Kilburn, Krista Hearty McLean and Monika Savage who are retiring from the Board. Their contributions and dedication will be missed.

The 2020-2021 OLA board will be having its first meeting on October 17 by Zoom.

Barb Hicks

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THE GYPSY MOTHS OF 2020

Eastern Ontario has experienced an alarming attack of Gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar dispar*, LDD) this year. The Highway 7 area, including Otty Lake, has seen pockets of massive foliage loss.



the bark of our beloved trees. Behind them lay stripped forests with favourite species including oak as well as beech, maple, white pine and spruce devastated.

In the spring of 2020, large numbers of tiny invasive caterpillars covered walls, outdoor furniture and trees. These caterpillars progressed through four stages of growth by August, as they grew up to 5 cm in length and developed prickly coats. Each ate approximately 1 square metre of leaf matter, resulting in an atrocious amount of feces! Caterpillars looked for inconspicuous sites to metamorphosize into pupae, tucked away in

In early August moths emerged, filling the air with fluttering males, ready to mate with the white moths that were unable to take to the air. Egg masses were numerous and the more one looked, the more apparent the problem became. Many on Otty Lake were removing hundreds of egg masses a day!! Our work will continue as we spray and scrape egg masses through the winter, minimizing the emergence of caterpillars next May! Infestations happen in cycles of

approximately seven years, but this may be altered by our warming weather trends. Aerial spraying by Zimmer Air Services is being considered by some residents, which would need to be done during a very small window in early spring. Local updates are available at www.lanark-county.ca. Note that several articles express concerns regarding the impact this could have on other species of moths and butterflies, but does not occur with Gypchek, an insecticide product that is not expected to be available in Ontario until spring 2022.

For much more information about these Gypsy moth attacks, visit www.ottylakeassociation.ca. Multiple holistic approaches are here to be shared.

Gail Read

THE BLOB MONSTER OF OTTY LAKE

Several people have reported strange gelatinous blobs in our lake, and it's any guess as to how many others have seen them. They are normally wrapped around a stick or plant stem close to the



(c) fishesoftexas: note the * - shaped colonies

surface of the water. What are they? Would you believe the "Magnificent Bryozoan" (*Pectinella magnifica*)? Seriously, that's what they are. Translated from latin, 'Bryozoa' means 'moss animal', and they are probably like no other creatures that you have encountered. They represent their own unique taxonomical category or "phylum," setting them apart from the rest of the animal kingdom.

Bryozoans are similar to corals and sponges in that they secrete a matrix to support a colony of extremely small individuals and that feed by filtering the water column. For *P. magnifica*, the matrix is gelatinous whereas some other species produce a hard matrix, like the exoskeleton of an insect. What surprises many is the size of the collective: these jelly balls

are regularly over 10 cm in length, and can grow to be as large as a basketball! The individual bryozoan is microscopic, with a horse-shoe shaped ciliated structure which they depend on for filter-feeding. If you look carefully on the jelly ball, you'll see a series of small, brown, clusters shaped like an asterisk; these are small groups of organisms within the colony. In all three cases they primarily feed on bacteria and protozoan (single-celled) organisms.

So what does this mean for Otty Lake? As it turns out, they are correlated with good water quality, although it's hard to determine whether it's cause or effect. Filtering out bacteria helps clean the water, but these are very sensitive to water quality: they do not tolerate large concentrations of nutrients nor can they survive being covered in fine particles. Why is the bryozoan population so high this year? They prefer warmer water and this has been an especially

hot summer. Add that to some of the few benefits of the pandemic: there have been lower nutrient levels in the lake and there has been less boat traffic to stir up the lake sediments, both the consequence of reduced tourism. So, while the first reaction by many is a 'YUCK!', especially if you brush into a bryozoan colony while swimming, we should actually feel good about them. It's perfectly fine to move them out of your swimming area, but we should leave them alone as much as possible, as they are beneficial to the lake.

Bruce P. Smith



(c) micrographia: two individual bryozoans

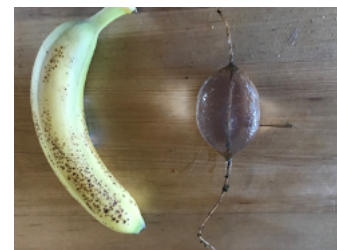


photo credit: Alison Kelford (colony is on the right)

SAFE BOATING AN ISSUE FOR AREA LAKE ASSOCIATIONS



respectful behaviour for some time, and are in the process of producing a webinar. Outgoing President Reid Kilburn agreed that every year we hear members' concerns on these boating topics (with the exception of fishing tournaments) and summarized them in the submission. Here is an excerpt:

The OLA provided input to the Mississippi Lake Association (MLA) on boating safety this past August. The Environmental Committee of the MLA has become increasingly concerned about issues related to boating safety and fishing tournaments, and so invited member lake associations of the Lake Networking Group (LNG) to contribute their comments and experiences. Their association has been considering how to address issues of safety, noise, and dis-

Speeding boats in restricted areas

- Otty Lake is blessed with 31 islands and, unfortunately for some, it is also blessed with approximately 34 rocks or shoals. While this combination of islands and shoals add to the beauty and diversity of the lake, they also present navigational challenges and limit options for motor boats.
- Some channels, created by the presence of an island or a series

of islands, are only slightly wider than 60 metres and legally not wide enough to accommodate 2 speeding boats meeting each other.

- Fortunately, most boaters who operate high powered motor boats do so in the wider parts of the lake, generally in the middle. While this is a very acceptable practice it tends to discourage non-powered craft and swimmers from traversing the lake. Similarly, it can create challenges for sail boats wanting to sail a specific line in the middle of the lake where the wind is usually at its best.
- Boat and jet ski traffic has increased on Otty this summer. Some suggest it is due to COVID-19 with people working from home/cottage and purchasing new motor boats and jet skis to better enjoy the extra time on the lake.

TAY VALLEY APPROVES FIRST CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

In late August, the Council of Tay Valley Township approved *Taking Steps to Make a Difference – A Climate Action Plan 2020*. The Climate Action Plan (CAP) contains ambitious but practical steps to address climate change. The Plan sets two targets - a 55% reduction in municipal greenhouse gas emissions by 2028 and a 45% reduction in community emissions. The Climate Action Plan identified the Township waste sites as the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions from municipal operations and found that transportation is the largest source of community emissions. Diesel is the largest source of energy used by the municipal corporation while electricity is the largest source of energy used by the

community. The CAP includes 45 key actions to be implemented within the next 10 years. Actions are grouped in seven areas: buildings, municipal operations, waste, transportation, renewable energy, agriculture & food security and natural systems. Implementation and funding of the CAP strategies will be done through further grants from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), which are now available to the Township as a result of having a CAP, as well as other federal and provincial grants for homeowners. To view a copy of the report, see <http://www.tayvalleytwp.ca/en/municipal-government/reports-and-publications.asp>

Other lake associations that contributed comments were Black Lake, Big Clear Lake, Dog and Cranberry Lakes, Greater Bobs and Crowe Lake and the Big Rideau Lakes. Karen Hunt, Chair of the LNG, collated the input to forward to the MLA. The document provides a good snapshot of what is happening locally on these issues and suggests actions that the OLA could consider.

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.

Coordinator: Barb Hicks
Distribution: Christine and Reid Kilburn
Reviewed by: Greg Hicks, Cathy Kari, Christine Kilburn and Gail Read
Layout and Design: David Bromley

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.

THE COMMON MERGANSER



Photo: Gail Read

The spring and summer of 2020 have brought many changes in routine, but also in the sightings of a rich variety of birds. The Common Merganser isn't new to Otty Lake, but the numbers of nesting couples and the size of the families have provided great entertainment for many of us. The Common Mergansers float gracefully along, aloof, fishing and sleeping on our freshwater lake, surrounded by the forests they depend upon for nesting. They avoid dense marshes and muddy waters. This summer we have enjoyed and busily attempted to photograph flocks of up to 23 chicks swimming by in long, orderly lines, resting on rocks, curling up on our rafts and running across the surface of

the water to pass our kayaks! The male Common Merganser is a large duck with a long body, a straight bill and black and white colouring that better resembles the loon than the female. A male Merganser is capable of swallowing fish up to 30 cm in length. The smaller female and juveniles have a reddish-brown breast, grey sides, a thin beak and a crest of warm reddish feathers on their heads. Both males and females show large white patches on their upper wings.

Mergansers will nest as far as a kilometer from the lake and as high as 30 meters off the ground. They may lay their eggs in tree cavities, rock crevices, or the vacated nests of squirrels, woodpeckers or other ducks. Duck boxes can be inviting to the female Merganser as well as a great deal of fun for us. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers nest box plans as well as tracking opportunities under www.nestwatch.org. With a little luck, you may be able to see first-hand a single brood of 6-17 eggs incubating for 28-35 days! However, Mergansers don't put all of their eggs in one basket and

may lay eggs in the nests of other ducks! On the other hand, females are also willing to pick up other ducklings that have been separated and whose instinct is to quickly imprint and adapt to their new family.

Mergansers typically hunt for prey over short 30-second dives but can stay under for up to 2 minutes. Sharp serrations on their bill allow them to grab slippery prey such as, frogs, spiders, caddisflies, mayflies, beetles, striders, and snails. Of danger to the Common Mergansers in this voracious food chain are hawks, owls, Bald Eagles, Golden Eagles, loons and northern pike.

These delightful ducks were amongst the first to return to Otty early last spring and are likely to be amongst the last of our waterfowl to depart. These short-distant to medium-distant migrants will settle in freshwater habitats to the south until our ice and snow begin to melt. We wish them well in their travels and will look forward to enjoying their antics again next spring!

Gail Read

STORING YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

The seasonal nature of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) depots means most households will need to safely store certain products at home until the centers are reopened for collection. Here are some important tips for storing these materials:

DO:

- keep the containers tightly sealed. If there are spills or leaks, store that container separately and use kitty litter, sand or sawdust to absorb the spills.
- keep products in their original containers and keep all the labels on. This is helpful to you and HHW workers.
- store HHW out of reach and out of sight from pets and children.
- follow the storage directions pro-

vided by the manufacturer (i.e. do not allow to freeze, do not store in humid areas).

DO NOT:

- store products in food containers, containers that can't be sealed, or containers that may disintegrate.
- mix products together. Mixing products could be very dangerous.
- store products near sun exposure, heat, flames or sparks.
- smoke in areas of your home where HHW products are stored.

OTHER TIPS:

- Store products at eye level to reduce the risk of any problems such as unscrewed tops and leakages, or at least, check on them periodically.

- Consider setting HHW in a plastic tub or tray so any leakages will be contained.
- Think carefully before buying these products again. Use the least dangerous product for the job and buy small quantities.
- Find out exactly what products are accepted. Some products may not be accepted at your depot, may not be considered toxic, or there may be other avenues for their disposal year round (e.g. paint, batteries, fluorescent tubes, motor oil, car batteries)
- Above all, DO NOT be tempted to discard them in the garbage, or by putting them down the drain or toilet, or in any other manner if you miss the depot.

REID AND CHRISTINE KILBURN'S CONTRIBUTIONS WILL BE MISSED



I first met Reid and Christine about 10 years ago while taking ball room dancing lessons! My husband and I were getting married and brushing up on our dance skills. There was a lovely couple we enjoyed watching glide across the dance floor and we chatted with them as we came in.

I was pleasantly surprised about five years later when I joined the OLA board and found myself in the home of that lovely couple as they hosted the board's annual meet-and-greet with Reid serving as president and Christine as secretary.

Reid and Christine are the ultimate "Volunteer Power Couple" and wow, what a team they make! They have a genuine love of our watershed and take their responsibility as lake residents very seriously, always leading by example.

After Christine joined the board as secretary in 2014, Reid came onboard the following year and rose to the challenge of leadership to fill a void

with no previous exposure to OLA. It seems like he was pretty good at it, because that was in 2015 and by the summer of 2020 he was still president!

Reid and Christine have both offered positive and thoughtful leadership with strong partnerships at all levels. They were willing to review processes, brainstorm alternatives and develop meaningful direction to the OLA. With Reid's extensive management background and Christine's strong organizational and financial background their complimentary skills come through again and again.

They are the kind of people who are willing to step forward not only in their executive roles but also take part on countless OLA committees and projects. They are well grounded in the undertakings and the needs of all committees. Not afraid to get their hands dirty and do the work, we have found Christine and Reid stuffing Summer Information Packages, cutting maple tree screening, building bat boxes, and volunteering at the fish habitat enhancement days and the Jebbs Creek Embayment project - to name a few.

OLA has benefited from their individual and combined interpersonal skills as they worked with the association's members and partners, consistently encouraged resident participation with open arms, partnered with

other lake associations (FOCA and RVCA) and the townships - never shying away from controversy and using their exceptional diplomacy to maintain and strengthen these partnerships.

Christine joined the board in 2014 acting as secretary until she assumed the role of treasurer in 2018 when we lost Dave Bell. She was very careful, thorough and prompt in her secretary role while also volunteering for other tasks along the way such as contributing to newsletters, the conservation authority discussion paper and a community partners spreadsheet. As treasurer she has modernized and streamlined the financials in an easy to use format so the next treasurer can slip right in and take over easily. She has become a friend to all and will be greatly missed on the board of OLA.

Reid, although staying on as past President, has left very big shoes to fill. We are grateful that we will continue to have his wisdom, experience, and sense of humor to tap into in the coming year as we move through these very interesting times.

Thank you both so much for all of your contributions to the Otty Lake Association and for being such great friends to us all!

Krista Hearty McLean with anecdotes and memories from Karen and Murray Hunt, Ian McDonald, Barb Hicks and Gail Read.

TRILLIUM FUNDS POLLINATOR HABITAT RESTORATION

A partnership between the Canadian Wildlife Federation (CWF), Lanark County and Hydro One has received an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant to restore pollinator habitat on Rights-of-Way. Lanark County has changed mowing practices and improved hydroseeding practices with native seed to promote pollinators, and has been successful in reducing invasive plant infestations and im-

proving pollinator habitat. Lanark will be sharing lessons learned with other Eastern Ontario municipalities. Hydro One is finding innovative uses for its corridors including installing nest platforms to support osprey habitats, protecting rare plant and animal species when trimming hazardous trees, and planting pollinator-friendly plants

across the province. CWF is excited to welcome other Rights of Way managers to join the movement in creating the Great Canadian Pollinator Pathway.



Photo: Beth Fischer

FOUR SURVIVING LOON CHICKS



Photo: Mary Brown

It was a strange summer for humans, maybe, but for the loons it was mostly business as usual.

The loons arrived back on the lake as the ice was leaving, and they may have been pleasantly surprised by how quiet it was to start the season. However, they certainly saw a busier

than usual lake once restrictions were lifted and cottagers flocked to the lake as often and for as long as possible. Although the loon survey was cancelled by Bird Studies Canada at the start of the season, there were still plenty of avid loon observers watching the pairs settle in and begin to nest. Of the estimated five pairs of loons on Otty this summer, three pairs were known to have nested. Two of the nesting pairs successfully hatched chicks: one pair toward the northern end of the lake, and one pair near the islands off the Colin Farmer Road shoreline. Each of these pairs hatched two chicks which, as of the writing of this article, continue to thrive.

Four surviving loons chicks is the best outcome we've seen on Otty in the last several years. What pleasure watching these babies grow from afar

brought to so many around the lake this summer! Their parents will be leaving in the next few weeks, leaving the chicks to fend for themselves and to get ready for their big flight south. In June, Bird Studies Canada announced that the Loon Survey for 2020 was back on, and so our happy results will be sent in at the end of the season as usual.

Kyla Haley



Photo: Christine Kilburn

IMPROVING CELL SERVICE ACROSS THE REGION

The following story was printed in the June 2020 FOCA Lake Stewards Newsletter.

The Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) is spearheading a \$213 million project to improve cellular services across the region. It launched a competitive bidding process in April 2020.

EORN is seeking partners who offer both the expertise and best value to improve cell coverage in areas where there are homes, roads or major roadways. The process should be completed in the fall, with construction to follow.

"As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us, connectivity is critical for quality of life, public safety and our economy," said EORN Chair J. Murray Jones. "We are building on the investment we've already made in broadband infrastructure to close the gaps in mobile services."

The federal and provincial governments have committed \$71 million each. All members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC)

and most municipalities within the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus are contributing to the \$10 million municipal share. Telecommunication providers are expected to provide the rest.

Improved cell service has been the EOWC's top priority for some time," said EOWC Chair Andy Letham. "The demand for cell service is growing exponentially, but our region doesn't have the infrastructure to keep up."

There are currently significant gaps across areas of rural Eastern Ontario where people live, work or travel:



"Given the way people use mobile devices, we not only need minimum

cell coverage, but enough capacity to meet the rapid growth in demand," said EOMC Chair Bryan Paterson.

EORN is a non-profit created by the EOWC to help to improve connectivity across the region. Its first project improved broadband access to nearly 90% of Eastern Ontario through a \$175 million public private partnership. More information about the cellular improvement project is available at www.eorn.ca/cell.

Join us for the 19th Annual...

LAKE LINKS WORKSHOP

"Effective Engagement for Positive Action"

WEBINARS

1. "Action research to improve water quality in Canada's Rideau Canal: How do local groups navigate environmental governance?"
-Isha Mistry, Christine Beaudoin & Steven Cooke, University of Ottawa
2. "How associations and organizations can use technology to stay connected and engage their members"
-Terry Rees & Michelle Lewin, FOCA
3. "What families can do to stay connected to nature and the lake"
-Rebecca Whitman, RVCA

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24 • 10AM-12PM

Free registration for this online event:
watersheds.ca/lake-links-2020

Generously funded by the S.M. Blair Foundation, FOCA, MVCA, CC, and RVCA



Photo: Rob O'Donnell

State of the Lake Watch for the annual State of the Lake report to be emailed to you in late October or early November. This summary of 2020 lake conditions and activities will be a collaborative effort of many residents, and is a snapshot of Otty that can be used to identify trends. Past reports are available on our website's [Environment Page](#).

Zoom Annual General Meeting (AGM) Thanks to everyone who participated in our first ever AGM via Zoom on Tuesday, July 28. Organizers were relieved that it all went smoothly and there were no major technical malfunctions! About 32 attendees logged in and heard highlights from the past year, as well as updates from Steve Fournier, Reeve of Drummond North Elmsley, Brian Campbell, Reeve of Tay Valley, and Noelle Reeve, Planner for Tay Valley Township. The minutes are [on our website](#), and a link to the recording is available on [YouTube](#).

Water Ski Slalom Course Application An application by an Otty Lake resident for a portable slalom water ski course on the North Shore opposite Mary Miller Road led to intense discussion. The course has been in the same spot in previous years, but due to a change in the rules, anyone wishing to place such a course must now obtain a permit from Transport Canada. The application appeared in the local papers, and details were available online. The public had 30 days to comment to the Navigation Protection program on any navigational concerns. If ap-

proved, the course will be put in place in June 2021

Surge in Boat Sales One unexpected result of the pandemic has been a surge in boat sales, leaving boat builders struggling to keep up. "Virtually all of the boats being built right now are already sold, there are people waiting for them," said one dealer. The jump in demand is great news for the boat industry, which was effectively shut down in Canada for much of the spring with the arrival of COVID-19. There were virtually no sales in March, April and May. Things took off around the Victoria Day weekend when [Ontario allowed boat ramps and boating to open](#) back up. The increased demand for boats has continued into August—a point in the year where sales normally tend to fall off. A number of boat dealers have also reported increased numbers of first-time buyers this year. [Read full Cottage Life story](#).



Photo: Christine Kilburn

Canada-US Border Closure Extended The Canada-US border remains closed to all non-essential travel (i.e. tourism, recreation or entertainment) until at least October 21, with very few exceptions in the [Government of Canada regulations](#). This is an unfortunate situation for the US citizens who cottage on Otty Lake, as they have effectively lost the whole cottage season. Approximately 15 Otty Lake properties are owned by people with US addresses. We have missed you this year! Many of the rental cottages usually rented by Americans were used by Ontario

and Quebec residents instead this summer. One American whose family has owned a cottage in the Kawarthas sent a [very touching letter to Kawartha Now](#) (an online publication serving the Peterborough area), that you may enjoy. Here is another story of an American family that cottages on a Georgian Bay Island: [Pointe Au Baril cottage experience](#).

Our Mailing List to be emailed Captain Otty's Log and occasional OLA notices, you need to be on our MailChimp mailing list, which is not the same as the membership database. We ensure that new members are on the MailChimp email list, but the odd address change may get missed. If you have another name to be added, or want to use a different address, just use the little form on the website landing page. You can unsubscribe at any time, but once you do, only you can add that address again.

iNaturalist Update The OLA iNaturalist project got off to a great start. As of the end September, 55 observers have submitted 958 observations. A total of 545 species have been documented including 189 types of plants, 185 insects, 55 arachnids, 50 birds, 22 fungi, 16 mammals, 5 reptiles, 8 amphibians and 5 molluscs. Herps (reptiles and amphibians) win - the top 3 species were the Painted Turtle, American Toad and Northern Leopard Frog. [Check out the web site](#) and consider adding your observations.



Photo: Kit Muma

CONTROLLING INVASIVE PLANTS: RVCA, iNATURALIST, AND PL@NTNET TO THE RESCUE!



We first set eyes on our Otty Lake property in October of 2018; we loved the idea of owning an alder-thicket swamp surrounded by a moat. The area around the house was bare where the builders had moved in gravel and sand prior to pouring the new foundation, so we had a clean slate. The one thing we knew we did not want was a manicured lawn. Based on information on the OLA site and Karen Hunt, we contacted the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority to find out about their Shoreline Naturalization Program. After a site visit, Laura Parent drew up a plan to plant over 180 native trees and bushes along the shore including Eastern White Cedar, White Birch, Red Maple, Black Elderberry, Highbush Cranberry, Pussy Willow, Ninebark, Serviceberry, Buttonbush, Sweet Gale and Red-osier Dogwood. We were thrilled! The only snag was that planting could not commence until spring 2020. Oh well, we thought we would wait to see what popped up in the meantime. We noticed lots of horsetail (*Equisetum* sp.) and next came some clover. Laura had recommended we plant clover or some other ground cover to stabilize

the soil, so we left it. We cleared some Great Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) from the septic bed but other than that, did not manage the area for the first summer. We were too busy with house repairs and guests, so the time flew by.

When COVID-19 shut everything down we prepared ourselves for the call that the planting had been canceled, but thankfully that didn't happen. Meaghan McDonald from the RVCA told us they had the plants ready to go and that Laura was able to work, albeit by herself, while following pandemic safety protocols. She came on April 29th and over two days put the hundreds of plants into the ground. We followed soon after with chicken wire cages to protect the young cedar and birch trees from the local wildlife.

The spring progressed and Bruce noticed the clover was everywhere now and becoming alarmingly tall. We sent photos to Laura, posted pictures on iNaturalist and consulted Pl@ntNet. We were disappointed that the plant was not identified right away on iNaturalist and now that we know the platform better, we understand that sometimes you need to reach out directly to an expert in the field. Laura directed us to some web sites where we confirmed we had a problem – the plant was in fact White Sweet Clover (*Melilotus albus*), a native to Europe and Asia. You have probably seen it growing along the roadside in the area, but the distribution is not well documented. It outcompetes most other plants and can grow to be 1.5 m tall. Although it is attractive to bees and butterflies, it can be poisonous to livestock due to the presence of coumarin, a blood thinner. The best way to control it is through pulling, and pull we did! Bruce spent several hours a day over the course of two months getting rid of it.

Just when we thought we had everything under control, we noticed another strange plant out front. More research through posting on iNaturalist and consulting Pl@ntNet told us we had Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*). This plant is extremely nasty, as it contains chemicals (furanocoumarins) that cause severe rashes if you come into contact with the sap and then are exposed to sunlight. Decked out in chest waders, rain jacket, gloves, mask and safety glasses, I carefully dug up the plants by the roots and placed them in garbage bags to compost.

By this time, we were feeling pretty smug about our accomplishments, but then Bruce noticed a very healthy stand of invasive Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). Once again Bruce got at it. *Phragmites* spread via rhizomes, hand pulling is only recommended if you can confirm that you have gotten the entire plant, including every little piece of rhizome. Several weeks later it looked like groundhogs had been tunneling through the sand, but we, mostly Bruce, had cleared the patch. Now that we have invasives under control, fingers crossed, Bruce has started documenting all the plants on our property. Through posting them on iNaturalist and verifying the identifications through Pl@ntNet, he has found that most are non-native species, which is OK as long as they are not noxious. To date he has posted 90 species of plants just on our Sunset Drive property. Check them out on the Otty Lake iNaturalist page. Oh yeah, and we forgot to mention, we have not even attempted to clear the extensive Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) from our wetland. Maybe next year...

More information:

iNaturalist – Otty Lake: <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/otty-lake>
Pl@ntNet: an app you can download for plant identification
Ontario Invading Species Awareness Program: invadingspecies.com
RVCA Shoreline Naturalization Program: rvca.ca

Kit Muma