

Draft 1

OTTY LAKE ASSOCIATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS – from 2013

The following is intended to summarize the activities of the OLA over the last ten years.

Lake Health

Surface water quality monitoring

Volunteers from the Otty Lake Association (OLA) conduct an ongoing E.coli sampling program taking 50 or more samples annually at locations around the lake. Results are generally very good, well within the provincial standard for swimming. These OLA volunteers also participate in the MOECC Lake Partner Program sampling for Total Phosphorus and measuring Secchi depths. Additional sampling for phosphorus and nitrogen is done by OLA volunteers to supplement the RVCA and the Lake Partner Program. The OLA Lake Steward maintains a water quality database. This database is made available to the RVCA.

Shoreline planting

In 2009 the OLA introduced a program of offering shoreline plants to Otty lake residents at subsidized cost, usually in conjunction with the RVCA's Shoreline Naturalization Program. The choice of plants and the number and size of plants on offer has varied from year-to-year. (As of 2017, 1,825 shrubs and trees and 295 native wildflowers have been distributed to lake residents.) But as of 2023 this popular program is still in place.

Septic inspections

Mandatory septic reinspection programs for shoreline properties on Otty Lake were introduced by the Townships of Tay Valley in 2012 and Drummond/North Elmsley in 2013. This action was supported by the OLA. A properly functioning septic system is important to reduce bacteria and nutrient inputs to the lake. In 2019, 30 properties were inspected, and 51 were due to be inspected in 2021..

Groundwater testing

In 2014 residents were given the opportunity to have their drinking water supply analyzed by a Kington lab for a reduced fee. Note this goes beyond the () testing done free of charge by the local health unit.

Shoreline assessment report

In 2013 an assessment of the shorelines of 474 Otty Lake properties was carried out under the Love Your Lake Program. It is recognized that ornamental or degraded waterfronts will contribute additional nutrients and sediments to a waterbody. Individual reports were provided to all property owners regarding the state of their waterfront. An overall assessment of lake shorelines was also made available and an improvement in the naturalization of shorelines was noted in a comparison with a previous survey done in 2005.

Zebra mussel monitoring

A program for monitoring Zebra Mussels on collection platforms deployed around the lake was initiated in 2014. The abundance of the mussels is cyclic and had declined by 2017 and the program was discontinued.

Lake and watershed habitat

Fish habitat

Over a period of four years starting in 2013, a major fish habitat enhancement project was undertaken at Otty Lake. This work was led by the RVCA and the OLA with many community volunteers. Spawning beds for smallmouth bass were constructed during the first three years. Nests for both smallmouth and largemouth bass were constructed in 2016. Approximately 275 nests were constructed along with the deployment of underwater brush bundles. The occupancy of the nests during the spawning season increased to 55 % by 2016, a remarkable success rate.

Loon survey

A loon mapping survey was initiated in April 2016 and is managed by an OLA volunteer. Loon observations noted by lake residents and cottagers are forwarded to the volunteer who incorporates the observations into a map. This map is updated on a regular basis and can be viewed on the OLA website. Annual observations of loons and their offspring on Otty Lake have been reported to Bird Studies Canada/Canadian Lake Loon Survey since 1991.

Construction of Wood Duck nesting boxes, bat boxes

In 2015 and 2016 OLA volunteers, with the help of the RVCA, constructed bird and bat boxes. Seventeen wood duck boxes, 15 swallow/bluebird boxes and 26 bat boxes were assembled. These boxes were made available to lake residents and installed at various locations around the lake.

Jebbs Creek Embayment Project 2018

Otty Lake volunteers assisted with the construction and planting for the RVCA's Jebbs Creek Embayment project. The project converted a small area of existing meadow habitat within the Perth Wildlife Reserve to a series of small riverine wetland embayments along the shoreline of Jebbs Creek, creating additional fish habitat. The project included the planting of shrubs, trees and native plants as well.

Grey Rat Snakes

Over 2017 and 2018 the OLA attempted to get a sense of the local grey rat snake population by having residents submit their sightings to an established contact point.

iNaturalist Observations

Otty Lake citizen scientists are encouraged to add their plant and animal life observations to the online social network, where an Otty Lake Project has been established.

Phragmites Control

Otty Lake received funding from the Green Shovels Collaborative in 2021 to educate the community on the threat posed by this invasive species. A group of volunteers worked to eradicate a small stand of phragmites, some Lanark County brochures were made available to residents, and the OLA collaborated with the FoTW to host a webinar on the issue.

Spongy (formerly Gypsy) Moths

Not sure if this was an OLA project so maybe doesn't belong ere

Community Communication

State of the Lake Report

An annual State of the Lake Report was initiated by the OLA in 2014. This comprehensive report provides information regarding water quality, the lake fishery, wildlife habitat, shoreline planting initiatives, the amounts of zebra mussels and algae, among many other topics.

Website, Newsletter and Summer Information Package

The OLA continues its long standing practice of communicating with lake residents through a newsletter published three times a year and periodic emailed notices. In July 2022 Captain Otty's Log moved from a print to an electronic format. The OLA also maintains an extensive website, <http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca/>. The Area Counsellors have delivered a printed annual Information Package which is delivered to lake residents each spring. From 2020-2022 this package was primarily distributed electronically.

2018 Infographic

Otty Lake cottage David Bromley designed a 2018 infographic summarizing Otty Lake conditions, and was include in that year's Summer Information Packages.

Updated Otty Lake Map

An updated version of the 2010 Otty Lake Map was created in 2021 to more accurately mark rocks shoals, name the islands, and mark the 30 m reduce speed and no wake zone. Free copies were given to Otty Lake members with additional copies available.

Shoal Marking Program

Beginning in 2022, 15 "high priority" shoals are being marked by bright yellow Transport Canada approved buoys. Volunteers have adopted certain shoals and install the markers in the spring and remove them in the fall.

Community Events

Nature Floatilla

Otty's first Nature Floatilla was a one day educational event. Residents toured five sites by boat. At each site an expert was stationed to share their knowledge about nature (e.g. snakes, turtles, fish, birds or ticks), and a picnic took place afterwards.

From Our Table to Yours

A special cookbook was created in 2016 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of settlement in the Perth area, "Our Table to Yours". The book is a collection of recipes, stories, photos and historical notes from the Otty Lake community. The first and second printings quickly sold out, and an electronic version is available through the website.

Other Events

- For a number of years the OLA organized an Annual Family Picnic at Maple Glens' waterfront park.
- Residents are encouraged to participate in the annual Pitch In Canada litter cleanup in April
- In 2017 a black bear awareness workshop was organized by the OLA. A representative of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry was the speaker. Over 40 people attended.

Otty Lake Association Leadership

Management of lake activities

The OLA has an active board that meets at least four times a year, made up of 11 – 15 members. A team of Area Counsellors facilitates interaction between the Board and lake residents and cottagers. A well-attended AGM is held in July. From 2000 – 2022 the AGM was held online via Zoom.

Five-year review of Lake Management Plan

In 2013 a Five Year review of the Otty Lake Management Plan was undertaken. Over 200 lake residents and cottagers participated in the associated survey.

The top three issues identified by lake residents and cottagers were:

- Protect and improve water quality
- Monitor and reduce, where possible, excessive aquatic vegetation and algae
- Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat in the Otty Lake Watershed

The results of this review were used to provide guidance to the OLA in developing activities and programs identified by members of the lake community. A team reconsidered the 2008 plan in xxxx to see if there were important areas that still needing attention.

Community Partnerships

The OLA works with many other organizations, including, Tay Valley Township, Drummond/North Elmsley Township, the RVCA, the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (FOCA), the Friends of the Tay Watershed, and the Leeds, Lanark and Grenville District Health Unit . The relationships forged with these organizations with continue to be supported. A full list of partner organizations is available on the website.

Liaison with other lake associations

The OLA continues to liaise with other local lake associations through its participation in the Lake Networking Group, and exchanges newsletters with a handful of other lake associations. Several OLA board member and members usually attend the October Lake Links Workshop in Perth. From 2020 – 2022 the event was held virtually.

Comments Made on Behalf of Lake Residents

From time to time the OLA may provide comments regarding an issue on behalf of lake members. In past years these have been proposed changes affecting conservation authorities, a proposed water skiing course, a causeway on the southwest shore, a proposed shooting range, and various other building permit applications.

