

Otty Lake Newsletter

April 1991

The View from the Bay

Usually a sure sign of spring on Otty Lake is the return of the loons. However, while Bernice Wanless reported 15 loons swimming past their place on December 23rd, your still ice-bound editor is not sanctioning that sighting. I prefer to declare the season official when our scrap lumber dock has been scarred anew by the ice and our lane axle deep in mud. So, take off your hip waders, put aside the Canadian Tire flyers and take a moment to read about the activities of your Otty Lake Executive this past winter.

Damages at Jebb's Creek

The health of our lake depends to a great degree on the maintenance of a natural water edge. And the level of the lake is affected by the state of the outlet at Jebb's Creek. It was, therefore, with considerable dismay that the Association learned that the owner of two lots at Jebb's Creek had excavated some 200 yards of shoreline and removed the rubble at the creek's entrance.

At the instigation of the Association, it was found that the request and the permit from the Ministry of Natural Resources to do this were not explicit and the Ministry has admitted their error.

"Terms of the Development Agreement" also required approval from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. This was not done. The RVCA are taking action within their area of responsibility.

Your representatives appeared before the Township Council of N. Elmsley, who were signatories to the Development Agreement. They explained that they did not have the expertise to deal with environmental issues but, with the co-operation of MNR and RVCA, they assured us that, to the extent possible, the situation would be remedied.

Two known members of your Association have kept records of lake levels for many years. We will be supplying these to MNR and RVCA to enable them to re-establish the rubble at the mouth of Jebb's Creek in order to slow the lake run-off.

It is becoming increasingly difficult and important to control environmental damage. As of this writing, we have just learned that significant excavation, by a different party, has been done in the wetland adjoining Jebb's Creek.

Your Association will need your support and help to protect our most valuable asset - **THE LAKE** - from both uninformed and unintentional damage to the surrounding areas which influence the overall ecology.

One Down ...

For several years now, Otty Lake has participated in the Lanark County Gypsy Moth Program. Due to its success, aerial spraying is no longer required.

In 1989, before spraying, there were 2,900 egg masses per hectare. By 1990, spraying had reduced the egg masses to 200 per hectare. A

threshold of 1,250 per hectare is needed before a wide-spread spraying program is implemented.

Congratulations to all those who worked on battling the gypsy moth, and especially Rex Boyd who co-ordinated the program for Otty Lake. For those who feel that they still have a problem on their property, or would like more information, please contact Lynn MacIntyre at the County Offices (267-4200).

... And Another to Take Its Place

The first of two meetings regarding zebra mussels will take place in St. Bridgit's Church Hall, Stanleyville, April 13th. This meeting will involve invited representatives from concerned organizations and will discuss the zebra mussel threat to the lakes in North Burgess. Our Science Chairman, John Hay, will attend on the Association's behalf.

The second meeting, Saturday, May 18th at 2pm again at St. Bridgit's, is open to the public. It will focus on what to do if your water is already infected (i.e. the Rideau). Guests scheduled to speak include: Mr. Igor Liakin, Counsellor, USSR Embassy, who will outline the status of the zebra mussel in the USSR; John Bonser, Superintendent of the Rideau Canal; David Dillenbeck, Regional Biologist for MOE; Paul Dick, MP Lanark-Carleton; and Bud Wildman, Minister of Natural Resources.

Mussels become active shortly after the ice melts, so come learn how we can prevent this alien from entering and destroying Otty Lake.

In the Meantime:

Boaters are asked to inspect both their boats and those of guests if they have been in suspected areas (Rideau, Great Lakes). Carefully inspect all areas below the water line for normally smooth areas that now appear roughened like coarse sand paper. Each little greyish-white bit of "sand" could be thousands of tiny larvae (called "veliger").

The adult mussel is about an inch long, with highly visible "zebra" stripes on the shell. Some can be albino, pure black or brown. Adults block water pipes, destroy spawning beds and consume large quantities of plankton. They attach to anything under water - docks, boats, fishing nets, rocks, clams and crayfish.

To help prevent or slow the spread of zebra mussels:

. Always clean your boat thoroughly before moving from lake to lake.

. Wash your boat's hull (trailer too if you put it in the water) with one tablespoon of bleach per one gallon of hot, soapy water. DO NOT USE THE HOUSEHOLD BLEACH SOLUTION NEAR ANY WATERBODY AS AQUATIC LIFE COULD BE HARMED.

. If you see zebra mussels on your boat, scrape them off with a paint scraper or high-pressure water

. Air-dry your boat in the sun for a couple of days

. NEVER use Great Lakes water to transport live bait and never transfer water from the Great Lakes to another body of water

. Rinse live wells, bilges and pumping systems with the household bleach solution.

You can get more information from your area counsellor or by contacting Amy Pokorny (267-1626) or Nancy Kenyon (Ottawa 235-4286).

Comings & Goings

We welcome with pleasure Hugh Henderson as Conservationist and regret the retirement of Ruth Helmsley as Director-at-Large. After many years of service, Ruth's knowledge and hard work will be missed. Tom Folkes has agreed to serve as auditor.

In the last newsletter, we erroneously stated that Stan Mitchell was Counsellor for Area 2. It is in fact Stan Fleming. The typist has been chastised.

Controlling Lake Levels

Dawson Girdwood has been retained by the Association to monitor water levels on the lake and, acting on the advise of experts, control the out-flow at Jebb's Creek. Mr. Girdwood will inspect the Creek fully twice in April, once in May, once in September and twice in October and make spot checks during the summer. He will remove any beaver dams and adjust the dam, as deemed necessary.

Based on records of long-time lake residents dating back to the early years of this century, normal lake levels should fluctuate as much as 18" over the course of the season. The six factors affecting lake levels are: inlet, rain, run-off, underground springs, evaporation and outlet. In the case of Otty Lake, the only one we have any control over is outlet at Jebb's Creek.

A lake is healthy only if its levels are allowed to fluctuate.

Sprucing up Our Shorelines

It is being recognized that a natural shoreline is a good prescription for a healthy lake. (It's also a lot less work than your lawn back in the city). As a member of MAPLE, the Otty Lake Association makes available **FREE** to residents, low plants that are very suitable for binding the soil near the shore. Varieties include red osier dogwood, virginia creeper, shrubby willow and sweet gale.

To participate in this program, phone your request to Bob or Chris Thompson (267-3050) no later than May 20th. Call early to avoid disappointment. Your shoreline will be inspected prior to planting.

Arrange to be home on planting day (scheduled for Saturday, June 8th). No planting can be done without the owner's presence.

Since as many as 200 plants may be planted in a given property, lots of time is needed to do a good job. Therefore, the planting team asks that you do two things:

a) Lend a hand with the digging and planting on your property or arrange for someone else to do the work if you are unable.

b) Join the team as it moves on to the next properties for up to half a day's work. Lunch will be provided by the Otty Lake Association.

Otty Lake Recycles

Starting this month, Lanark County has its own recycling program and summer residents, as well as year-round, are being asked to participate.

North Elmsley residents can use the blue box system, as a part of their pick-up garbage service. Seasonal residents will be getting their blue boxes in May or June.

North Burgess residents can take their newspapers, bottles, jars, cans and plastic soft drink containers to the dump at Stanleyville where there are receptacles for recycling.

Science Committee

This committee was re-activated on January 15th, 1991. David Code, Fred Green, Al Hoffman, Bill Schriever agreed to serve as members with John Hay as Chairman.

While goals and priorities are still being developed, it was determined that the committee would act as advisors to the Executive with regard to the identification and resolution of problems relating to water quality, environmental protection and the "quality of life" around the lake. These terms of reference were accepted at a Directors' Meeting on February 2nd.

A summary of the questions raised for future discussion by the Committee, include:

- 1) What is the state of the lake's health?
- 2) What are its problems?
- 3) How effective is our testing for water quality and can we react quickly enough if the situation warrants it?

4) Can residents be forced to abide by the 100' sewage setback? How?

5) How can we make use of government agencies?

It was agreed that an active education program should be developed by the Association but no consensus was reached at this time as to who would implement it.

Others interested in joining this committee are welcomed and encouraged.

Membership Fees

At the 1990 Annual Meeting, membership fees for the Otty Lake Association were formally increased from \$7.00 to \$10.00. The raise was justified to cover climbing costs.

For those who have not yet paid their 1991 dues, you can either submit them to your area counsellor or mail them to the Treasurer, Mr. John Burns, at R.R. #3, Perth, K7H 3C5.