

Newsletter

Message from the President

Hello all! I have learned over the past year or so that there are a lot of associations in Frontenac County that are similar to ours. They may be smaller or larger in size, but for the most part they deal with the same interests and issues. I've learned a lot from some of the sessions I've attended over the year.

One of particular note, where there were quite a few lake associations present, was the Lake Links Conference, held in Perth in October. Speakers from conservation authorities, lake associations and non-government organisations addressed the issues of: planning and development pressures around lakes, and how lake associations can become involved; and lake shorelines and the importance of keeping them natural. I'll keep attending this conference, as I always pick up some interesting information.

Last week I was at a meeting where the subject of discussion was: the role of community groups in monitoring the health of their lakes and associated natural features. The conservation authorities were there, as were Ministry of Natural Resources, Ministry of Environment, Frontenac Stewardship

Council (the host) and several lake association reps. In addition to the Lake Partner Programme (which is the one Dave Babcock has been feeding into with water sampling each year) there exists programs that keep an eye on frogs, loons, birds, wetlands, climate, more water quality measurements and lots of other things.

Lake Links

The main sponsor of the Lake Links conference is the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds. Take a look at their website:

www.watersheds.ca/

The Frontenac Environmental Partnership (see note on them later in this newsletter) is promoting this initiative to get these programs better known to lake associations and to help train volunteers to carry out the monitoring. I'll stay involved over the next few months then report on progress in the Spring newsletter.

Season's Greetings to you all and enjoy your winter, whether you are on the lake or not!!

2007 Annual General Meeting

As agreed after our lengthy debate at the 2006 AGM, the 2007 meeting is scheduled for:

Sunday, August 5, 2007

1:00pm

at Anne Tucker's cottage

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Notice

One of our neighbours on the lake is undergoing a bit of a tough spell right now. Curtis Morey (near Willie's Lane) has just had a hip replacement and, as he is recovering from this, he is waiting for a kidney transplant (his wife Pam is the donor). Please consider sending a donation to help the family out c/o Treasurer, Social and Athletic Club, Box 121, Harrowsmith K0H 1V0.

The Day the OPP Visited the Lake

By Gord Rogers

In case you didn't notice, we had a visit from the OPP Lake patrol on August 18th and 19th. Many of us were surprised to find the patrol boat on the lake, and a few were extremely surprised to be fined – and fined a pretty healthy amount. I had a chance to talk to Constable Jones of the Hartington OPP detachment, and want to share some of what we talked about.

The boat that visited 14 Island and Mink Lakes was not from Hartington, but from the OPP's "SAVE" team in Odessa. The SAVE team (Snowmobile, ATV, Vessel Enforcement) is a permanent force of 6 officers who operate across the East Region – Belleville up to Bancroft, across to the Quebec border. Constable Jones was able to tell me that they came out to our lake on Aug. 18th as a result of a complaint, and that they laid 2 charges (both for life jacket infractions) and issued 3 warnings (2 for not having a throw rope; one for not having a working flashlight). The fine for the lifejacket violation: \$200 + \$40 court costs. Const. Jones didn't have any stats for the 19th.

The messages that I was left with were:

- Know the law – get a copy of the "Safe Boating Guide" (Hartington OPP has copies), and look for the regulations **for your particular type and size of boat**. You will quickly see that the regulations are very complicated, different for each type of vessel (canoe/kayak, sailboard, sailboat, paddleboat, power boat, Personal Watercraft), and for different lengths of vessel;
- The police apply a zero tolerance for infractions related to:
 - lifejackets (one Canadian-approved PFD is required for every person on board); and
 - alcohol (bottom line: no alcohol

permitted on the types of boats we have on our lakes)

- There are also age-horsepower restrictions, careless operation charges, and speed limits (e.g., there is a **standard** Max 10 km/hr when traveling within 30 m (100 ft.) of shore)
- Some of the other items (not a complete list) they will be looking for, **depending on the type and size of boat**, are whether you have: a throw line; an oar or paddle; an anchor; a bailing device; a whistle; a working flashlight; a fire extinguisher;

Buy a Safety Kit

If you don't already have the gear in your boat, you can pick up a small safety kit at Canadian Tire. The kit contains a throw rope, whistle, flashlight, and the container serves as a bailing bucket. Remember to put batteries in the flashlight!

- The Pleasure Craft Licence is required in certain instances (if you were born after 1983; if your boat is less than 4 m. in length, or is a PWC). Everyone else needs to get a licence by 2009. And it'll cost you \$250. plus court costs if you are charged for not having your licence.
- If you see some specific boating behaviour on the lake that concerns you and want to have OPP deal with it, call them right away (not a few days later), and they'll do their best to get to the lake that day.

That's what I was told....

Please feel free to contact your executive:

President:

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613-374-3521

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Tom Bryant
bryant48@sympatico.ca
613-374-1473
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ethala@sympatico.ca
613-966-7153

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Elaine St. John
elaine13@granite.anikast.ca
613-374-1276

Treasurer:

Rod Harris-Lowe
harrislowe-r@rmc.ca
613-374-3641

Lake Steward:

Peter Peart
peter_peart@hotmail.com
613-374-1175

Lake Steward's Report

By Peter Peart

The non-stop rain that we endured during October and November certainly contrasted with a glorious summer on the lake. For those who fish the season was a bit of a mix. Bass and northern pike were plentiful although one had to work to catch them; they didn't just leap into the boat. The pickerel fishing, however, was poor, only marginally better than the season of 2005. I do not have an explanation for this and would welcome your input.

Dave Babcock reports that the chaps he caught pickerel fishing out of season last year seemed to have taken his words to heart and did not appear until opening day this year. Sometimes people are simply unaware and a cautionary word can achieve the desired result.

Next year will see a limit of four pickerel per day with only one over eighteen inches. A Conservation Licence, highly recommended, would reduce that limit to two per day and only one big one. The reason for this is the superior breeding ability of the larger fish.

Our lake's water was tested for total phosphorus and clarity. Unfortunately, the only feedback we have is for '05 which Dave reported on and we'll have to wait for the spring report for an update. As far as clarity is concerned, however, the Secchi Dish procedure (it's a special striated plate which is lowered into the lake and a graduated rope lets you know the depth at which it disappears from sight) resulted in increased clarity from seventeen feet in 2005 to twenty-five feet this past summer. This is a good news/bad news situation. The greater clarity enhances the beauty of the lake; but

sunlight penetrates deeper and the result is burgeoning growth in vegetation. The reason for this phenomenon, of course, is those wretched zebra mussels. But have they peaked? My perception, based on an admittedly small-sample survey of observations and anecdotes, is that they seem to be fewer and they seem to be receding. Again, your input would be appreciated.

Special Thank You to Dave Babcock

As Peter takes on the responsibility for the Lake Steward position, we want to offer our thanks for the years of service from Dave Babcock, who stepped down this year as Lake Steward. Dave has performed yeoman's duty over the years, and was recognized at the Annual General Meeting. Although Dave is no longer on the executive, we know that he isn't going away, and that he'll still be an active steward of the lake.

Thank you Dave!

At the time of writing the water level is – take a guess – unseasonably high. Dave B. took a board out of the dam on Labour Day but the water is still ten to twelve inches higher than normal. It seems that two months of rain will have this effect and apparently we have little influence with Nature on this.

Thanks to the Babcocks the buoys are out and stored, the dam has been recovered from marauding beavers, and

Dave will train me on water testing in the spring.

Last note: nothing encapsulates the treasure that we share in our lake more than the loons. Their cries, their antics, their flights are forever fascinating. And this year was special in that two sets of twins grew to maturity. Yet we need to be careful. Not often, but occasionally, a loon will inadvertently pop up in front of a motor boat.



Be watchful. Ordinarily loons are not at all afraid of motorized boats. The reason is that the motors make noise and are, therefore, from a loon's point of view, only a stupid noisy animal. Not a predator!

However, every time over the past thirty years that I have been on the lake and that I have explored the cause of a loon's distress cry (which is VERY distinct) I have seen a canoe or a kayak nearby. The variable: they make no noise and are seen therefore as a threat, a danger, much like a very large black rat snake on the hunt. Please keep far away from these birds, especially if they have young. Let us all be alert and protect these invaluable assets.

A final request: if you have an anecdote of zany loon antics please forward them to me.

Annual General Meeting Highlights

By Elaine St John

There were lots of you at the meeting on that hot day in August – about 70 in total! The meeting did go on a bit longer than normal – but given the agenda, that wasn't surprising. Some of the highlights:

- We passed the first constitution of our association (final, approved version is attached to this newsletter)
- We agreed on a name for the association – the 14 Island Mink Lake Association
- We heard the results of the survey of lake residents
- We elected a new lake steward – Peter Peart
- We agreed to proceed with lake planning for 14 Island and Mink lakes
- We had the ***** scared out of us with the presentation on invasive species by Bret Colman of the Ministry of Natural Resources

Thanks to Anne and John for hosting the meeting, again!



△ The Annual General Meeting August 6, 2006.

The Constitution of Fourteen Island Mink Lake Association

For the first time, our association has a constitution – passed at the Annual General Meeting Aug. 6, 2006. The constitution brought out a lot of discussion and debate at the AGM. The final version, with the amendments and changes as voted on at the AGM is included in this newsletter package.

A special thank you goes out to Elaine St. John for her hard work in researching and drafting (and re-drafting) the constitution.

Draft minutes of the AGM are attached/included.

Reminder - Dues are Due

For those of you who haven't paid your dues for 2006-07, this is a reminder that your \$25.00 is due. Please make out cheques to

"Fourteen Island Lake Property Owners Association"

(until we get the name changed at the bank) and send them to:

The Treasurer
14 Island Mink Lake Assoc.
Box 105, Hartington, Ont.
K0H 1W0

Membership and Financial Report

By Rod Harris Lowe

Our association has a total of 64 members signed up and our financial situation as of November 2006 is:

Balance at AGM Aug 6:	1,714. 42
Dues paid for 2005-06:	100. 00
Dues paid for 2006-07:	200. 00
Interest	0. 20
Service Charge	-1. 99
GIC cashed:	5,702. 83
Balance Nov. 2006:	7,415. 46

Thank You to Hollywood North

Thank you to Elaine, Curtis, Chris, Cynthia, Ray and Lilly for being such gracious hosts, and offering their beautiful home as the locale for the social gathering after the AGM. We appreciated the chance to come together to re-acquaint with friends on the lake, and to enjoy the yummy food and drinks.

Update on Lake Planning

By Brett Dark

At last year's AGM, you, the membership, voted to start a lake plan process, and agreed to provide \$1400 this year toward the process by passing the following motion:

"That \$1,400 dollars be allocated to The 14 Island Mink Lake Lake planning subcommittee to provide seed funds to seek grant funding partnerships and undertake the initial components of lake plan development."

Brett provided a funding outline where in it was estimated the plan would cost approximately \$9000 to \$15000, over about three years, and the funding target mix would be as follows:

- Volunteer professional services 50%;
- association cash funding 15%;
- grant funding 35%.

The subcommittee on lake planning has been working on the outline of the lake planning process, and as part of this has put together a draft mission statement and a set of objectives to help get the process going. These are included here and the Lake Planning Committee is asking for your comments.

And to kick off the work on the plan itself, we are looking for your help. Anyone who wants to get involved in this important project are asked to forward their name and areas of interest based on the mission statement (see the box below) to Brett Dark or Gord Rodgers at their earliest opportunity.

DRAFT

Mission Statement and Objectives for the 14 Island Mink Lake, Lake Plan

Mission Statement: A 14 Island Mink Lake community where the maintenance and enhancement of a healthy eco-system on the lake and in the surrounding area is achieved through responsible recreation behaviour, constructive social relationships and sustainable development of the lake community.

Objectives:

- 1) To develop a lake plan that reflects the opinions and values of the 14 Island Mink lake community and speaks with one voice on current and future areas of interest.
- 2) To provide input to Municipal and other governing agencies to ensure community consultation in all legislative jurisdictions that could impact the lake and surrounding areas.
- 3) To enhance enjoyment of the lake for current and future generations through responsible recreational behaviour and constructive social relationships.
- 4) To protect and enhance the Natural Environment of our lake that would include: water quality; fish; wildlife; surrounding forests and wetlands.

Call for Volunteers!

The lake planning process is going to need some help – and that means YOU! The committee has come up with a general outline of the work that needs to be done, and will need to find people around the lake who can offer their expertise in a number of areas. Lots needs to be done, and we know we've got expertise out there in the following areas:

1. Background Studies in:
 - Water quality
 - Fisheries
 - Streams
 - Shoreline survey
 - Other natural and physical features
 - Social and historical context of the lake
2. Survey of lake residents
3. Review of planning documents
4. Mapping
5. Preparing publications
 - Newsletters
 - Draft and Final Plan

Please contact Brett Dark: brettandlory.dark@sympatico.ca

Dock Talk

By Gord Rodgers

1. Dark Skies

This is one of those subjects that might get repeated a few times in Dock Talk. The reason being, this is one of those things that we have the ability to control without too much trouble, and with no cost, and we can easily protect something that many of us value as a part of our lake experience.

“On a moonless night you should be able to see 2500 to 3500 stars and the Milky Way.people in cities generally see less than 100 stars on a “good” night”. I’ve quoted from a FOCA Fact Sheet, which you can download from their website www.foca.on.ca.

The Fact Sheet points out that:

- too much artificial light can mess up the life cycles and behaviour patterns of fish, insects, birds, and other wildlife;
- it can be a real annoyance to neighbours; excess lighting doesn’t decrease crime levels;
- we see better on the lake without the glare of shoreline lights;
- you can save some energy and money by using less or better lighting (fewer lights, smaller wattage bulbs, fixtures that don’t send light sideways or upwards).

So check out the FOCA site, or www.darksky.org, and learn a bit more about the importance of the night sky, and how you can do your part in preserving it.

2. Frontenac Environmental Partnership

A group of people have started an organization to increase communication and offer advice and help to lake associations and others in our area.

The Frontenac Environmental Partnership (FEP) was incorporated in 2004, and have about 25 lake association members.

The FEP may be a good source for data and information on our lake and for this reason, I have made contact with them and will follow their progress.

Property Taxes

We promised to give you a follow-up on property taxes – an issue identified by a number of you in the association’s survey last year. You might have noticed that the assessed value of your property and hence the taxes you pay have been going up. In fact, waterfront assessments have increased substantially more than non-waterfront property. Our properties have been going up about 8% a year in recent years. The way that the system works is this. A provincial body, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) does a financial valuation of every property in the province (as an actual market value) and provides these assessed values to municipalities who then apply a standard “mil rate” to this assessment to calculate your taxes. The main reason our taxes have been increasing is because our assessments have been

increasing. Over the years, Ontario property owners have been very critical of MPAC and of the way municipal taxes are calculated. A public interest group has become established to lobby government over the issue of waterfront property taxes – Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation (WRAFT). One of the targets of WRAFT’s wrath has been MPAC!

There is some good news and some bad news on the tax front. The good news is: Last March, Ontario’s Ombudsman’s Office issued a damning report on the body responsible for assessing property values in the province (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation – MPAC). The report recommends numerous changes to the way MPAC does business, and MPAC appears to be doing its best to follow through on the recommendations of

the Ombudsman. The government, as a result of this report, has put a moratorium on re-assessments for two years. So we won’t see any increases in assessments until 2008. The bad news is: MPAC may not be changing the fundamental approach to assessing waterfront property, and we’ll end up being in the same boat after 2008, but with a kinder and gentler MPAC. (by the way, it’s MPAC who also provide voters lists for municipal elections – the recent election suggests they aren’t doing too good a job at that either!)

If you want more info, I recommend you take a look at:

- www.wraft.com
 - www.mpac.ca
 - www.ombudsman.on.ca
- (Report is titled “Getting it Right”)

Dock Talk (continued)

By Gord Rodgers

3. Recycling at the Lake

Here's a question for everyone, whether you are seasonal or full time on the lake: **Do you have your blue box? Have you been putting out all your recyclable materials?**

Our Township doesn't exactly have a sterling track record on its recycling initiative, but in the past year and a bit they have finally responded to the demands of the Ministry of the Environment to put in place a curbside recycling program.

If you have been following the progress on this over the past year, you will know that there have been a few stumbles along the way to making it work. We began with pickup of all materials once every two weeks, and the existing drop-off facilities in the dumps and in Sydenham were closed.

When the original contractor did not/could not continue in the second year, the Township changed contractors. At first we had alternate week pick up, but only certain materials could be put out each time – well, that wasn't too convenient, was it? So after lots of complaints from their constituents, the Township switched to weekly pick up, but continued with different materials on alternate weeks. It seems that the changes may have either confused people, or ticked people off, because my observation is that there are fewer blue boxes out there than at the beginning of the curb side pick up.

So – please stick the notice that the Township sent out to everyone on your fridge so you know what goes out

each week, and be sure to separate and recycle. You can either do it just for the altruistic reason of saving the planet, or you might want to do it because recycling will mean our dumps stay open a bit longer, and you will be putting off the inevitable big time increase in the cost of garbage disposal.

Further Information

If you want to know more, or get another copy of the recycling schedule, call the Township at: 613-376-3900 ext. 4330

4. Freshwater Jellyfish in I4 Island Lake??

This summer Brett Dark's nephews and my son Matt happened to see some very small jellyfish in two different spots in the lake. Now that's kind of weird, don't you think? Well, maybe not. I asked Bret Colman from MNR about it, and this is what he had to say:

“Funny you should mention the freshwater jellyfish as I've found some (actually thousands) myself in a feldspar pit just off Deyo's road a couple of years ago. I was keenly interested at that point and this is what I found out:

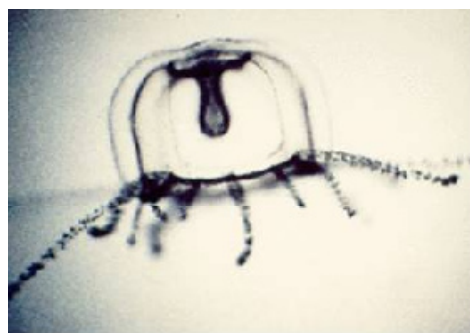
- Apparently they are not rare but still uncommon (explanation to follow). It's a type of Hydra and not a true jellyfish. Typically the species reproduces asexually by budding - forming colonies. Probably every lake in the area has colonies of these critters in their polyp form (microscopic in size).
- However, every once in a while they decide to reproduce sexually (no one really knows why - often

temperature dependent) and medusa or “jellyfish” are produced.

- The really weird part is that the rare jellyfish “blooms” you might see from time to time are almost always all female or all male, so how do they reproduce sexually?
- They are originally from the Yangtze River in China (the only place on earth where you will find both male and female jellyfish in the same population).
- Nobody really considers them invasive – more of an oddity. Typically they should be done by September.

I've attached an interesting website link you can share with your fellow lake association members. If you look under the “Distribution” heading you'll find some of our local lakes identified under Ontario.

You can also register an element occurrence on that site to help them with their research.”



△ *The Freshwater Jellyfish – about the size of a quarter.*

If anyone else has seen these creatures, please let Gord or Peter know about it. We will pass the information along to the researchers studying the jellyfish at the University of Pennsylvania. www.jellyfish.iup.edu/history.html