



# BIG BALD LAKE COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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## Environmental Newsletter - Fall 2014

### Educational Meetings

Our spring educational meeting was so successful that we're going to make it a yearly event. We're still in the planning stages for next year and would love to have your input. We will have two speakers with additional information and vendors at tables where you can pick up brochures. It will be followed by a BBQ and will be a family oriented event. We'll keep you posted through our website and BBLCA News emails.

What would you like to learn about?

### Septic System Inspections

Septic System Inspections are mandated by the Building Code Act and were recommended in our Lake Plan. Inspections should take place every five years.

The City of Kawartha Lakes chose not to have a septic re-inspection program. Instead, they have a Septic Rehabilitation Loan Program for property owners to undertake repairs to their septic system, or if necessary, replace it.

The Township of North Kawartha implemented a septic re-inspection program in May 2014 and used summer students to conduct the inspections.

The Municipality of Trent Lakes is leaving it up to the Peterborough County Health Unit to perform septic inspections for our township. There are no definite plans, so we can't tell you when such a program would start.

Here is a fun way to check if your septic system is working properly. (We heard this at the Kawartha Lake Stewards Association spring meeting.) Get yourself a lawn chair and a cold drink. Setup your lawn chair over your septic bed and enjoy your drink. If you don't sink and the smell doesn't drive you away, probably your septic is fine.

Seriously, here are just a few things that are looked at during an inspection:

- number of fixtures and bedrooms
- use of special devices such as garbage grinders or water softeners
- frequency of tank pump-out
- evidence of backup of effluent
- wetting conditions in the leaching bed area
- condition of surface vegetation and
- odour problems

## [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - Septic System Re-Inspections](#)

We are trying to arrange a septic inspection workshop and will keep you posted.

## **Lake Plan**

The stream survey that was done as part of our Lake Plan has been registered and now is part of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources database.

Future work could include a detailed wetland survey of the lake and an endangered species survey. We may be able to reduce costs by making use of existing surveys.

Is this of interest to you? Do you want to get involved? Please consider joining the BBLCA Board as an Environmental Director or a committee head. Come out to the AGM and share your opinions or offer your help.

Here are a couple of examples where lake plans were or could have been useful.

The Peninsula Lake Association (east of Huntsville) created one of the first lake plans in Ontario, which was essential in an OMB ruling against the development of a quarry overlooking the lake.

The Citizens For Responsible Aggregate Development (CFRAD) commented at a public meeting that it would have been helpful if a Species at Risk survey had already been in place before the owner of the property for the proposed mega quarry (outside Bobcaygeon) had clear cut 200 acres and drove out all the wildlife.

Our Lake Plan and studies are posted to our News page.

## **Shorelines**

Follow these tips from the FOCA Newsletter to help the lake water quality.

- Maintain a strip of plants along your shoreline at least a metre wide to help save your property from erosion and to deter geese from going onto your lawn.
- Avoid using fertilizers on your lawn as they will eventually make it into your lake and negatively impact water quality.

## [2014 FOCA Lake Stewards Newsletter](#)

## **Great Backyard Bird Count**

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

Since then, more than 100,000 people of all ages and walks of life have joined the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

Would you like to participate? We'll post a reminder on our website as the date draws near. The next GBBC is Family Day Weekend - February 13-16, 2015.

[gbbc.birdcount.org](http://gbbc.birdcount.org)

## **Milkweed Way**

Take part in building a Milkweed Corridor to help save the Monarch Butterfly.

Why not set aside a sunny spot on your property for some wildflowers. You'll attract lots of birds, butterflies and bees. While you're at it, plant some milkweeds. They're easy to grow and easy to pull out if they spread too fast. Monarchs are in decline. Be part of the Milkweed Corridor.

For more details on the Monarch decline and how milkweeds can help, read these articles:

[GreenUp Newsletter - Magnificent-Monarchs](#)

[David Suzuki website - Bring Back Monarch Butterflies](#)

## **Be Bear Wise**

With so many bear sightings near the lake this summer, we thought it wise to give you a few tips from the Ontario government. Start by limiting sources of food on your property.

- take garbage to the dump often
- fill bird feeders only through the winter months
- in the spring, offer birds natural alternatives (e.g., flowers, nesting boxes, fresh water)
- do not leave pet food outdoors, in screened-in areas or porches
- do not put meat, fish or fruit in composters
- remove grease and food residue from barbecue grills, including the grease cup underneath, after each use
- inform cottage renters of how to avoid attracting bears to the property

[www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/report-bear-problem-bear-wise](http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/report-bear-problem-bear-wise)

## **News from FOCA about Hydro Rates**

### **OEB Schedules formal Hydro One rate hearings for September**

During the recent Ontario Energy Board "Settlement Conferences" covering Seasonal and other rate issues, there was no agreement on the 40+ issues in front of the Board. The OEB has subsequently scheduled 13 days of formal hearings in September to rule on Hydro One's 2015-19 Distribution Rates Application.

FOCA will be there, representing the interests of members in all the residential rate classes.

Of particular interest will be a number of proposed rate classification changes that will have a small number of "winners" and many more "losers" amongst Hydro One waterfront ratepayers.

One proposal in particular involves a major reclassification of Seasonal customers that – if adopted – would see low use customers' bills rise by over 100%!

If you have recently moved to the lake and this is now your permanent residence, be sure to notify Hydro One, so that your rates can be reduced.

[FOCA Elert - Hydro One Rate Hearings](#)

BBLCA has joined FOCA, so if you're a BBLCA member, you're also a FOCA Member. See our website News page for details.

## **Aggregate Secondary Plan - Aggregate Resources Committee**

The City of Kawartha Lakes is developing an Aggregate Secondary Plan to protect and manage the City's aggregate resources while still ensuring that environmental and social values are recognized and protected throughout the aggregate extraction and transportation process.

Why is this important to us? Our local municipal candidates are all promising to form an Aggregate Resources Committee with residents and council members. The City of Kawartha Lakes is one step ahead of us, so let's watch what they're doing. Check our Environment page for updates.

## **Municipal Election**

The municipal election is on Monday, October 27th, but mail-in ballots will be available in advance. Please be sure to **vote**. We have posted candidate names and website links to our News page and have also listed dates and locations of all-candidates meetings.

## **BBLCA Events**

Check our News page for 2015 tentative plans

- Winterfest & Chili Cookoff - Family Day weekend, Saturday, February 14, 2015
- Educational Meeting and BBQ - June 2015 (approx. 3rd weekend)
- Scavenger Hunt Regatta - Civic Holiday weekend, Saturday, August 1, 2015
- Community Yard Sale - summer 2015

## **AGM**

The AGM is on **Saturday, September 27th** at 10:00 a.m. at the Buckhorn Community Centre. Please come out for coffee and treats, see your neighbours and get the latest updates. The agenda and last year's minutes and presentation have been posted to our News page. Watch our website for updates.

## **BBLCA Election**

All board positions are up for election, including President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary. Voting will take place at the AGM. If you cannot attend, but wish to vote, please complete a proxy form. Positions, nominations and the proxy form have been posted to our News page. Keep watching for updates.

## **Pens and batteries**

Bring your old pens and household batteries (no car batteries) to the AGM and we'll dispose of them properly.

## **Directories**

Please check the Directories on the website Membership page and report any discrepancies. We will be printing hard copy directories and want to ensure all information is correct.