



BIG BALD LAKE COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

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Environmental Newsletter - Spring 2015

It's all about the **Water**

Our theme for this newsletter is water. We live or cottage by the water. It's where we swim, boat and play. Some of us even take our drinking water from the lake. It's ours to enjoy and ours to protect. I hope you find this information useful. *Nancy*

Educational Meeting & BBQ

Please join us on Saturday, June 27th for a BBQ, live Celtic folk music, a friendship bracelet workshop for the kids, plus our special guest speaker, the OPP Marine Unit. Everyone is welcome. This is an event for the whole family.

You will be able to visit the following information tables to speak with exhibitors and pick up brochures:

- [WeedsBGone](#) - aquatic weed removal
- [Goose Squad](#) - Goose Control, Waste clean-up and removal
- [Peterborough Certified Home Inspections](#) (PCHI)
- [Logan Tree Experts](#)
- [Kawartha Lakes Stewards Association](#) (KLSA)
- [Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations](#) (FOCA)
- [Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre](#) (KTTC)
- [Kawartha Land Trust](#) (KLT)
- [Community Care](#), Harvey office
- [Peterborough County Waste Management](#) - recycling/composting
- [Peterborough County Health Unit](#) - septic systems / well water

Also available for pick up:

- brochures about Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus
- drinking water testing bottles
- [Buckhorn Community Centre](#) list of events

Bring your:

- old pens and household batteries (no car batteries) to the meeting and we'll dispose of them properly.

Please RSVP re your food requirements by Saturday, June 13th.

Aquatic Plants

Aquatic plants are annoying weeds to most of us, but they're necessary to support the fish as they provide shade, protection, food, and places to lay eggs or build nests. They help us too by improving water clarity and slowing erosion causing waves.

Preventing Excessive Weeds

We can help to prevent an excess of these aquatic plants and algae blooms by:

- stopping the use of fertilizers,
- naturalizing our shorelines, and
- maintaining our septic systems.

Weed Removal

You may want to try to pull out weeds from your swimming spot. Be sure that you don't leave small pieces in the water that can regrow. I use a converted fishing net that has a screen to catch and remove loose weeds in the water without leaving those small bits behind.

Do you have too many weeds to remove them yourself? Some bays are choked with weeds making swimming and sometimes boating impossible. You may want to consider hiring a professional to remove weeds.

Check our [Environment](#) page for information on Joe DeMarco's company, [WeedsBGone](#). Joe spoke at last year's educational meeting and we've invited him back by popular demand. Joe will be at one of our information tables at this year's educational meeting and BBQ. Stop by and discuss your requirements with Joe.

Get a Better Understanding

We encourage you to read the [Kawartha Lake Stewards Association's Aquatic Plant Guide](#). This guide discusses different methods of controlling weeds such as mats, herbicides, cutters, mechanical harvesters, raking, homemade dredges and corn.

Restrictions and permitting requirements were discussed in the [Spring 2014](#) newsletter.

My experience is limited, but our friends at the [Kawartha Lakes Stewards Association](#) (KLSA) and the [Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations](#) (FOCA) are experts on aquatic plants and natural shorelines. KLSA's Lynn Woodcroft and FOCA's Tracy Logan are returning to our educational meeting this year. Visit them at their information tables to discuss preventing and removing excess weed growth.

Harvesting Lake Nutrients: Musings of a Lakeside Gardener

For many years, KLSA Board member, Mike Dolbey, has gathered the aquatic weeds that drifted to his cottage shoreline and mixed them with dry leaves to create fertilizer for his garden. In 2012, he decided to measure the amount of phosphorus he was removing from the lake. Aquatic plants were prolific in 2012 and Mike collected approximately 225 cubic feet of weeds from the lake, about three times more than usual. In addition to phosphorus, the weeds are high in nitrogen and when they are layered with carbon-rich dry leaves, produce excellent and free garden fertilizer.

(From: Kawartha Lake Stewards Association: [What's Next?: 2012 Lake Water Quality Report.](#))

Water Quality

We continue to test six locations on our lake for E.coli, phosphorus and water clarity. As reported in our [BBLCA AGM Presentation - 2014](#) and on our [Environment](#) page, the E.coli levels were acceptable on our lake, but they did fluctuate. In Saunders Bay, readings ranged from 0 to 77 E.coli/100 mL. The most likely reason for this fluctuation is waterfowl.

Reducing E.coli

We can't do much about the waterfowl that congregate within bays, but we can keep geese off of our shorelines, which will help keep waterfowl waste from washing into the lake.

Natural Shorelines are normally the most effective way to keep geese off your property. My favourite shoreline plant is the Red Osier Dogwood, which has an extensive root structure that prevents erosion. This shrub can be cut down each fall to any height you want. Natural shorelines discourage geese and keep nutrients from washing into the lake. Again, KLSA and FOCA can advise you about natural shorelines.

The [Goose Squad](#) is a company that specializes in goose control, waste clean-up and removal. They will be at an information table at the educational meeting to answer all your questions.

Other animal waste contributes to the E.coli in our lake. Please be sure to clean-up pet and wild animal waste on your property. This waste should be disposed of down your toilet or in the garbage. It should not be composted on your property or left on the road where the bacteria can make its way to our lake.

Blue Canoe Program

Holly Shipclark, a Stewardship Technician at Kawartha Conservation, describes the Blue Canoe Program as a public education program aiming to raise awareness of environmental concerns and provide information about best practices for shoreline conservation.

Trained summer staff visit cottagers at their docks to distribute resources on topics such as septic system maintenance, invasive species and shoreline protection. They also conduct Dock Talks (group presentations) and participate in community events. Funded in 2012 – 2014 by a three-year grant from the RBC Blue Water fund, the program was offered in parts of Sturgeon, Cameron, Balsam and Pigeon Lakes. Blue Canoe is seeking new funding opportunities and partners to continue its work and expand the program.

(From: Kawartha Lake Stewards Association: [The Nature of Our Lakes: 2014 Lake Water Quality Report.](#))

Representatives from your BBLCA board, water quality testing team and the environmental committee are attending a Blue Canoe Event in June to find out more. Your Board continues to attend meetings such as the KLSA spring meeting and we work with neighbouring cottage associations to share ideas and bring information to you.

Research

We would like to do research into the Blue Canoe program and the benefits it might bring to our lake. Also, we want to investigate what surveys we can make use of for our lake plan such as detailed wetland and species at risk surveys. If you have experience or an interest in this area, please consider joining our Environment Committee.

Environmentally Friendly Products

Any products we put into our septic systems can affect the health of our septic system and ultimately impact our lake quality if we're not using environmentally friendly products.

Front loading washers work so effectively now that very little soap is required and you may find that laundry liquid is just as effective as laundry detergent. Peroxide is a biodegradable alternative to chlorine bleach and is very effective as a disinfectant. Vinegar works well as a fabric softener.

If you want the convenience of a store bought cleaner, then read the labels closely. Make sure it's biodegradable or just look for the Certified EcoLogo.

Here are ingredients that you want to avoid:

- sodium or ammonium laureth/lauryl sulfates
- anti-bacterial (contains Triclosan)
- phosphates
- chlorine
- ethoxylated alcohols

BBLCA Events

- [Educational Meeting and BBQ](#)
Saturday, June 27, 2015, 1:00 p.m.
- [Community Yard Sale](#)
Saturday, July 4, 2015
7 a.m. until noon
Deadline to sign up to sell items is Saturday, June 20th.
- [Scavenger Hunt Regatta](#)
Civic Holiday weekend, **Sunday, August 2, 2015**
Sign up at the Educational Meeting and BBQ on Saturday, June 27th.
5 Hosts Needed!
- **Septic Re-inspection Workshop**
tentative - Friday in July or August
- **Annual General Meeting**
Saturday, September 26, 2015
10:00 a.m. until noon
- **Fall Road Clean-up**
tentative
- **Boxing Day Parade**
Boxing Day, **Saturday, December 26, 2015**

We're offering more events than ever before. We'll determine next year's events based on this year's attendance and volunteers. **We can't do this without you.**

Road Reps

Our Road Reps worked very hard last year. We boosted our membership by 40%. We received feedback from you through our road reps about issues that were important to you such as having more family social events and monitoring environmental issues.

We need more volunteers. There are too many areas to cover with so few people. Please help lighten the load. Large roads require 2 or 3 reps. See our [About BBLCA](#) page for a list of the road reps and where we need more help. This is a great way to get to know your neighbours.

Win a \$25 gift certificate for Allora Pizza. Sign up to be a new Road Rep or pick up your membership renewal package at the educational meeting and I'll enter you in our Road Rep draw.

Communication

We have email addresses for 162 homes/cottages on the lake. Please ensure you're on our distribution list. We update our website regularly. We post information through Facebook and Twitter and our sign boards.

If you have a keen interest in the environment and would like to take over our semi-annual environmental newsletter, please let me know. Also, we accept suggestions and articles for the newsletter and website.

Volunteers Needed

We're doing what we can with a small core group. We need your help. Please consider becoming a board or committee member or volunteer for a specific event.

See you on June 27th!