

June 2015



URLA Newsletter

Upper Rideau Lake Association
Box 67, Westport, Ontario, K0G1X0

President's Message- Jayne MacDonald

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FYI....

- Ice out this year was April 23rd
- Your URLA membership entitles you to benefits from FOCA
- URLA membership fees are still \$30, please renew today
- We can always use new volunteers for our Executive, if interested contact Jayne

The executive of URLA remained active and engaged for most of the cold winter. We attended meetings of Westport council and Lake Networking groups and learned far more than we ever wanted to about sewage treatment facilities, blue-green algae and environmental assessments.

We are now looking forward to a new recreational season at the lake. Many questions remain ranging from water quality to hydro rate increases. Some articles in this newsletter will address those issues.

As for now we must continue to work to improve the lake environment for all water users, residents and visitors, those that like to fish and ski, and some of us who simply think that this jewel of a lake must be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

I have been invited to serve on the Technical Steering Committee for the Village of Westport Sewage Treatment Plant Class Environmental Assessment –stay tuned!

Westport

The village of Westport council was very busy all winter attempting to deal with the situation with their Sewage Treatment Facility. They held meetings with guests that included, Bernard Masse from Northern Watertek, the firm that formerly operated the facility; Jim Mahoney and Cindy Cowin, from MOECC and AECOM, the engineering firm hired to assist them.

The village approved and implemented work on the sewage pumping station and the berm of the lagoons. During the long cold winter the facility processed as much waste as possible.

They developed a Spring Mitigation Plan to monitor the lagoon capacity and react quickly to potential failures. Westport council planned to truck any sewage that could not be handled at the site rather than allow any discharge into the lake.

After the meeting that explained the need for a municipal environmental assessment, *“An increase to the rated capacity, a change to the treatment method, or an expansion of a facility where land acquisition is needed triggers the need to undertake a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) Jim Mahoney MOECC December 1, 2014”*, the village proceeded to go in that direction.

The village also improved their communication with the lake association and other interested stakeholders from around the area.

In February it was announced that the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund had approved \$1,980,000 to help Westport fix its problems.

URLA Annual General Meeting 2015

Will be held at the North Crosby Community Centre, 875 -8th Concession Rd., Westport,
Saturday, July 11 10:00 am

Guests include:; Michael Yee- Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Robin Jones- Mayor of Westport and Rideau Lakes Township Mayor Ron Holman

***Please join us for coffee @0930, a complimentary BBQ will follow the meeting.

Blue-Green Algae- Our Lake is at Risk!!

Last August to the shock and dismay of all, our lake succumbed to a blue-green algae bloom. Many people wondered what to do.



Photo courtesy of the Turners,
North Shore Road

“Last August to the shock and dismay of all, our lake succumbed to all blue-green algae bloom....”

If you suspect a blue-green algae bloom-

- Be cautious, assume toxin is present and avoid exposure to the water
- Call the **Spills Action Centre 1-800-268-6060** to report it
- Inform your lake association/ neighbours so they can take precautions

Some blue-green algae blooms produce toxins which are harmful to people and animals. You cannot visually tell if a bloom is producing toxins or not or at what level-**use caution!**

Drinking Water

- Surface water is never a safe source of drinking water without effective treatment
- Common treatment systems such as UV light, chlorination and boiling are **not effective**
- Use an alternative safe source- ***Do not boil, cook or wash with it!***

Recreational Water

Avoid recreational activities that increase exposure to the toxins produced by blue-green algae.

- Skin irritation indicates the level of toxins is significant, rinse off and stay out of the water a few more days and reassess. (Keep your animals out of the water)
- All surface water can potentially be contaminated with other micro-organisms that affect health so always avoid swallowing.

Consumption of Fish

- Be cautious about consuming fish caught in water where a blue-green algae bloom has occurred
- If toxins are present they are concentrated in the liver, avoid consuming liver, kidneys and other fish organs
- Avoid consuming fish for at least 2 weeks after the bloom is gone.

What you can do to reduce Algae Blooms

- Avoid using household fertilizers on waterfront properties
- Use phosphate free products ie: detergents/cleaners, personal care products
- Maintain a natural shoreline, plant and maintain a vegetation buffer zone.
- Ensure your septic system is far enough away from the lake and is properly operated and maintained

For further information, please contact:

Leads, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit

Website: www.healthunit.org, Email: contact@healthunit.org

Health ACTION Line: 1-800-660-5853

ALSO, PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

-Two Rideau Valley Conservation Reports have been released this year indicating the water quality in the Upper Rideau Lake is **POOR**.

They can be found here: http://204.101.207.53/IM/Documents/watershed_planning/Rideau_Lakes/Upper_Rideau_Catchment.pdf
http://204.101.207.53/IM/Documents/watershed_planning/Rideau_Lakes/RLSWP_2014.pdf

-The People, Aquatic Plants and Healthy Lakes: Finding the Balance in Eastern Ontario Project has also produced an **ALGAE AND AQUATIC PLANT EDUCATIONAL MANUAL** which will soon be available. This project was funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Another Successful Plant Program

Thanks to all the cottagers on the Upper Rideau who have planted native trees and shrubs. URLA has had another successful Shoreline Naturalization Program.

This year, in conjunction with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority we have planted 790 trees and shrubs, bringing our total for the last six years to over 4000 plants. During this period, we have filled 117 orders, placed by 68 different property owners. As you know, naturalizing our shoreline is the best way to prevent nutrients from leeching into the lake thereby reducing the “food” that contributes to the growth of aquatic weeds and algae.

And this is only part of the picture. In earlier years, URLA planted thousands of plants through M.A.P.L.E.

If you have not yet taken advantage of our program, we will be offering plants again in our November newsletter. Additionally, both the RVCA and Watersheds Canada offer programs where you can have an expert conduct a site visit to help you best determine what would work on your shoreline. For contact info see the Love Your Lake article in this newsletter.



“Naturalizing our shoreline is the best way to prevent nutrients from leeching into the lake”

**LOVE
YOUR LAKE**

A few weeks ago you should have received a “Love Your Lake” letter from Watersheds Canada (formerly the Centre for Sustainable Watersheds) informing you of how to order your personalized shoreline property report. Your report includes a picture of your property and a summary of the shoreline features observed last summer that contribute towards a healthy lake as well as recommendations on how you can maintain or improve the health of our lake.

We suggest that you request a hard copy of your report as they contain additional information on a variety of topics including erosion, docks, septic fields and more that may come in handy in the future.

If you did not receive your letter or if you have any questions about the program, please contact Colleen Holmes at colleen.holmes3117@gmail.com.

Some of you may have received a recommendation that restoring your shoreline to its natural state would improve the water quality of the Upper Rideau. There are a number of resources that can help you achieve this objective. One is URLA’s own plant program where trees and shrubs are made available to property owners free of charge. As well, both the RVCA and Watersheds Canada offer programs which include:

- Subsidized or free native shoreline plants
- Complimentary on-site visits with qualified staff that provide simple, cost-effective advice on “how to” protect your shoreline
- Project planning and support including:
 - development of shoreline planting plans and species lists
 - ordering, shipping and handling of plants and tending materials
 - planting advice and/or assistance -- full project management from start to finish

We encourage you to take advantage of one of these programs. Further information can be found at RVCA.ca and Watersheds.ca .

URLA



Executive for 2014/15

President- Jayne MacDonald
-613-549-0732

Vice Pres. – Anne Carter

Past Pres. – Wendy Stewart

Treasurer – Murray Kane

Secretary – Jennifer Davis

Membership and Community Affairs- Anne Carter

Lakeshore- Colleen Holmes

Water Quality- J. MacDonald

Newsletter- Carol Thomas

Members at Large –

-Bob Branson

-Diana Kemp

Web Master- Huw Davis

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.urla.ca

We are also on
Facebook!

Each year the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority Board of Directors

participate in a watershed tour. This year they are doing the tour in Westport (Foley Mountain). As part of the Aquatic Plant Project the group will be out on the Upper Rideau Lake where staff will demonstrate the lake sampling that they do, what information the sampling tells them, the connection between nutrients and plants and algae growth and best management practices that people can participate in to reduce nutrient inputs into the lakes. **The tour is scheduled for June 25th.**

Friends off Foley Mountain Announcement:

Mark Your Calendar! The Friends of Foley Mountain (FOFM) volunteers work throughout the year to enhance the education programs offered at Foley Mountain. Their main fundraiser this summer is a **Dinner and Auction Friday on August 28th**. If you have items to donate and/or would like to buy tickets please contact Mary Bowlby, President FOFM, at 613 273 6671 or mary.bowlby@gmail.com.

The Rideau Lake Conservation Authority (RVCA) is offering **Summer Programs** and camps at Foley Mountain. Tel: 613-273-3255 <rebecca.whitman@rvca.ca>

Have you experienced the spectacular view from **Spy Rock** on Foley Mountain? It is listed as one of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve's **"Ten Amazing Places!"** Come for a run, hike, walk, or take advantage the mobility trail and conveniences.

Foley Mountain Conservation Area is our jewel on The Upper Rideau Lake.

Do you want make a tax deductible donation to support environmental activities on the Rideau Lakes?

If so, make your donation to The Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation (RLEF). In the last few years, URLA has received support from RLEF to participate in the Love Your Lake program, the Aquatic Plants study and the buoy program. Please consider donating to RLEF so we can do even more. Payment may be made by check payable to: Rideau Lakes Environmental Foundation, PO Box 93, Portland ON, K0G 1V0 or online by credit card at www.brla.on.ca/rlef. ***Remember to direct your donation to Upper Rideau Lake***

Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

Do you know that your membership to URLA also entitles you to the many benefits offered by FOCA. We encourage you to check out their website: www.foca.on.ca

Many thanks once again to:

-The Cove, Cross Street and Associates, Westport Village Rentals and Internet Kingston for their continued support.

-George Ingram, Don Rasmussen, Peter Newguard and Paul Byrne for once again installing our navigation buoys.

About Our Organization...

URLA is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization comprised of community members surrounding the Upper Rideau Lake. The Association surveys the lake for potential problems, monitors water quality, promotes shoreline maintenance and restoration and also gives a strong voice for its members to the regional bodies governing the lake.

Our membership year runs from May 1st to April 30th. Our membership fee is still \$30 per year. The membership form is enclosed and available on our website. Your updated contact information with membership renewal facilitates contact when the need arises.

We can always use interested members on our executive, if you would like to volunteer your time please contact Jayne.

ROAD REPS NEEDED!!!

URLA depends on representatives on each road with waterfront properties around the lake to help keep track of the names, addresses and emails of the residents for us. This data is used to send out our newsletter twice per year and to send important or urgent messages in between. When blue-green algae was discovered on the lake last summer, the email list was vital in notifying residents quickly about the problem.

Roads without reps are at a disadvantage when important information needs to be communicated quickly.

If you live on or near one of the roads listed below, please consider volunteering to become a road rep.

- Mulville Bay Lane off Hwy 42
- Wagon Wheel Lane off Hwy 42
- Sugarhouse Lane off Hwy 42
- 1206-8 Narrows Lock Rd