

November 2012



URLA Newsletter

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

President's Message

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- RVCA advised we are no longer in a low water condition.
- 2013 Navigation Season will not be shortened but a modified service will be offered spring and fall

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Have you wondered why, although it was the hottest, driest summer in recent memory, we did not see more weeds or algae than usual? Last weekend, on behalf of URLA, I attended the Lake Links Workshop on Climate Change in Eastern Ontario. I learned that we haven't really felt the impacts of this trend in our area yet, but based on 30 years of data from the conservation authorities, we have a pretty good idea what is coming.

Of particular concern is the shifting of precipitation patterns – in the future stream flows are predicted to be down by 44% in mid-summer and 70% higher in fall and winter. The spring freshet will be shorter, and earlier, with less volume – making it difficult to fill our feeder lakes so we can keep our water level high for the summer navigation season. Precipitation will increase by 10%, and rainfall events will be of greater intensity, with more frequent and more violent storms and winds. Variable water levels will increase the potential for shoreline damage through erosion in summer and the build-up of frazil ice in the winter.

While we can't do much to stop climate change, we can reduce our vulnerability and enhance our resilience if we understand the risks to our lake environment and plan for the uncertainty ahead. URLA is considering several options in this regard.

And why did we have clearer water this summer? Because of the drought! There was no rain to wash the fertilizers applied to lawns, gardens and farms down into the lake – and therefore our weeds had less nourishment on which to thrive. This is particularly relevant on properties that have not maintained a 10 meter buffer strip of natural vegetation on the shoreline. This band of native trees, shrubs, and grasses really does soak up migrating nutrients and it makes a difference to water quality. Last year residents planted over 500 trees and shrubs on our Upper Rideau waterfront. URLA is again offering free plants to those who wish to re-naturalize their shoreline next spring. Next to a drought, it's the best way to keep our lake sparkling!

In October, the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority advised that our watershed is no longer in a Low Water Condition, due to recent above-normal rainfall throughout September. While water levels are close to normal for this time of year, wetlands have not yet been fully recharged.

Further to direction received at our AGM, I attended MP Gord Brown's public meeting in August and presented our concerns regarding Parks Canada budget cuts and our heritage waterway. I have received word from the Superintendent that the 2013 navigation season will continue from Victoria Day until Thanksgiving with "upon arrival" services throughout the peak summer period. In spring and fall, a modified service will be offered 7 days a week through scheduled lockages offering between 7 and 9 hours per day.

Continued pg. 2



President’s Message, Continued



“FOCA reminds us to tell MPAC if you don’t think you’re 2012 assessment is fair “

By now most of us have received our new assessments from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). URLA continues to work with the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association (FOCA) to ensure that waterfront property owners have a strong voice on taxation issues. FOCA reminds us to tell MPAC if you don’t think your 2012 assessment is fair. MPAC has a 25% “acceptable deviation” for waterfront properties – and that means that if they are within 25% of the actual value – then that is satisfactory to MPAC. It is 10% in the city. If you’re considering whether or not to appeal your assessment, see www.foca.on.ca for detailed instructions on how to request a review.

I have received word that,

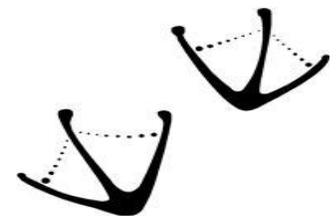
on the Friday before the Thanksgiving weekend, a section of floating dock appeared in Duck Bay -- it could have floated from anywhere on the upper lake. The dock is six feet by twenty feet and appears to have been constructed professionally. It has good deck cleats and other hardware. At one end there is a message stenciled on the dock in red paint. Any help you could provide in tracking down the owners would be much appreciated. Phone (613) 272-3604.

URLA has wrapped up its meeting schedule for 2012 but we keep in touch during the off season to deal with issues as need arises.

It is now mid-October on the lake and as we prepare to close up our cottage on Big Island I’m watching flocks of waterfowl winging overhead in their fall migration... beautiful. I’ll close off with best wishes for the holidays ahead and a bit of amazing trivia:

If a Canada Goose is in a hurry, how fast can it fly?

Answer on page 4.



Don’t Light the Night

During a moonless night at the cottage you should be able to see over 3,000 stars and the Milky Way. Because of light pollution city dwellers are lucky to see 100. Around Upper Rideau Lake changing light patterns can disrupt the balance of the ecosystem.

Studies show that moths, fireflies, frogs, songbirds and

other wildlife are affected by artificial nighttime lighting. It influences navigation, predator-prey relationships, foraging behaviour, reproduction and mating.

Researchers are also investigating a link between nighttime lighting in humans as it disrupts the release of protective melatonin in our systems.

So at the cottage, please use outdoor lights only when necessary. Choose glare-free lights, aim them down and away from the water, and don’t leave them on all night. Low wattage bulbs and timers are also recommended.

Refer to FOCA’s Docktalk fact sheet, “Night Skies” for further information and suggestions.



Navigation Buoys

As reported in the spring newsletter and at the AGM, URLA has added two buoys off Round Island to mark a shoal that presents a hazard to boaters passing between the Westport and Newboro channels. These complement the two buoys in Kanes Bay and the five buoys

marking Drummers Shoal and the shallows in McNallys Bay. This fall McNallys Bay road residents, Peter Newgard and Chris Flemming, both long time URLA members, have been enlisted to take care of the buoys at that end of the lake. Don Rasmussen and George Ingram

continue to look after those at the North end. The shoal markers continue to be an important service which URLA provides to residents of the Upper Rideau and members are encouraged to identify other hazards which could be considered for inclusion in the program.

Prefer the Landscaped Look? We've got the plants for you!



Buttonbush



Red Osier Dogwood

According to all the experts the greatest tool we have to improve the quality of the water in our lakes is to maintain a shoreline buffer of at least 10 meters. While some of us prefer a rugged looking shoreline, others prefer a more manicured look. Either way we can meet URLA's objective of having a 10 meter shoreline buffer all around our lake by taking advantage of the **free** plants that are being offered again in 2013

For those that prefer a more ornamental look we have selected several varieties just for you. Choose from the plants below that prefer either moist or dry conditions and you will be improving soil retention, preventing erosion and limiting nutrient leaching into the lake, all of which ultimately contribute to better water quality.

Trees available this year include: Silver Maple, White Cedar, Larch (Tamarack), White Birch and Red Maple. All trees are bare-root and small in size compared to those that you might purchase at a commercial nursery.

Shrubs include Buttonbush, Ninebark and Pussy Willow that like wet feet, Chokecherry and Honeysuckle that prefer dry feet and Red Osier Dogwood that can tolerate both wet and dry conditions.

Minimum orders **per variety** of both trees and shrubs are groups of 10 plants.

Orders must be placed by **Friday, December 14, 2012** by contacting Colleen Holmes via email at colahey@hotmail.com or by telephone at 613-737-3117.

Plants must be picked up between **11 a.m. and noon** on **Saturday, May 4, 2013** at the North Crosby Municipal Yard on County Road 10.

Numbers are limited --- reserve your plants now!

Shoreline
Naturalization Program

Want to naturalize your shore? We can help with money and advice — free on-site visits available. Call 1-800-267-3504 ext. 1173 or andrea.klymko@rvca.ca | www.rvca.ca

URLA

Executive for 2012/13

President - Wendy Stewart
613-484-6228
Vice Pres. - Jayne MacDonald
Past Pres. - George Ingram
Treasurer - Murray Kane
Secretary - Jennifer Davis
Membership - Arlene Wilkins
Lakeshore - Colleen Holmes
Water Quality - Jayne MacDonald
Public Relations - Carol Thomas
Community Affairs - Anne Carter
Members-at-Large - Allison Smith
-Marilyn Van Dusen
Web Master - Huw Davis

E-MAIL:

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.urla.ca

Answer to Trivia Question:

The Canada Goose has been clocked at 96 km/60 miles per hour!!!

Highlights of URLA Annual General Meeting 2012

In attendance at the 23rd Annual Meeting were 36 members plus 9 members of the Board of Directors.

Rachel Mayberry, an Ecosystem Scientist with Parks Canada, was our Guest Speaker. She presented findings on the 2010-2011 Algae Monitoring Program. The program, led by Dr. Chantal Vis, took place over 2 years and involved random samples taken from the Rideau River and Lakes and also the Cataraqi system. It was pointed out that weeds and algae notably macrophytes are an important factor in the food chain and are vital to healthy fish stocks.

A proliferation of weed growth due to nutrient leeching from fertilizers etc. can be counteracted by planting a shoreline buffer. Cyanobacteria or "Blue/Green" algae, which can be toxic, is undesirable. If observed, it can be reported to the Ontario Ministry of Environment at 1-800-268-6060.

Special Guests included Mayor Holman and Councilors Bob Lavoie and Ron Pollard. The Mayor brought greetings on behalf of the Rideau Lakes Township and Councillors, reported to the assembly, and answered questions.

Special Thanks to:

The Cove – for hosting our monthly meetings and providing coffee.

Cross Street and Co. Chartered Accountants in Westport – for providing professional assistance in the preparation of our financial statements.

Westport Village Rental – for providing storage space for URLA records and archives.

Internet Kingston – for hosting our web page.

Good Lake Stewardship

Ever wondered how to do what is best for your lake and cottage property?

Wondered what you should/shouldn't be doing?

The following websites offer valuable information...

Living by the Water

<http://www.livingbywater.ca/main.html>

Parks Canada- www.pc.gc.ca/docs

Rideau Valley Conservation Authority-

http://www.rvca.ca/watershed/aquatic_habitat/shoreline_overview.html

Federation of Ont. Cottagers Associations - www.foca.on.ca

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 also gives a strong voice for its members to the regional bodies governing the lake.

Our membership year runs from July 1st to June 30th each year.

Our membership fee is \$30 per year.

You can still join or renew, simply mail your contact information and membership fee to URLA at

P.O. Box 67, Westport, K0G 1X0

REMEMBER

The deadline to order trees/shrubs is Friday December 14, 2012

*We wish you a
Warm and Wonderful
Winter and an Early Spring!!!*



SAVE THE DATE!!

URLA'S AGM 2013

WILL BE HELD ON JULY 13

@

NORTH CROSBY C.C.

WESTPORT

@0930 AM