

# 2018 SUMMARY OF OTTY LAKE ASSOCIATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS - PAST 5 YEARS

## Community Accomplishments

### 2013 Five-year Review of Lake Management Plan

A Five-year Review of the Lake Management Plan was completed in 2013. The top three issues identified by lake residents and cottagers were;

- Protect and improve water quality
- Monitor and reduce, where possible, excessive aquatic vegetation and algae
- Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat in the Otty Lake Watershed

Another important issue identified in the Five-year Review concerns development on the lake. The OLA encourages choices for development that will limit the impact on lake health.

### Lake Health

#### *Surface water quality monitoring*

Volunteers from the Otty Lake Association (OLA) conduct an ongoing E.coli sampling program taking 50 or more samples annually at locations around the lake. Results are generally very good, well within the provincial standard for swimming. These OLA volunteers also participate in the MOECC Lake Partner Program sampling for Total Phosphorus and measuring Secchi depths. Additional sampling for phosphorus and nitrogen is done by OLA volunteers to supplement the RVCA and the Lake Partner Program. The OLA Lake Steward maintains a water quality database. This database is made available to the RVCA.

#### *Shoreline planting*

In 2009 the OLA introduced a program of offering shoreline plants to Otty lake residents at subsidized cost. This has often been done in conjunction with the RVCA's Shoreline Naturalization Program. The choice of plants and the number and size of plants on offer has varied from year-to-year. As of 2017, 1,825 shrubs and trees and 295 native wildflowers have been distributed to lake residents.

#### *Septic inspections*

Mandatory septic reinspection programs for shoreline properties on Otty Lake were introduced by the Townships of Tay Valley in 2012 and Drummond/North Elmsley in 2013. This action was supported by the OLA. A properly functioning septic system is important to reduce bacteria and nutrient inputs to the lake.

#### *Shoreline assessment report*

In 2013 an assessment of the shorelines of 474 Otty Lake properties was carried out under the Love Your Lake Program. It is recognized that ornamental or degraded waterfronts will contribute additional nutrients and sediments to a waterbody.

Individual reports were provided to all property owners regarding the state of their waterfront. These individual reports were confidential and recommendations for reducing the impact on lake water quality were provided to shoreline property owners. An overall assessment of lake shorelines was also made available and an improvement in the naturalization of shorelines was noted in a comparison with a previous survey done in 2005.

#### *Zebra mussel monitoring*

A program for monitoring Zebra Mussels on collection platforms deployed around the lake was initiated in 2014. The abundance of the mussels is cyclic and had declined by 2017.

### **Lake and watershed habitat**

#### *Fish habitat*

Over a period of four years starting in 2013, a major fish habitat enhancement project was undertaken at Otty Lake. This work was led by the RVCA and the OLA with many community volunteers. Spawning beds for smallmouth bass were constructed during the first three years. Nests for both smallmouth and largemouth bass were constructed in 2016. Approximately 275 nests were constructed along with the deployment of underwater brush bundles. The occupancy of the nests during the spawning season increased to 55 % by 2016, a remarkable success rate.

#### *Loon survey*

A loon mapping survey was initiated in April 2016 and is managed by an OLA volunteer. Loon observations noted by lake residents and cottagers are forwarded to the volunteer who incorporates the observations into a map. This map is updated on a regular basis and can be viewed on the OLA website. Annual observations of loons and their offspring on Otty Lake have been reported to Bird Studies Canada/Canadian Lake Loon Survey since 1991.

#### *Construction of Wood Duck nesting boxes, bat boxes*

In 2015 and 2016 OLA volunteers, with the help of the RVCA, constructed bird and bat boxes. Seventeen wood duck boxes, 15 swallow/bluebird boxes and 26 bat boxes were assembled. These boxes were made available to lake residents and installed at various locations around the lake.

#### *Calendars*

The OLA produces calendars most years featuring the flora or fauna of the Otty Lake watershed. These calendars usually have a stewardship focus and help promote living in harmony with the natural aspects of the lake environment.

### **Community Feedback**

#### *State of the Lake Report*

An annual State of the Lake Report was initiated by the OLA in 2014. This comprehensive report provides information regarding water quality, the lake fishery, wildlife habitat, shoreline planting initiatives, the amounts of zebra mussels and algae, among many other topics.

### *Website, Newsletter and Summer Information Package*

The OLA continues its long standing practice of communicating with lake residents through a newsletter published three times a year and an annual Information Package which is delivered to lake residents by an OLA Area Counsellor. The OLA maintains an extensive website. <http://www.ottylakeassociation.ca/>

### *Bear Aware workshop*

In 2017 a black bear awareness workshop was organized by the OLA. A representative of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry was the speaker. Over 40 people attended.

### **Otty Lake Association Leadership**

#### *Management of lake activities*

The OLA has an active 15 member board that meets four times a year. A team of Area Counsellors facilitates interaction between the Board and lake residents and cottagers. A well-attended AGM is held in July.

#### *Five-year review of Lake Management Plan*

In 2013 a Five Year review of the Otty Lake Management Plan was undertaken. Over 200 lake residents and cottagers participated in the associated survey. The results of this review were used to provide guidance to the OLA in developing activities and programs identified by members of the lake community.

#### *Liaison with other lake associations*

The OLA continues to liaise with other local lake associations through its participation in the Lake Networking Group.