

OPP/Lake Associations Spring Meeting

April 30th, 2014 at 9:30 a.m.

Tay Valley Township Council Chambers

217 Harper Road

Attending:

OPP – Lanark County Detachment Commander Inspector Derek Needham, Marine Operator
Constable Byron Newell

Lake Associations – Christie Lake – Brooke Briggs; Sharbot Lake – Kevin Browne; Bennett & Fagan lake – Gord Welby; Bennett Lake – Ian MacDonald; Black Lake – Anita Payne; Pike Lake – Terry Kimmel; Kennebec Lake – Judy Kennedy, Peter and Gloria Smiley; Otty Lake – Murray and Karen Hunt; Bob Fugler – Loughborough Lake; Bobs and Crow Lake – Larry Arpaia; Dalhousie Lake - Judy Hall

Regrets:

Kay Rogers, Pike Lake; Barb Hicks –Otty Lake; Jackie and Brian Stapledon- Farren Lake

Discussion

Marine Program - Inspector Needham opened the meeting with comments about the local OPP Marine program. The program covers a large geographic area with many lakes in Lanark County and Central and North Frontenac. The OPP Marine Patrol visit each of the local lakes as often as possible during the summer recognizing the area is very spread-out and considerable time is spent trailering boats from one area to another and also on cleaning the boats between lakes (concern with zebra mussels). They have access to five harbour craft vessels in Lanark County and two smaller boats located at the Sharbot Lake detachment office. As well, they are supported by the SAVE Unit operating out of Smiths Falls. The 2014 Lanark County Summer Marine program is currently being set-up. They will have summer students working in the OPP boats with the marine operators.

A lake association wishing to have a presentation about the OPP Marine Program should contact Constable Byron Newell at byron.newell@ontario.ca .

The marine program has a law enforcement and a community policing role

Marine question – If an individual is stopped on a lake for impaired driving, can the OPP look in their database to see if there has been a previous conviction on the highway? Answer – yes

Question two –if someone is charged and convicted of impaired driving in their boat, does this automatically mean that they are prohibited from driving a motor vehicle? Answer – No. A judge can prohibit someone from driving a motor vehicle as well as piloting a plane when convicted of impaired driving in a boat but this does not always happen.

** No open alcohol is allowed on board a boat

OPP and MNR partner together on some patrols and OPP can help MNR to enforce conservation regulations.

Community Safety Issues – Inspector Needham mentioned that there are usually a higher number of Break and Enters reported in the spring when residents open up their cottages and realize that they have had a break-in over the winter. If a property owner has had a break-in the OPP will implement the property owner’s access to the Safeguard Program.

SafeGuard Ontario Program -The Safeguard Program is conducted by the OPP Auxilliaries and is designed to make a home/cottage safer and avoid future break and enters. Everyone who has had a break and enter is contacted within three days of the reporting of the incident and offered a safeguard program visit and the use of the engraver to mark their belongings.

A discussion followed about ways to make your home/cottage less vulnerable to break-ins. E.g. locking your doors with secure deadbolt locks, various kinds of alarm systems (e.g. noise-based), cameras, audible detectors etc. It all depends on how much money you want to invest in a system.

The OPP used the term “target hardening” – make it as difficult as you can for someone to break in e.g. lock your doors and don’t leave anything in your vehicle to tempt thieves.

For more information about the SafeGuard Ontario Property Security Program look online at www.opp.ca . Look under the Resources tab/Community Issues section and locate Safeguard Ontario. There is information there that lake associations could use for newsletters and on websites.

Local OPP will do a presentation about the Safeguard Program for lake associations. For further information about community programs, the point of contact is Constable Byron Newell (byron.newell@ontario.ca)

Inspector Needham and Constable Newell stressed that an important aspect of community safety was the development of a strong informal community communication system. Community members should let one another know if something is amiss. This helps with prevention/avoidance of problems. Do not wait until later to report! Call police immediately if you notice anything out of the ordinary. Get all the information that you can.

It was recognized during the discussions that sometimes it is hard to get a conviction even when everyone had worked together to get all the evidence they can.

Bennett Lake Cottage Watch

Ian MacDonald (Bennett Lake) was asked to describe the Cottage Watch program that he helped to establish for his lake community.

Ian explained that at Bennett Lake the Cottage Watch was set up following a number of break-ins. It operates on a road by road basis with a road rep on each road. Good communication is stressed. Important to keep contact information up to date so neighbours can contact each other. Signs with the Cottage Watch and OPP logos are posted at the end of each entry road to the lake. Bennett Lake Cottage Watch program has signs, decals and flyers that they make available to lake residents.

They feel that the Cottage Watch program is helping. They have not had a break-in reported for 2 years.

Bennett and Fagan Lake Association has posted information on Cottage Watch at www.bennettandfaganlakes.com

Also at Bennett Lake there is an Ice fishing Watch. Website identifies what is **not tolerated** on the ice e.g. leaving garbage, fires on ice etc.

Notices are posted on ice shacks.

Questions to/from Lake Association

1. A question was raised concerning a winter problem at Bennett Lake where non-residents wanting to park when accessing the lake for ice fishing sometimes block the private right-of-way roads. What can be done? Can these cars be towed? Re towing – might be a challenge to ensure that drivers of parked cars were not given permission to park by a road resident. If they had permission and were towed, costs would be the responsibility of the person calling the towing service. Recommendation: Post signage to indicate COTTAGE OWNER ACCESS ONLY!
2. Wildlife protection - Who should be called in a situation where a boat or personal watercraft operator is endangering wildlife through the operation of their vehicle e.g. loons – Call MNR Conservation Officer
3. What equipment is required in kayaks and canoes – life jackets + visual (flashlight or flares) and auditory (whistle) signalling device.
4. Paddleboard – same as above

5. You should carry a copy of your boat ownership as well as your boat operator's card with you in the boat

Note: Warnings are usually issued for first offences for equipment violation but for alcohol charges, there is no tolerance

6. In response to a question, Constable Newell indicated that, if requested by a lake association, he would be willing to do a group dockside presentation including an explanation of what is needed for safety equipment (byron.newell@ontario.ca)

Safe Boating Guide

The Safe Boating Guide was last printed in 2011. Updates are now only available online.

Go to

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp511-menu-487.htm>

As a follow-up to some local media discussion last fall, Inspector Needham wanted to assure lake communities that, as long as the water is open, the OPP always have a boat available that they can put into the water in response to a water emergency. The SAVE Unit can go out on the ice.

The lake association reps attending the meeting along with the OPP Officers discussed the timing of future OPP/lake association meetings and it was decided to move to a pattern of meeting once a year in the spring. In lieu of a fall meeting, there will be an opportunity on the agenda of the fall Lake Networking Group meeting for lake reps to bring forward any lake/lake community safety and security question which will be forwarded to Inspector Needham. His response will be distributed back to lake association representatives.

It was agreed that Karen would forward to Constable Newell contact information for the local lake associations for communication purposes.

Next OPP/lake associations meeting will be Wed. April 29, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. Location to be arranged.