

## July/August 2007 LMP Working Groups Meeting Notes

**Intent** – Working Groups to come up with ideas for stewardship activities (programs, projects) that we, the Otty Lake Community, can undertake to address some of the goals for the issues addressed in the draft Recommendations for the Otty Lake Management Plan.

Note: **Responsibilities of Landowners in Protecting Lake Health** is actually the thrust of the Working Group discussions and was addressed through the activities outlined for each of the topics that the workshop participants will cover.

### Issues dealt with in the draft Recommendations for the Otty Lake Management Plan

- Surface Water Quality
- Aquatic Vegetation
- Groundwater quality and quantity
- Water Levels
- Development Pressures and Land Use
- Fish & Wildlife Health
- Shoreline Protection/health
- Mining rights/claims
- Impacts of boating
- Responsibility of landowners in protecting lake health
- Partnerships in lake management

**Meeting Dates** – Tuesday, July 31 (7-10 p.m.) and Wed. Aug. 8 (1- 4 p.m.)

**Location:** 194 Kerr Road, RR# 5, Perth

### **Draft Meeting Agenda**

1. Welcome group and outline objectives for participants during working group session (10 minutes)
  2. Divide group in half (in the smaller group on Aug. 8 the group worked together and chose 5 of the issues that they would focus on).
  3. Activity Outlines/Challenges (see below) were posted on flip charts.
  4. Group was asked to spend approx 1 hour 40 minutes brainstorming the five topics at their station. (approx. 20 min. per challenge). All responses/suggestions were recorded and included below.
  5. The larger group then reconvened to report on the suggestions/plans that participants had come up with in the smaller groups and the group will brainstorm together for additional ideas (1 hour) on all topics.
  6. Wrap-up/other issues/items /next steps (10 minutes)
- .....

## **Small Group Challenges**

### Activity Outlines

1. **Issue: Water Quality (nutrient loading, bacterial contamination, water clarity, aesthetics)**  
**Goal:** Protect, maintain and improve the surface water quality of Otty Lake  
**Objective:** Reduce or eliminate sources of water quality impairment  
**Action:** Promote awareness of threats to water quality through education and good stewardship practices

### Activity -

**Group to brainstorm ways they individually or the Otty Lake community can promote awareness of threats to water quality and promote good stewardship practices**

### July 31<sup>st</sup> Group Responses

- *What is the most important message we want to convey about water quality?*

All individual actions are cumulative in their impact on the lake

Also

Importance of good septic system maintenance

Importance of shoreline plantings

- *How do we get the message out to Otty Lake residents?*

Use of newsletter, media coverage, encourage area counselors to be more visible, more email updates

Idea – campaign for healthiest lake in Ontario

- *How do we encourage Otty Lake residents to accept responsibility for their role in protecting the water quality in Otty Lake?*

Must get the message to lake residents

Put area counsellors names in newsletter so residents know who to contact

Publish photos of favourite/healthy Otty shorelines – offer a prize

Make info available about possibilities for residents to improve impact on lake

-could use newsletter to highlight properties with improved shorelines

Publish/put on website. photo examples of healthy shorelines (Barb Hicks offered to provide web link to good examples)

- *What would you as an individual be prepared to do to help promote awareness of a threat to water quality?*

Talk to neighbours

Provide information about environmentally friendly cleaning products etc.

2. **Issue: Aquatic Vegetation – excessive growth, interference with recreation, aesthetics**

**Goal:** Manage excessive aquatic vegetation growth in problem areas of Otty Lake

**Objective:** Identify and manage inputs contributing to excessive weed growth

**Action:** Educate property owners about the causes of excessive aquatic vegetation growth and good stewardship practices

Activity – *Develop some ideas for community programs which would a) help to educate property owners about causes of excessive aquatic growth and b) encourage good stewardship practices*

- *What is the most effective way of educating Otty Lake property owners about causes of excessive aquatic growth?*

July 31<sup>st</sup> group

- Intensify municipal inspection of septic systems and subsequent enforcement of upgrades/improvements (eg. Muskoka Lakes approach to attaching additional costs to tax bills where action is not taken by the resident independently)
- Distribute pamphlet sharing regarding impact of defective or ineffective septic systems as well as weed management.

- *Once lake residents are informed about the causes of excessive aquatic growth, how can they be encouraged to alter their actions?*

Lobby the government for:

- a PST rebate for use of “best products” re phosphorous, nitrates, etc. (similar to new program for rebates associated to “stop smoking” initiatives)
- government upgrade programs for new septic systems with a focus on savings over time and long term benefits to the environment

*What could you do to help?*

- Share with neighbours re the importance of changes to septic and suitable weed management/harvesting practices. Encourage others to share their great ideas!
- Share articles that we come across/are found during personal investigations (eg. Internet)
- Advise others of effective products
- Submit our ideas to Captain Otty’s Log and to the lake website where access points can be created.

Aug.8/07

-Would be helpful to understand how much(what percentage) of the vegetation growth is within our control

-Group emphasized the importance of strong septic re-inspection programs and discussed how to best let the municipalities know that this is important to residents . Group also discussed the importance of approaching residents in a positive way when inspections are done to encourage cooperation – need to work with members of the community

-Use Capt. Otty’s Log to congratulate all those who have had septic systems replaced, inspected, maintained e.g. Congratulations to all those who have had their septic systems cleaned, replaced this year. You have made an important contribution in looking after the health of Otty Lake - with thanks from the lake and the lake community

- Promote free workshops e.g. upcoming TVT Septic System Workshops

- ***Once lake residents are informed about the causes of excessive aquatic growth, how can they be encouraged to alter their actions?***
- ***What could you do to help?***

Group discussed possible ways of encouraging lake community to share suggestions for environmentally appropriate cleaning

e.g invite submissions for newsletter to be published under the heading Have you tried .... - best suggestion wins a prize, name in newsletter (One participant offered \$25 for first competition). If enough ideas were received, lake association could consider compiling suggestions into a “recipe” booklet that could be made available to community (have to cover costs). Each tip/recipe would be attributed to the person who provided it.

### **3. Issue: Groundwater- contamination , overuse, lack of information**

**Goal:** Protect groundwater resources in the Otty Lake community

**Objective:** Prevent groundwater contamination

**Action:** Educate all landowners in the watershed about protecting groundwater

Activity – Group to brainstorm for ideas that might be used to make the landowners in the Otty Lake Watershed more aware of the need to protect groundwater and how they might go about this

- Why is it important to protect the groundwater in the Otty Lake watershed?
- How do we get that message out to Otty Lake residents?
- How do we encourage cooperation from lake residents?
- What could you as an individual do to help someone understand the importance of protecting the groundwater?

Response from July 31<sup>st</sup> Group

- Provide a Health Unit presentation on healthy wells/well water checking at an AGM. Make testing bottles available for residents to take home. Provide good direction of next steps and encourage Health Unit contact where marginal/unsatisfactory results are found.
- Promote a minimum of annual water testing as an initial steps working toward the three times per year recommendation.
- Promote a combined use of lake and well water:
  - Lake water for toilets, showers, watering
  - Well use for kitchen use
- Publish an article providing information of the 3 levels of aquifers in this watershed, the area through which aquifers travel and the impact of contamination:
  - Captain Otty’s Log,
  - Radio minutes,
  - monthly newspaper articles,

- Otty Lake website (should post all articles that are relevant)

#### Response from Aug. 8 Group

- What is groundwater? Put an explanation in Capt. Otty's Log so that members of the Otty Lake community understand the difference between surface water and ground water
- More information about local groundwater needs to be identified – could the OLA organize well testing on behalf of area residents? Wells should be tested for such things as phosphorus, heavy metals, chemicals, bacteria, chlorohydrocarbons. (one of the workshop participants to research cost of well testing – for individuals/for group. If a group testing program is set up, it could be promoted in the newsletter – Do you know what is in your well? Are you interested in having comprehensive testing done on your well?
- Include bottles for well water testing (and the directions on how to do this successfully and where to take samples for testing) with the Summer Info pkgs. as this should reach all Otty Lake shoreline and watershed residents

#### **4. Issue: Water levels – too high, too low, property damage, impacts on the lake ecosystem and wildlife**

**Goal:** Preserve natural water levels in Otty Lake

**Objective:** Promote understanding of naturally fluctuating water levels

**Action:** Educate the lake community about natural lake water level fluctuations and encourage property owners to make appropriate development choices respecting natural water fluctuations.

Activity:

- *What kinds of information needs to be collected to help Otty Lake residents learn about the natural fluctuations of the lake?*

#### July 31<sup>st</sup> Group

- OLA currently working with RVCA to collect info for a stream survey to identify seasonal and permanent streams entering the lake
  - We need to educate people about the importance of natural fluctuations of water levels and the fact that Otty has a very slow turnover rate. \*\*\*any impact on lake by humans has a huge impact over a long period of time
  - Look for Otty volunteers to help collect water level info
- *How do we get the information out to Otty Lake residents?*  
Capt. Otty's Log  
OLA website
  - *How do we encourage Otty Lake residents to make appropriate development choices respecting natural water fluctuations?*

- *What could you as an individual do to help promote awareness of the natural fluctuations of the lake? e.g. assist in the monitoring of water levels*

**5. Issue : Development Pressures and Land Use- Overdevelopment, water quality, shoreline hardening, loss of habitat, quality of habitat, erosion, quality of life, privacy, rural character**

**Goal:** Protect the Otty Lake environment and ecosystem from the impacts of shoreline development and redevelopment

**Objective :** Educate all landowners in the watershed about development pressures and how they can be minimized

**Action:** Provide information about septic system design alternatives and maintenance, protecting and restoring shorelines, architectural design guidelines, light pollution, noise pollution, stewardship of crown land and private property

Activity – Each group to come up with ideas on how three of the above action items could be brought to the attention of Otty Lake property owners.

- How do we encourage Otty Lake residents to act upon the information they receive on these topics?
- What activities would you as an individual be prepared to assist with?

July 31<sup>st</sup> Group

Light pollution:

- Use of timers, photo-electric cells and motion sensors information should be shared and encouraged.
- Lake communities (eg. Maple Glen) should be approached regarding limiting their use of night-long lighting.
- Current trends to install lighting of postal hubs should be discouraged.

Septic impact:

- Group pumping rates should continue to be sought and successful discounts shared via Captain Otty.
- Township involvement must continue to be sought. Where pumping has not been completed within “x” years, the task should be ordered complete by the township and billed to the resident as an addition to the tax bill.

Stewardship of crown and private land:

- Information regarding use of crown land should be posted as island use is high
- Maintaining crown land is everyone’s concern (eg. The wedding held at Sandy Beach which included the temporary installation of a dock, spraying, erecting of tents, large numbers of people in a small space, cutting of trees and vegetation) and should be reported through a Community Watch program if destructive in nature
- Info should be shared regarding footprint impact and the impact and subsequent responsibilities of each resident (apply footprint assessment to each resident vs. the resident reacting to others....encourage starting at home)

***How do we encourage Otty Lake residents to act upon the information they receive on these topics?***

Communication recommendations:

- Memo updates to the Counsellors to share personally or to “hand off” to a friend/neighbour
- Media moments: monthly articles in papers, info minutes on radio stations
- Captain Otty’s Log articles or MNR info items

Continue to provide workshops: septic tank care, Well Aware, Dock Talk, planting availability

***What activities would you as an individual be prepared to assist with?***

We pledge to participate in footprint assessment, starting with ourselves.

We will investigate available presentations, attend and share information with our neighbours.

Aug. 8<sup>th</sup> Group

***How do we encourage Otty Lake residents to act upon the information they receive on these topics?***

- Promote the safety aspects – safety is an issue that people understand!
- Encourage townships to be clear and consistent on regulations and expectations
- Create extra Summer Info pkgs. and encourage counselors to make contact and deliver these pkgs to new neighbours
- Work with real estate offices to develop “welcome to the Lake” pkgs (note e.g. shown at Bobs and Crow Lakw)

**6. Issue: Fish and Wildlife Health - Loss of habitat, poaching, exploitation of gamefish**

**Goal:** Protect wildlife, terrestrial and aquatic habitats and ensure sustainable management of watershed resources

**Objective:** Protect, maintain and enhance indigenous fish and wildlife diversity and their required habitat in the Otty Lake watershed

**Action:** Educate the Otty Lake Community about the importance and role of indigenous fish and wildlife diversity and habitat in Otty Lake and its watershed

**Activity:** Develop ideas for an education/information program which would assist members of the Otty Lake community to understand the importance of having and co-existing with a healthy varied native fish and wildlife population in Otty Lake and its Watershed.

- *Why do you think that is it important to have a healthy and varied native fish and wildlife population in Otty Lake and its watershed?*
- *How do we get that message out to Otty Lake residents?*
- *How do we encourage members of the community to protect native fish and wildlife populations?*

July 31<sup>st</sup> Group

Look at variety of activities-

Importance of working with younger members of the community was stressed e.g. Kids' Fishing Day, Stewardship Rangers assisting with Shoreline Survey, PDCI students working on benthic monitoring and aquatic vegetation collection., possibility of young people's column in Capt. Otty's Log, need to promote activities and awareness for young people and encourage information, play and competition

- What actions would you, as an individual, be prepared to take on?  
Darlene Bishop suggested that she would consider creating and organizing ideas around "Things to do for Young People"

### **7. Issue: Shoreline Protection and health**

**Goal:** Restore and maintain a healthy **ribbon of life** around Otty Lake

**Objective:** Promote maintaining natural shorelines or re-naturalization of altered shoreline by all property owners

**Action:** Develop education programs and information on good stewardship practices related to shoreline protection

**Activity – Group to come up with suggestions for programs to educate and encourage members of the Otty Lake community about the importance of maintaining a healthy shoreline**

- *What do you think is the most important action that should be focused on to help Otty Lake residents understand why it is important to maintain a healthy shoreline ?*

July 31<sup>st</sup> Group

First residents must understand what a healthy shoreline is!

Municipalities need to be encouraged to enforce shoreline restrictions

- *How do we get that message out to Otty Lake residents?*

Ensure that sound clear info about shoreline protection is on OLA website.

Use newsletter to highlight properties with improved shorelines

Publish photos of good/improved Otty shorelines – could offer a prize?

Make info available about possibilities for residents to improve their impact on lake

Publish/put on website links to photo examples of healthy shorelines

Request for volunteers to help locate additional information that can be posted on the website to share with community

- *How do we encourage participation?*

Information that is offered must be positive, offer resources and educate

Residents need to be made aware of programs like FOCA's Docktalk which offers free confidential information about shorelines, wells, septic



- ***What actions are you as an individual prepared to undertake to help others understand the role of healthy shorelines in protecting the health of the lake?***

Richard Hofer offered to fund the purchase of 500 copies of a booklet to show what a healthy shoreline is.

Amy Pokorny offered to provide information about shoreline plantings

Robert Cosh will help locate information about potential Ont. Gov't funding for shoreline protection

Barb Hicks offered to provide web link to examples of good shorelines

#### Aug. 8<sup>th</sup> Group

- Increased problems with beavers this year at north eastern end of the lake – difficult to increase # trees along the shoreline when beavers are active - discussions around possible landowner actions/working with trapper etc.
- Presentation of Docktalk Program by Barb King has offered several landowners sound information on shoreline protection – OLA should continue to make these opportunities available
- Shrubs from MAPLE had been used by some participants for shoreline plantings – need to let other landowners know that this is available
- Continued education about shoreline plantings needed
- . **Delivery of message is critical! People generally want to do the right thing – need to know what the options are** - people lead busy lives – how do you get their attention and get them to read the information that you offer
- Residents need to know about funding opportunities –encouragement to take on restoration projects
- Could use newsletter to pass on environmentally sensitive suggestions e.g. use of floats to put dock in water in spring with little impact on spawning beds

#### 7. **Issue: Mining rights/claims – property damage and devaluation, water quality, quality of life**

**Goal:** Protect the Otty Lake watershed from the impacts of all mining activity

**Objective:** Protect all privately owned Surface Rights Only lands from mining claims, exploration and extraction

**Action:** Educate property owners about mining issues (e.g. provincial mining legislation, potential impacts of Surface Rights Only property ownership, threats to groundwater and surface water quality) and encourage them to lobby the provincial government and opposition parties on a collective and individual basis for a revision to the Clean Water Act and the Mining Act to protect rural surface and groundwater sources from the impacts of mining exploration

Activity:

- ***What is the most effective way to educate Otty Lake residents about mining issues?***

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-Discuss impact of mining on water quality. Current situation in Frontenac Co. re potential uranium mining  
-Residents need info to access MNDM website to see whether their property is 'Surface Rights Only' – For easy to follow directions go to [http://www.tayriver.org/documents/mining\\_rights.htm](http://www.tayriver.org/documents/mining_rights.htm)

- ***How could the community be encouraged to become involved in lobbying the provincial government?***

Awareness and promotion

- ***What actions would you as an individual be prepared to undertake?***

Promote CMAG Annual Mtg – Aug. 11/07 at 10 a.m. at the Burgess Hall

8. **Issue: Impacts of boating – personal safety, erosion, noise, introduction of additional invasive species**

**Goal:** Minimize the negative impacts of boating on Otty Lake

**Objective:** Ensure that the Otty Lake community is aware of the impacts of specific boating behaviours

**Action:** Educate boaters about how to minimize their impact on the lake and how to minimize disruptions of nesting birds and wildlife

Activity

- Provide two examples of ways that we could most effectively educate Otty Lake boaters about the importance of minimizing the negative impacts of boating on the lake?
- How do we encourage residents and users of Otty Lake to minimize disruptions of nesting birds and wildlife?
- What actions would you as an individual be prepared to undertake?

July 31<sup>st</sup> Group

***How do we encourage residents and users of Otty Lake to minimize disruptions of nesting birds and wildlife?***

Face-to-face communication with property owners via counselor sharing and conversations with your own neighbours. This could focus on such direct impacts as:

Impact on bird nesting

Empathy for neighbours' solitude

Increase in prevalence of weeds

Signage on roads carrying traffic to Otty Lake as well as at launch points (approaching private property owners).

Media is critical and would include a general information spot for lake health on local radio stations JACK and LAKE (Norm Wright and Brian Perkin). A monthly healthy lake column should be encouraged in our local papers EMC (reaching all residents), the Perth Courier and This Week.

Lake literature package should include boating fliers as this package is well received and such information regarding wake, use of the centre of the lake and nesting awareness would all be considered.

***What actions would you as an individual be prepared to undertake?***

As individuals we promise to practice good boating practices:

- Move wake to the center of the lake during water sports
- Ensure that travel in my pontoon boat is moved away from the shoreline

As individuals we will speak to our neighbours personally and at a community road meeting (where such exists).

9. **Issue:** Responsibility of landowners in protecting lake health –apathy, lack of knowledge and understanding, lack of unity  
**Goal:** Encourage and promote environmental awareness, responsibility, education and action  
**Objective:** Educate the lake community about the issues affecting the lake and their role as good stewards of the lake and the watershed  
**Action:** Develop education programs and information on good stewardship practices for topics of concern identified by the lake community

**Note: This issue is addressed in each of the other discussion topics so will not be addressed through a specific activity challenge**

10. **Issue:** Partnerships in lake management – lack of unity, lack of communication and coordination, inability to accomplish goals independently (see comment below)  
**Goal:** Establish, maintain and expand upon effective partnerships in lake management  
**Objective:** Maximize opportunities for the lake community and its partners to participate and cooperate in the protection of Otty Lake  
**Action:** Establish effective, open and ongoing communication with watershed property owners and community partners for the purpose of exchanging data, information, and understanding of mutual needs

Activity:

- What might be the most effective ways for lake property owners and community partners to communicate about the issues of importance to the Otty Lake community?
- How do we encourage this kind of participation?
- What actions would you as an individual be prepared to initiate?

July 31<sup>st</sup> Group

**\*\*\*Partnerships in lake management – unity, coordination, communication, goal attainment (Note: this should be expressed in the positive!)**

***What might be the most effective ways for lake property owners and community partners to communicate about the issues of importance to the Otty Lake community?***

- Continue to make people feel part of “the team”, “the partnership” and “the solution”
- Otty Lake website management and ease of use will be critical
- Captain Otty’s Log ~ a well respected and eagerly awaited read!
- Welcome Wagon ~ create a package for new residents
- Real Estate Agents ~ create a helpful brochure for prospective buyers (contacts, info sources including our webpage)
- AGM ~ provide a package to engage current residents
- Road Associations/Counselors ~ provide memo updates that can be shared on a more personal note by neighbours to neighbours to get the conversation local and personal

***How do we encourage this kind of participation?***

- Establish a discount for several neighbours for regular septic service calls
- Tie inspection to pumping (neither are as effective independently)
- Identify issues among neighbours and work to a solution
  - Promote sharing at AGM, in Captain Otty’s Log and on the Otty website
  - Action                      Sharing                      Success

**Aug. 8 Group**

- Website is critical in providing wealth of information to lake community
- Information, community agencies programs etc. should all be offered in a positive reinforcing way - not “Thou shalt Not!”
- Survey lake community to find out what they want

**Large Group Input**

The larger group reconvened and group members reported on the suggestions/plans that participants had come up with in the smaller groups.

Group brainstormed together for additional ideas

**Development Pressure**

Identify islands that are crown land and put up stewardship signs

**Shoreline Protection**

Provide an explanation re exactly what happens when water from fertilized lawns is washed into the lake (chemical and physical explanation)

**Fish and Wildlife**

Put information about fish, wildlife, plants found in Otty Lake Watershed on website and in Capt. Otty’s Log e.g. use info from SoW Appendix (Include info on Species at Risk)

**Mining**

Put link on OLA website to assist landowners to access MNNDM info about ‘Surface Rights Only’ land

**Wrap-up/other issues/items /next steps**

Karen thanked participants for their time and their input into this stage of the Otty Lake Management Planning process and assured them that their feedback would be used

**Next step** – Community members and community partners are asked to review the draft Recommendations and provide comments (by Sept. 10)

Once the recommendations are revised they will become the core of the draft Otty Lake Management Plan which we hope to have ready for distribution by the end of the year.

OLA currently preparing a survey to be sent to all members of the Otty Lake community asking for their input on the recommendations and the role of the OLA in carrying them out