

Clear Lake Property Owner's Association Annual Newsletter - 2014

Greetings to all Clear Lake Cottagers and after the longest winter in recent memory, welcome to summer 2014! As always, this annual newsletter is intended to update you on current issues, inform you of events of interest and to thank you for your continued support of the Association. For newcomers to our lake, and there are a few more this year, a warm welcome to you as well.

The ice finally broke up just about the latest that anyone can remember this year, unofficially set as April 28th. Total snowfall was what we'll charitably call "significant" but with a gradual warming and limited rainfall, we have so far avoided the terrible flooding of last year although levels are quite high and the Bala falls are spectacular.

Last fall we were alerted to the fact that our resident beavers had decided to block the outflow from the lake and had created quite a substantial dam out from the shoreline. This was backing up water levels to what could have been dangerous levels for the neighbouring low lying properties, especially with the snowfall that followed. Special thanks to Steve Ramsay/family and friends who worked tirelessly to disassemble it.

CLPOA AGM, on Saturday June 28th, at 10:00AM at the Torrance Community Centre

Refreshments will be served and we'd love to see every cottage represented, so remind your neighbours and carpool over early to take the opportunity to chat with fellow cottagers.

This is also an **election year** so come out and exercise your right to vote for the Clear Lake Board of Directors! We are looking for some "new blood" on the board, so please give some consideration to running. We need team players who can commit to truly serve for the greater good of our lake. Any member can be nominated (with consent) so either check with him/her beforehand if you think of a good candidate or better yet, get him/her to nominate you!

I always like to take a moment to thank the current Clear Lake Executive for all of their hard work, time and commitment to work for our common enjoyment and stand on guard for Clear Lake. All of the Executive volunteer their time 100% and we've been through both some challenging and also rewarding times together. So a special thanks from yours truly to Vice President Brian Ternoway as well as Directors Ron Algate, Suzanne McClennan and Dennis Cartwright.

Clear Lake Boat Ramp

As communicated recently, council approved the building of a boat launch ramp for Clear Lake on the public access property and the budget has been approved. The environmental assessment was conducted last fall and there are no major issues, other than spring fish spawning activity which must not be disturbed.

We were recently informed by the Director of Public Works, that they would start the land work this Spring, but that they may not be able to get into the water until mid July. This would have impacted putting boats into the water this Spring. He did say that they should have the ramp available for the Fall (to take boats out).

We have contacted the MacBains / Silvesters and they have graciously agreed to allow cottagers to launch their boats in 2014 using the usual ramp. We would ask that you respect their privacy and get your boats in as soon as possible and avoid taking them out during the summer. As such, please discourage renters from bringing boats with them, as they can also harbour invading species on their hull or as part of internal water. Moving your own boats from lake to lake can result in similar problems. Returning boats should be left out of water for at least 24 hours or until completely dry, then scrubbed or power washed. Internal water should be drained on dry land, far away from the watershed area.

We will need to construct a floating dock as part of the association's contribution to the ramp site and will discuss what this entails at the Annual General Meeting. We will continue to monitor the ramp construction activities and will update you on any significant changes on that schedule.

Camp Pine Crest Re-Zoning Application Status.

Further to our final update of 2013 in which we informed all CLPOA members of the Township of Muskoka Lakes Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting, regarding the Camp Pine Crest rezoning application, we can report there has been no further movement or communication from the YMCA to your Board of Directors.

Last fall, after three (3) excellent presentations at the Township Committee Of the Whole meeting by Ron Algate (CLPOA), Steve Ramsay, and Bob Stephens (Gullwing/Echo Lake), it was very evident to the Committee of the Whole that there had still been no progress "working with the community".

Mayor Murphy and Councillor Nishikawa were very well prepared and raised several issues that were unable to be adequately answered by Township staff, YMCA, or Camp Pine Crest. All Councillors seemed very well versed in the ongoing issues.

Councillor Nishikawa seemed to speak for the majority when she emphatically stated that she felt strongly that the application for rezoning should be turned down, based on major issues that have NOT been addressed.

The Clear Lake Board of Directors continues to feel strongly, as our membership does, that at a minimum the current traffic and safety issues on Clear Lake Road, combined with the over threshold for phosphorus nature of our lake makes the application for higher density zoning simply irresponsible at this time. Clear Lake Rd continues to be abused by increased traffic levels and oversized vehicles and also remains a dangerous Winter use road.

We will continue to be actively engaged in this issue and hope to keep the lines of communication open as well as the membership updated as the situation warrants.

Regatta Plans

This year, I'm thankful to say that on Saturday August 2nd the annual Regatta will be returning to the McClennan's dock in the big bay for more great memories built on swimming competitions and the ever popular tug of war. Hopefully, we'll get some adult paddle boat races going for bragging rights! It starts with the hotly contested decorated boat parade at 11:00 for the coveted "Broken Paddle Award". The parade leaves from the Big Bay for a tour around the lake, followed by swimming events, prizes and refreshments (hot dogs, corn on the cob and pop free for all who attend) starting at 1:00 on McClennan's sandy beach. We've been blessed with good weather and great participation over the past few years and I'm sure that kids young and old are looking forward to the thrill of friendly competition again this year.

We'll have the waterfront area well marked for boat parking and you can also come by road to 1032 Clear Lake Road. Come down to socialize with your neighbours and have a bite to eat, even if you don't have kids competing. You can cheer them all on instead! A big thank you to the McClennan families and neighbours for hosting on their property once again.

Since this day is primarily attended by those with younger families (and email), we won't be reminding you of this date via door to door flyer this year. Put it on your calendars now!

Water Quality

Our lake clarity and quality for drinking, recreation and support of natural aquatic life remains the top priority of the CLPOA. Our lake continues to be listed as “above threshold” for phosphorous levels but the good news is that at least those levels are steady and not rising. This directly feeds ideal conditions for algae growth which in turn can produce algae blooms and reduced clarity, especially in hot, dry summers. The lake is still in good shape and continues to be a jewel of Muskoka, but higher levels should be a continued wake up call against all products containing phosphorous, especially washing machine detergent. Remember, what goes in the septic still ends up in the lake to some degree.

There are viable green cleaning products widely available that any Board member would be only too happy to discuss with you. You can also check out our website at www.clearlakemuskoka.ca under the Keeping it Clean tab where there is a good list of environmentally friendly products.

Your CLPOA Board has unanimously agreed to continue funding of regular Clear Lake water testing in conjunction with the Muskoka Lakes Association. However, testing is for general quality benchmark assurance and not for drinking safety. A copy of the 2013 water testing results is available.

Get your septic tanks pumped every two-three years; it's a cheap insurance policy against very expensive repairs or replacements ahead of their time. Similarly, herbicides and pesticides of any nature are a strict no-go anywhere around the lake environment. Dandelions are nice at the cottage! Think twice (and think again) when cleaning boats, power washing docks or filling gas tanks....a little common sense goes a long way and little efforts really add up. Make sure any renters know these rules as well.

Loon Nest

We love our loons! For many years they have successfully reared young chicks, but oddly enough, two very different types of boats are a threat to them; wakeboard boats (or any boat making a large wake) which may wash out a nest and canoes/kayaks which encourage well-intentioned nature lovers to get a bit too close.

Please keep boat wakes to a minimum around nesting sites or the loon chicks while they are young, particularly in this year of high water levels. Under no circumstances should you approach the nesting area or young, even in a canoe or kayak. Let's give them a chance to love us too!

On that same note, wake activity continues to be a bit of a new hot button on the lake. Some sandy shorelines are being undercut by the larger wake-centric activity. Please try and keep wake boats to the centre 1/3 of the lake and don't cruise just off docks running parallel to shore or inside rafts.

Fishing

We'd love to see your fishing (or any wildlife pictures) on the CLPOA website. Please email them to executive@clearlakemuskoka.ca

I've always found it preferable to use the cell phone camera or keep a one-use camera in my tackle box to record the memories of “the big one” and then practice catch-and-release as well as use non-lead weights. Remember, Smallmouth bass season doesn't open until midnight, the 4th Saturday in June. Fishing for anything before that date, means you run the very real risk of pulling aggressive bass off of their spawning and putting their fry at risk to other predatory species.

Largemouth Bass continue to gain more of a presence in Clear Lake and the newly present pike are thriving; both more numerous and larger individually. Pike are not indigenous to Clear Lake, should be kept and eaten or disposed of (away from any properties please) in an effort to cull their numbers.

Cottage Watch

There will be a "Cottage Watch" report at the AGM. With the advent of more year round residences, incidents of break-ins have lessened. However, if you or any one you know has suffered a break-in or attempted break-in over the last year, please let any one of the Executive know as soon as possible.

Wildlife Watch

This should be the year for last year's cubs to be "large and in charge" and still with Momma! She and their other furry friends such as raccoons will take every opportunity to knock over your birdfeeder or check through your garbage to see what you've been eating that week. Please, place garbage in a bear/raccoon proof containers only on the morning of your regular pickup.

Also, we've been asked by the MLA to resist feeding any ducks and particularly Canada Geese that may visit Clear Lake. They are becoming a problem on some area lakes as their droppings add E. coli to the water, especially small shallower ones like ours.

Membership Lists

An updated membership and address list will be available for pick up at any events this year. If you have any changes, please notify us at your earliest opportunity.

Thanks

The operation of your association and the success of our events are a testament to the support of cottagers and to the efforts of the dozens who volunteer their time and energy. A big hat's off to all of you who pitch in to help every year....you make our lake a better place.

As always, we need continued help and volunteers to make the Regatta a big success. Anyone who is thinking of helping out, even in a small way is invited to make your interest known at the AGM.

Membership Fees Due

Finally, I'd like to ask for your financial support of the Association again this year with payment of the **annual \$30 membership fee**. These fees help to fund Association responsibilities, such as marking the shoals with our new buoys (no tying up to them!), insurance and offsetting the costs of the member events.

We will also be incurring some costs associated with building the floating dock for our new ramp (to be determined). Early return of the fees to: CLPOA c/o 187 Fincham Ave, Markham, Ontario L3P4B4 would be appreciated or bring them to the AGM. You can have up to four paid memberships per property, so make the effort to get the next generation involved!

In an effort to be more environmentally friendly and save postage, we will once again be emailing this annual newsletter to all members who have supplied their email address. If you're receiving this in the mail but now have email, please let us know.

Don't forget to visit our very own website www.clearlakemuskoka.ca and have a safe and happy summer, everyone. See you on the lake and be sure to wave.

Warm Personal Regards,

Gary Deathe
President, CLPOA

On behalf of the Board, Clear Lake Property Owner's Association