

ShoreLines

The Gananoque River Waterways Association

Box 15 Lyndhurst, ON KOE 1N0 www.grwa.ca

December 2008; v.7, #2 of 2

Year 1 of the Gananoque River Watershed Project

The 2008 study on Lower Beverley Lake is complete and the analysis and report writing is in process. For more details read p. 6 and connect to www.grwa.ca



All are warmly invited to
share and celebrate

The Gananoque River Watershed Study
preliminary report for 2008

Monday, December 15; 7:00 pm

The Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve
Corner of Cty Rd 3 (Reynolds Rd) & The Parkway

Refreshments will be served

Door prizes and draw for Mary Pepperd's
painting of Blanding Turtles

Assessments and Taxes

Your increase in property assessment does NOT automatically increase your tax bill. The Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands sets its budget and then divides the monies needed (taking in to account revenue sources such as fees, Casino money etc.) in proportion to the assessments by means of a mill rate. So if the Township spending is increased in 2009, as it has the last few years, so may your taxes. The Township has the authority to declare that the assessments will be "tax revenue-neutral" as the County has already done. The Township also has the authority to keep its spending down, especially in this year of decreasing property values in the wake of the increasing economic problems. The GRWA Board will be writing to the Township to request a revenue-neutral tax for 2009.

Individuals can also get more information:

CAO John Theriault, (A letter to him goes to every member of Council.)

jtheriault@townshipleeds.on.ca 613-659-2415

Mayor Frank Kinsella,

fkinsella@townshipleeds.on.ca 613-387-1005

1 Jessee St. Box 129 Lansdowne ON K0E 1L0

Since MPAC does admit to mistakes, GRWA also encourages its members to check with MPAC on the comparisons to other properties to reassure themselves about possibly appealing. You have until March 2009 to appeal. MPAC: 1-866-296-6722 or www.mpac.ca "VisitAboutMyProperty"

(The obvious flaw in the whole exercise: the assessment has been done at the top of a 10-year market increase and now that market values are going down it just does not seem fair to have these for 4 years.)

BARB'S 17 YEARS with GRWA

When I joined the GRWA, Cliff Redman was president, Bill Cutfield was membership chair and Dick Fox was treasurer. I can't recall who did Minutes but I quickly joined the Board as Secretary. As time went by, Bill was running out of steam and thinking about moving away, and I began helping out with membership. Dick had a reasonably viable list of members which we worked to update. Eventually I was working as recording and corresponding secretary, doing P.R., and helping with membership.

When my health began deteriorating, I informed the board that I'd continue as recording secretary only.

In recent years, as my health stabilized, I became more involved, finally serving as president for the preceding year—although still acting as secretary.

It has been my privilege to work with a handful of dedicated people on the Board. As boards in general go, in my experience, both personal and second hand, this Board has been atypically harmonious and congenial—probably because we are all committed to preserving the environment. That passion, rather than ego, has driven the Association.

Since I don't now have access to official records, the following stems from memory—not entirely accurate, of course. Including myself, we have had something like nine presidents in 17 years. And there were others during the 30 years between Elizabeth Shaw and Cliff, of course. Three O'Connors have served, and the wife of one was midwife to the birth of our latterly formalized Constitution, to replace the one-page document that served until then. The O'Connor family helped settle this area, and members have a unique perspective on the changes in the environment. In every case, our presidents have been reluctant to assume the position. Love of the waterways has been their sole imperative. Every individual who has served on the board has a life beyond busy.

Interestingly, the original and still valid concern about fluctuating water levels on the River has never been addressed satisfactorily—although not for lack of trying.

This next section will be something that Bonnie Mabee as Editor will want to leave out, but I give permission to print this whole piece only with its inclusion!

GRWA began to take off vis a vis membership and activism when Bonnie retired from teaching and took up the banner for the environment. My great regret in resigning from the Board this summer is that I've left her holding the bag.

From my perspective, GRWA began with a bang, languished (but kept the faith) for many years, came to life over the silica mining infractions, and then exploded in the past 10 or so years. All the ecological problems extant for many years are becoming more intense; the need for solutions more crucial; the time factor more urgent.

As an association, I believe we have influenced the Township regarding the Official Plan and the increasingly critical requirement of a septic re-inspection plan.

The Association continues to expose the machinations of careless and venal development.

We supported the formation of a sustainable canoe trail through the waterways.

We helped farmers tap into grants to create alternatives to cows intruding on waterways.

We continue to educate, educate, educate: members, landowners, government representatives, developers.

We help landowners who want to initiate Land Trusts.

We helped A2A initiate a watershed study.

We have joined with myriad interconnecting environmental organizations.

We are fostering the formation of various feeder lake associations.

Have I left out an endeavour? Probably.

Above all these achievements, I believe that the GRWA, struggling along, ebbing and flowing, has helped create the feeling of COMMUNITY of lovers on and lovers of the waters of our area. The mission/mandate is expanding geographically due to urgings from members. The Gananoque River does not run on its own. It has feeder lakes and streams and end waters below the Marble Rock Dam. Below the earth run waters we cannot discern, bubbling up in springs, seeping in from rain, connecting us all.

I hope I might be able to return to the Board. But if not, I trust that new (and hopefully younger) individuals will accept the challenge to lead the GRWA into calm, clear waters.

As has been noted many times, we humans are, metaphorically, all in one boat. And so we are. It's a Noah's Ark writ very large. It's a planetary boat, supported by the waters of one amazing globe.

In one way or another, large or small, we each need to plug the holes, sail on, and keep bailing.

Barb Jones

Ed. Note: GRWA sincerely thanks Barb. The Board will miss her wise words and generous hospitality. She does remain as a valued member whose input will continue. We need more poems, Barb.

What's in a Dead Tree?

Answer: Life ... and lots of it.

Bees, birds, nests, insects, carbon, swings, kids, forts, moss, lichen.

Now some may ask 'Yes, but what's in a dead tree?' The answer is still life...only in a dead or dying tree there is even more of it.

At this time of year the urge to 'clean up' takes hold. Standing dead trees are often considered dangerous eyesores in need of prompt removal. Actually, they play such an important role in wildlife ecology that it is often said they give life to the forest.

It is also true that these trees give life to our backyards and to our neighbourhoods. More aptly called a wildlife tree, they provide food, hunting perches and natural cavities that are the required nesting sites for many species.

Frequently trees that seem 'dead' are often still very alive. Even though they exhibit large cavities or dead limbs, these trees are still offering the invaluable services of; water retention, carbon storage, oxygen release, acting as windbreaks and providing shade and cooling in summer.

A completely dead tree can stand for many decades, giving life, shade and contributing to the beauty of your home and neighbourhood for generations. That is something to think about before setting the teeth of the chainsaw to its trunk. Resisting the urge to 'clean up' for just a moment, consider the complete picture and think longer term. Look at the benefits in terms of wildlife, aesthetic and social appreciation. Consider the values that will be lost forever if that tree and all others like it are taken down and hauled away. Cut only what is truly needed.

Township Septic Re-inspection Bylaw, passed November 24, 2008

During the last 2 years GRWA has supported the passing of such a bylaw, as required in the 2006 Official Plan to be a means of protecting our water quality. A risk assessment strategy will be used to determine which of the 200 properties will be designated for re-inspection each year. The owner can choose a certified inspector who is either a consultant, private contractor or with the Health Unit and the owner will pay for the inspection which is outlined to be \$173.25. There is nothing in the bylaw indicating how often it must be done; GRWA encourages the industry standard of at least a pumpout every 3 to 5 years. The bylaw can be had from a Township office or www.townshipleeds.on.ca "Council" "Council Meeting Agendas" "Planning"

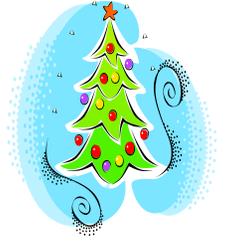
It should be noted that the ON government is currently looking at a provincial law for septic re-inspections.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Dec. 7

Lyndhurst Tree Lighting & Santa Breakfast

**Velma
Kelsey,
928-2786**



Dec. 15

**Gananoque River
Watershed Project**

**Preliminary report
to be released**

7:00 pm

The Biosphere office

(See p. 6 for more details)

Feb. 6-8

Seeleys Bay Frostfest



Charlie Kellington 387-3062

www.frostfest.cjb.net

and

Lansdowne Winter Fun Day

and

Rockport Winter Carnival

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO TIWLT

The Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust is celebrating its 15th birthday. In 1993, the Canadian Thousand Islands Heritage Conservancy began. In 2006, it changed its name and mandate. In 2009, they are looking to renew the 84 current members, and to increase the membership to 150—ten for each year of existence. GRWA has already renewed.

SOME OF THE TIWLT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The Stewardship Award Program. Since 1994, seventeen property owners and agencies have been recognized as good stewards.

Cross-border donations. In 1999, the Land Trust successful with one of the first cross-border donations. A tax receipt was issued in the U.S. for a donation of a Canadian island to the Conservancy.

Conservation easements. In 2002, we signed our first conservation easement. This year we completed two more easements.

Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. The Conservancy put forward the successful nomination of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. The UNESCO designation was celebrated in 2003.

Charleston Lake Provincial Park. In 2005, we coordinated and contributed to a partnership which bought the 150 acre Haskins property, now a valuable part of the Park.

Expansion of the Conservancy. In 2006, we enlarged the size of the area of our operation by about 10 times and changed our name to Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust to reflect this.

Sale of Commission lands to Parks Canada. In 2006, the Land Trust “brokered” several transactions, most significantly the sale of provincial Parks Commission lands to Parks Canada, thereby doubling the size of St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

United Church property at Landon’s Bay. We initiated the sale of the United Church property at Landon’s Bay to the Nature Conservancy of Canada. This precious property has since been transferred to St. Lawrence Islands National Park.

Fund Raising. Our nine sold-out **Historic Cottage Tours** have taken hundreds of land trust supporters on an annual boat tour of the Thousand Islands and into historic summer homes. Through these and donations by our members, we created a Conservation Fund several years ago which we have built to about \$40,000.

GRWA supports TIWLT with a membership and by having GRWA reps such Kim Goodman with this essential organization. GRWA would like to have another couple of its members volunteer to go to the monthly Land Trust meetings, learn the ropes and discuss mutual interests.

**PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING FOR THIS VERY WORTHWHILE POSITION
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY, ONLY A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN**

For more info check out www.tiwt.ca and connect with a member of the GRWA Board: www.grwa.ca

GRWA needs YOU

On the membership form is an opportunity for you to become involved with GRWA committees which do not have a definitively defined role. The needs of the GRWA Board and the interests of volunteer committee members are communicated so that items of mutual concern can be discussed and acted upon if necessary. GRWA is open to other suggestions.

WATERSHED STUDY—plans are now beginning for 2009 when volunteers will be needed again to help the scientists; communication will be improved from this year; the forestry and environment committees are part of this one.

MUNICIPAL PLANNING—needs someone or two to track the Township decisions by attending Council meetings and checking the website especially the agendas posted every second Friday for Monday’s meeting

LAND TRUST—see above

SOCIAL EVENTS—in the past, the only event has been the AGM but the Board is open to having a couple of people organize other kinds of events, either as a getting-to-know-you event or as a fundraiser

FRONTENAC ARCH PADDLING TRAIL—will need some “FAPA Friends” to help promote and maintain the Trail in our area, especially the remote sites such as the campsite at Lost Bay or Blueberry Island picnic site.

Interested? 613-237-1056 or www.grwa.ca

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB): Ash Tree Killer

By our estimate, the natural forest on half of our 75 acres near Lost Bay is as much as 25% ash trees. We are very concerned.

EAB does not spread on its own much more than 500m. It is most commonly spread when people move infested materials such as firewood and pallets.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is working to limit the spread of the emerald ash borer and safeguard our valuable forests.

Enclosed is some information. For more check:
www.inspection.gc.ca or 1-866-463-6017

The 2008 testing for Zebra Mussels and Spiny Waterfleas showed that neither of these invasive species is in Fodey (Long), Killenbeck or Grippen Lake. Thanks and congratulations for cleaning those boats going from one lake to another Next year South Lake will also be tested.

MOE's Lake Partner Program

The 2008 water samples has been shipped to MOE but the phosphate results are not ready. The secchi disk used to measure water clarity showed a large increase in the distance that sunlight is penetrating into my spot between The Crank and Lost Bay; it now measures consistently more than 4 m and one time was 5.2 m. This is entirely due to the filtering action of Zebra Mussels.

Algae growth was prevelant probably as a result of some of this increased light. But more of one factor is not enough. There must be enough food, usually phosphates, to go with the light. One algae sample sent into MOE proved it was common native green species, *Spirogyra* which is not toxic.

A more detailed analysis of water quality will be in the April edition of ShoreLines.

Bridges Across Our Waters

There are not many bridges spanning the GRWA area from Marble Rock to Lyndhurst Dam (By the way, MNR says the Lyndhurst Dam is now slated for restructuring in i2012/13.)

At Black Rapids the first bridge was built in 1849 replacing a fording place; the current bridge was constructed in the early 1960s. It is rumoured to be a response to the fact that ON cabinet minister James Auld's car went over an embankment nearby in March 1960. A small bridge remains on Red Horse Lake Rd. Of course, the oldest remaining 3-arched stone bridge in Ontario was built in 1857 at Lyndhurst by John Roddick to span Furnace Falls.



GRWA expresses sympathy to the family of Debra Summerfield, beloved wife of Ed Lowans, who passed away in September. Debra was a strong, positive environmentalist and supporter of GRWA. A component of the Watershed Project will be dedicated in her memory in 2009.

The Gananoque River Watershed Project

Update October 2008: Year 1, Lower Beverley Lake

The Gananoque River Watershed Project, as designed by the Algonquin to Adirondack Conservation Society (A2A) with the help of over 20 stakeholders including GRWA, has now finished the field work for 2008 and is awaiting the written report. The major funder is the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) with the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) and MNR (Kemptville) leading the research. Three major studies were completed by two crews of 2 students each on Lower Beverley Lake.

The **Seining crew, trained by MNR**, planned to do 150 seines which is very heavy work. A seine is a 30 foot net that is dragged through the water near the shoreline. Fish and other creatures are caught in the net, and forced back into the purse, the middle part of the net, as the net is gathered up. Then, after aquatic plants are sorted out, the young-of-the-year fish and other small shoreline fish are placed in a tub of lake water to be identified by the crew and measured and immediately thrown back into the water to avoid harming them. Some of the common species of fish being found are pumpkin seeds, blue gills and rock bass.

The seining crew found several Species at Risk (S@R) -- several Grass Pickerel, Stinkpot and Map turtles, and one pugnose shiner. When species-at-risk fish were found, the crew weighed them, measured both their fork length and total length, took scale samples and photographed them. The turtles had the length of the upper and lower shells (plastrons and carapaces) measured and recorded. The type of vegetation both in the water and up on the shore was also recorded, so that we will have a better idea of what type of habitat Species at Risk need. A Global Positioning System (GPS) reading was taken at each location.

Volunteers with the seining crew recorded data, helped to position and count fish, learned and identified fish and plant species, paddled the boat through weedy areas, worked the GPS and camera on board, and saw first hand the near-shore biodiversity of the lake.

The **Shoreline Inventory crew was trained by Tom Beaubiah, a CRCA biologist**. They also used a GPS unit going around the shoreline three times. On the first pass they recorded the type of structures that are on there including docks and boathouses and the nature of the shoreline. On the second pass they looked at the type of vegetation that is on the land. Is it a manicured lawn? A pine forest? Junipers growing from rocks? And on the third pass they identified some of the vegetation growing in the water.

Lastly **water analysis** at many points along the entire watershed was carried out using an instrument called a sonde and this testing should be repeated at the same places in 2009.

Many residents of the Gananoque River Watershed volunteered to go out with the crews who reported that having an extra person helped them to operate more efficiently. Volunteers and stewardship are the key to this Project and we are all so grateful to the 15 GRWA members who signed up. GRWA extends a special note of appreciation of Chuck Shaw of Shawmere Resort who loaned a boat and two motors to the crews for the entire summer. Many thanks Chuck. Also thanks to renowned birder and GRWA member Bud Rowe who assisted the crew. Because of communication gaps (that will be seriously tightened in 2009) many who volunteered were not contacted effectively. The Project learned a great deal from this initial experience that will be improved in 2009.

BREAKING NEWS:

NOVEMBER 20 The GRWP Steering Committee has decided that in 2009 similar studies should be done on **Gananoque Lake and South Lake** with the funding application going in by **Dec. 12**. If successful, the Project will invite GRWA members to volunteer to assist a crew.

DECEMBER 15, 7:00 The preliminary report will be received and reviewed for all at the Biosphere offices at the corner of Cty Rd 3 (Reynolds Rd) and The Parkway; refreshments will be served.

A GIFT TO THE WATERWAYS

PROTECT WHAT YOU LOVE CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS WITH A GIFT FOR OUR WATERSHED

The Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association (A2A) is leading our Watershed Study which will cost several hundred thousands of dollars over several years. Your donations will help hire a biologist to continue the important work of studying health of our Watershed and how to improve it.

Please make your donation payable to the Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association, which has charitable status in Canada. Tax receipts will be issued for gifts of \$10 or more.

Name: _____ Address _____

I am enclosing a Holiday Gift to the Waterways of \$ _____, payable to the Algonquin to Adirondacks Conservation Association, for the Gananoque River Watershed Study.

Mail to: The A2A Conservation Association, 19 Reynolds Road, RR1, Lansdowne, ON K0E 1L0 Canada

*THANK YOU
FROM GRWA*

Emerald Ash Borer—moving closer

October 23, 2008

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has confirmed the presence of the emerald ash borer (EAB) in the municipality of Blue-water, Ontario. The infestation is located at a private campground outside of the community of Bayfield. Transportation of firewood is a common way for invasive species to spread. Hidden under the bark where you can't see them, these pests are moved across Canada.

The emerald ash borer has killed millions of ash trees in the US and Canada since it was first introduced from Asia. Help slow its spread to new areas: don't move infested materials like firewood.

Help control the spread of invasive species

BUY and burn local firewood only.

LEARN where your firewood comes from.

FIND out if you are living in or travelling to an area regulated for an invasive species.

LEAVE natural items in their natural habitats.

For more information please visit the CFIA's website at www.inspection.gc.ca or contact the CFIA at 1-800-442-2342