



The Gananoque River Waterways Association

Box 15 Lyndhurst, ON KOE 1N0 [www.grwa.ca](http://www.grwa.ca)

Member of The Fontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve: [www.fabr.ca](http://www.fabr.ca)

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## With this issue: TURTLES AND TANKS

Biodiversity is one of the buzz words heard more often these days as we have a growing awareness that the diversity of reasons why we are here reflects the richness of the waterways that we all love. The Gananoque River Waterways is blessed to be able to support this biodiversity because of the Frontenac Arch geography with its rugged granite beauty, quiet bays, cool forests and even the mosquito-breeding marshes. We swim, fish, paddle, picnic, hike, bike, climb, dive, hunt, do tubing, catch frogs, pick blueberries, look for the first trilliums, and read in the shade of a pine – all our diverse activities reflecting the amazing diversity of this Waterway.

So what do Turtles and Tanks have to do with all this?

Turtles are part of that biodiversity that we cherish. They have been a part of the waterways long before any people walked the shores. First Nations peoples have many stories to tell about them. Katherine Beehler, our own “Turtle Lady” has been studying the Northern Map turtle on the River for the past 2 summers and we expect she will be setting up her traps again this year. You have, no doubt, seen turtles basking on logs and rocks. Maybe you have seen the turtle nests and the eggs that have either hatched or been dug up by a predator such as a raccoon. You experience fewer mosquitoes because turtles may eat mosquito larvae. The supplement with this issue is about the turtles on our Waterway as well as on the ‘big river’ as we are of the same watershed. Read the accompanying paper “Turtles at Risk...” to find how varied turtles really are, how each chooses a specific habitat for egg-laying or for basking. Leave your shoreline natural so that you can have turtles on your property; let that fallen log lie on the shore to become part of the plant biodiversity that supports the animal biodiversity. Drive your boat at a speed of less than 10 km/hr when close to the shore to protect that natural buffer and habitat as on p.6. Keep your winter shovel in the car to help propel turtles on the road onto safer ground. GRWA thanks Chris Bellemore and the St. Lawrence Islands National Park for providing both the supplement and some funds for postage to get it to your house.

Now to Tanks, septic tanks, that is. It is universally recognized that the septic tanks that are in use along our waterways can be a major contributor to declining water quality as shown on p 5. Poor water means a decline in its ability to support biodiversity which includes us. This fact is reinforced by the 2006 Official Plan of The Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands:

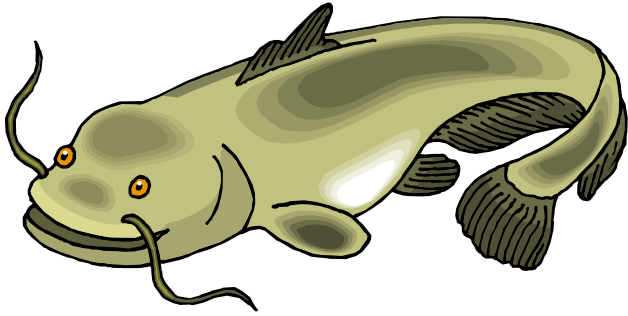
*Section 4.22.5 Sewage disposal systems are a potential source of contamination of ground and surface waters. It is a policy of this Official Plan to introduce a sewage system re-inspection program to ensure that faulty systems are not contributing to water quality problems. The Township’s first priority...will be...undersized waterfront lots, especially those for which no official system approval records are available.*

A pilot re-inspection project, begun in 2005 along Slack Road on the north shore of Charleston Lake, will finish up this year. Of the 64 tanks inspected, 32 were given a ‘clean bill of health’ certificate while the rest required some minor or major work including 15 needing new systems.

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Department of Health in Brockville, 1-613-345-5685 or [www.healthunit.org/landcontrol/](http://www.healthunit.org/landcontrol/) will determine if your records are up-to-date. The booklet that accompanies this newsletter will help you to act now to ensure that your septic tank works well.

## A “Fishy” Fish True Tale

*When my 8-yr old grandson, Will, was visiting during August he made a discovery. He caught a 5 lb strange-looking fish which had a sort of catfish look to it. Will took to a neighbour to look it up in his fish book. It turned out to be a BURBOT. Submitted by Mary Giroux*



An MNR person in Kemptville confirmed that these fish are in GRWA waters. So for your information this was found on the McGill biodiversity website: *The burbot (Lota lota) is the only freshwater species of the cod family and its range extends to northern North America, Europe, and Asia. The burbot possesses the unique feature of spawning in midwinter under the ice. The actual spawning event is said to occur at night, whereby 10 - 12 individual burbot merge to form a writhing and intertwined ball approximately two feet in diameter. Burbot grow to be as large as 9 kg in Canada, and are well known for their voracious feeding habits on invertebrates as well as fish; in a recent study, the stomach of one burbot contained 179 individual fish!*

### **GRWA Thanks Caroline and Brian**

**In November new members Caroline and Brian Fowler volunteered to pick up the mail in Lyndhurst because they already go there often enough. However, at the very last minute they received an email asking them if they would also take the cheques that came in the mail to the bank in Lansdowne. They did this for the 3 months during this miserable winter and we truly appreciate the great service. Thanks, Brian and Caroline, for helping in both directions.**

### **TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDARS**

**June to October every Saturday - LOCAL FLAVOURS MARKETS Gananoque- 9 to 12 beside the arena Brockville- 7 to 1 on Market St. [www.localflavours.org](http://www.localflavours.org) or 1-613-659-4824**

**June 30 - new deadline for applications to the Municipal Properties Assessment Corp. for a re-evaluation of your property's assessment. 1-866-296-6722 or [www.mpac.ca](http://www.mpac.ca)**

**July & August – 8 weeks of FONTENAC ARCH BIOSPHERE RESERVE NATURE DAY CAMP FOR children and grandchildren AGES 8 TO 11; 1-613-659-4824 or [www.fabr.ca/naturecamp.html](http://www.fabr.ca/naturecamp.html)**

**July 1 – Canada Day celebrations in Seeley's Bay**

**JULY 9 – GRWA's AGM, Sunday July 9, 11:00 to 12:00 am, pot luck lunch to follow at Kendrick Park (north on Short Point Rd. on the west edge of Lyndhurst)**

**July 20 to 23 LANSDOWNE FAIR: the Friendly Fair for Friendly Folks; 659-2399**

**Aug 1 to 14 - RETESTING FOR ZEBRA MUSSELS AND SPINY WATERFLEA. Hopefully Fodey and Killenbeck Lakes will continue to remain free of zebra mussels.**

**November 13 – MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS FOR MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS; a vote-by-mail ballot will be sent to all Canadian residents and GRWA will send out its fall newsletter in October with information on the candidates.**

**BE AWARE THAT AN EMERGENCY CALL FROM A CELLPHONE TO 911 DOES NOT PROVIDE THE LOCATION INFORMATION TO THE OPERATOR. ALWAYS HAVE THE CLEAR AND EXACT ADDRESS SO THAT FIRE ENGINES AND AMBULANCES CAN REACH YOU. IF YOU ARE IN A BOAT, A GPS SYSTEM CAN HELP.**

## **President's Message: Together we are better!**

It was with reluctance that I took on this role for this one year, mainly because I am a 'doer' who dislikes being in charge of meetings; also I am away quite often and I strongly feel that the president is the one who should be "on site" not living in Ottawa. But my belief in the necessity of joining together to promote and protect the River is absolute; so I volunteered.

**NOW GRWA NEEDS SOME OF YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE WATERWAY TO CONTINUE THE 43 YEARS OF ENSURING IT REMAINS AS THE VIBRANT PLACE WE LOVE. MANY AND ALL TALENTS AND IDEAS ARE NEEDED. AND YES, IT TAKES SOME PRECIOUS TIME – MAYBE AN HOUR A WEEK. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT OUR WATERWAYS NEED SOME OF YOUR TALENTS AND SOME OF YOUR TIME. PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO JOIN OUR BOARD OR WORK ON A PROJECT.**

It is always better if a team of two can work together as "two heads are better than one" and continuity is provided when one is away. GRWA is on the cusp of joining with the Beverley Lake Associations to do a multi-year watershed study/plan that will require several people. We also need a couple of people to coordinate with the Beverleys, Charleston Lake and TIARA in a serious look at the issue of speeding boats as on p 6. The Township has a new CAO and a new official plan; November is election time for the Councillors. Our logo is being updated. After 10 years of doing this newsletter, I need new ideas and extra help to promote the membership door-to-door. Connect with me to volunteer in any way: 613-237-1056 or [www.grwa.ca](http://www.grwa.ca)

In the last 2 years, my Membership Report has called for lake representatives who might meet with the Board annually, as noted in 2005:

*Because it is such a 'long' area from Marble Rock Dam to Lyndhurst Dam, I am convinced that a representative system from each major Lake/road area should be set up to allow more people to be involved and to be in touch with our area more effectively. Red Horse Lake has expressed an interest in being the first.*

I understand that the Red Horse Lake Association is soliciting members but not as a part of GRWA. The Board has extended an open invitation to this new organization to discuss mutual concerns and ways to cooperate.

Together we are better.  
Bonnie Mabee

## **MY FAVOURITE SPOT ON THE GANANOQUE RIVER**

Our cottage faced south on the river. To the east of us was Larry's Rock, and around a bend northeast of that is a quiet bay.

Often at day's end we'd paddle the canoe there, slipping along in the bay as silently as possible. And then we'd wait in the stillness. We saw wildflowers, heron, otter, beaver, turtles, and a raccoon that came to the water's edge to wash food.

We never disembarked, preferring to leave the spot to the creatures. After we'd absorbed our fill of silence and peace, we'd paddle home, refreshed.

Barb & Pat Jones

# YOUR CHOICES CAN PRESERVE AND IMPROVE YOUR WATER QUALITY

LIFESTYLE MAKES A DIFFERENCE TO PHOSPHORUS LOADING, the silent killer of rivers & lakes

<u>RUSTIC</u>		<u>MODERATE</u>		<u>MANICURED</u>	
Human waste	=534 g	Human waste	=534 g	Human waste	=534 g
No dishwasher	=0 g	Dishwasher, liquid detergent	=260 g	Dishwasher, powder detergent	=651 g
No fertilizer	=0 g	Fertilizer, once per year	=981 g	Fertilizer twice per year	=1962 g
Treed lot	= 17 g	Cleared lot	=29 g	Cleared lot	=29 g
Phosphate-free household products	=0 g	Phosphate-containing household products	=180 g	Phosphate-containing household products	=180 g
<b>TOTAL=551g</b>		<b>TOTAL=1984g</b>		<b>TOTAL=3356g</b>	

These phosphorus loads were calculated assuming that 3.7 people used the cottage for 89 days out of the year. The dishwasher did one load daily while they were there. It was assumed that the powdered detergent for dishwashers was 23% phosphate and the liquid detergent was 8% phosphate. The lawn (15 x 30m) was fertilized with 10-10-10 fertilizer at the recommended application rate of 0.05 kg per sq. m.

Source: Ontario Ministry Of the Environment

Other sources of phosphorus are bird and animal faeces including that of cattle, discharge of greywater from boats and homes, plus septic tanks that are poorly maintained and/or too close to the shore. Excess phosphorus nutrients mean excess growth resulting in overall poor water quality because of excess algae growth, oxygen depletion that suffocates the fish, and water that is truly unpleasant for swimming or boating. It becomes an obese and must be put on a strict diet.

To protect your lake from this nutrient obesity, reduce the phosphorus you put in your sewage system. Even new and well-maintained old ones, have limits on the amount of phosphorus they can capture and remove. On the Canadian Shield [as is the GRWA], the limited soil cover may not readily capture phosphorus. Also, as systems age and tile beds become saturated, phosphorus uptake diminishes and most nutrients eventually reach the lake. To minimize risk:

- **All detergents for automatic dishwashers contain from 4.5% to 18% phosphates so use as little as possible or better still buy the special phosphate-free automatic dishwasher detergents. Detergents for clothes and dishes are, by law, already phosphate-free.**  
**Also use environmentally friendly shampoo and soap to bathe in the lake.**
- **Pump out your septic tank regularly, at least every 5 years.**
- **Use marina facilities to pump out sewage from pleasure boats.**
- **Avoid using fertilizer as it will definitely end up making the lake plants grow more.**
- **Enhance and maintain a natural shoreline of 30 m to increase nutrient uptake by shoreline plants, to reduce erosion and to prevent more nutrients from leaching into the lake.**
- **Prevent surface runoff from your property into the lake [by using wood chips for paths instead of concrete and leading eaves troughs to a back slope or a rain barrel].**
- **Do not wash cars in the lake.**

*Note:* The label “biodegradable” on some detergents and other products means only that the product will break down in the environment, not that it is non-toxic or non-polluting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: contact the Ministry of Environment  
1-800-565-4923 or [www.ene.gov.on.ca](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca)

## **SPEEDING BOATS ON THE GANANOQUE WATERWAYS - PARTICULARLY IN ITS NARROW PARTS**

Along with the fluctuation of water levels, the most constant and consistent complaint to GRWA which we have not done much about is the speeding of boats, particularly through the narrow parts of which there are many along our waterway. I believe this is a function of more boats with more powerful motors. The resulting pollution in both the water and the air, including noise pollution, is not just a nuisance but a measured danger to the health of people and wildlife. Moreover, the resulting wakes when these boats are close to shore does substantial damage to the essential integrity of the shorelines along with the wildlife dependent on it: nesting loons, basking turtles, spawning fish, to name but a few.

In May 2004, on receiving a complaint from Lyndhurst Creek, I researched the law of Universal Shoreline Speed Limit (USSL) set out by the federal Department of Fisheries and administered by the local Ontario Provincial Police Marine Unit officers who are designated as "fisheries officers" and thus enforce the Federal Department of Fisheries regulations which include USSL. Boats within 30 m of any shoreline are to go no more than 10km/hr (a slow run); the fine is \$130 but there are no demerits on the driver's licence because one is not needed to operate a boat.

However, there is a serious conundrum in the USSL law as it does not apply to waters less than 100m wide. And many of these vulnerable narrow parts, Lyndhurst Creek in particular, plus spots at Beaverrock Rapids, The Crank, and Jim Day Rapids are partly less than 100m but then widen out to more. Thus in these narrow waters, any speed is the law. The ideal places to measure and deal with speeders would be those parts of the narrowed waters which are just over the 100m wide.

I have had a phone conversation with two of the OPP Marine Unit officers, who work out of the Hwy 32/401 office (382-2195) but are headquartered in Brockville, in each of the last 3 years but will sum up only this year's [2005] chat as they keep saying the same thing. The main dispatch office in Smiths Falls, 1-888-310-1122, can put you through to either officer to leave a message. They have been good at getting back to me and answering my questions. Both agree that it is a common complaint.

Dennis Roberts, Senior Constable, and Paul Mayhew, Provincial Constable are the officers involved. Mayhew is the one who is "on the river" usually "five times each year" which means a sweep about once a month. They do carry a radar gun but I gather it is rarely used as the main target is alcohol and other safety factors such as number of lifejackets. I am not sure why speeding is not a safety issue. (Please note that "overloading a boat" is not an offence in itself unless there is an "incident".) Both officers encourage phone reports but both realise the impossibility of reading the numbers from the speeding craft because you have to be "real close"; however, **the phone calls will help documentation and maybe force more police presence.** Roberts says that for some types of boats especially the bass boats, the slower speed produces even more of a wake (but the Rideau Canal authorities dispute that). He also said that some of the narrow areas in the St. Lawrence that had put in speed restrictions with signs are asking for them to be removed because it turns out that the residents themselves, not just those passing through, like to speed. Mayhew said that most boaters on the waterway are "locals".

I asked if it were possible to have Mayhew come by land with the radar to document these complaints but he said he could not as he "would not be doing his job." He also said that GRWA would be liable if we put up some kind of sign that said "slow please" in that if one boat slowed down for the sign and another behind crashed into it, it would be partially our fault. Some feel the fishing guides in the bass boats are primary speeders but the OPP has no jurisdiction over the licensing of these guides. They do give out the Boating Regulations booklet but would not give out a pamphlet that highlighted the reasons for the USSL, if such a pamphlet existed or were produced. I still would like to pursue having someone from the police document speeders with a radar gun. The Charleston Lake Association and the Thousand Islands Area Residents' Association both indicated that it is a problem; "call the police and good luck".

I have contacted 2 turtle experts for help. Katherine Beehler is doing a study of northern map turtles for her masters in the Lost Bay area. Chris Bellemere is working with Parks Canada as the 'Species at Risk' expert at St. Lawrence Islands NP and has offered about 6 'turtle' signs to put up on private property along the waterway; DFO and CRCA have approved the idea. Sites have to be decided on but probably at the entrances to the narrow parts such as Beaverrock Rapids and the Crank. I wrote letters last August to the property owners but confess that I have not yet followed up on them but will be doing so this month.

I believe through the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve and the other Associations in the area, a leaflet can be produced that requests boaters to slow down with the reasons why. Because I am not in the area permanently, I am asking for a couple of people who live along the Waterways to take on this project.