

Reports submitted for the Oxbow Lake Cottagers' Association AGM – 2020 09

2020 08 Muskoka District Update -

Much of District Council's work has been focused on the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring that business continues safely.

Council approved a motion to work with the municipality of Parry Sound in performing an analysis of options for improving broadband in rural areas. This is especially important given the number of people forced to work from home.

The District of Muskoka provided funding to Muskoka Futures to assist small businesses with loans that did not qualify for Federal or Provincial support.

There will be a new rural transit pilot project coming soon to Lake of Bays. Rural service will be provided once a week connecting Baysville to Bracebridge and Huntsville. The Hwy. 60 corridor linking Dwight and Dorset is unfortunately not an option at this time. It is hoped that the pilot project will increase ridership which will then may support route expansion. Stay tuned for details.

District Councillor has authorized paramedic services to continue to assist with extra covid-19 testing until the end of 2020. Testing including the mobile unit that was set up in Baysville is above and beyond services already provided by the Province.

In other news some environmental programs have been put on hold this summer such as the algae testing program (Muskoka Watershed Council) while others such as the ash Muskoka project have just started up again. Please see Ash Muskoka at <https://ashmuskoka.ca/>.

All the best,
Councillor Mike Peppard - 705-380-3310

Lake Steward's Report -

2020 06

Hi from Angie and Peter Heydon, and Marc Lichtenberg, Oxbow's volunteer Lake Stewards,

Since our Annual Meeting has been postponed indefinitely this year due to Covid-19, we are sharing ***updates about our lake environment*** by email.

We do two types of tests as volunteers through the Ontario Lake Partners Program:

1. Measuring algae levels by dropping a white disc into the lake and measuring the point at which we can no longer see the disc.

Significant increases in algae harm water quality, food resources and habitats, and decrease the oxygen that fish and other aquatic life need to survive. Algae increases when there are too many nutrients entering the lake. This can also lead to algae blooms that produce algal toxins which can be harmful to human and animal health.

Typical sources are lawn fertilizers and septic leakage. You will never have to use fertilizers if you scatter clover seed over a third of your lawn! Valley Feeds at 233 Main sells clover seed. If you do fertilize, keep it well back from the lake shore.

East Arm is still experiencing a decline in visibility due to higher algae levels. Where the disc used to disappear at around 19 feet down (2004), last year it disappeared at 12 and a half feet.

West Arm is holding steady around 11 and a half feet.

So far this year our disc readings are better, showing an extra 3 feet of visibility on both arms!

2. Measuring the level of Phosphorus in the lake.

Too much phosphorus can cause increased growth of algae and large aquatic plants. When total phosphorus remains under 10 µg/L, a lake rarely experiences nuisance algal blooms. Good news - both arms of Oxbow Lake continue to have acceptable readings of: West - 4.9 and East - 5.6.

LOON REPORT

Sadly, for the first time in Cottager memory, we did not have a pair (or two) of loons on the lake through the summer of 2019. I haven't seen chicks in over 20 years. Loons are in decline in Ontario. Some migrated through in May but as of June 17, 2020, a pair hasn't been seen.

What can we do about this? Responsible boating. Please do not create wakes in the small bays on the east arm, especially in the month of June! Watercraft wakes swamp loon nests, which are right at the shoreline, and the chicks die of exposure. (This is in addition to Oxbow's "No Wake" zone through the narrows, to avoid hurting swimmers and damaging docks and boats in that zone.)

Let's hope we'll see the loons return - how can you have a northern lake without those haunting calls? It's estimated that call has been around for 25 million years.

Great health to everyone, have fun and to share one of the best quotes I've read on what our purpose on this planet is: *"To witness creation and help it in every way we can"*.

Tune in to our Preserving Oxbow menu option on the Oxbow Lake Cottagers' Association website (<http://oxbowlake.weebly.com/preserving-oxbow>) for more enviro info. If you need any input on things natural around the lake, please feel free to contact us: LichtenbergMarc@outlook.com ; angie.heydon@sympatico.ca ; peter.heydon@yahoo.ca .

2020 08 update:

The East Arm is seeing better water visibility reports this summer! Right now, we have 14 feet visibility which is 3 feet more clarity than recent years at this time, which means less algae in the lake.

Our loon is back on the east arm with one report of three. There is an otter and osprey often showing up and a wolf howling a few weeks ago.

Oxbow Lakeside Community Club (OLCC) – September 12, 2020

Oxbow Lakeside Community Club has enjoyed a busy summer on the lake. After much deliberation, the OLCC Board of Directors decided to open OLCC to rentals for past guests only. The Ontario Health Screening Tool was used for all renters, along with increased cleaning and sanitizing put in place. We had a very successful rental season, as we were full to capacity most of the summer, as people were anxious to escape to our wonderful peaceful setting.

We appreciate the boaters that cruise through the narrows at a slow speed with no wake. This not only ensures the safety of the swimmers and children in the water but helps to preserve the shoreline.

However, we have concerns about the boaters who go through the narrows at a speed that creates a damaging wake. We would appreciate everyone slowing down through this short section of the Lake. Oxbow cottage owners, please ensure your guests and renters with boats know about the no wake and reduced speed limit in the narrows.

We are all living through this different and sometimes difficult time. We were sad not to be able to host the annual OLCA Regatta this summer. We look forward to a summer, hopefully in the near future, where we can all gather together safely again.

Carol Speers
Representative for Oxbow Lakeside Community Club

OLCA Communications Report – September 2020

Lynda Arnold - Communications, Oxbow Lake Cottagers' Association

Oxbow Lake Website

- The lake website has had our 'Lake Etiquette' updated recently, thanks to Markus Herten.
- The contact form on the website is also used by new folks on the lake and also others wanting to share information. Special welcome to those new comers to Oxbow!
- Councillor Rick Brooks shares information regularly and there is a page/blog on Oxbow's website with his 'news'.

Regular update news emails continue to be sent to our lake members and just this past week took a vital part in the search for one of our Oxbow cottagers who went missing and was eventually found after spending several days lost in the bush.

Face Masks – our new norm! Special thanks to Tommy Yin for providing masks for Oxbow. There are still lots left so if you are heading to town or home and need any, please stop by... they are on our porch!

Loon Booklet project

Volunteer needed to continue this project (materials have been prepped and sent to Oxbow by Mary Ann Raidel – *thanks, Mary Ann!*) – pricing of printing/paper and overseeing the cutting and putting together. The aim is to have it ready for next summer's AGM and distribution. Pricing to be approved by OLCA. **Please reply by email to me if you are interested!**

Roads Report - September 2020

Neil Cambray has been in touch with the township with regards to several issues, questions and areas needing attention. At this point there is nothing new to report.

Councillor Rick Brooks Report – see attached