

On October 22nd Brian Stewart and I (Judy Hall) attended the annual Lake Links meeting at Perth and District Collegiate in Perth. Approximately 80 people representing lake associations in Ontario participated.

Weeds

The first topic on the agenda was 'Weeds' – Why do we have them and what do we do about them? Andy Smith from Fisheries and Oceans Canada addressed this topic and some of the highlights of his presentation are as follows:

- 1) Fisheries Act, list of fish available in Ontario lakes and conditions they prefer (weeds provide the preferred habitat for fish)
- 2) Phosphorous builds up gradually in lake water. We must try to limit the amount of phosphorous that goes into the lake and streams by using phosphate-free detergents and avoid washing hair (and cars) at the beach. Shoreline should be kept as natural as possible.
- 3) Why so many weeds last summer?
 - a) Lots of sun
 - b) Lots of nutrients
 - c) Warm water temperature
 - d) Low water levels
- 4) Methods to control aquatic plants
 - a) Raking
 - b) Cutter bar – attached to side of boat
 - c) Weed cutter
 - d) Aquatic herbicide (permit required)
 - e) Dragging chain or harrows
 - f) Dredging
 - g) Bottom barriers
 - h) Filling

The latter 4 methods have a negative impact on fish survival

Weed cutting should be left until after fish spawning.

The Long Term Solutions to Living with Weeds

- a) Swimming raft
- b) Decrease nutrient input by having a natural shoreline
- c) Reduce/eliminate lawn fertilizers

Contacts for more information on Aquatic Vegetation (weeds)

- a) Ministry of the Environment (www.ene.gov.on.ca)
- b) Conservation Authority (www.mvc.on.ca)
- c) Conservation Ontario (www.conservation-ontario.on.ca)
- d) Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association (www.foca.on.ca)
- e) Keep All Our Lakes Great (www.invadingspecies.com)

- f) Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (www.ofah.org)
- g) Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (www.mnr.gov.on.ca)
- h) Fisheries and Oceans Canada (www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

A panel discussion followed the presentation with panel members: Andy Smith (Fisheries and Oceans Canada), Tom Beaubiah (CRCA), Mike Yee (MVCA) and Valerie Blazeskie (Parks Canada – Rideau Canal)

How to Get You Lake Community to Care About Water Quality Protection

Bill Finley (Bennett & Fagan Lake Association), Don Curry (Charleston Lake Association), Karen Hunt (Otty Lake Association) and Kim Goodman (Centre for Sustainable Watersheds) addressed this topic and some of the highlights are as follows:

- 1) It is important to have a list of members with contact information, history of members and area(s) of expertise.
- 2) A newsletter is an important part of communication with members
- 3) Membership should be extended to all people interested in the lake community
- 4) Associations are focusing on water quality and providing activities for members e.g. swimming lessons and environmental day for youths; web site for more effective communication and lake and stream management plans
- 5) More information can be obtained from the Centre for Sustainable Watershed (watershed.ca or 272-5136)
- 6) Interest was expressed in having a meet and greet with a representative from all the various government agencies along with councilors and mayors to allow lake associations to learn which agency to contact when problems arise

At lunch we were able to network with other associations in our area and Mike Yee from MVCA.

Your Lake, Your Responsibility

In the afternoon Gary Neilson, Susan O'Brien McTaggart and Shanna Linlin were the presenters. Charleston Lake has undertaken a very extensive lake management plan and outlined various programs that they feel are important to the health of their lake community.

- 1) Septic system re-inspection
- 2) Shoreline review of all properties
- 3) Topographical map showing contours on bottom of the lake
- 4) Species at risk recovery plan
- 5) Stream assessment
- 6) Lake capacity modeling

It was a great workshop! We walked away with knowledge, inspiration and the feeling that we are part of a large body of people who are concerned with protecting and enjoying a lake environment.