



<http://www.foxlakeassociation.org/>

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Another summer season has passed at Fox Lake and despite the rather strange weather this year I hope everyone had an enjoyable time at the lake.

While we had great weather for our BBQ fest and the Regatta events, a cloud burst and thunderstorm managed to end the Corn Roast a bit prematurely. However, everyone was having a good time up to the point when we were drenched!

The final act of the weatherman was the heavy rains and rapidly rising waters in late September. The lake appeared to rise about two feet in 24 hours scattering docks, boats, canoes and kayaks around the lake. It was a bit like a swap meet with everyone trying to find and get their possessions.

Despite all this I'm sure in our memories it will have been another glorious summer at Fox Lake.

Again this year, as a result of the BBQ fest event and auction, we were able to raise around \$2,000, leaving the Fox Lake Association treasury in a sound financial position, which will allow us to cover the costs involved in getting our Lake Plan embedded in the Town of Huntsville Official Plan (more on this in Lake Plan update that follows).

The Annual General Meeting occurred on July 12th, graciously hosted by Ellen and Brian Fox, with a very good turnout from the association membership. A number of initiatives were covered at the meeting but I wanted to highlight a few of the key activities that occurred through the summer.

The association continues to focus on water quality spearheaded by the good work of David White. Again this year we worked with the Ministry of Natural Resources to do benthic and invasive species monitoring. As well, the association has posted signs at various entry points to the lake reminding boaters to take proper precautions to prevent invasive species from entering the lake.

In September we again planted trees on the lake island damaged by fire several years ago. We are seeing a 50 % success rate from our efforts which are having a positive impact on the reforestation of the island.

The association is continuing to stay current with any re-zoning or development initiatives which could impact the lake environment and bring these activities to the attention of the association membership.

Our website continues to be developed, thanks to the fine work of Ellen Fox, and has lots of information, links, photographs, etc. You can find newsletters (like this one), meeting minutes, directories and other useful information there. Also, a reminder that the address for the association is foxlakeassociation@gmail.com and emails to the board can be sent to it.

Finally, with winter and the holiday season coming upon us quickly I wanted to wish everyone a warm and happy time and look forward to reconnecting next spring.

Tom Gillette
President

FLA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

"Membership has its privileges" is a well-known quote and this summer proved that the Fox Lake residents are privileged to have some hard working and community minded members working on our behalf. Judith Maxwell and Ellen Fox have put in countless hours in committee and town hall meetings to finalizing the Lake Plan. A plan six years in the works and wonderfully constructed by Jack van der Meer, Elaine Jackson, a former and longtime resident, and others.

We are privileged to have a board that puts time and muscle in organizing social and fundraising events such as the Annual Regatta, BBQ and Corn Roast. The only way that we can raise funds to finance projects such as the Lake Plan. We are a small lake and these events are our opportunity to get to know each other so that when we have occasions such as the flooding late this summer we look out for each other. Jim Watson, David White, Rick Skinner and David Blanchard rescued countless watercraft, docks and chairs and tried to reunite them with their owners.

Our Fox Lake Association email, foxlakeassociation@gmail.com, has also been very useful as a community bulletin board where we can keep each other informed about relevant issues such as the flood. But it can only be a useful bulletin board if we have your current contact information. So, please, keep me posted (either at the FLA email or msmirniw@sympatico.ca) with any changes to your contact information.

And for those who have not yet paid their membership dues please send your cheques (\$40 made out to Fox Lake Association) to Jim McMahon, Treasurer Fox Lake Association, 1008-3900 Yong Street, Toronto, ON. M4N 3A6. The full membership form is posted on the FLA website.

Mary Smirniw
Membership Chair

LAKE PLAN UPDATE

We have been busy! And we have news on two fronts – the Fox-Vernon Portage; and the Lake Plan implementation.

The Portage:

The Town's Official Plan – Section 8.10.4: says that “currently used portages will be preserved or new trails made to provide another suitable route.”

The loss of access to the traditional portage has been a source of grief on the part of many residents of Fox Lake --- it was a lovely cool spot on a hot summer's day, and the children loved to don their life jackets to play in the rush of water in the deep pool. In 2008, several residents made a concerted effort to convince Town staff to correct the situation, but without success. This year the Board tried again -- out of concern for the safety of the intrepid canoe campers who were making their way along the narrow, windy section of Muskoka Road 45 leading to the Hoodstown bridge – no mean feat with a canoe over one's head. Ellen Fox and Judy Maxwell stressed the need for a safe pathway in a presentation to the Public Infrastructure Committee in July. The Committee asked Town staff to examine the feasibility of getting easements from the four landowners we could resume using the path beside the rapids. If that fails, the Town will look for a suitable route along the road allowance.

The Lake Plan:

Fox Lakers are lucky to have a thorough and complete Lake Plan, prepared for our community by Jack van der Meer in 2009. If you haven't read it, you should, as you will learn a lot about your lake. You can find a copy on the website. <http://www.foxlakeassociation.org/fox-lake-plan.html>

Our purpose now is to update the plan and embed it in the Official Plan of the Town, so that Council and staff have a deeper understanding of the unique characteristics of the Lake and the challenges to its health.

Much research has been done since the spring to update the information contained in the plan. We found significant changes in the state of the shoreline, a sharp increase in the number of docks, and a growing trend toward year-round residence. And for the first time we have a count of the number of boats visible along the shoreline on the July and August long weekends. This is the first time that a boat count has been done on the lake.

We have also been plowing through the District and Town Official Plans so we are better informed about what the Town's responsibilities are and what they expect of us.

Our main conclusion so far is that the state of the lake has changed a lot since 2009. This has convinced us that we – the community as a whole, and the Board, on your behalf -- should be monitoring the health of the lake on an ongoing basis.

At its Thanksgiving weekend meeting, the Board reviewed a draft report collecting the information required by the Town as part of the Implementation process and provided guidance on the way ahead.

Judy Maxwell
Lake Plan Officer

LAKE STEWARD REPORT

Monitoring of Fox Lake continued in 2014. In addition to the usual factors, this year the University of Waterloo sampled for seven physical/chemical parameters. They were Dissolved Oxygen, pH, Conductivity, Temperature, Secchi Depth, Nitrate/Nitrite, and Total Phosphorus/Orthophosphate. Six sites on the lake were sampled twice in July. The results vary somewhat across the six sites. Colin Yates, the program coordinator, in an email to Ellen Fox states: *"The only parameters that appear to be out of their normal range is pH and dissolved oxygen. PH is on the low side, of normal range for oligotrophic lakes in central Ontario. I would prefer to see dissolved oxygen closer to 8 mg/L in a lot of cases, but since this is the first year of sampling on Fox Lake this may be normal there."* Our mean pH figure was about 6, and DO was 7.5 mg/L. MoE states that early stage life should have a DO level of 9 mg/L while other stages require 5 mg/L. Standards for aquatic life from CCME (Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment) suggest that pH should be between 6.5 and 9.0. Figures below 6.5 indicate that the lake may be unable to sustain certain plants and aquatic life. Obviously Fox Lake sustains many forms of life, we just don't know what might be present if the lake was less acidic.

Benthic Monitoring (aquatic invertebrates) results once again are mixed. The following is the interpretation of the results by Dylan Moesker the Biotech from the District of Muskoka that led the monitoring for the last two years:

"First off I want to thank you for your help with the benthic monitoring on Fox Lake this year! It's great to see people getting together who are all interested in learning more about biological activity within lakes and lake health.

Each year we sample our established sites to determine which benthic macroinvertebrates are found. These benthos indicate the health of the riparian zone (section between shallow water and dry land) and the littoral zone (shallow water nearest to dry land). These two zones are especially important to lake health as they are impacted by snowmelt, runoff, sedimentation, etc.

*Collected benthos are grouped into seven (7) different categories, in which three (3) are mainly focused on: EOT, Chironimids, and Richness. The % EOT includes mayflies, dragonflies, and caddisflies, which are benthic macroinvertebrates who are **intolerant** to pollution. % Chironimids is focused on the invertebrate named a Midge (or blood worm) which are **tolerant** to pollution and can survive in harsh environments. Richness is the biodiversity of species found within the sample, and with biodiversity, the more the better. The other four (4) categories are more used as reference, in that if one year a number drastically jumps or falls, further investigation might be required.*

With these numbers alongside the Muskoka Average, we are able to understand the direction the lake is heading in regards to shoreline and lake health. If the % EOT (intolerant) is low, and % Chironimids (tolerant) is high, this indicates that the environment may not be suitable for the intolerant benthic invertebrates. This indicates to us that this section of the lake may be impacted by sources such as development, runoff, or other anthropogenic sources.*

Below I have explained results from our testing on August 15th, 2014

- *Richness is above the Muskoka Average at 16. As stated above, richness is important as it represents biodiversity within the lake. Biodiversity shows healthy relationships between benthos.*
- *%EOT has slightly dropped from previous years, but annual monitoring should show if this is continuous or just a part of a larger trend*
- *%Chironimids looks healthy at 7. There are quite a few lakes that are above this average, so being below it is good to see*
- *%Collectors/Gatherers is showing a decrease as well, but again, more monitoring will show if this is a trend or if is something to be concerned about*
- *Hilsenhoff Index looks great at 5.69. For this index, the lower the number, the better."*

Please come to your own conclusions. The results and an interpretation guide are posted on the FLA website. It is still 'early days' for our benthic monitoring program.

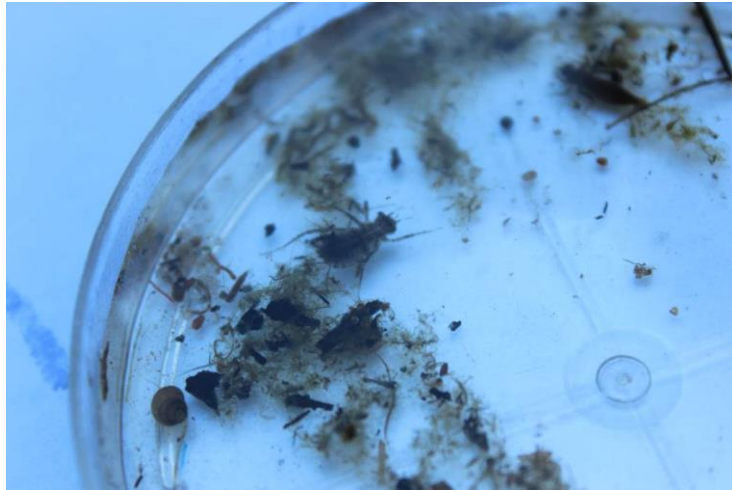
Invading species monitoring results for 2014 will not be available until late spring 2015.

Secchi depth (water clarity) was lower this year, with an average of 1.8 m. The previous ten year average was 2.0. This may be attributable to the many heavy rain events causing increased turbidity.

Everyone is likely aware of the unusual lake levels this year. There has been no change in MNR's target level parameters for the lake. The following is from a communication with Amanda Vincent at MNR, "...there have been a couple of times this year where the Big East River flows rocketed up without recording much rain at Huntsville, Katrine or the Environment Canada climate station at Beatrice. Monthly accumulations for September haven't been too far off normal but flows across the Muskoka and Magnetawan river system have been much, much higher than historic averages for this time of year which suggests that there has been a lot of rain but not over top of our gauges! For example, the full stoplog complement has not made it into the Fox Lake Dam all summer and more stoplogs have been out of the Fox Lake Dam than what would be out during a 'typical' spring freshet since the middle of September!!! Crazy." You are likely aware that there was a major rain event on Sunday September 21st. Bill Knight on West Fox Lake Road, says that the rain started about 10 in the morning and continued till about 2 p.m. Extensive erosion damage and some flooding occurred on the roads around the lake. Apparently, the town was out that afternoon to check the damage. The roads were already being repaired the next day. The lake was extremely high on the Monday with many boats and docks dislodged and afloat. People who were at the lake, rescued and tied up floating objects. We assumed the water level had peaked and would recede thereafter. Unfortunately it continued to rise through Monday and

into Tuesday. The level peaked that day at 295 metres. Docks that looked secure on Monday, had floated away by Tuesday morning. Inflow from the extensive wetlands above Fox Lake must have caused the delayed maximum level. It is expected that more of this type of event will occur in the future, so it may be wise to tether boats and docks even during parts of the year when high levels are not expected.

David White
Lake Steward



Benthic Macroinvertebrates

PLANNING AHEAD: 2015 SUMMER EVENTS

AGM-July 11, 2015

Regatta-August 1, 2015

Corn Roast-September 5, 2015

FLA EXECUTIVE

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Vice-President	Bill Knight

Past President	Robin Yule
Recording Secretary	Sharon Lillico
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Director, Social/Fundraising	Karen Beamer
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Officer, Membership	Mary Smirniw
Officer, Lake Plan	Judy Maxwell
Newsletter Editor	Katie McMahon

This newsletter is published and funded by the Fox Lake Association Inc. It is distributed to all Fox Lake residents or their information and pleasure. If you have enjoyed reading it, please consider supporting the Association by becoming a member if you have not already done so.

If you did not pay your annual dues of \$40/yr per family at our Annual General Meeting, you can mail a cheque payable to Fox Lake Association Inc. to: Jim McMahon, Treasurer,

In order to keep our membership records current, please include your name, home and Fox Lake address, phone number(s) and your email address (so the Association can communicate information to you cost-effectively).

