

Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh

CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

— FALL 2004 NEWSLETTER —



MNR / Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association Fish Committee Fisheries Management Meeting

On October 5, 2004, MNR met with the Fisheries Committee of the Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association (WCA) to formulate a plan of action regarding fisheries regulation, assessment and management actions.

A. Fishing Regulations:

It has recently been learned, the 2005 and 2006 Sport Fishing Regulation Summaries will be combined. Consequently, the earliest any new fishing regulation can be implemented is 2007. It is anticipated at that time (i.e. 2007), there will be major changes to Division Fishing Boundaries as well as several significant changes to size and catch limits pertaining to walleye, pike and perhaps even bass. This is a Provincial Initiative and there will be public consultation over the next couple of years in this regard.

However, as an interim measure, the MNR made a number of recommendations to the WCA Fish Committee regarding voluntary regulations that the Association might consider.

These included:

- A voluntary closure of the lake trout fishery,
- A voluntary slot size for walleye (this will undoubtedly be part of the above mentioned Provincial initiative), and
- Abide by current regulations for bass and pike.

Lake Trout:

Recent netting and creel surveys suggest the lake trout population is very small, but seemingly stable. Currently, recruitment seems to be balancing mortality, but both are at very low levels. Nonetheless, the Ministry considers the Wah-Wash-Kesh Lake trout population to be highly vulnerable to over-exploitation. This is because even a small increase in angling mortality over

its current low level would upset the present delicate balance. Even a small increase in angling mortality will further reduce already precipitously low numbers and exceed the recruitment rate, thereby jeopardizing the sustainability of the population. Hence, the Ministry's recommended a voluntary closure of the lake trout fishery. The Fish Committee of the WCA asserted that perhaps public education and individual choice was a more acceptable approach than an over-all voluntary closure to be imposed upon all WCA members.

Consequently, the MNR and WCA fish committee **recommend that individual members make a responsible decision to voluntarily refrain from angling (including catch and release) lake trout until signs of a well rehabilitated and highly stable population are established.** (Admittedly, the MNR concedes this may be a lengthy period of time as past harvest reductions have not resulted in a rehabilitated population.)

Walleye:

Recent netting and creel surveys suggest the walleye population is healthy and providing a reasonably good sport fishery. However, some indicators suggest walleye abundance has decreased relative to surveys conducted in the 1980's.

The Ministry recommended the voluntary adoption of a slot size to the WCA Fish Committee. (Note: Fish within a certain length range (slot) would be released.) The Fish

Committee was reluctant to endorse such a recommendation considering: The MNR already considers the status of the walleye population as "healthy". A reticence to adopt a new and potentially confusing type of catch regulation (i.e. slot size). A perception that the Ministry is constantly reducing harvest with no discernable benefits to the angler or the fish population.

In light of the foregoing, no recommendation was endorsed regarding voluntary regulations with respect to walleye angling.

Northern Pike and Smallmouth Bass:

These populations appear to be very healthy. The 2002 creel survey indicates pike and bass enjoy a remarkably high release rate of 90% and 76% respectively. Consequently, it was considered unnecessary to make any recommendations to voluntarily further reduce the harvest of these species.

Other Voluntary Angling Regulations:

On behalf of some members, the WCA Fish Committee brought up the notion of barbless hooks and a live bait prohibition. The Ministry felt these were inappropriate or ineffective regulatory tools to address the ills presently facing the Wah-Wash-Kesh fishery. However, if individual members feel these are beneficial and wish to abide by them on a self-imposed basis, by all means they are welcome to do so.

B. Future Fisheries Assessment:

Discussions ensued regarding the most cost-effective method to monitor angling activity and harvest.

Options included:

- 1) Victoria Holiday Weekend Voluntary Creel,
- 2) End of Season Creel Questionnaire, and/or
- 3) Voluntary Creel Diary Program

The Option #2 – End of Season Creel Questionnaire was considered the most effective method. In this regard, please find the questionnaire enclosed in this newsletter. The MNR requests you complete and return it to their office prior to January 1, 2005. MNR will summarize the results and present a summary report to the WCA in 2005.

C. Other Management Initiatives:

The WCA will apply for and conduct a Community Fisheries Involvement Project to enhance the walleye spawning bed at Whitestone Chutes in 2005.

On an experimental basis in the fall of 2004, the MNR will conduct a netting survey to evaluate the feasibility of a lake trout egg collection and culture project.

Eric McIntyre, Parry Sound Area Fisheries Biologist Parry Sound District

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
(The Fish Enhancement Committee wishes to thank Eric McIntyre for collecting and preparing this summary of the meeting held on October 5, 2004 to consider options available to Wah-Wash-Kesh fishermen.)

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Explanation of Rejected Fisheries Management Report

At our Annual General Meeting July 31, 2004, the Fish Enhancement Committee reported that a Fisheries Management Plan had been commissioned by the Association several years ago, but that the report had been rejected by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) and has not been implemented. Members from the floor requested an accounting for the money spent on this report and an explanation of why it was rejected by the MNR.

This article describes the money that was spent on the reports mentioned at the AGM. Eric McIntyre, Fisheries Biologist – Parry Sound Area, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, has submitted a detailed explanation about why the reports were rejected, (printed on the next page).

In 1999, the Fish Enhancement Committee, with the full backing of the Directors, entered into a project with the OMNR to develop a Fisheries Management Plan for our lake. The report was completed by SAAR Environmental and the final report was submitted in October 2000.

The Association paid SAAR Environmental \$2,675 on cheque #0262 dated March 9, 1999, for Lake Survey Action Plan Phase 1 (their Ref.#TS-394). The invoice amount was \$2500 plus GST of \$175.

Also we paid them an additional \$2,675 on cheque #0325 dated October 25, 2000, for WWK Lake Fisheries Management Plan, also their Ref. #TS-394. This was invoiced at \$5,000 + GST of \$350, for a total of \$5,350, with \$2,675 paid by OMNR and the balance of \$2,675 paid by us.

This report recommended various monitoring and analysis activity as well as potential spawning bed enhancement programs, and also a

reconsideration of the winter fishing ban on our Lake.

In February 2001, the Association engaged Mr. Lloyd Thurston, retired OMNR Fisheries Biologist, to evaluate the plan and prepare a Lake Fisheries Operational Plan. He was paid \$1,215⁴⁹ on our cheque #0301 dated Feb. 6, 2002 for his Review of Fisheries Management Plan & Preparation of Fisheries Operational Plan. This comprised fees of \$1,155, disbursements of \$48⁴⁵ and interest due to our late payment of \$12⁰⁴.

Several aspects of the Thurston report were rejected by the OMNR in a letter from Mr. Eric McIntyre on May 28, 2001, including foreign lake trout stocking, sensitive area mapping (downloaded to municipalities), completion of the Wah-Wash-Kesh Fisheries Management Plan (due to budget restrictions), and the stocking of the north basin with splake.

The OMNR did agree to consider a trout egg collection program, provided a copy of fisheries reports to the Association, committed to a Synoptic Trap Net Survey in 2002 and a Spring Littoral Index Survey in 2004, Gooseneck Creek spawning bed evaluation, and scientific data collection and implementation of spawning bed work.

Total expenditures by the Association on these reports and their analysis were \$6,565⁴⁹

In November 2001, the Association attempted to recover from the OMNR the dollars that were spent on Mr. Thurston's review of the plan and on half the money spent on the SAAR report but we were not successful.

**John Nelson, President
Stillwater Cottage, North End**

MNR's Perspective on the Wah-Wash-Kesh Lake Fisheries Management Plan

At the 2004 Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association AGM, it appeared there were a number of misconceptions with respect to the Ministry's involvement with the Wah-Wash-Kesh Lake Fisheries Management Plan. The following is the Ministry's perspective in this regard:

1. In 1999, the Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association (WCA) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) entered into a voluntary partnership, under the Ministry's Community Fisheries Involvement Program (CFIP), to hire a consultant to write a Fisheries Management Plan for Wah-Wash-Kesh Lake for our mutual benefit.
2. In 1999, under the auspices of a CFIP grant, the Ministry provided \$2,500 towards the project; which at the time we believed would constitute the majority of funding required for the project.
3. In good faith, the Ministry of Natural Resources submitted to the WCA a listing of consultants that we believed would produce a good and creditable Report. The selected consultant was chosen from this list. The Ministry acknowledges and accepts its role and responsibility with respect to contractor selection in this regard.
4. It was the Ministry's opinion the prepared report was deficient in many respects and did not meet the Terms of Reference for the Plan. (The Terms of Reference are also available upon request.) Copies of the report were submitted to the Ministry and WCA, so the report was completed and does exist. We simply don't believe it has much utility to help us with fisheries management on the lake. If anyone would like to read the submitted plan, it is available for their viewing from either the Fish Committee of the WCA or the MNR.

(The statement that the Ministry "refused" the Report is correct insofar as the Ministry will not use the Report with respect to fisheries management on Wah-Wash-Kesh Lake. The Ministry still has a copy of the report.)

5. In no way does the Ministry's assessment of the submitted report represent criticism of the WCA's involvement in the process. The WCA always acted in good faith and actively participated as a full partner in endeavouring to make the Plan a success.
6. The Ministry had neither knowledge nor participation in the process whereby the WCA hired an independent consultant to peer review the submitted Plan.
7. Notwithstanding the absence of a satisfactory Fisheries Management Plan for the lake, we were still very committed to an ambitious monitoring and assessment program in conjunction with the Fish Committee of the WCA. These works are summarized in the following table:

Year	Conducted by WCA	Conducted by MNR
2000	• Walleye Spawners Survey – Whitestone Chutes	• DO/Temp. profiles re Lake Trout habitat • Spring Littoral Index Netting (Lake Trout) Survey on North Basin • Lake trout egg bioassay study
2001	• Victoria-Day Weekend Voluntary Creel • Smelt Spawning Site Investigation	
2002	• Walleye Fry planting – Gooseneck Inlet	• Intensive Summer Creel Survey • Synoptic Trap-net Survey • DO/Temp. profiles re Lake Trout habitat
2003	• Walleye Fry planting – Gooseneck Inlet	
2004	• Walleye Spawning Bed Enhancement – Gooseneck Inlet	• Spring Littoral Index Netting Survey (for lake trout) on South Basin • Summer Profundal Index Netting Survey (for lake trout) on South Basin

(Copies of reports for the above surveys are available upon request from the Ministry of Natural Resources)

8. The Ministry is well aware and highly sensitive to the fact the WCA has spent a very substantial amount of money on an unsuccessful project that our Ministry initiated. This is an extremely embarrassing situation for us. We assure you, the Ministry is no more pleased with the outcome than the WCA. In any contractual agreement there is an element of risk the work will not be done in the manner foreseen, and that is essentially the situation here.

Eric McIntyre, Parry Sound Area Fisheries Biologist
Parry Sound District, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Note: Fish Enhancement Committee members Ed Bennett, Ken Taylor, and Don Comrie of the Fish Committee have approved the following statement: "The Fish Enhancement Committee would like to add the following information: When the report was finally rejected by the MNR, the Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association executive at that time were advised and their approval to pay the final bill for the plan is a matter of record and is reflected in the executive's minutes"

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Magnetawan River Operating Plan

Over the past three years, the MNR has been studying the water flows in the Magnetawan River and reviewing their standard operating procedures to manage it. They consulted with many stakeholder groups including people from Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh. Ed Bennett and Ray Corneil were our representatives on the Public Advisory Committee.

In May this year, the MNR issued the Final Report of the Magnetawan River Water Control Operating Plan. The Association Board, Ed Bennett, and Ray Corneil reviewed the report in early June and responded formally to the MNR. The full text of our reply can be viewed on our website at www.lake-wah-wash-kesh.org. In July, the Municipality of Whitestone notified the MNR that they fully supported our response. We received a detailed reply from Mr. Mike Phillips in August.

The Association had three major concerns:

- 1) Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh was specifically excluded from a list of lakes that the plan assigns higher priority to with respect to the interests of property owners.
- 2) The MNR plan was prepared with almost no actual scientific data about WWK water levels, but relied on computer generated estimates.
- 3) The MNR assigned itself to be its own watchdog to ensure that it actually implements the plan in years to come.

We recommended that the MNR look harder for records of WWK lake levels kept by Mr. Cliff Bennett for twenty-odd years until the 1970s and filed with the Federal Department of Public Works. We also recommended that a permanent automatic water level monitoring station be installed on WWK. We asked that once more data is available that the plan be reviewed promptly. We asked that the MNR reconsider their ranking of how they consider the interests of WWK property owners compared with other lakes. We suggested that an independent body monitor the MNRs compliance with their plan. We asked that the MNR communicate high water warnings to us effectively.

Mr. Phillips promised to renew efforts to find the missing records,

and said that the consultants' report recommended more water monitoring stations, saying that WWK is a good location if funds are available in the MNR budget. He said the plan is reviewed every ten years as a general rule but didn't rule out an earlier look at it if new data suggest it. He said that the Municipality of Whitestone receives high flow warnings and suggested we coordinate with them. He noted that the rainfall we experienced in the fall of 2003 and the spring of 2004 was close to the maximums ever recorded.

We plan to arrange a meeting with Mr. Phillips over the coming months to discuss the issues further.

In the meantime, we're in touch with Whitestone to try and set up a high-flow warning procedure – possibly a "telephone tree" and a posting on the municipal and Association websites.

**John Nelson
Stillwater Cottage**

PLANNING

The OP is still not approved by the Provincial Government. Apparently as I am told the MNR is holding up the approval simply by not providing their final response to the draft OP. This response has been sought since Nov 2003. Today (October 21/04) I called the Whitestone Municipal Offices and inquired as to whether there would be a point-soon. Were Council themselves embarrassed enough to launch aggressive follow up on this matter. We will see I suppose.

Meanwhile the Zoning Bylaw has been developed and a public meeting was scheduled for Saturday, October 23rd, 2004.

The Association provided Planscape (Rick Hunter) with a draft-zoning bylaw and sought input as to the quality and comprehensiveness of the Whitestone zoning bylaw. We also wanted assurance that the zoning bylaw was congruent with the draft OP.

Recommendations and comments were forwarded to the Municipality on October 21st in advance of the public meeting. We expect some further communication on this matter with the Municipality over the next few weeks.

My guess is that by the spring of 2005 we should have both an

approved OP and an approved Zoning bylaw.

By the way both the OP and Zoning bylaw are on the Whitestone web site.

This OP and Zoning bylaw has been a 5-6 year process and a lot of ongoing work for the planning volunteers. We are all looking forward to standing aside and letting the in-place planning policies of the Municipality function, as they should.

**Dalton Ferris
On behalf of the Association
Planning Committee**

The Early Years

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of The Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association in 1954, the Association has set a goal of publishing a sequel to the book "The Early Years". Published in 1986 the book dealt with the history of the WWK area and of the Association up to, roughly, the early 1980s.

The original book has become a popular classic, which, through its sales in Bennett's and Hayward's stores still benefits the Association and is read and reread by members at home and in cottages around the lake.

The book became absorbing reading through the efforts of many members sharing and recording their stories. The same widespread effort and support is necessary to create the sequel. The target date for publication is the AGM in August 2005.

The geographical growth of the membership of the association has not been uniform over the years and communities of cottagers have grown up based on such factors as the building of roads which allows easier access to the cottages. This shift in the population density around the lake is a factor that it is hoped will be reflected in the stories contributed to the sequel.

Just as in the original work, it is hoped that many members will also contribute photographs to be published in the sequel and along with those already in hand will form the basis for a pictorial archive for the Association. While some members and their families may have stories bursting to be told, others may need some prompting to get the creative juices flowing.

What follows is a selection of topics that may serve to prompt contri-

butions to the "sequel"

PROMPTS:

First roots: How did you come to hear about WWK? When was your first journey? How did you travel? What memories do you have of those early days, where did you stay? Did you rent, stay with in-laws, friends? History of the property, how many of you then and now? How many summers have the family spent at the lake? What are the cottage stories told around the dinner table, the comic and the serious?

Accommodation: What construction did you and/or the family carry out? What stories arose from plumbing problems, water supply, waste disposal, leaking roofs problems with ice, weather, high and low water levels, lighting by oil. Propane or electricity, hydro blackouts, the old original outhouse.

Boats: First boats, first outboard, boating stories, lost in fog or the dark, rescues, lost or sunk boats, "out of gas" changing types of boats, canoes to jet skis.

Communications: Message stories, phone booth stories, radio phones, CB radio.

Stores and store keepers/service providers: "Running out" before company is coming, the mad dash before the store closes. Special order baking, the smell of baking. Acts beyond the call of duty. Service calls for boats that won't start. Closing and opening up the cottage, ferrying boats and docks.

Food: How has procurement and preparation changed over the years? Refrigeration, ice houses, ice boxes, refrigerators, microwave ovens, cookouts, berry picking.

Emergencies/disasters: Medical and surgical, drives to the hospital, being stranded without a working boat, car problems, lightening strikes, fires, floods, major storms, (summer and winter).

Environmental changes: Changes in garbage disposal, washing in the lake, things that used to be done but are no longer acceptable.

Visitors: Stories about coping with visitors unfamiliar to cottage life, meeting and transporting them, strange and funny comments or events.

Leisure activities, passing fads & stunts: Games played or invented on

wet weekends, families favourite pastimes/rituals, card and board games. Waterskiing, tubing, plywood discs, water walking on pontoons, cliff jumping, regattas.

Flora and fauna: In-cottage critters, racoons, mice, flying squirrels, bears, mosquitoes.

Outdoors: Flying and biting insects, beaver, muskrat, deer, pinemartin, fishers, snakes, loons, blue herons, mergansers, cormorants, gulls, osprey, terns, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, jays, rare sightings, wildflowers, trees, fungi, fish, and fishing stories, hunting and trapping.

Historical finds: Have you found Indian arrowheads, Indian pottery, logging implements, boat wrecks?

Over the years the members of the Association have become more involved in the communities surrounding the lake.

Seasonal visitors and their support services are an important part of the economic life of the townships. This trend started with the decline of logging in the Magnetawan watershed. Improved roads have increased access to formerly remote areas, cultural activities such as the Whitestone Historical

Society mark a blending of the interests of the cottagers and the year round residents. The management of the waters of the Magnetawan river system and the introduction of sustainable methods of logging are also matters of interest to the members and will be touched on in the "Sequel". Our mutual interest in the provision of emergency services is seen in the sprouting of the 911 signs on all cottage properties and the support provided by the Association for the new Parry Sound Hospital.

Members are invited to use the topics mentioned in this article as a starting point for their contributions but not to feel confined to them. Their stories should be as personal as possible making full use of "I" "we" and "they". The "sequel" will be the creation of the members and it is their memories that, when recorded, will ensure a publication that is a fitting follow up to "The Early Years".

Contributions should be sent as soon as possible to the President of The Association, John Nelson.

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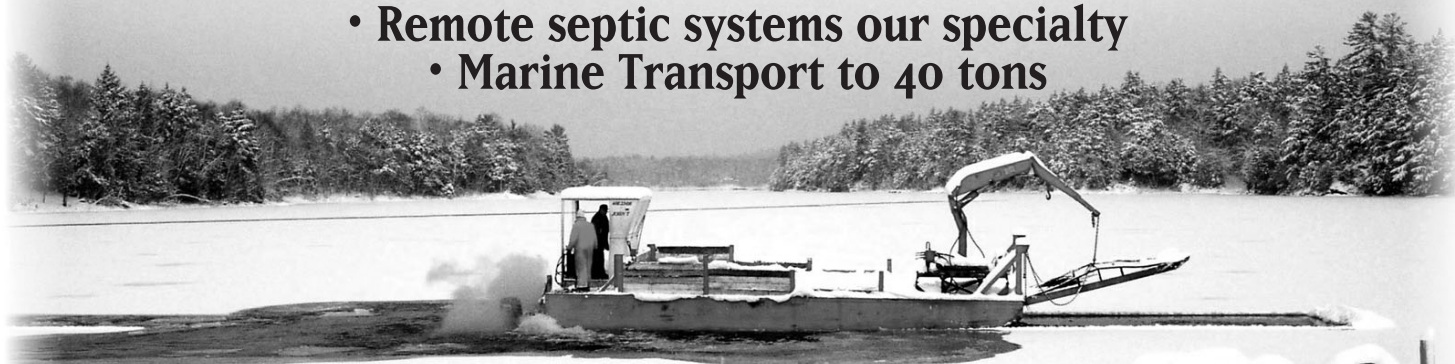
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Emergency Helipad and Additional Parking

On September 13, John Nelson met with Whitestone Road Superintendent Nick Thomson and Fire Chief Bob Whitman at the Bennett's Bay dock. We discussed the need for additional parking in that area and also the need for an emergency helipad on Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh.

Many members have suggested that the old dumpsite near Bennett's Bay be opened up as additional parking. The dump was closed in 2000, and the MNR roughly leveled and compacted the area and installed a covering layer of soil. The access lane to the old dump has been blocked off by a gate and a pile of dirt since then. Presently the area looks like an open meadow about two hundred feet in diameter covered with short vegetation. The MNR has not been optimistic about the probability of using the area for parking because the Ministry of the Environment has concerns about the heavy use of former waste disposal sites.

For several years, many people on the lake have been concerned by the lack of a proper helipad for the emergency air evacuation ambulance, available in all seasons and during the day and night. A glance at the demographics of our membership survey tells us that the population is aging, and we know that emergency services are important to us all.

Dean Timson of the MNR has said "that if Whitestone was to get the proper approvals for the Helipad MNR would be supportive" of a plan to use the old dumpsite as a helipad. The emergency helicopter requires a pretty sizeable area for safe landing, and cars cannot be parked nearby because they would be damaged by the gritty wind kicked up by the blades. The helicopter also needs a sloped-in flight path to conserve fuel because straight up-and-down take-offs burn a lot of fuel and also mean they can carry less weight – so they might even have to dump gas leaving them short for the trip to the hospital. A helipad must be close to both a water access point and a road access point so that if the chopper is diverted by weather or another emergency, the patient can

be quickly transferred to a road ambulance. A helipad should be located on public land. The old dumpsite is the only site that seems to meet all of these requirements – compared to possible sites north of Shanty Bay or at the Peace & Quiet Cottages for example.

However, as far as parking goes, just up the road to Indian Narrows, on the left as you leave Bennett's Bay, there is a fairly level patch of ground that was used years ago when the MNR improved the Indian Narrows road and dock. It's not big enough for a helipad, and doesn't allow a sloped in flight path. It only takes two minutes to walk from there to the existing parking lot near Bennett's, and if the weeds were cut and the area cleaned up a bit there is room for about ten or fifteen cars. This work would cost the Association Dock Fund next to nothing and would very quickly take some pressure off the existing parking area. Neither the Municipality or the MNR has any obligation to provide parking for cottagers – it's up to us to find (and fund) solutions.

The Association has recommended to Whitestone that they establish a helipad at the old dumpsite. We have also asked the MNR to inspect the other area and grant us permission to establish it as a parking area.

John Nelson
Stillwater Cottage, the North End

Loon Nesting

This past spring at the "Cottage Life Show" we happened upon a loon display. We watched a video and talked to the host. In this process we learned that lakes that have significant spring water level changes present nesting and rearing issues for loons. As you all know we have changing spring water levels at Lake WWK!

Loons nest very close to the water and basically right on the shore line and usually in a quiet bay not directly exposed to wind. Loons have extremely limited ability to walk as their legs are mounted close to the rear. Thus if they are in the nesting cycle and the water drops they experience great difficulty getting to the nest. The result being eggs are unprotected from predators and as well may

not hatch as they are not being properly incubated-thus no young result. Therefore there is a need on our lake for floating loon nests.

The loon display provided plans for a floating loon nest. The plans are simple. The nest platform consists of 4, 8 foot posts, some wire mesh for a floor, some cable and 2 cement blocks for anchors. This material when assembled results in a 4x4 floating nest platforms onto which you pile leaves and small sticks and you can even plant some shore line plants to make it all look inviting to the loon couple.



This past spring we assembled a platform and placed it in "Driftwood Bay" in a quiet spot out of the wind. The platform was covered with rakings from the forest floor and a few cedar bows. We did not get to place any live shoreline plants—thought we would do that later as the bugs chased us out. Our thinking was well this nest platform will likely be used next year as it was well past the middle of May by the time we had it placed.

We were very pleased to find that in a few days loons had chosen the platform for a nesting location. There was one egg and the egg took about 30 days to hatch-with loons seeming to take turns on the nest. Soon we saw a very tiny head swimming beside a parenting loon. This loon family stayed around the area till very late in September. Our family had a whole summer of enjoyment watching this little loon progress and at the same time took great satisfaction in knowing we had helped this loon family with their parenting duties.

If others are interested in developing floating loon nests and helping expand the loon population on our Lake let me know and I will send you a set of nest plans.

Toggle Point
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The Changing Vista of Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh: For Better or Worse?

Cottagers returning to the Lake next summer will see a dramatic change to the skyline above Taylor Bay. Bell Canada and Bell Mobility have received approval to erect a 350ft high communications tower on the hill above Mill Beach near the Taylor Bay Trailer Park. One of the final stages in the approvals process occurred at a Regular Council Meeting held on September 28, 2004 when the Municipality of Whitestone concurred with Bell's proposal.

Mr. John Woods, Bell Mobility's Project Manager, confirmed recently that construction activities could start as early as this fall. The guyed tower will occupy an area of about two acres and will provide cellular coverage throughout the Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh and surrounding area. Bell Canada will utilize the cellular cover-

age to provide fixed wireless technology to cottagers that do not have access to Bell Canada's wireline services. The technology employs a cellular interface device to provide the familiar "dial tone" instead of a direct physical connection to a telephone line. The new fixed wireless technology will offer both voice and Internet capabilities.

As required by Transport Canada a red-strobe navigation warning light will top the tower. At an information meeting hosted by Bell Canada and Bell Mobility at McKellar Community Centre in June of this year, Mr Woods explained that Bell would employ a collar around the strobe light designed to minimize annoyance to cottages residing close to the tower, while still maintaining a navigational warning to aircraft. He was unable to say how the light pollution may affect other cottagers living further away from the tower, but did comment that Bell was using the same device on cell towers in the Muskoka region.

Mr. Woods also stated that the

Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunication Commission, as part of a program called Service Improvements Program (SIP), are mandating Bell's updating of services. Anyone using Bell's existing radiotelephone services will be able to upgrade to the new service at no cost. New subscribers will be required to pay an initial \$1,000 fee.

There is no doubt that everyone will benefit from the improved communications facilities offered by this

tower, especially those relating to 911 emergencies. However, the question remains—did the tower need to be located where it will have such a detrimental impact on the beautiful scenery surrounding Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh?

Chris Downes
Deer Points, the Big Lake

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Dock Committee Report

The Dock Committee has had a busy year! We've moved ahead with a big part of this year's major project to improve the Indian Narrows dock, and we've started discussions with stakeholders about future improvements at Bennett's Bay.



The first week of October was a busy time in Indian Narrows. John Kormos, our "General Foreman", supervised a crew to raise the concrete abutment up to the same height as the one in Bennett's Bay. This will make the Indian Narrows dock useable several weeks earlier each spring. The concrete pad is now sixteen inches higher, and extends back an additional eleven feet towards shore. Overall, it is now nine feet wide and twenty feet long. Three heavy steel hinge brackets were cast into the new concrete to receive a new ramp that will be fabricated over the winter. The new ramp is being designed by a Professional Engineer and will be at least twenty feet long. This will allow easy passage down a gentle slope to the floating docks, and should allow some additional tie-up space. The old wooden ramp will be re-used at the shore end of the new concrete pier to provide an easy slope up from the ground.

The fun started on a rainy Saturday October 2, but really got underway on Sunday. A crew of volunteers worked steadily until late Wednesday evening to clear the soil from the surrounding bedrock, drill hundreds of holes in the old concrete and rock, build the wooden form, install steel reinforcing pins and rods, and finally to pour and finish more than twelve cubic metres of concrete. As many large rocks as possible were placed in the form to minimize the amount of concrete needed. The gang also filled in two sizeable depressions in the smooth rock slope next to the pier, which should make it a lot easier to use as a boat launch.

John Kormos' volunteer crew consisted of Rod Bennett, Mike Szymanski, Doug Hand, Harold Boese, Andy Vurma, Ken Hayward, and John

Nelson. The concrete was purchased from Near North Concrete who were very prompt, very helpful, and provided high quality product and service all-round. They are located just past the Quiet Bay Restaurant on Highway 124 near Magnetewan. By 7:00pm Wednesday, the concrete surface was finished with a broom and edging tool, and then

John Kormos and Doug Hand stood guard until the wee hours to make sure it wasn't disturbed. They were joined by one final volunteer – a beautiful red fox who trotted around, sniffed their boots, and walked on the newly set concrete to check it out! All in all, the concrete cost \$2,260 and the other material (forms, rebars, rock drill rental, transport, etc.) cost \$740 for a total of \$3,000.

In Bennett's Bay, on September 13, John Nelson met with Whitestone Road Superintendent Nick Thomson and Fire Chief Bob Whitman, and with Ed Bennett to look at sever-

al issues. Whitestone will likely place some "No Parking" signs on the narrow curve of the road down to the Association dock in the near future. This will keep access clear for everyone, including larger vehicles and emergency vehicles. We also discussed steps to improve that road involving widening it right back to the cliff face on the right as you go down and installing a new ditch on that side. Right now, rainwater flows down the road and washes large amounts of sand and gravel into the lake at the dock – the new plan will prevent



that. We have proposed to Whitestone that we share the cost of an engineering study to improve the whole area including the retaining walls and concrete pier as well as the roadway. The study

may take place in 2005 with work to follow in 2006, but it will depend on finances available.

John Nelson, Dock Committee Chairman
Stillwater Cottage, the North End

Lake Partner Program Update

The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) initiated the Lake Partner Program in an effort to amass a database of nutrient related information for Ontario's lakes. The program encourages volunteers to get involved by taking water clarity readings and obtaining samples for total phosphorous analysis. The Lake Partner website can be found at the following address;
http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/water/lake_partner/index.htm.

Why Are Algae Important?

Algae represent the base of the food chain and an important source of dissolved oxygen. If there are too few algae the level of aquatic life in a lake will be very low. Examples of such lakes can be found in Killarney Provincial Park where many of the lakes are clear and have a bluish hue. The relatively high acid level in such lakes prevents the growth of algae, denying aquatic life a food source. Lakes that are very high in algae suffer wide fluctuations of the dissolved oxygen level, playing havoc with the life cycles of other aquatic species. High algae levels also have a negative impact on intake pipes, boats, and general aesthetics.

Water clarity and total phosphorous are two of the primary factors affecting the level of algae in a lake. In general, the clarity of a lake tells us how deep the sunlight penetrates. Algae will only grow in areas that have adequate sunlight. Phosphorous is a nutrient used by algae during their life cycles and as such gives an indication of the potential for algae to exist.

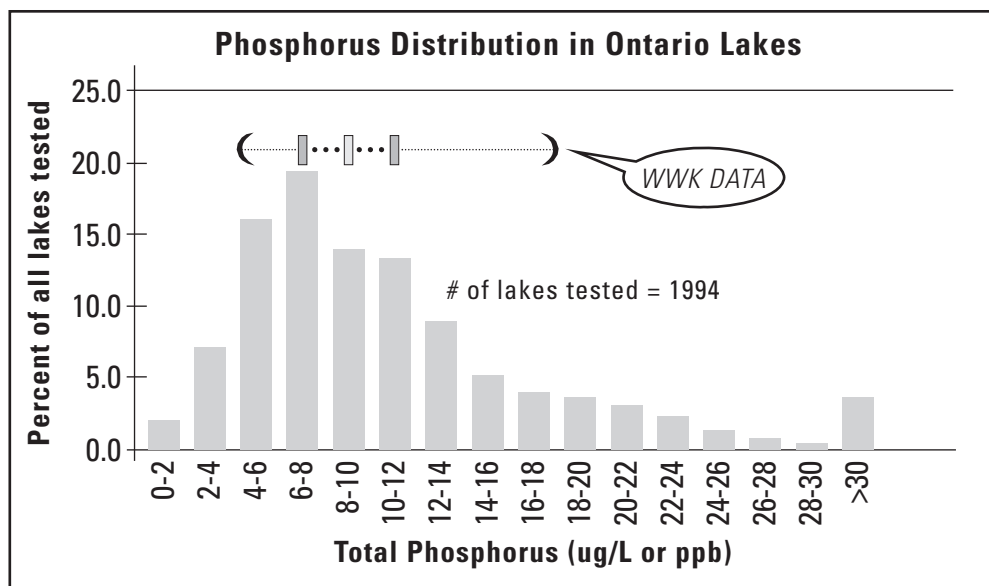
Algae liberate oxygen and consume carbon dioxide via photosynthesis. An important thing to keep in mind is that algae must respire as well, this process consumes oxygen and liberates carbon dioxide. Algae respire all the time while they photosynthesize only when in contact with sunlight.

Our lake currently has a good balance going for it in terms of algae level. Some ways that we can ensure a continued balance are; installing and maintaining septic system as per regulation, limiting shore-line development, and using soaps and detergents that do not contain phosphates.

How Do We Compare?

The figure below is a histogram showing the distribution of total phosphorous concentrations in Ontario lakes. I have placed a diagram representing total phosphorous statistics obtained from data pertaining to our lake on the figure for comparison purposes. As of 2003 we had 18 total phosphorous results, the statistics for the "WWK DATA" diagram were generated from these.

Looking at the large bars on the histogram we



can see that almost 20% of all the Ontario lakes tested had total phosphorous concentrations between 6 and 8 parts per billion (micrograms per litre). The plot above the large bars labelled "WWK DATA" represents data for our lake. The position of the "WWK DATA" plot on the y-axis (Percent of all lakes tested) is immaterial, what is important is its relation to the x-axis (Total Phosphorous).

The brackets indicate the minimum and maximum values obtained in our waters. The vertical bars (inside the brackets) represent (from left to right) the first quartile, mean, and third quartile.

The figure suggests that our average total phosphorous concentration (8 to 10 ppb) is shared by 15% of the other lakes tested in this program. If

we expand our view from just the average and include the first and third quartiles in our comparison we see that half of all of the total phosphorous results from our lake are the same as about half (48%) of all of the total phosphorous results from other Ontario lakes (6 to 12 ppb).

An interpretation of this information is that our lake is very similar with respect to total phosphorous as other tested lakes (6 to 12 ppb) and that our volunteers sampling in a comparable way to other volunteers in Ontario. Good work!

Another interesting bit of information that the histogram provides (and the data for our lake reflects) is that there are some questionably high total phosphorous results. Ideally, with such a large

number of samples analyzed, the histogram should be symmetrical about the mean. The MOE has noticed this and suggested that the higher results were due to large zooplankton contaminating the samples.

Zooplankton contain relatively large amounts of phosphorous in a "bound" form, i.e. it is not immediately available to be used as nutrients for algae, as such, it should not be considered when we are trying to determine the current potential for algal growth.

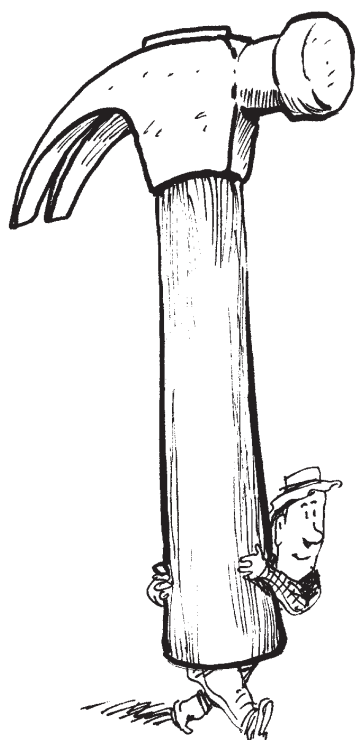
To correct the bias, the MOE has included filters with sampling kits. The filters prevent large zooplankton from getting into the sample containers. In 2004 we used the filters and can reasonably expect to see more symmetrical data in the future.

Looking Ahead

The Top Lake and Indian Narrows are well covered at this point as far as sampling is concerned. Some interest in expanding the sampling program further into the Big Lake was expressed at the Annual General Meeting. Those people interested in contributing can either call **1-800-470-8322** or email lakepartner@ene.gov.on.ca to arrange for a sampling kit and information package to be sent in time for the spring sampling session.

The Association would like to thank those who have volunteered their time and effort in contribution to this program. Preventive measures along with continued monitoring of pertinent information are the best tools that we have in ensuring that our lake retains many of the characteristics that we have come to love.

Pat Ferris, Toggle Point



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Green Corner by N. Glenn Perrett

Protecting the environment involves using products that have minimal impact on the natural world. "Green Corner" will highlight some of these eco-products. Most of the items will be available in Canada, but quality "green products" available in the United States will also be occasionally featured. By purchasing environmentally friendly products from companies that are concerned about the natural world you are making a significant commitment to the environment.

Nature Clean (Toronto, Ontario)

Web: www.frankross.com

Tel: (416) 282-1107

Cleaning and personal care products cause considerable pollution and other problems. Our family uses products by Frank T. Ross & Sons Ltd. This Canadian company produces non-toxic cleaners and other products that are readily biodegradable (99% within 28 days) and cruelty-free. According to their website Nature Clean products have never been involved in a single accidental poisoning. Nature Clean products also contain an ingredients list on all of their products. Two products that we've used with excellent results are the "Natural Toilet Bowl Cleaner" and the "Tub & Tile Cream Cleanser." More Nature Clean products will be included in future Green Corner columns.

Themptations (Sarnia, Ontario)

Web: www.themptations.com

Tel: (519) 344-0606

I don't normally shop for products by the material they are made from – unless that material is hemp! Hemp is a wonderful plant capable of healing the Earth. Hemp is used for food, paper, clothes and many other things. Since the hemp plant has numerous benefits for the environment including it is good for the soil, can be grown without pesticides and herbicides and can be cultivated in as few as 100 days, we use items made from hemp whenever possible.

Recently I tried a 55% hemp, 45% cotton Henley shirt by *Effort from Themptations*. This attractive, heavy soft shirt is very comfortable and will be ideal for those cool nights at the lake. Hemp clothes typically last much longer than clothes made from cotton and other materials and I'm looking forward to having this shirt for many years to come. By purchasing products made from hemp you are protecting the environment. Themptations offers many hemp products.

C. Crane Company (Fortuna, California)

Web: www.ccrane.com

Tel: (800) 522-8863

The C. Crane Company offers many quality eco-products and other useful items for the cottage. A few items that we tried recently are their CCRadioplus, with their "CCRadioplus Solar Kit" and the CC Expedition 600 flashlight.

According to the C. Crane Company, their CCRadioplus is "the best radio for long range AM reception." This radio does get excellent reception and the audio is also very good. Some of the features of this impressive radio include: • signal meter and fine-tuning knob • weather alert • tv audio • clock with alarm • timer. We use this radio with the "CCRadioplus Solar Kit." Not only do we not need



electricity, but we're helping the environment and we'll be kept informed should an emergency arise and there is a power failure. The solar kit includes a solar panel, 4 heavy duty NiCad batteries and a white LED (light emitting diodes) light along with an AC adapter. The solar panel can be mounted either outside or in a window. Another impressive C. Crane Company product is their CC Expedition 600 white LED flashlight. LEDs are very bright (don't shine them into eyes). They are also very efficient as their batteries reportedly last up to ten times longer than other batteries. The CC Expedition 600 is shockproof, tested waterproof to 160 feet and the LED bulbs "can last over 60,000 hours." If you're looking for a less expensive flashlight with many of these features you might try the CC Trek flashlight.

Hempola Valley Farms (Dalston, Ontario)

Web: www.hempola.com

Tel: (800) 240-9215

While I usually only write about products that I've tried, I felt that I'd make an exception with a DEET free, natural insect repellent by Hempola (I have tried several of their products and they were all good). The product is called West-a-Nile-ate and testing at the University of Guelph showed that this product provided greater than "...95% protection from blood-seeking mosquitoes in a field test using human subjects..." Our family is certainly going to use this product both at the cottage and at home. Hempola Valley Farms is conveniently located for many cottagers as it is located just north of Barrie (they have good directions on their website.)

Part of being a responsible steward of the natural world involves using eco-products. While some of these items can cost a little more, you're getting a quality product and one that helps to protect the environment. It's about time that governments, industry and individuals realize that environmental protection is vital no matter what the cost.

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Wiener and Corn Roasts

Once again these events were a great success and a good time was had by all who participated. After all the rain we had in the early summer, we couldn't have ordered a better day for the Wiener Roast. A large crowd turned out to enjoy the tasty hot dogs cooked on the open fire.

The weather co-operated again in August for the Corn Roast, and the corn was absolutely delicious. It is very rewarding to see so many turn out to meet with friends and Cottage Association members.

It takes many volunteers to put these events on and our thanks go out to all the helpers who worked at the Wiener and Corn Roasts. Special thanks to: Frank Camenzuli, Bert Ellingham, Tim Maheu, John Nelson, Stu Price and Steve Rauh.

And a very special thanks to Marlene Bennett for all the time and effort she puts into these functions.

Also Eleanor Arbour for the excellent job doing the posters. Many thanks to all who made donations and again this year, there will be no cost to the association.

Thank you for your support and assistance and we look forward to a bigger and better turnout in 2005.

Ross and Pat Willett
Willett's Landing, North End

Rock 'N Dock

We would like to let everyone know that the Rock 'n Dock sale was a great success. This was a new experience for us, and we really appreciated all the help and advice that came our way.

Jacki and Lew Morgan, Pat and Ross Willett, Jeanette and Bert Ellingham, Sue Stopps, Randy McCullough and several members of the Nichol, Easterbrook and Boyter families. All pitched in to work and support the endeavour.

However, a big "THANKS" goes to all those people on the lake who, not only donated items to sell, but also came and spent their money! Well done everyone. We realized a profit of \$1144⁹⁵.

The weather was great, the water was calm and the food was excellent. With this kind of support, it makes the whole undertaking that much easier. Who knows? We may consider doing it again!

June and Arden Boyter



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In Memoriam

- **Stan Harding**, age 73, passed away on August 6 at his beloved cottage. A founding member of the Dock Committee, Stan started visiting the Lake 40 years ago and built at Indian Narrows in 1967.
- **Harvey Scott**, passed away February 15th, 2004.

We apologize if we have missed including someone. You can advise John Nelson or any Board member for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Book & CD Reviews by N. Glenn Perrett

Nature Trails: Teach Kids to Identify Wildlife by Sound

(CD) Dan Gibson & Holly Gibson Stewart
Solitudes Ltd. - www.solitudes.com

Nature Trails: Teach Kids to Identify Wildlife by Sound is a wonderful CD written and produced by Holly Gibson Stewart and featuring Dan Gibson's nature recordings. By listening to this CD you will join a group of people on a nature walk along the shores of Loon Lake. Here you will be greeted by many animals including Robins, Red Squirrels, Olive-Sided Flycatchers, Common Loons and Leopard Frogs. By listening to their calls you learn to identify many kinds of birds and other animals. With this knowledge you can identify who your neighbours are even if you don't see them!

After hiking along the shores of Loon Lake the nature group heads into the forest on the "Wolf Howl Trail." Here the hikers hear various forest birds as well as the Timber Wolf.

Along with Dan Gibson's nature recordings, *Nature Trails* contains considerable information about the animals whose songs are featured. This CD is ideal for young naturalists.

Up the Great North Road: The Story of an Ontario Colonization Road

John Macfie, The Boston Mills Press, 2004, 160 pages, ISBN: 1550464213

Up the Great North Road: The Story of an Ontario Colonization Road by John

Macfie is the entertaining history of a road that is 60 miles long starting at Parry Sound and ending up at Commanada. The road is known as the Great North Road but many people will recognize it as Provincial Highway #124.

I've been driving past this road on the way to my parents' cottage since the mid 1960s, but it wasn't until a few years ago when my wife and I bought a property on Lake Wahwashkesh that we started to travel it. It's a scenic road that goes through such places as Waubamik, McKellar, Dunchurch and Maple Island. And it also has an incredible past that Macfie has effectively captured. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the entertaining text as it describes the construction of this colonization road beginning in the mid 1800s and follows the people who settled here and the activities they did to survive. 260 black and white interesting photographs greatly add to the text resulting in one of those books that is truly hard to put down.

Up the Great North Road is a great historical book – especially for those of us who travel this storied road!

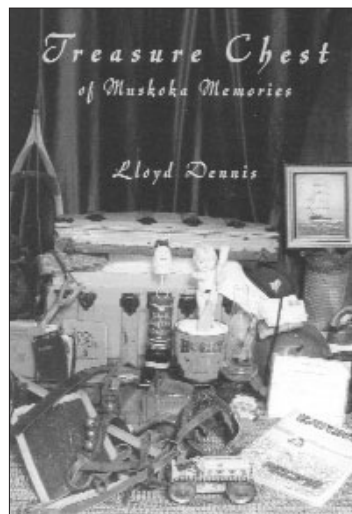
Treasure Chest of Muskoka Memories

Lloyd Dennis, Brad Hammond and Fox Meadow Creations - www.foxmeadowbooks.com

2003, 192 pages, ISBN: 0968145299

Whether you like reading a good biography or you prefer a selection of short stories you will enjoy Lloyd Dennis' *Treasure Chest of Muskoka Memories*. Dennis' entertaining book looks at his life growing up in places such as Ullswater, Ravensworth and Aspdin during the 1920s and the 1930s. And while the Dennis family didn't have an

easy life and faced many hardships during these difficult decades, Lloyd Dennis counted himself fortunate to be raised in a loving family and in a special part of Ontario.



Dennis takes the reader back in time and shares many of his experiences growing up including attending fall fairs, dances and even going to friends to listen to "Foster

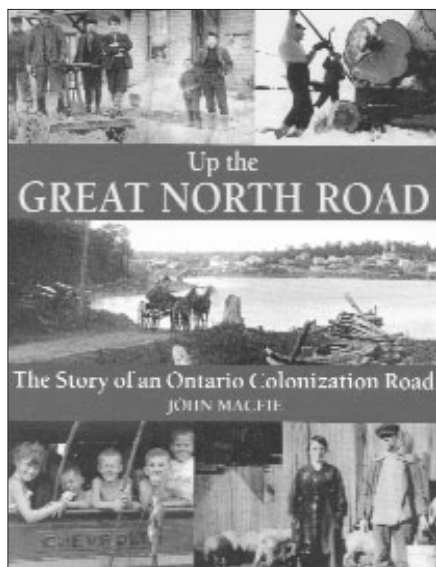
Hewitt's National Hockey broadcast" on their new radio. While reading Dennis' stories about growing up in Muskoka, the reader receives subtle history lessons as Dennis' book effectively captures life in rural Canada during the early twentieth century

Recycled Crafts Box

Laura C. Martin, Storey Kids
2003, 88 pages, ISBN: 1580175228

Making crafts at the cottage is fun and reusing items is good for the environment so *Recycled Crafts Box* which features numerous crafts projects and involves using recycled items has much to offer. Author Laura C. Martin has divided the book into sections for making projects from paper, plastic, metal and fabric. In the section on paper, Martin describes how to make a cottage from a cardboard juice carton and a castle from a cardboard box, paper towel tubes and other materials.

While the projects are interesting and will result in quality time spent by children, possibly with their parents and grandparents, it also offers the reader information on trash and the need to recycle. A "trash timeline" takes an interesting look at when disposable products were invented including disposable razor blades (1895), aerosol cans (1943),



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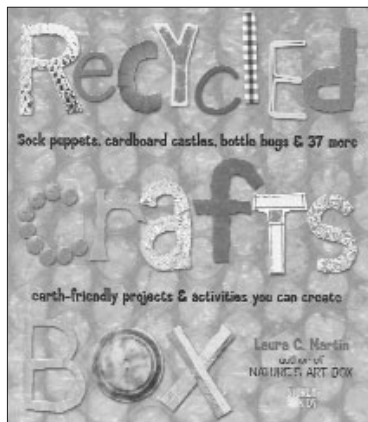


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polystyrene cups (1960) and disposable cameras (2002). Martin also informs the reader of problems that garbage creates such as discarded plastics giving off toxic substances which pollute the air and the groundwater. She includes suggestions as to what people can do to reduce their trash and recycle what waste they do make. Recycled Crafts Box will not only entertain children, it will also help to protect the environment.

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Your Personal Information

The Federal Government's Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) came into full force on January 1, 2004. The following background is intended to help you better understand what the Association has done in response.

For more information about this Act, see the Privacy Web site, at http://www.privcom.gc.ca/index_e.asp

The Directors have appointed me as the Association's Privacy Officer and as such, if you have any concerns about the privacy of the information that you have given to the Association, please contact me and I will be pleased to answer any of your questions.

The information that the Association has on file for each member consists of their name, their spouse's name, their addresses (cottage and home), their phone numbers (cottage and home), fax num-

bers, mobile phone numbers, e-mail address, date and amount of dues paid each year. In many cases, the information is incomplete, as we record only the information released to us by the member or include information that can be found elsewhere in the public domain. An example would be a public phone book.

In addition to keeping the original documents submitted by the member, the Association also keeps the membership information on personal computer. The information is password protected and backed up periodically to CD disk. Access to this information is limited to the Directors of the Association to allow them to perform their duties.

If you would like to see the information that we have on file for you, please contact me.

The Association strives to keep your personal information up to date. As soon as we are aware of a change, we correct the database. If the information is out-of-date, we

remove it. So please let us know if your personal information changes by contacting any of the Directors.

The Association collects your personal information so that we can send you the newsletter, letters or e-mails of communication on various subjects and to send you membership renewal notices. We also use some of this information to produce the Cottage Directory. The Cottage Directory only includes information that could otherwise be found by searching through various publicly available directories. The Cottage Directories are numbered and we keep a record of who has bought each directory. The last Cottage Directory was published in the summer of 2004.

The following is the Association's Privacy Policy Statement.

The Lake Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association supports and abides by the requirement of the Personal Information Protection

and Electronic Data Act (PIPEDA). It only collects personal data with approval, using fair and lawful means, and only uses it for the purpose for which it was collected or as required by law.

The Association supports the right of individuals to inspect their data as it appears in Association's lists and have it corrected if found in error or lacking in completeness.

The Association does not sell, lease, rent out nor lend out information lists containing personal information. In the event that the Association considers a request for the use of a list to be beneficial to the membership of the Association, then the Association may release it to another agency with the approval of the persons in the list. Agencies wishing access to lists containing personal information must pay the Association's cost of seeking approval for its use.

**Andy Vurma, Association
Privacy Officer**

Visit our website at: www.lake-wah-wash-kesh.org

Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association 2005 Membership Renewal

Please fill out the membership renewal form, tear if off & MAIL it & your cheque to:

• **Chris Downes - Treasurer**
795 Myrtle Road,
Ashburn, Ontario, L0B 1A0



Wah-Wash-Kesh Conservation Association 2005 Dock Permit Decal

Please fill out the membership renewal form, tear if off & MAIL it & your cheque to:

• **Chris Downes - Treasurer**
795 Myrtle Road,
Ashburn, Ontario, L0B 1A0

Dam Passes Final Inspection

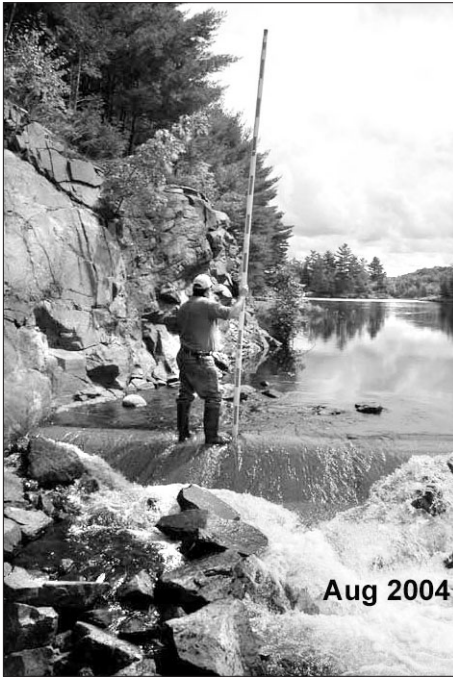
On Thursday, October 28, 2004, the MNR, HydroOne and our Consultant RG Robinson met at the new dam for its final inspection. It passed with flying colours!

At our request on August 13, 2004, the MNR came to our dam to verify the height of the new dam compared to the old dam. Mike Phillips of the MNR has confirmed that their measurements show that the new dam is exactly the same height as the old dam.

The Association can now pay the final bill to HydroOne (about \$15K) and some remaining expenses to our consultant (about \$2K). The only thing remaining item is to submit these bills to FedNor for their final funding.

Including all expenses, the dam has cost a total of \$626K, which has been funded by the Association (\$40K), HydroOne (\$25K), MNR (\$358K) and FedNor (\$203K).

Andy Vurma



MNR verifying the height of the new dam, compared to the old dam



WHITESTONE VARIETY

- Convenience Store
- Home Baking



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705-389-3562

RR#2 Dunchurch, ON P0A 1G0

2005 WAH-WASH-KESH CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (Please return this form with your cheque as soon as possible - \$35.00 per member)

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Lake 911 Address: _____

Telephone: () _____

CB Handle: _____

Cottage Phone: () _____

E-mail: _____

2005 Memberships for the following individuals in your household @ \$35 each:

50th Anniversary Cottage Directory: Purchase _____ at \$10⁰⁰ each = \$ _____

By returning this form, you acknowledge the Association's Privacy Statement.

2005 DOCK PERMIT DECALS - for all Indian Narrows Dock & Bennett's Bay Dock users (Please return this form with your cheque as soon as possible - \$30.00 per boat)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Number of boats @ \$30 each: _____

By returning this form, you acknowledge the Association's Privacy Statement.