

WLHCA Update

By Peggy Stewart, President WLHCA July 16, 2018

It is long overdue, but it certainly is time to reconnect with members of WLHCA. Our Lake Steward, Fred McConnell and the executive have been very active recently addressing issues relating to protection of water quality in Wollaston Lake. While for the most part, the water looks much the same as it always has, and I am sure it is providing a great deal of pleasure for all those who come to enjoy fishing, swimming, boating, and just sitting by the lake getting a cool breeze in the evening or watching the sunrise, we are learning that you can't take it for granted that our water quality in Wollaston Lake will continue to be the same.

Recent Algae Patches

In the recent heat wave at the end of June and beginning of July, there were many reports of a greenish algae growing on the shoreline of many of our cottages. Fred McConnell reported that his investigations have told him it is filamentous algae and grows when the conditions of heat and available nutrients are right. Filamentous algae are not toxic and should dissipate in cooler weather.

Additionally, over the past few years, we have had the revelations of two invasive species, Zebra mussels and Eurasian Milfoil. It has redirected our focus and time recently as we realize that it is time to be proactive in looking for action that could help to maintain the quality of water in Wollaston Lake.

Engaging Wollaston Township as a Stakeholder in protecting the water quality of Wollaston Lake

In this regard, Fred McConnell our Lake Steward has made efforts to engage additional stakeholders to become involved in protecting Wollaston Lake. He wrote a letter dated June 6, 2018, as a private, concerned citizen, requesting an opportunity to present a delegation to Council. (See after this update #1. Letter to Wollaston Township Council Fred McConnell June 6, 2018) This letter is posted at the end of this update. He felt strongly that he wanted to do this as a personal endeavour and WLHCA respected his desire to begin this first step in engaging stakeholders in the process of protecting water quality in Wollaston Lake. WLHCA supports his connecting with the council and enlisting their engagement as a potential stakeholder

At his invitation, on June 26, 2018, Barbara King, Executive Director of Watersheds Canada, spoke to the council, outlining how municipalities have important responsibilities and capabilities to organize stakeholders in protecting lakes and waterways. I have included a summary of her very worthwhile presentation at the end of this update. (See after this update #2. Barbara King's Presentation to Wollaston Council & #3. Summary of Presentation to Wollaston Council, June 26, 2018). Her whole presentation is on the audio recording for the Wollaston Township Council Meeting on the Wollaston Township website for the June 26 council meeting.

Fred followed up the delegation to the Wollaston Council with a letter to council requesting the council to:

1. Support the Management and removal of Eurasian Milfoil in Wollaston Lake by sending a representative from council to the July 14th workshop on the WLHCA Healthy Shorelines, and commit to creating natural shorelines on Wollaston township shoreline properties.
2. Water quality testing in Wollaston Lake will be completed this summer and fall, by the MOECC for dissolved oxygen. Fred asked that the municipality fund additional water testing the following three years to monitor any reduction in rates of dissolved oxygen. (None of this money would go to WLHCA. It would go to pay for the testing and analysis of water samples.
3. Fred asked that Wollaston Township to form a committee of stakeholders with the task of completing a State of the Lake review.

I have posted this letter also at the end of this update. (See after this update #4. Letter to Wollaston Township council final July 4, 2018)

On Tuesday, July 10, 2018, the Council of Wollaston Township responded to his letter by passing the following resolution; “Be it resolved the Council of Wollaston Township receive and file the letter from Fred McConnell. Any financial decisions will be considered during 2019 budget deliberations.”

Lake Steward Update:

Fred McConnell has been contacted by Riley-Ann Schmitt a leader of the Stewardship Youth Ranger Team, four 17 year olds, working out of the MNR Office in Bancroft. They have volunteered a team to work with him on removing milfoil in Wollaston Lake. They had planned to work on Mud Bay on July 13th but found out that it was necessary to reschedule due to lack of training for the Young Rangers in watercraft. Another site, the clearing at the shoreline at Ferguson Bay in front of the old Ferguson log cabin is being looked at. They do not need to use boats and the teams would be more suited to work in the shallow water there.

At the Healthy Shoreline Workshop Fred will organise teams to remove milfoil patches in other areas of Wollaston Lake. Please, if you can commit to one of these teams, or if you can try to remove milfoil directly in front of your property, it would be greatly appreciated. You can contact Fred for further information, for instructions, to report how your removal went, and for signing up at WLHCA.news@gmail.com.

AGM Reminder

The AGM for 2018 will be held on Aug 19 at the Coe Hill Legion. Please join the executive for a complimentary breakfast at 9:30 a.m. We will start the agenda as close to 10:00 a.m. as possible. Please let us know if you are joining us for breakfast by contacting wlhca.membership@gmail.com or by mail at WLHCA, Box 249, Coe Hill, ON.