



COMMUNITY INITIATIVES HANDOUT

Lake Links 2020





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ABOUT LAKE LINKS

Lake Links is a one day workshop held every October, typically in Perth, Ontario. Due to current health guidelines and the safety of attendees, Lake Links 2020 was held exclusively online. The theme of the 19th annual Lake Links was "Effective Engagement for Positive Action".

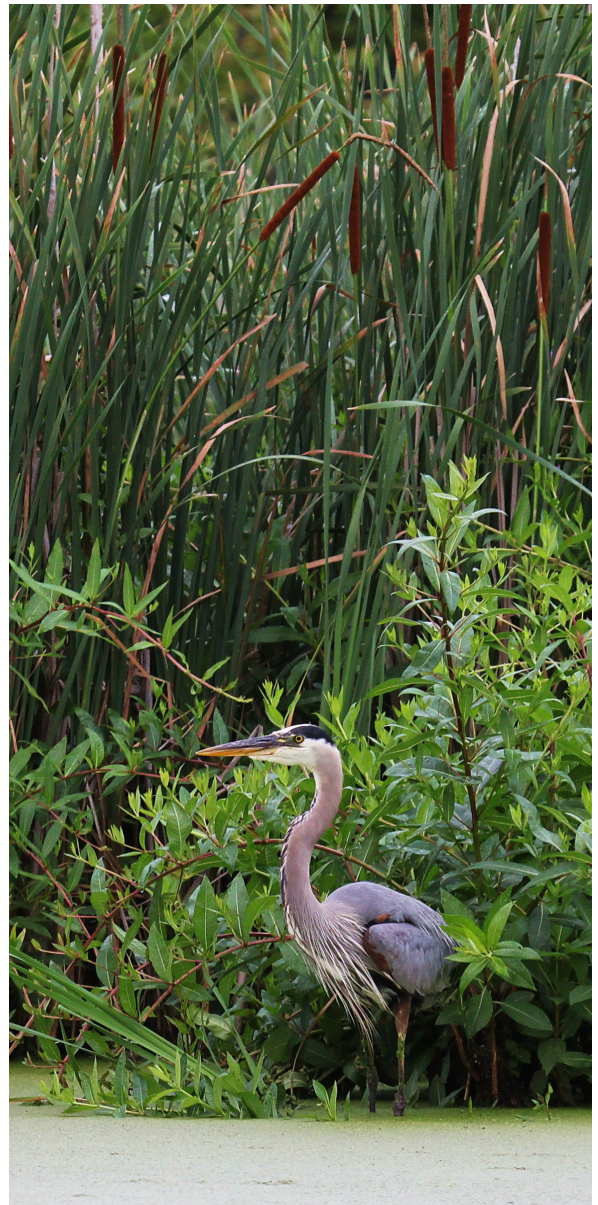
Video presentations from the workshop are available on [Watersheds Canada's YouTube page](#).

SPONSORS

- Cataraqui Conservation
- Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations
- Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
- Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
- S.M. Blair Family Foundation

PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Cataraqui Conservation
- Friends Of The Tay Watershed Association
- Lake Networking Group
- Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority
- Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
- Watersheds Canada.



BIG CLEAR LAKE ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: ONLINE



ABOUT THE PROJECT

With COVID-19, we decided to utilize Zoom to give online workshop to our members: we had Quinte Conservation and Watersheds Canada present on Shoreline Protection. With Zoom, we were able to record it and make it available to people who didn't attend original meeting.

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

We held it in May so many people were not comfortable yet with Zoom.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

Online meetings are a great alternative to face to face.

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BLUE FISH CANADA

LOCATION: EASTERN ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

To promote sustainable and responsible shore fishing and to increase opportunities for urban youth to fish, Blue Fish Canada has been working on two fronts. The first is a partnership with local area fishing clubs to establish Fishing Tackle Recyclers at popular shore fishing locations. These recyclers collect discarded fishing line, led weights and jigs, plastic baits, and other expired fishing tackle that should not be left in the environment for health and safety reasons. Over 50 of these Recyclers were set up in communities such as Cornwall. Our other project, funded by the Ottawa Community Foundation, involves identifying current and potential shore fishing locations, and then consulting with stakeholders on how these sites can be improved. With this information, we are working with both National Capital Commission and Ottawa City officials to identify strategies for creating safe, accessible, and sustainable naturalized shore fishing locations to offer youth and others opportunities to connect with nature in responsible ways. The Fishing Tackle Recyclers are one part of what should be located at any shore fishing location. The feedback we are getting from stakeholders is quite popular. Our long term goal as a charity is to publish a guide on how to develop sustainable shore fishing locations that emphasize connecting people to nature in sustainable and responsible ways.

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

In 2019, a lot of the shore fishing locations we were working with were subjected to flooding. In 2020, the pandemic has meant that our volunteers involved with the project have been placed on hold.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

This really has to be a process that builds on trust with youth and anglers. They need to feel that the space is theirs to steward.

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CHAFFEY'S AREA LAKE ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: CHAFFEY'S LOCK AREA - MEMBERS FROM SIX
LAKES, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Six years ago, CALA membership had shrunk to less than 10 members. Six volunteers got together to resurrect the Association. Goals - build awareness in the community of the Association and it's reasons for being. Secondly - we needed to educate ourselves re: lake issues and resources out there to help improve and maintain healthy lake water and shorelines. Thirdly - build relationships and form partnerships with Networking groups, other Lake Associations, government partners, and FOCA.

We initially connected with past members to build a base membership. We established two physical meetings per year that combined a social get together (Meet and Greet + Pancake Breakfast) with a speaker on a hot topic in the area. Our initial project was to establish the Lake Partner Program on all six lakes. This required buying some equipment and training the new testers. We learned that one lake was already being tested and the tester became a partner.

Last year we reintroduced a "Duck Race" that was popular years ago and ran it in conjunction with our Heritage Society July 1st festivities at the Chaffey's Lock. A booth on the grounds allowed us to share information about CALA and sell memberships as well as tickets for the Duck Race. After a speaker session on the topic of Emergency Preparedness we sponsored a workshop at the community hall with a professional trainer in AED/CRP and First Aid training. The class was full and provided value for our members.

COVID cancelled all of our physical meetings and our workshop in 2020. However, we are planning a Cottage Succession Planning Workshop August 14, 2021 in partnership with FOCA and a neighbouring lake - Buck Lake Lake Association.

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CHAFFEY'S AREA LAKE ASSOCIATION

Our new mayor in Rideau Lakes Township brought all of the Lake Associations within Rideau Lakes together to form a new committee (Rideau Lake Lakes Association) that meets four times per year to discuss lake water/shoreline challenges and possible solutions. The Township has also developed a grant for each Lake Association. The amount is determined by a formula that includes lake size and number of members. Our original Executive has changed over this time period and it has been a struggle finding volunteers. This year we had three new volunteers come forward.

A positive result of the COVID shutdowns has been the emergence of technologies such as ZOOM and GoogleMeet. These have allowed us to keep in touch with members, run our meetings and AGMs virtually, and widen our networking scope. An example of how we have ridden this wave is that our members are increasingly concerned re: boat speeds and ignoring of navigation rules leading to increased noise, wakes and safety concerns. The Muskoka Lakes Association has been very open to have us sit in on webinars to view how they are handling these same issues on their lakes. They are not giving webinar presentations to Lake Associations in our region. Our very basic newsletter that we developed early on has now become a sixteen page, professionally designed publication that we email to members twice per year. A website is in the development stage and we hope to launch it in 2021.

We are looking forward to seeing where our networking will take us in the next year!

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

Financing and dwindling reserves, as well as the difficulty in attracting volunteers that are willing to give some of their free time to help keep their lakes healthy. Additionally, how to go to the next step of engaging waterfront properties owners in a conversation about establishing or improving their waterfront buffers.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

Reach out to other groups, like the Lake Networking Group (led by Karen Hunt) and Lake Links (Watersheds Canada), and definitely encourage your members to connect to FOCA (e-lert sign-up). Take advantage of their sessions and you will meet so many people that have common issues on their lakes. If we all work together, our voice is much louder in ensuring that government programs reflect our member needs.

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DESERT LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: SOUTH FRONTENAC, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Our association used the Love Your Lake vehicle in 2018 to assess all the properties on our lake and each received a report on the properties shoreline health. Thanks to all who put this together and executed it - it was, in my opinion, a great success and I would highly recommend it for other lake associations. It is by far the best tool to date to nudge property owners who have shorelines to rethink their relationship with the lake and gives positive ways to improve (very important!)

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

The cost of the project was very reasonable, but just the logistics and time put in by our volunteers was the first challenge. Also getting and matching properties to owners and then addresses for them was tedious. Many thanks to our two past Presidents for their efforts!

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

Engaging in your waterfront community/association is a worthwhile and necessary task that all must engage in. We shouldn't think that the beauty we enjoy is available for free - we humans must carry the torch to educate and engage all stakeholders in maintaining the waterfront/nature zones we enjoy. If you have an association, join it - if not, create one!

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GLOUCESTER POOL COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: SIMCOE/MUSKOKA AREA, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

To obtain volunteers, we utilized social media, a rack card program, email and our annual magazine. Our annual magazine is sent out in April. The president asked for volunteers in her President Statement and we asked for volunteers for each of our events. We have set up a Facebook and Instagram page for our organization and we set up some Facebook events for specific events. In addition, we have sent up Twitter. Our rack card program involved developing a rack card that listed our events on one side and on the front we listed our website, Facebook and Instagram accounts. We packaged our rack card with our membership form and hand delivered them to cottages on the lake. In the spring and summer, we sent out an email newsletter which highlighted our upcoming events. We would ask for volunteers and specifically state the job that they would do. Additionally, we sent out ad-hoc emails which listed events and asked for specific jobs. We did get volunteers for each of our events.

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GLOUCESTER POOL COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATION

Water quality became an issue on one section of our lake. We included information about the water quality issue in our magazine, newsletter email, and our ad-hoc email. When blue-green algae was spotted, we sent out an ad-hoc email with just the information about the blue-green algae and we included the exclamation mark to get the attention of our members. We also asked them to share the information. A couple of the executive members advocated on behalf of the cottage association to all three levels of government to get them to take action. We successfully got the municipal government to develop a septic re-inspection program and to include information on septic systems and algae in their newsletter that they send out with the tax assessment. This information was shared with the membership through ad-hoc emails, newsletter email, and magazine and we asked for volunteers to join an Environment Committee. We successfully obtained volunteers for a committee.

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

We found that we had to ask for volunteers several times and through several different types of media and specifically stated the job and the time that they would be providing us.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

We found that we were able to get volunteers if we explicitly listed the duty and the volunteer time was within a couple of hours.

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LAKE OF THE WOODS DISTRICT STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: KENORA, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

We have other activities and initiatives, including a seedling program and metal waste collection, but I have just provided info on LakeSmart. Other information can be provided if desired.

LakeSmart is an award winning community outreach program unique to our area. It is designed to offer information to shoreline residents and anyone who enjoys the lakes and environment on ways that they can "live and play green" at the lake. It is delivered by a team of three post secondary students, each with an environmental education focus, who spend the summer sharing information on ways that we can live and play green at the lake. The LakeSmart team is equipped with knowledge and resources on a broad range of topics including creating and maintaining shoreline buffer zones, reducing run-off, septic systems, using eco-friendly cleaning products, preventing the spread of invasive species, safe boating, and more.

Summer 2020 marked LOWDSA's LakeSmart program's tenth birthday. In the face of limitations due to COVID-19 we got creative and adapted our program and activities to a very different kind of summer, adding a significant digital platform.

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LAKE OF THE WOODS DISTRICT STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

The team spent just part of their summer travelling the lakes and roads of the area, but they were also very busy sharing practical knowledge about what we can each do to contribute to a healthier lake ecosystem and spreading the word about being more sustainable in our stewardship of land and water... virtually!

<https://www.lowdsa.com/cpages/lakesmart>

This is an annual program that runs for 2-3 months each summer. More information about funding and results can be added if you wish. Sponsor information is included on our website (link above).

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

Funding can be a challenge as we historically have been partially dependent on government program funding. We continue to expand our sponsorship base with area businesses/corporations to reduce that dependency.

This year health and safety concerns forced us to adjust the program, but ultimately that led us to expand the program with the virtual aspect. What presented as an obstacle initially truly became an opportunity.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

We make use of several tools for all our programs, initiatives and activities. That would include our website, 4 social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube), and semi-regular eNews bulletins to our members. However, our most important way of reaching out to engage with our members is our Lake of the Woods Area News magazine that is published and mailed to members 5 times a year; it is also available online digitally to members.

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LONG LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: PERTH, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

We had a sign erected, in partnership with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, warning boaters about the presence of European Milfoil and the needs to clean boats before and after entry to the lake and to avoid milfoil areas.

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

Obtaining consensus on the wording.

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MUSKOKA WATERSHED COUNCIL

LOCATION: MUSKOKA, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

MWC released a [white paper](#) in January outlining the need for Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) in Muskoka. The white paper was included in MWC's February 2020 submission to the Province's Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group, which was appointed by the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks in 2018 to provide advice and recommendations to help protect and safeguard the Muskoka River watershed and support economic growth in the region.

With its white paper, MWC contends that an integrated watershed approach must be implemented to effectively manage Muskoka's watershed. A watershed hydrology initiative, in the context of a comprehensive watershed strategy, will provide broad insight and potential solutions for greater flood resiliency. This approach could be undertaken in addition to simply revising the Province's existing Muskoka River Water Management Plan.

The purpose of the white paper is to start a discussion about water management in Muskoka and outline a potential process to implement IWM, particularly with the absence of a local conservation authority. Based on initial feedback and response to MWC's position, the local community and municipalities are generally supportive; however, significant resources, including support from all levels of government and the community at large, in addition to securing sufficient, multi-year funding, would be required.

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MUSKOKA WATERSHED COUNCIL

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

Challenges to implementing IWM in Muskoka include no appropriate governance structure in place given the absence of a conservation authority in Muskoka, which is the usual governance model for managing this type of approach in Ontario; securing sufficient financial and political support to implement IWM; and Muskoka's size: the region is a large geographic area with multiple and diverse economic drivers, including tourism and resource industries, increasing development pressures in urban, rural and remote areas, tourism, and significantly fluctuating seasonal populations.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

There is an opportunity to reach a broader audience using online engagement platforms. These platforms make it easier to reach out to remote/rural communities. We are anticipating heightened participation given the increased virtual opportunities.

MUSKOKA WATERSHED COUNCIL

LOCATION: MUSKOKA, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

MWC developed an Algae Monitoring Program to collect information on the distribution, abundance and seasonal cycles of a) all phytoplankton combined, and b) blue-green algae in particular, across Muskoka area lakes so that, over time, it may be possible to identify conditions favouring algae, detect trends in phytoplankton abundance, and provide management advice. The program harnesses the efforts of dedicated citizen scientists who currently monitor water quality across Muskoka in order to build a richer database of information on local algal populations using fluorometric analyses.

A pilot project was carried out in 2019 in partnership with four lake associations (Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association, Muskoka Lakes Association, Peninsula Lake Association, and Three Mile Lake Association) to test the equipment, sample collection protocol, and analysis methodology. Year two of the pilot project will be carried out in 2021 to further refine the program with the aim to roll it out broadly across Muskoka in subsequent years. The program was developed by MWC's Algae Sub-committee, which includes scientists from the MECP, local consultants, lake association representatives, and other community members. MWC funded year one of the pilot project and is seeking funding for year two and broader implementation.

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

Year two of the pilot project was postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19. Working with seasonal volunteers presents a challenge when data collection continues past the typical cottaging season. Securing funding to continue the program is another challenge.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

A Story Map is being developed for the program and to provide the results of the year one pilot project. Story Maps are great for presenting information in a variety of different, more engaging ways.

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OLMSTEAD JEFFREY LAKE ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: HALEY STATION



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Invasive Species Evaluation

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

The hardest part was setting up the date to receive the students performing the evaluation

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

FOCA has been extremely helpful with providing speakers to attend our past AGM's.

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OTTER LAKE LANDOWNERS' ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: LOMBARDY, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

In 2015, with help of Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, we conducted an aquatic plants survey of Otter Lake and found a small amount of European Frogbit. In 2016, the amount of frogbit had increased considerably and an eradication project was launched with volunteers and the help of RVCA summer students in 2016 and 2017. In 2018 and 2019, we expanded our project and raised funds through special donations from our lake association members and received a grant from FOCA with the funds going towards covering costs for RVCA summer students to expand their assistance to our project. In 2020, we switched to a monitoring and maintaining approach. Our project had a significant impact on reducing the amount of European Frogbit in Otter Lake. Unfortunately the main waterway flowing into Otter Lake has an abundance of this invasive species which will make it an ongoing challenge to keep it from encroaching into the lake.

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

It is always a challenge to engage volunteers, especially for a long-term project.

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PAUDASH LAKE CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

LOCATION: HALIBURTON, ONTARIO



ABOUT THE PROJECT

We ran a contest for owners to enter their degraded waterfront property with pictures and comments--the winner would get a full 'makeover' to naturalize the shoreline with native trees, shrubs and labour. We partnered with the Bancroft Area Stewardship Council.

CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES

We think COVID reduced the participation--only 4 entries. Also many with poor waterfronts don't care or don't realize they are poor.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL OTHERS?

A lot of education is needed.

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TAY NET WATERWAY REPORTING NETWORK

LOCATION: BETWEEN BOBS LAKE AND PORT ELMSLEY,
ONTARIO

FRIENDS OF THE



TAY WATERSHED

We All Live Downstream...

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Residents living along the Tay River and its waterway lakes can now obtain online status reports on water levels on the river at the Friends of the Tay Watershed website. The Tay Net Program provides reports on 12 locations along the Tay between Bobs Lake and Port Elmsley, of which eight sites are staffed by volunteer reporters and four are government electronic gauges. The reports can be found [here](#) and information on the program can be found [here](#).

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