

Otter Lake News

Spring 2023

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www.olra.ca

[OLRA Otter Lake](#) on fb

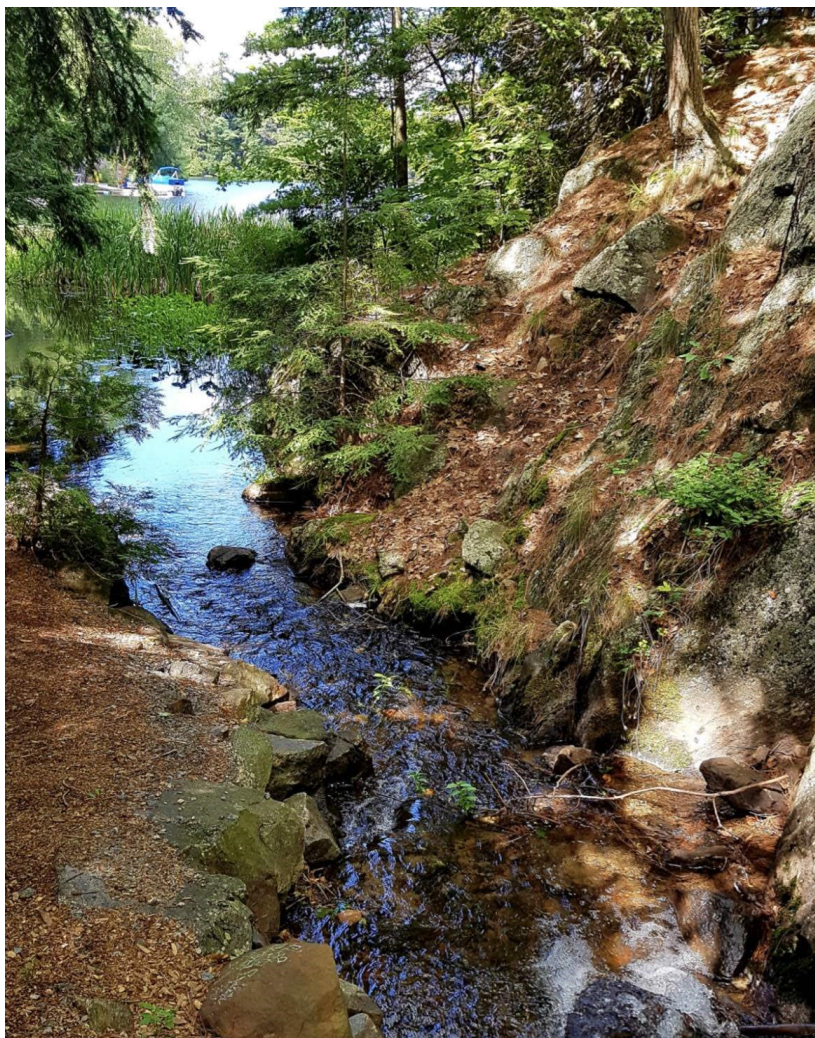


Photo by:
Sue Conforti

(see our website at [OLRA.ca](#) for galleries from past years' Photo Contests, Boat Parades and historical photos too.

Save These Dates:

OLRA Annual General Meeting - Sunday, May 21, 2023

Join your lake neighbours from 9am-11:30 am for guest speakers: Mayor Ann MacDiarmid, Councillors Ken Adams and Mario Buszynski, plus updates on news, events and OLRA initiatives in 2023 at the Foley Community Hall at 60 Rankin Lake Road, Seguin.

2023 OLRA Canada Day Boat Parade - July 1st, 2-4 pm

Rain date: Sunday July 2nd



2023 OLRA BBQ - Sat. August 12th, 5-8 pm

at the Grand Tappattoo Resort. Everyone welcome!

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Electing Our Executive and What We Do

We currently have a full compliment of 9 Board members but there are always people rotating on and off the Board and standing re-election so if you are interested in joining us, please let a nominating committee member know or send an email to info@olra.ca

Sept. 1st 2022 OLRA began its 61st year!

That is a VERY impressive history of generations of caring Otter Lakers coming together to contribute to their lake community, protect our lakes, have fun, give us a collective voice at [Seguin Township](#) (Seguin) and other levels of government as well as the [Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations](#) (FOCA).

OLRA also engages with other organizations such as the [Georgian Bay Biosphere Mndoo Gamii](#) (in which Otter Lake and Little Otter Lake lie), [Safe Quiet Lakes](#) (SQL), the [Muskoka Watershed Council](#), the

Current OLRA Board of Directors

<i>President / Communications</i>	Kerry Mueller
<i>Vice President / MNR&F</i>	Marty Chepesiuk
<i>Liason re: Lake Levels</i>	
<i>Secretary</i>	Nicole Mailloux
<i>Treasurer / Membership</i>	AJ Mueller
<i>Lake Steward</i>	Brian Hindley
<i>BBQ</i>	Gerry Doyle
<i>Director</i>	Rob Cribbie
<i>Director</i>	Brad Chittick
<i>Director</i>	David Amy

[Lake Partner Program for our water testing](#), and most recently with [Nature Metrics](#) North America, Guelph ON for the initiation of our eDNA sampling project in 2022 (pg. 5)

As well, OLRA endeavors to host fun social events and inform residents about key issues, sustainable lake living and things to do in and around our area..

Currently, the OLRA Board of Directors can consist of up to 9 Board members who each usually serve a three year term. Check out [Our Association](#) on OLRA's website for our [Goals and Objectives](#) and the 10 great benefits of supporting OLRA (pg. 11) as we strive to preserve and protect Otter Lake (including Little Otter Lake) as the shared freshwater ecosystem jewels they are today!

The Board typically meets four times a year: in February, on the day of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the May long weekend, in the summer and in the fall for a meeting and potluck social event with partners. Due to COVID, we've missed our potluck for three years but hope to get back into socializing that way again in 2023.

New Board members are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Nominations can be to the Nominating Committee (below) and at the AGM. You must be a current OLRA member to be a Board member and to vote at the AGM.

OLRA's AGM is planned to be on Sunday May 21, 2023 from 9 -11:30 at the Foley Community Hall, 60 Rankin Lake Road. See the front cover for more details.

Looking forward to seeing you then! 😊

OLRA Nominating Committee

Kerry Mueller	Brad Chittick
519-463-5454	905-601-8236
Marty Chepesiuk	
416-219-7686	

From The President

By: Kerry Mueller

Signs of spring are finally showing. This April 2nd morning is frosty but showers have encouraged daffodils up and south facing shores are largely snow free. The ice has not broken up but has thawed around the shore as AJ's photo below shows. Will we beat the 2022 "ice out" date of April 23rd? Stay tuned!



Mar. 30th, 2023 - poking a hole in the ice.

This winter your OLRA Board has been busy!

Lake stewardship has been going strong with our first **eDNA sampling results** posted on olra.ca [here](#). The water testing and benthos (bugs in the mud) monitoring results are also posted in our **2022 Aquatic and Environmental Report** [here](#). (More about both reports and stewardship plans for 2023 on pg. 4 & 5.)

The **OLRA by-laws are being updated** to be in line with the Ontario governments new ONCA guidelines. We plan to send out the proposed new by-laws to you, our membership, in April and to vote on adopting them at the May 21st AGM at the Foley Community Hall at 60 Rankin Lake Road from 9 am - 11:30 am. **So please come out, meet your neighbours again in person, hear our guest speakers and VOTE!** (pg. 1 and 5)

The **annual photo contest** (pg. 8), **boat parade** (pg. 12) and **BBQ** on August 12th are being planned. More info will come later on the BBQ.

Investigation was done on **changes to the Ontario fishing regulations** and affects on lake trout. (pg. 9)

OLRA has helped coordinate a seminar on **Keeping the Cottage in the Family**. (pg 17)

A **survey** is being prepared to stay current with what's working and what else we could be doing. (pg. 17)

There will be an **Otter Lake Team** in the 2023 fundraiser to support our local hospital. We hope you'll add your support to this very worthy cause. (pg 17).

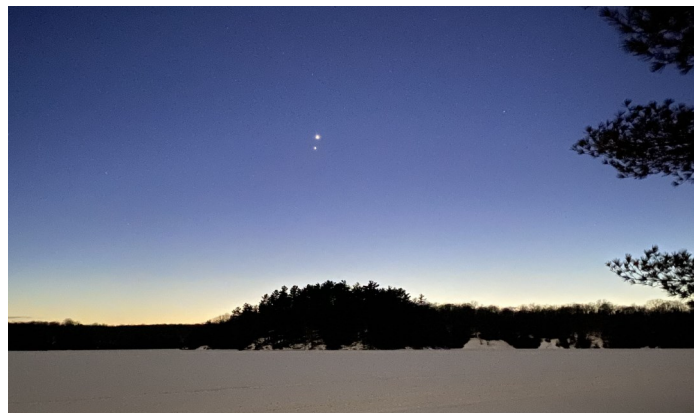
Work on an intergenerational lake plan has begun.

Lastly, the **OLRA Board strongly supported Council's 5:2 vote against licensing short term rentals** (STRs). We congratulate all the 5 councillors, including Ken

From the President cont'd...

Adams and Mario Buszynski, who voted licensing down. Their research, openness to public input and thoughtful comments were instrumental in deciding to maintain Seguin's current by-law that does not allow STRs and to preserve residential zoned property for residents. (pg 7)

This year is shaping up to be very eventful for Seguin and for Parry Sound in terms of development. As you'll read in our Mayor's update on page 6, the [Seguin Minister's Zoning Order \(MZO\) application was approved](#) giving Seguin a green light to proceed towards developing over 700 acres at the north end of Ward 2 just south of Canadian Tire. This is a huge undertaking for Seguin. The aim is to help alleviate a critical shortage of attainable housing in the area which is a serious problem. Parry Sound's sewer and water systems would need to be upgraded if they are to service this development and it is unclear if/how that will happen. No doubt there will be much negotiating between the municipalities and public consultation will be part of the process. Environmental concerns and costs will be watched closely too. We'll keep you posted as things progress.



Mar. 2nd 2023 - The Great Conjunction of Venus and Jupiter Over Woodburn Is. Photo by: Kerry Mueller

The [West Parry Sound Pool and Recreational Centre](#) is moving ahead at long last and, in my opinion, will be a great addition to the area. The new Parry Sound Best Western is up and running. A new restaurant is going in at the Parry Sound docks. There was a proposal before Parry Sound council to build [Harbour Bay Residences](#) on the shore opposite the town docks. And very few places have been for sale on Otter Lake in 2022 / 2023.

The bottom line is more people want to live, work and enjoy this beautiful area as we do. The opportunity and challenge for Councils, their staff and residents is to only allow development that is progressive, sustainable and in part, attainable, while protecting the natural environment.

Thank you for reading our newsletter. Enjoy your time at this gem of a lake. I hope to see you soon!

This newsletter is a team effort and all those who contribute are much appreciated!! Drop us a note to info@olra.ca with questions / comments / photos. You can reach me at kerryemueller@gmail.com / 519-463-5454.

Lake Stewardship Report—Spring 2023

By: Brian Hindley

Greetings All!

We received the [Georgian Bay Biosphere Mniidoo Gamii](#) (GBB) report which summarized the past 4 years of “bugs in the mud” sampling. While some of the numbers of the benthic invertebrates were down slightly, the benthic invertebrate numbers and species diversity at the stations sampled indicate that Otter/Little Otter Lakes are in good health that is characteristic of the better quality lakes in Muskoka.

Total phosphorus sample results from 2022 are also in from the Ontario [Lake Partner Program](#). These results indicate that total phosphorus results remain below 0.01 mg/l which is typical of oligotrophic lakes (fairly pristine lakes with low nutrient and productivity levels) and water transparency remains relatively constant. There is an indication, however, of a slight increasing trend in total phosphorus levels. Dissolved oxygen levels remain typical of healthy lakes, however there is evidence that our shallow embayments experience low dissolved oxygen levels when the lake stratifies. This is good news, however we should remain vigilant in ensuring that all landowners and visitors around the lake practice good stewardship to actively manage our activities/properties to keep pollutants from entering the lake. GBB has also reinforced these recommendations (see Figures 1 and 2 below).

Stewardship Activities

1. Encourage Otter Lake and Little Otter Lake property owners to maintain and/or restore natural shorelines. For info about choosing native plants, see the [Best of the Biosphere](#) plant list.
2. Property owners interested in minimizing their ecological footprint can utilize the GBB’s [Life on the Bay](#) stewardship guide.
3. Get involved in one of the many [citizen science](#) programs available for cottagers and residents (e.g., invasive species reporting, IceWatch)

Figure 1: Highlights from the GBB recommendations.

GBB also noted the importance of continuing to protect our Lake Trout population as an important species that gives our Lake special status to protect it from

OLRA Lake Stewardship Report cont’d

development pressures including freezing lot increases (see Figure 3 for an example of a natural shore). Protecting our Lake Trout status should be our # 1 priority (see Defenders of the Deep article on pg.9).

While MNRF draft regulations for Fisheries Management Zone (FMZ) 15 have suggested opening the winter lake trout fishery for Otter Lake, we are asking MNRF staff to reconsider this. Stay tuned!

Fish Communities

1. Maintain current angling regulations for lake trout in Otter Lake (40-55 cm protected slot size, winter closure).
2. If there is interest, volunteers could monitor the enhanced lake trout spawning habitat in Otter Lake to determine if it is being used.
3. Anglers should familiarize themselves with the [new regulations for the sale and possession of live bait](#) in Ontario.
4. The [app MyCatch by Angler’s Atlas](#) can be used by people fishing on the lake to log fishing trips and share data confidentially with biologists.

Figure 2: Highlights from the GBB recommendations.

Monthly water sampling will start in May of this year and we will host the GBB staff in sampling this July. Watch the website for updates and an invite for you to come out and watch!

As you know, the OLRA membership approved our eDNA project at the AGM in May 2022. The use of eDNA to identify organisms (invertebrates, fish, reptiles/amphibians, birds, mammals) present in water from traces of their DNA, is a rapidly emerging technology that has the potential to characterize biodiversity of animal communities in a waterbody by analysing a water sample containing DNA remnants. It has the potential to replace more traditional means of sampling the organisms (fish, invertebrates, etc.) using nets and traps, and also to identify many more species that traditional sampling can miss, but it has its limitations: it can only detect animals that were present at the sample location in the past 24 – 72 hours and

OLRA Lake Stewardship Report cont'd

of course, just because an animal was not found doesn't mean it is not present! Our eDNA project funded 6 samples the results of which are [on our website](#). We plan to do additional sampling in spring on private land.

There is a considerable amount of data to sort through as our samples yielded almost 400 different eDNA codes. When these codes are compared to databases of species DNA profiles, we found numerous species – zooplankton, benthic invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles and mammals, as well as unknown eDNA codes for which there is no matching animal in the databases.

I can say that the results for the invertebrates generally show as much or more diversity than the results from work with GBB - this is to be expected as the habitats sampled are different and eDNA allows organisms to be identified to species, while GBB only looks at the family level. Looking at just Family level (so major groups of invertebrates), then the numbers range from 6 - 36. There are lots of insects - flies, beetles, mayflies, stoneflies, caddisflies, as well as a crayfish and a clam!

There is a good representation of fish - no lake trout appeared, but this is expected given that the habitat locations and the time of year would have precluded any lake trout. There were many baitfish species, large and small mouth bass, northern pike, black crappie; 28 species all together and 11 - 16 species in each of our 6 samples. We also found several salamander species, snapping turtle, painted turtle, raccoon, beaver, muskrat, white tailed deer and wood duck.

These results do show that eDNA techniques can be a powerful tool in describing the biodiversity of a habitat or ecosystem. Consider that our results were based on only 6 samples and reflect only those animals present in the area sampled for 1 to 3 days before sampling!

Other work on the books this year for lake monitoring include the following:

- Continuing the monthly Phosphorus sampling in Otter and Little Otter lakes – 6 monthly samples in each for the Lake Partner Program (supported by MOECP)
- September dissolved oxygen profiling in the shallow bays of Otter and Little Otter lakes – to monitor the extent to which bottom sediments/aquatic plants reduce oxygen levels in these areas
- GBB benthic invertebrate sampling in early July – our ongoing program that helps assess the health of Otter and Little Otter Lakes and provides a measure of how they compare to other lakes in our area.

OLRA Lake Stewardship Report cont'd

These regular monitoring efforts are very important in providing a regular and ongoing measure of the overall health of our lakes and while they do not necessarily identify localized concerns, they serve as a barometer that hopefully will warn us if our lake health is in jeopardy.



Figure 3. Natural shoreline example showing shallow wetland features and forested back shore.

I hope that we can expand our lake health monitoring program with other measures to improve our system of early warning forecasts for the lakes.

Remember that we are all stewards of the health of our lakes and we need to be vigilant and ensure that we maintain and wherever possible, restore our waterfront and adjacent shores to a healthy, natural state.

Hope to see you on the water!!

OLRA's New By-laws - Get Ready to Vote!

By: Kerry Mueller

Your OLRA Board has been busy on updating OLRA's by-laws to comply with the Ontario government's new [ONCA](#) (ON Not-for-Profit Corporations Act).

The proposed updated OLRA bylaws will be sent out via email. We plan to have a vote at the OLRA AGM on May 21st, 2023 at the Foley Community Centre

So please attend on May 21st and be ready to vote on these important changes and to hear the latest updates from our Mayor and Councillors. See you there!

Loon News

By: Kerry Mueller

The awesome [call of a Loon](#) claiming his territory signals the ice is nearly gone and spring is in full swing! According to [Journey North](#), a Loon was seen at Beaver Dam, WI on March 28th, 2023. We should celebrate each Loon's return since their long journey back from the oceans is perilous and fewer Loons are making it.



Photo by: Susan MacLean

[It used to be that about 40% of young Loons aged 2-5 years would return to the lake of their hatching. Now that number is only about 15% and 25 - 30% fewer chicks are being fledged across Canada too.](#) Why exactly is being further investigated.

[Loons have been amazing survivors dating back 70 million years](#) to the time of sabre toothed tigers, mammoths and mastodons, However, due to a [rapidly warming climate](#), they are now facing high stress.

Like us, Loons need clear, clean water so they are good indicators of lake health. [They hunt visually so need clear water to see prey.](#) Climate warming is causing [heavier rains which wash more soil and pollution into lakes](#) reducing water clarity and [increasing algal blooms that can create dead zones.](#) Hotter weather also drives Loons from their nests to cool off leaving their eggs vulnerable to predation. Being apex predators, [Loons bioaccumulate toxins, like mercury and lead](#), which harm their health and their ability to care for chicks.

To adapt, Loons are expected to move north out of the northern US and southern Canada. A third of Loons migrating to Canada and the US come to Ontario so we have a big role in helping [Ontario's official bird](#).

[What can we do to help Loons?](#)

- Keep shoreline natural to reduce erosion /protect fish.
- Maintain your septic to keep pollution out of our lake.
- Reduce pollution by burning less fossil fuels.
- Welcome Loons back by not fishing with lead tackle and giving them lots of space when out on the lake.

Thanks for looking out for our Loons!!

Seguin Township Spring 2023 Report

By: Mayor Ann MacDiarmid

I am excited and pleased to announce that Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has approved Seguin Township's request to rezone 743 acres of land in the north part of Seguin (directly behind RONA and Canadian Tire) to allow for future residential development. This development will include a mix of much needed rental and multi-unit housing that will be priced attainably. With the Minister's approval, Seguin Council and our Planning Department will be undertaking the important steps of community consultation, site plan approval and the creation of net-new Environmentally Protected (EP) zones to ensure that this area becomes a showplace for how residential development can occur within our precious northern environment.

Seguin Council has many major projects that are well underway and will be completed over the coming months. These include the update of our Official Plan, Shoreline Alteration Bylaws (tree cutting, blasting and fill regulations) and an update of our Strategic Plan. As we move into strategic planning we will be urging our council and community to set priorities and a vision for the long term – what do you want Seguin to be in 20 – 30 years? With that vision, the Council's work for the next 4 years will be to set the stage to enable this growth and development.

On Monday March 13, Council rejected the staff recommendation to investigate the concept of regulating Short Term Rentals (STR) via a licensing program and asked staff to continue to monitor the STR activity throughout other communities. At the same time, staff have brought forward strengthened "quality of life" by-laws that will enable our by-law department to ensure that owners and renters will be expected to uphold the quality of life in the neighbourhoods we value so much. Ongoing monitoring of the costs of enforcing these strengthened by-laws without offsetting revenue will be vitally important to ensuring that existing taxpayers do not pay for the few offending properties. STR's have been on the Seguin Council agenda since 2017 and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

The West Parry Sound pool and recreation centre is coming!!! The Municipal Services Board, comprised of representatives from 7 municipalities and 2 first nations, has hired a Project Manager, an Architectural and Design team, a Construction Manager and a Professional Fundraising Consultant. T-shirts promoting the pool can be purchased at White Squall in Parry Sound and at many public markets throughout the region. There will be many opportunities for community involvement in the coming months. Like STR's, the dream of an indoor aquatic centre has been discussed for many, many years. Congratulations to everyone and every group who has stuck with the dream for over 30 years. Find lots more information at www.letsmakeasplash.ca

Seguin Township Spring 2023 Report cont'd

As spring moves into summer, I hope everyone will enjoy the many natural parts of our Township while caring for our environment, keeping everyone safe and respecting our shared resources. More Township news can always be found at www.seguin.ca and www.letsconnectseguin.ca.

Ann MacDiarmid
annmacdiarmid@seguin.ca
705-346-2210 (cell)

Ward 1 Councillor Report, Seguin Twp. By: Councillor Ken Adams

Winter is coming to an end and spring is here! Other than a couple of ridiculous snowstorms, it was a pretty good winter. I'm sure a lot of people can't wait to get up to the cottage and open up for another great season.

Being a new councillor, the winter has given me time to experience some of the challenges to help myself feel more confident in this role.

On Feb. 25th we had the 38th Annual Dog Sled Mail Run with 12 teams delivering the mail from Humphrey to Rosseau. The date was moved from the Family Day Weekend which I think made it a huge success.

The Road Needs Study will be starting early spring while the roads are at their worst for a better overall review of the conditions they are in. The hope is to have the study done by the 3rd quarter for council review.

All the new committees have been filled and are underway. I'll be on the Recreation and Culture Committee along with Councillors Finnsen & Fellner.

Looking forward to the OLRA AGM on May 21st and to the August 5th meeting with the Rankin Lake Ratepayers Association at the Humphrey Arena.

From May until October, Mario Buszynski and I will be at the Foley Resource Centre one Saturday a month from 12 until 2pm. The dates are as follows: May 20th, June 24th, July 22nd, Aug. 12th, Sept. 23rd, Oct. 21st.

On March 13th we had a special meeting of council to make a decision on Short Term Rentals. All councillors were given an opportunity to speak on this matter. As a ratepayer and living on a lake I was very pleased with council's decision not to licence short term rentals. It was all based on a survey alone, with no concrete information on the licence or how it was to be enforced. We need clean up before we introduce something new.

As always, please feel free to contact me at any time.
Regards,
Ken Adams 705 471 7549
adamsk038@gmail.com kenadams@seguin.ca

Ward 2 Councillor Report, Seguin Twp. By: Councillor Mario Buszynski

I would like to thank all of the people that had confidence in me for electing me as Councillor in Ward 2.

Over the period that I was off Council, there have been many staff changes in the Township in addition to changes on Council. These changes have brought about changes in policy. The snowstorms over the Christmas holiday season strained Township resources and as a result, the Director of Public Works advised that Township snowploughing would have to be focused on year-round Township roads and that residents living on seasonal private roads would have to arrange for their own snow clearing service. This is not new, however, the Township used to do some minor clearing on parts of some private roads that they can't commit to now as the Three-Legged Lake Ratepayers found out. Seguin's after-hours emergency number is: **705-751-0050**. Private contractors offering snow clearing services are as follows: Les Badger: (705) 774-8103; Hard rock excavating: (705) 773-2652; Adams Brothers: 746-2962; and Weeks Construction: 705-746-5111. Seguin has hired Tatham Engineering to undertake a professional engineering study of Township roads this spring and summer to provide the basis for setting re-construction priorities – results available this fall.

I am pleased with the direction Council has been going on a few issues. I was able to ensure that the original portage between Salmon and Clear Lakes will remain open through a development agreement between the Township and the developer. I was part of a Council decision that turned down a proposal to licence short-term rentals in the Township. The proposal would have taken us down the rabbit hole of lawsuits, staff increases to manage the program, significant expenditures for legal advice and uncertain outcomes as the many Townships that have passed such a by-law have found. We are presently looking to beef up our "quality of life" by-laws like noise in order to go after problem properties.

There still remains much to do. Seguin's increased year-round population is putting a strain on our waste management system, from our transfer sites to our landfill. I promised to see what the residual impact of the gasoline tanker spill into Oastler lake is and what can be done to protect other lakes from the same fate and many other issues to protect our quality of life on Otter Lake.

Ken Adams and I will be available for meetings at the Foley Resource Centre from 12 - 2pm on the following Saturdays: May 20th, June 24th, July 22nd, Aug. 12th, Sept. 23rd and Oct. 21st.

I still plan on sending out a newsletter (probably every quarter) to keep people up to speed on Township activities. Please send your email address to me at mario.buszynski@gmail.com to receive it. Thank you.

Mario Buszynski 416-254-6614 (cell)
mario.buszynski@gmail.com



It's baaaack! The 2022 OLRA photo contest was a huge success. We received 79 entries last year and you chose the winners.

It is time again to grab your phone and camera and click away. Share your Otter Lake memories with us all!

Prizes will be awarded in the Adult and Youth (16 and under), categories of:

- People
- Scenery
- Wildlife

The contest opens Saturday, May 20th and closes Tuesday, October 10th, 2023.

Voting will take place shortly after the contest closes. Photographs will be uploaded to our website, olra.ca and may be shared in the OLRA Newsletters and other communications. Winners will be announced in the fall newsletter and on the website.

The contest is open to OLRA members, family and guests; however only OLRA members and their immediate family are eligible to receive prizes. **All photographs need to be tied to a current OLRA member.**

Category prizes are as follows:

- 1st prize \$25
- 2nd prize \$20
- 3rd prize \$15.
- Overall winner receives \$25 and ultimate bragging rights!

Congratulations again to Mike Haddrath, our 2022 overall winner! (see Mike's gorgeous photo and others [here](#))

Send your photos from any season, taken on or around Otter Lake, and email them to:

OtterLakePhotoContest@gmail.com Remember one photo per adult category. Youth (16 and under) may submit up to 3 entries. Photos must be 6 MB or smaller in size. Please note that photos with advertising or political endorsements will not be accepted.

Along with your photo, please include the following information in your email:

- the preferred category
- contact information (email and mailing address)
- the OLRA membership name tied to the entry
- a brief description of the photo.

You may also complete this information by using [this form](#). It's that simple! Keep a lookout for a reminder email in May, before the contest starts, with all the details. We are looking forward to seeing the beauty, wonder and fun of Otter Lake reflected through your lens.



Otter Lake Marina Update

By: Deb Smith



Photo by: Deb Smith, Otter Lake Marina

It is nice to see the sun shining as the days are starting to get a bit longer. As usual the fall and winter seasons flew by and it is hard to believe it is March already! The winter season was great although very different from previous seasons.

With the slow start to the ice coming in this winter we are anxious to see the snow and ice starting to melt as we have already received a couple requests for boats to be launched.

The store will reopen the May long weekend however gas and oil will be available as soon as the ice is off the lake. We look forward to seeing everyone again very soon!

OLRA Membership Report

By: AJ Mueller

As of Dec 31st, 2022, OLRA's membership exceeded the 2021 total membership count by 2 families and a total of 29 members. It is awesome to see membership growing over the last 5 years due to the great team work of the OLRA Board and other volunteers who make OLRA tick.

Again we would like to thank the many members who support OLRA and generously donate to the environment and reserve funds! You are OLRA's lifeblood.

	Dec. 31, 2022	Dec. 31, 2021
Families	185	183
Additional Family Members	309	282
Totals	494	465

If you know of a new owner on the lake or someone who may just be unaware of OLRA, its many environmentally focused initiatives and social events, please share this newsletter with them and encourage them to join.

A membership form is on pg. 10. Member benefits are on page 11. One can get this info [on our website](#) too. Thanks for your support!!!

Defenders of the Deep

By: Marty Chepesiuk



They patrol the cold oxygen-rich depths of Otter Lake during the summer and fall, but during the winter the entire lake is their domain. They are top predators and will even eat their own kind. They are so special that their presence in our lake is the key reason why further lot creation has been curtailed to protect them. (Image from Wikipedia)

[Salvelinus namaycush, commonly known as Lake Trout](#), were left behind when the glaciers retreated from this area about 10,000 years ago and the huge lake that covered much of central North America drained away. They only survived in the one percent of lakes in Ontario with very high water quality and deep basins that maintain adequate oxygen levels. Because of their presence Otter Lake is designated "at capacity" for development. No more lots with their associated septic systems can be created on our lake as long as we retain this status, maintaining our excellent water quality.

Lake trout were artificially stocked in Otter Lake from the 1950s until 1998, when biologists concluded that naturally reproducing lake trout would be better genetically adapted to their particular lake than stocked fish. The MNR conducted spring shallow water netting studies on Otter Lake from 1976 to 2005, showing that most netted lake trout were stocked as they had clipped fins. A more recent and updated study done in 2013 used different nets set in the summer in deeper water, now showing a predominance of natural lake trout (without clipped fins). This study used gill nets each 64m x 1.8m with 8 mesh sizes placed at 29 locations around the lake for two hours, netting a total of 9 trout as well as incidental cisco (herring), white sucker and smallmouth bass. Four trout were stocked (left pelvic or adipose fin clipped) and 16-20 years old, the rest were natural, weighing up to 3.7 kg. Four fish that did not survive the netting (65-70 cm long) were sent for analysis of contaminants (mercury, PCBs, organochlorine pesticides), showing that [there is a concern for PCBs](#) and that non-pregnant adults should consume no more than two meals per month. Children under 15 and pregnant women should consume none.

I contacted the MECP about testing our lake's fish for the "forever chemicals" known generically as PFASs and though our fish were not specifically tested I was reassured that only lakes with known contamination were at risk ([PFAS contamination has occurred around airports](#) where they are used as fire suppressants, but even if they were used at the Parry Sound airport that area does not drain into Otter Lake).

All netted trout were large, suggesting that they feed on abundant forage fish like smelt and cisco rather than zooplankton. The low number caught indicates a low to moderate abundance of lake trout, with an estimated population of 144 natural and 123 stocked lake trout 10 years ago.

Defenders of the Deep cont'd

The MNR is proposing new fishing regulations for our area, Fisheries Management Zone 15. Currently Otter Lake is closed to winter fishing, but starting next year ice fishing will be allowed from the Saturday of the Family Day Weekend to the third Saturday in March as long as only one line is used and any fish under 50 cm are released. The open water season would end on Labour Day instead of the last day of September.

Hopefully this added fishing pressure will not overly deplete our lake of these important fish, though there are stories of trout that are so large they could not fit through the hole in the ice! Even fishing for Lake Trout by catch-and-release can be a problem, as well-meaning anglers can inadvertently kill the fish through barotrauma – when pulled up to the surface quickly from deep water (>50 feet) their air bladder can explode internally.

Because they are not particularly tasty to eat, are difficult to catch, and the largest ones have accumulated high levels of PCBs perhaps it would be best for the future of our lake if anglers left our deep lake defenders alone. All of us on the lake can also help by properly maintaining our septic systems, not using lawn fertilizer and avoiding detergents with phosphates, thus limiting the algae growth that depletes deep waters of oxygen and reduces our water quality.

By keeping the lake trout safe we can keep this part of Ontario beautiful for generations to come.

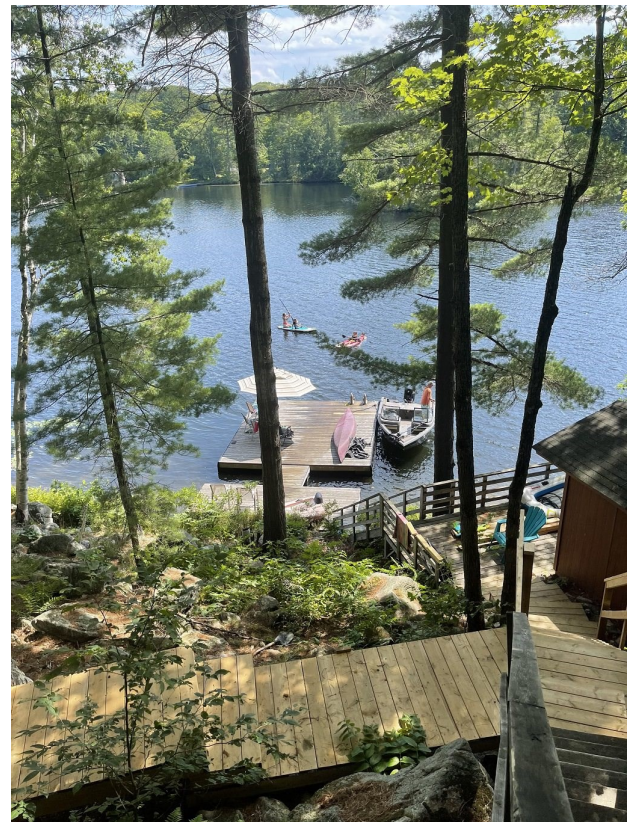


Photo by: Lynn Langdon

Please give any new neighbours on the lake a warm Otter Lake welcome, share this newsletter and encourage them to join our OLRA family too!



Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association

website: www.olra.ca
 email: info@olra.ca
 facebook: [olra otter lake](https://www.facebook.com/olra.otter.lake)
 twitter: [@OLRAOtterLake](https://twitter.com/OLRAOtterLake)

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2 nd Family Member			\$5
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5 th Family Member			\$5
6 th Family Member			\$5

OLRA sends information, announcements and newsletters via e-mail to keep communication costs low. You may request an update to your e-mail address or delete it at any time by sending a note to info@olra.ca

Consider Donating:	Reserve Fund
	Environment Fund
	Total Payable

Mailing Address	Otter Lake Address
Phone #	Phone #

Please make your cheque payable to OLRA and mail it with this form to AJ Mueller, OLRA Treasurer, 1701-144 Park St, Waterloo ON, N2L 0B6 or send an e-transfer and a copy of completed form to: treasurer@olra.ca

The Otter Lake Ratepayers' Association (OLRA) would like you to become a member too. Help us celebrate and protect awesome Otter Lake!



Here are 10 Benefits of Being an OLRA Member:

- 1) Stay in the know with **OLRA's two newsletters** (spring and fall) plus other updates.
- 2) Help **protect our lake water quality, support our Loons, "bugs in the mud" and eDNA survey projects**. Help ensure our lake ecology and property values are maintained.
- 3) Participate in or just enjoy watching **OLRA's Annual Canada Day Boat Parade**.
- 4) Socialize with your neighbours at **OLRA's annual BBQ** typically held in August.
- 5) Participate, win prizes or just enjoy **OLRA's annual photo competition** (see past winners in the Galleries at olra.ca)
- 6) **Strengthen our collective voice at Seguin Council** and the province on matters affecting you, your property and the lake environment. Stay informed about Public Meetings.
- 7) Enjoy **member benefits** in the **Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association (FOCA)** as an OLRA member. You have access to all the research and programs that they offer including discounted insurance programs.
- 8) Stay informed of initiatives by the **Georgian Bay Biosphere**, a globally important ecological region, designated by UNESCO in 2004, in which Otter Lake is located.
- 9) Support and stay informed of initiatives by **Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL)** to promote safe boating on our lakes.
- 10) Vote, learn and socialize at **OLRA's Annual General Meeting** on the May long weekend. Meet your neighbours, invited members of Council as well as our guest speaker(s).

In short, you'll **feel good and do good by joining people who love Otter Lake** and are working to keep it the gem it is for decades to come!

We hope you will participate in the **OLRA AGM on the morning of May 21st, 2023**.

Learn about what's going on around Otter Lake, meet your neighbours, hear from our Seguin Council members, participate in discussions, votes and find out how you can get involved too.

Hope to see you then. Thanks for your support of OLRA!!!



Join us for the 3rd Annual OLRA

Canada Day Boat Parade

What better way to celebrate Canada Day!

Date: July 1, 2023

Rain Date: July 2, 2023

Time: 2-4 pm

Start: Otter Lake Marina

End: Near Beaver Hollow



Prizes awarded for the:

- Most Patriotic
- Most Creative
- Most Otter Lake Spirit
- Trophy for Best Overall!!!

* Free to all residents of Otter Lake

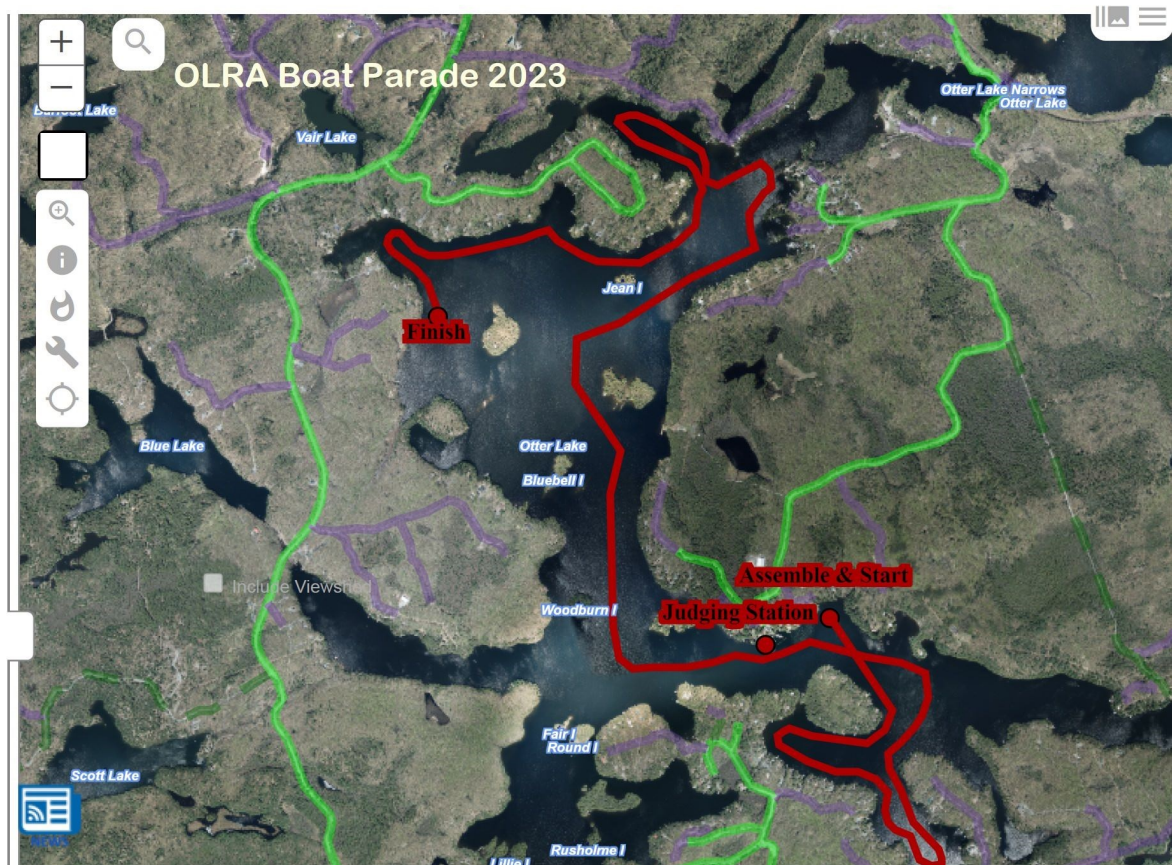
* Prizes available to be won by OLRA Members who check in before the Parade and receive an entry number

* Open only to motorized boats (that can keep pace with the parade)

* Look for more details in upcoming OLRA membership emails

* Contact Rob Cribbie (otterlakeboatparade@olra.ca) for more details

2023 Boat Parade Route - see you there!



<https://www.wpsgn.ca/v5/#>

1/2

Otter Lake Cup Pond Hockey Tournament By: Nicole Mailloux

Susan Shackleton from the Grand Tappatoo Resort spearheaded the idea of holding the Otter Lake Cup Pond Hockey Tournament event in 2023, but who would have guessed what type of winter we were heading into? Ever since I can remember, January on Otter Lake has always been the coldest month of the year, but this year was different. January started off as one of the mildest months ever! Everywhere we looked, faces looked very worried...there was still open water on Otter Lake in mid-January. Would the puck hit the ice at the February 4th/5th Otter Lake Cup Pond Hockey Tournament OR would the puck sink?

Everyone secretly prayed for sub zero freezing breath-taking ice-cold weather, and impatiently waited with fingers crossed for the ice to thicken! And it happened, just in time!

On February 3rd, all the organizers of The Otter Lake Cup Pond Hockey Tournament, hockey players and fans, members of the Wasauksing First Nation and Otter Lake Association, Moose FM, and others were welcomed by the traditional Indigenous ceremony which opened the event, in temperatures of minus 30 degrees centigrade, with warnings of exposed skin freezing!

Otter Lake Cup Pond Hockey Tournament Cont'd

The pond hockey games then began, with everyone shouting and cheering for their favourite team. The Little Otter Lake Lumber Jacks and the Otter Lake Long Arms were two of the many competing teams.



Hockey Players Scrimmaging at the 2023 Otter Lake Cup Pond Hockey Tournament

Photo by: Nicole Mailloux

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Otter Lake Cup Pond Hockey Tournament Cont'd

Surprisingly, February 4th was a balmy but cloudy day for the finals. The snow and ice were starting to melt. The Wasauksing Amok women's team won against Aunt-teal's, 10 to 6.



Nicole Mailloux, OLRA, congratulating the Wasauksing Amok Women's team proudly holding their Cup.
Photo by: Brian Hindley

The men's final had to be played sooner than expected as the ice was really getting messy. Sunnyvale (Barrie) won against the Little Otter Lake Lumberjacks, 16 to 14.



The Sunnyvale Men's Hockey Team proudly showing off their Cup!
Photo by: Devin & Kara Morley, Muskoka Event Services

The day was a great success with lots of fun, thanks to [many sponsors](#) including the [Grand Tappatoo Resort](#), the [Muskoka Event Services](#), the [Wasauksing First Nation](#), the vendors and of course all the hockey teams and fans from across the province who braved the cold to play the greatest game that can ever be played on a frozen pond, hockey!

Tales From Otter Lake - Tale #5 By: Richard Hood

Otter Lake has a rich shared history with those of us who love it. With your submissions we can share our stories to enrich our Lake community. R.H.

Mario Buszynski's family originally settled on Otter Lake in 1909. His grandfather saw the island he purchased from the Crown as a hunting and fishing tent camp. That lasted until his wife set him straight: Otter Lake was much too beautiful for a mere camp. It could be a place where the kids could fish and swim. They could learn how to drive a boat. They could learn where the shoals were. They could learn how to celebrate the joy that the Lake offered.

By 1914, Scottish masons were building the original fireplace for the new family cottage!

Mario's grandmother's vision has endured for over 100 years! The Buszynski family have raised their own children with a deep love for the gifts of Otter Lake.

Mario has embarked on an important adventure: representing Ward 2 on Council.

I asked him why.

Mario: I have learned that we can't be silent if we want to preserve the water purity and carrying capacity of the lake. In the 50's and 60's, cottages were built with little care to protect the shoreline. Hydro was clear-cutting giant swaths through the woods. In the late '70's, the Chromium Canadian Motor Lamp flushed their pipes with about 200 pounds of phosphates into Little Otter Lake. I realized then, "this is just wrong".

RH: "This is just wrong." How has this realization influenced your belief about protecting the beauty of the Lake we love?

Mario: I realized that we can do better. But this would take a commitment to build a vision of Otter Lake that is actively protected by those of us who enjoy it.

RH: What does it mean to 'do better'?

Mario: There is significant pressure right now for more development...development that might undermine the carrying capacity of the Lake. If this happens, there might well be more frequent blue-green algae blooms; there might well be more polluted water; there might well be more crowding on the Lake, which is already over its carrying capacity.

As Mario said these words, I thought about his Grandmother's vision: a place where families enjoyed the natural ecosystem. We have celebrated this enjoyment for over 100 years.

Seguin's motto is "**The Natural Place to Be**".

It is our great privilege to be stewards of Otter Lake...to care for it, to enjoy it...to pass it on to future generations.

What story is your family writing about your celebration of Otter Lake?

We welcome stories from lovers of Otter Lake, whether you're 6 or 60. Please contact Richard Hood (richardhood3@gmail.com) for details.

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Seminar - Keeping the Cottage In the Family

- Otter Lake Room at the Foley Community Hall (60 Rankin Lake Rd, Foley, ON, P2A 0B2)
- Saturday, June 24
- Doors open at 10:00 AM
- 10:00-10:30 registration and refreshments
- 10:30 – 11:30 – Greg and Ryan will go through the “Keeping the Cottage in the Family” presentation
- 11:30-12:30 – discussion and questions

Greg Bruns, RBC Dominion Securities, and his co-host Ryan Cons, a lawyer with Sondhi Defence, will share some thoughts and strategies to manage a smooth transition of cottage ownership between generations within a family. They will touch on practical matters like usage agreements, and financial strategies to fund the tax on any capital gain.

Please join Greg and Ryan for some light refreshments, a short presentation and then a panel discussion. You are encouraged to bring your family. They look forward to getting to know each of you!

If you are interested, please email greg.bruns@rbc.com to reserve your spot. If space permits, you may be able to register at the door.

Fun Events Coming Up!

[Sport Recreation and Leisure Fair - Bobby Orr Community Centre on April 20th from 5 to 7 pm](#)

[Rosseau Lake College annual Hekkla Run - April 21st at 1pm](#)

[Celebrate Earth Day - Humphrey Nature Trails on Sat. April 22nd at 1 pm](#)

[Seguin Valley Golf Course - reopening April 28th](#)

[Turtle Tally - Rose Point Trail with the PS Nature Club Apr. 29. 1 pm](#)

[Morning, Dinner and Sunset Cruises of Georgian Bay aboard the MV Chippewa III](#)

[Georgian Bay Craft Beer Festival - Trestle Brewing Co. on May 12th and 13th](#)

[Natalie McMaster and Donnell Leahy - Stockey Centre May 14th at 2 pm](#)

[Going a Little Batty in Georgian Bay - Parry Sound Nature Club on May 17th at 7 pm](#)

[Webinar - Dispelling EV Myths - Georgian Bay Biosphere on June 14th at 7 pm](#)

[Rosseau Farmers Market kicks off on Fri. June 30th](#)

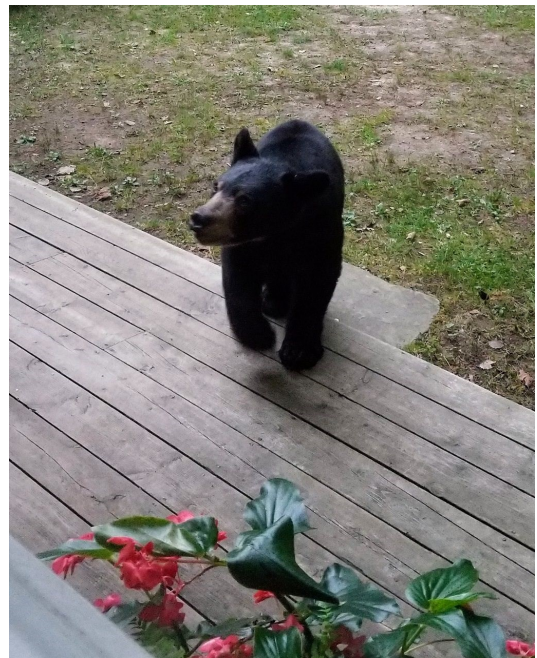
Upcoming OLRA Survey In May

By: Gerry Doyle

Your OLRA Board would like to hear your opinions and thoughts on how we can best tailor activities in the upcoming years to enhance your enjoyment of Otter Lake.

In May we will be asking you and your family to complete an online survey so that we can gather your thoughts and ideas on how to best serve your needs and wishes. The survey is an opportunity for you to share your ideas and provide feedback on past and proposed upcoming events. We would like you to share your vision of “life on Otter Lake” by completing the survey when it arrives in your inbox.

Thank you in advance for your participation and continued support. We look forward to hearing from you and your family.



2022 3rd Place Winner - Wildlife Category
By: Sybil Brynzan

Join and/or Support the Otter Lake Team

By: Kerry Mueller

One never knows when we'll need the West Parry Sound Health Centre (WPSHC) but we can help it to be ready for us. A fun and healthy way to give your support is in the **Your Health Your Way** fundraising event.

Kim Karges, Little Otter Lake resident and the Chair of the [WPSHC Foundation Board](#) says to join the Otter Lake Team and/or to donate in support of us, just go to www.LoveOurHospital.com. In May participants will log their kms as they walk, run, cycle or paddle towards their goals. Easy! 4 fun community walks are also planned for May. Proceeds will go towards the Healthy Aging Rehab program. We hope you'll enjoy getting active this spring and supporting our local hospital too!