

## BLACKSTONE LAKE COTTAGERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER JUNE 2011

Fellow Blackstone Lake Cottagers:

By all reports Blackstone Lake experienced a gentle winter. Our cottage roof did not require shoveling and the winter sports were less than stellar. Spring was slow coming, but May 31<sup>st</sup> brought 30 degree weather and warmed the lake significantly. Summer is around the corner.

### Annual General Meeting

First, I want to highlight that the 2011 annual general meeting (AGM) will be held on **Sunday, July 31<sup>st</sup>** (the Civic Holiday weekend). **For the first time it will be held at Crane Lake Resort.** It was agreed at last year's AGM that we would try this new approach, because it is difficult for any of our members to host the meeting at their cottage. I should note that we also agreed to hold the meeting the week prior to the holiday weekend, but that was not possible; Crane Lake has a wedding booked the week previous. Our hosts at Crane Lake Resort will provide coffee and tea. Please consider bringing some treats on a "pot luck" basis. See the notice below for details.

This will be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our association!

### Block 17

You may recall that there was a proposal to rezone from natural state to residential a portion of land near the outlet from Oldfield Lake. This would allow a cottage to be built in a sensitive area adjacent to a high quality wetland and fish habitat. Our association and many members were concerned about this rezoning, because the cumulative impact of such decisions would compromise our lake's environmental integrity. The Township of Archipelago was concerned also.

The proponent commissioned environmental studies to support rezoning and was prepared to take the rezoning to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). OMB hearings are expensive for all parties and the outcome is uncertain. It is quite likely that the OMB would "buy into" the proponent's studies and support rezoning. Before this happened our township was able to negotiate a deal with the proponent that will see the township buy the land and ensure that the natural state zoning is retained. The lot will NOT be developed. There is much more to this story than I have provided above, but I am not familiar with all the details.

I believe this is a good resolution to the situation. We can be thankful we pay taxes in a township that is willing to stand up for environmental protection. Forty years ago our association was launched primarily to support establishment of a cottager-friendly municipality, at a time the province was preparing to make our "unorganized" township part of Parry Sound. This recent initiative is one of many demonstrating the Township of the Archipelago's responsiveness to cottager interests.

## **Ontario Camp for the Deaf**

Ian Mead's excellent Councilor's Corner update (see below) provides a good summary of where things are at with respect to racing issues at the Ontario Camp for the Deaf (OCD).

I will only add that the Georgian Bay Association (GBA) took an interest in this issue this winter. No specific action was taken, because quite frankly all viable avenues had been or were being pursued by others. GBA Update included an article regarding the issue (<http://www.georgianbay.ca/pdf/update/vol21no1.pdf>).

## **Health and Safety**

Our intention is to offer a first aid course sometime this summer, featuring cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as well as other first aid training. A date has not been set yet, so this will likely be AFTER our AGM.

You should be aware that two defibrillators are located on the lake, at Angler's Inn and the Kupka cottage. However, it is imperative that CPR be applied until a defibrillator can be put to use. I recommend that you seek to ensure that members of your family have CPR training.

At last year's AGM we discussed a service that – for a price – would connect the 911 emergency response service to our volunteer fire response network. At our AGM I expect that we will make a decision about whether or not to sign a contract for this service.

## **Conclusion**

Ian Mead's update provides lots of news, so I won't elaborate further on those matters. I will say that Ian is doing a great job representing our interests.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming AGM at Crane Lake Resort and turning over the presidency of the association to President Elect Jessie Metelka. I will continue on as our representative on the Georgian Bay Association Board of Directors. Jessie's assumption of the presidency will represent a generational "passing of the torch". Please consider supporting this youth movement by bringing/sending to the AGM any younger (teenagers and up) family members who cottage with you. I am sure that they too enjoy all Blackstone Lake has to offer and wish to preserve its identity.

Rob Moos  
President  
Blackstone Lake Cottagers Association

## **Councillor's Corner (June 2011)**

By Ian Mead

As you all know, I am in my second 4 year term of office. I have learned a lot over the past 4 years and now I really know what I don't know ☺.

At the December meeting of Council, after our swearing in ceremony, I was proud to be given the position of Vice Chair of the Environment Committee with the challenge of taking over as Chair during this term. Lot's more learning and challenges ahead and that's good.

Now, let me give you an update on some things that are going on in the Township that affect Blackstone Lake.

**Crane Lake Dam:** In the June 2010 newsletter I made a comment "The Province is strapped for cash and I personally can't see them spending money on anything unless it's absolutely necessary". Wrong again. It must have been this type of foresight that made me do so well with Nortel shares ☺. The dam was modified last fall – looks good! As a result of the modification, the owners of Discovery Camp can no longer gain access to their property on the north by walking over the dam. This spurred a sooner than anticipated request for rezoning to allow the camp to build a bridge over the river just below the dam. At the January 14<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, Council passed a zoning bylaw amendment that will allow the Camp to build a bridge no wider than 5.5 feet wide between the railings and it must be constructed on Township owned road shore allowance. The camp has agreed to allow visitors to walk over their bridge so that they may picnic etc. on the publically owned shore road allowance. The Camp is now required to enter into a lease agreement with the TOA for the use of the road shore allowance and that is currently in the works. From Council's perspective this is a win, win for all concerned.

**Proposed Rogers Communication Tower:** Just before Christmas, the word came out about a proposed Rogers communication tower to be erected on the Camp of the Deaf property across from the Hall sand pit before you get to Black Road. Obviously the residents in that area are deadly against it for obvious reasons. Most of you will have received an Email from me giving you an opportunity to comment to Rogers. The deadline for comment was up on January 15. In a phone conversation with the Roger's consultant, it appears that the tower has been approved with a projected construction in the fall.

**Ontario Camp of the Deaf (OCD):** As you will remember, the whole issue of Motocross racing at the OCD came to a head last summer. There are really 2 issues with the Motocross racing. One is the excessive noise that it produces that can be heard way over on Blackstone Lake. The other issue and a real concern of mine is the fact that in order to accommodate the racing 15 to 20 acres of the property have been virtually stripped of all vegetation. When it rains, the mud and sand get washed into the Blackstone River which feeds Third Lake and then Blackstone. Massive siltation has occurred over the years.

To address the noise issue, some residents of Third Lake have hired an Environmental Lawyer who has laid charges under the Environmental Protection Act against the OCD.

The charge is as a result of noise levels well above MOE standards when the races are on. This has been in front of the Court 3 times so far and the next Court date is in June 28 in Parry Sound and I plan on attending – stay tuned!

To address the environmental issues (siltation) the OCD was required to hire an Environmental Consultant (Azimuth Consulting) and the MNR and DFO were called in. As a result, numerous visits to the OCD were made by MNR, DFO and Azimuth and this resulted in a report that instructed the OCD to construct large storm water management ponds on the site. Apparently this has been done and now we need to wait to see if it works. Just so you know, our federal MP, Tony Clement is very interested to see how this turns out.

Stay tuned!

**Roads:** As you all know Blackstone/Crane Lake road and Healey Lake road underwent a massive overhaul last summer. Some of you wonder why we spent the money on roads that appeared pretty good. Let me tell you why:

As I'm sure you are all aware, to stave off a recession, the feds and the province came up with a plan whereby they would each fund 1/3 of an infrastructure project as long as the Municipality also chipped in a 1/3. Fortunately the TOA was well ahead of the curve insofar as we had created reserve funds many years ago. In 2009 all Municipalities were mandated to create reserves for the eventual rebuilding of all their assets. There were many Municipalities who couldn't participate fully in Stimulus plan simply because they couldn't come up with their 1/3. The TOA grabbed this opportunity and maximized its availability.

So how much did this cost you and me? For starters, taxes have not and will not be increased as a result of the road construction. As I mentioned earlier, we had the money sitting in reserve for road reconstruction. Now, obviously, this money that was in reserve came out of taxes in years past. So how much of our (Ward 5) taxes was spent?

The total cost to do Blackstone/Crane was \$3 million. The Feds paid \$1 million, the Province paid \$1 million and the TOA paid \$1 million. Road expense in the Township is "area rated" which means roads in the south are paid by taxes from the south and roads in the north are paid by taxes in the north. In the south Archipelago, we have 3 Wards, 4, 5 and 6. Ward 4 encompasses all the Georgian Bay shoreline and islands from the Moon River north to Parry Island and they contribute in excess of 75% of the taxes in the south. This leaves Wards 5 and 6 contributing in the neighbourhood of 25%. So of the \$1 million that the TOA paid to rebuild Blackstone/Crane, it cost you and me \$250,000 in taxes over the years.

I hope this gives you an appreciation that for every dollar that got spent on roads in the south last year, Ward 5 and 6 contributed a little over 8 cents – what a deal!

Obviously in the past we had been building reserves for the eventual reconstruction of the roads in the south, Healey Lake Road being the biggest. With the type of hard surface we had before, the resurfacing timeline was 5 to 7 years. With the new surface, the timeline is 15 to 20 years. This means that the reserve can be built over 15 to 20 years instead of 5 to 7 which will reduce the \$ required each year and that will save you me \$ going forward.

**Seguin Portion of Blackstone/Crane Lake Road:** Last summer, as the reconstruction of Blackstone/Crane Lake road was under way I received dozens of E-mails, phone calls and discussions about what was happening. A common thread in the communications centered on whether the Seguin portion of the road was going to be upgraded as well. It became evident that many/most of us were disappointed that the

Seguin portion was not going to be upgraded and many thought that the TOA/I should take an active roll in getting Seguin to hard surface the road.

As a result of your input, our Manager of Public Works got together with Seguin's **new** Public Works Manager and came to a proposed agreement whereby we/TOA would pay half of the cost to hard surface the road up to a maximum of \$100,000 – good deal!

The next step was for the Managers to present the proposal to their respective Councils and get approval. Glenn (our Public Works Manager) presented the proposal to Council just after we had gone through a budget meeting. In the budget meeting Council had decided to hold off on any more infrastructures spending in an effort to hold any tax increase to a minimum. We had spent plenty on roads and garbage equipment over the past 2 years. As you can imagine, Glenn's proposal fell on all but one deaf ear - mine. From my perspective I could understand the other Councilors' position but thought it was a shame to let this opportunity go by. In the end we came up with a solution that was acceptable to all: The \$100,000 will be paid out of general reserves and the users of the road (you and me) will pay it back on our taxes over 10 years at 3 percent interest. There are approximately 360 to 370 of us that use the road to access our properties on Blackstone, Crane, and Traves Lake. This will mean that we will have an additional line item of \$32.00/year on our tax bill for 10 years.

I'm sure you will agree that \$32.00/year is a small price to pay for:

- no more wash board
- no more loose gravel
- no more mud up to the axles during frost out
- no more choking dust as we make our way to our little piece of heaven.

**Seguin Council also approved the proposal. Please see Mayor Conn's very positive letter attached.**

**Work is under way. Seguin hopes to have it done by the end of June!**

**Horseshoe Lake Weir:** For many years now, Horseshoe Lake water level has been controlled by a pile of rocks in front of the culvert that drains Horseshoe on its way to First, Second, Third and Blackstone Lakes. This has been a big issue in the past because people on Horseshoe would take it upon themselves to add and remove rocks willy nilly and alter the level of the lake. Two or three years ago, it all came to a head and the MNR got involved. The MNR set a level that the rock weir had to be maintained at and after a 2 year period, if the level was satisfactory, a more permanent weir would be required. The Horseshoe Lake Association would be 100% responsible for the \$ to build the weir and would be responsible to maintain it.

Some of us were advised last fall that the permanent weir was required and as a result, I met with 2 representatives of Horseshoe Lake and a representative of the MNR. My main concern was how they were going to ensure that the right amount of water would always flow through the weir to keep the downstream ecosystem alive.

As a result of the meeting, the Horseshoe Lake Association has agreed to hire consultants to determine what the minimum flow of water should be and create plans for the weir to accomplish this. They are also required to come up with an operating plan for the weir. The plan will cover keeping debris away from the weir so that flow-through

is not inhibited and will cover how a six inch log will be raised in the fall to prepare for spring runoff just as the MNR does with our dam. They also agreed to create a committee and have a representative from downstream on the committee. If I can't find a volunteer for that, I will sit on the committee myself. I have a good candidate in mind. All in all, we were all pleased with the meeting and I am sure when it's all said and done we will notice no change downstream and that's good— stay tuned.

That's all for now. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at:

Phone           705-378-2089 (summer), 705-484-5235 (winter)

E-mail           [ianm@vianet.ca](mailto:ianm@vianet.ca)

Thanks

Ian Mead

**BLACKSTONE LAKE COTTAGERS ASSOCIATION  
2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Date: Sunday, July 31, 2011 (Civic Holiday Weekend)  
Location: Crane Lake Resort  
Time: Arrive and Mingle 9:30 to 10:00 AM  
Meeting from 10:00 to noon

Members and non-members are welcome

**Coffee and tea will be provided; please consider contributing some cookies or pastries!**

For information or directions call Rob Moos at 705/799-1830 (home) or 705/378-2037 (cottage)  
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**BLACKSTONE LAKE COTTAGERS ASSOCIATION  
2011 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**ANNUAL DUES ARE \$90.00.**

Dues include membership in the Georgian Bay Association

Please make your cheque payable to **Blackstone Lake Cottagers Association** and bring it to the Annual General Meeting, or mail it with this application to:

Barbara Metelka  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Blackstone Lake Cottagers Association  
RR 2, 13652 Fourth Line  
Acton, ON  
L7J 2L8

I am becoming a member for the first time (please check one): No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_

Please update your personal information where applicable:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Cottage Tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cottage Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Personal information will be used only for BLCA