



## 2014 BLACKSTONE LAKE COTTAGERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

By Jessie Metelka

With a late melt this season, spring has finally arrived. Aside from a number of displaced docks, the good water levels, few bugs, lots of green and bass actively spawning ...we are headed towards a great summer!

It is my hope that 2014 will be a summer of increased community involvement on Blackstone Lake. The Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve will be hosting an Environment Day this August, a Shoreline Workshop this July as well as running their Kids in the Biosphere Club throughout the summer. I will be the liaison between the BLCA and the GBBR for the Kids in the Biosphere Club so please see the description below or visit [www.gbbr.ca](http://www.gbbr.ca) if you would like to sign up for the KIB Club.

Did you notice we have a Facebook page? Please pass along our message to the youth on the lake and let them know that everyone is encouraged to share photos, videos, events and stories!

See you this summer!

Jessie Metelka  
President

## COUNCILLOR'S CORNER

(JUNE 2014)

By Ian Mead

### **BELL TOWER**

It's been a whole year now since Bell first announced they wanted to erect a 350 foot cell tower on Blackstone Crane Lake road. As a result of your input last spring, Council asked Bell to reconsider and come up with a solution that wouldn't negatively impact our vistas and night skies. As a result Bell came back in February with a proposal to erect a 250 foot tower. Using the default Industry Canada criteria for notification, they sent letters to those within 3 times the height of the proposed tower which resulted in 3 ratepayers. They also put a notice in the local Northstar newspaper. In order to get more involvement I e-mailed everyone on Crane and Blackstone that are on my E-mail list (over 300 of you) and asked that you send a message to Bell with your comments regarding the proposed tower. 83 cottages responded. 23 wanted the proposed tower and 60 did not. I followed up on this by sending an E-mail to the 60 who did not want the tower to ask them how they would vote if it was a tower with lights or nothing. 58 of the 60 said no tower, 1 said they would go with the tower and 1 said they were split on the issue so elected to abstain.

With these results it was/is clear to me that the majority do not want a tower that negatively impacts our vistas and night skies. As a result, staff, at the request of Council, have sent a letter once more to Bell to ask them to reconsider and erect "mono pine" towers in strategic locations to service the 2 lakes.

It is May 26<sup>th</sup> and we have **just** received an E-mail from Bell. They have come back to say that the proposed tower height will now be 50 meters (150 foot) and it will have no lights or markings. They feel that a tower of this height in the proposed location will allow them to place mono-pines in strategic locations in the area to give us proper reception. I am going out again to those of you who opposed the tower to get feedback - stay tuned!

### **MY NEW CHALLENGE**

Back in 2006, I joined the TOA Council. There were 2 main reasons that I chose to be on Council. One was to do whatever I could to help maintain water quality and the environment in general and the other was to do whatever I could to keep taxes low so that my grandchildren would not have to sell my/their cottage because they couldn't pay the taxes. At the start of my second term on Council in 2010 I was asked to be Vice Chair of the Environment Committee and hopefully I have had some influence putting together the relationship between the Township and the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve. As I mentioned in the winter newsletter, the TOA has an agreement with the GBBR and now they are watching our environmental store, so to say - quality people at a reasonable price!

In January of this year I was asked to be the Chair of Finance and I gladly accepted. Now I am realizing both the goals that I set back in 2006. As the Finance Chair I have some very competent and talented boots of my predecessors to fill. It will take me a while to become intimate with the numbers but I'll get there. I/we are fortunate that this Township has been very well managed fiscally since inception and that will make my new job a lot easier to succeed at.

## OPP

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who took the time to communicate your concern on the proposed changes to the OPP funding formula. The response from Crane and Blackstone was outstanding. Now that all things are up for grabs due to the election we really won't know where we are until after the election. Here's hoping we can change this nonsensical issue.

## FRIENDS OF BELVEDERE

The "Friends of Belvedere" is a group of hard working, dedicated individuals who constantly raise funds to contribute to Belvedere home for the aged in Parry Sound. One very successful campaign is the collecting of aluminum products which are then sold for the metal. In our neck of the woods, Rita Kunc (a long time member of the Friends of Belvedere) puts a container at the Crane/Blackstone Lake waste site and asks that people put their empty aluminum cans etc in it when they dispose of the rest of their waste. Please take the time to help out this cause by putting your aluminum waste in Rita's container.

### Are you on my E-mail List

If you currently are not on my E-mail list and would like to be, just send me an E-mail at [ianm@vianet.ca](mailto:ianm@vianet.ca) and ask me to add you.

Cheers

Ian

Address - 206 Crane Lake Water  
The Archipelago, ON  
P2A 0B7

Phone - 705-378-2089 - summer  
705-484-5235 - winter  
905-301-4583 - cell

### **Here Comes (and There Goes) The Sludge** By John Robson

Every cottage on Blackstone Lake has (or should have) a properly-constructed, properly functioning septic system to handle waste in a manner that will help maintain Blackstone Lake's water quality. Most cottagers take an interest in the environment, but even those that do not will almost certainly want to avoid contaminating their own waterfront. So, the desire to have an effective septic

system should be pretty well universal! (The only class of cottager likely to disagree with that statement would be one who rarely boats, never swims, and drinks only bottled water.)

A necessary step in maintaining an effective, properly functioning waste treatment system is to have the septic tank emptied every few years. The frequency recommended for this action depends upon the design and capacity of your system and the 'load' that it handles, which depends upon the number of weeks the cottage is used each year and the average number of occupants. The typical recommendation is to have the septic tank pumped out every three to five years. If in doubt regarding whether your system needs a pump-out, it is usually suggested that you have the system inspected by a specialist or simply proceed with the pump-out.

In recent years, cottagers on Blackstone Lake have benefited from the efforts of Dave McCamus, who coordinated arrangements to have Muskoka Septic Services offer pump-out service to water-access cottages on the lake. This year, that activity is being taken on by John Robson, a recently arrived cottager on the lake. (John is so enthusiastic about the task that he signed himself up as his first customer.)

Muskoka Septic Services (based in Mactier) will arrange a tank truck and barge to handle the operation. The company requires a minimum of three customers to make the operation economical. The expected cost per cottage is approximately \$900-950 plus taxes (the lower figure applicable to tanks smaller than 1,000 gallons). A final quotation will be provided once the company has been advised regarding the number of pump-outs and timing. If we are able to line-up more than five customers, the charge per cottage will be reduced by \$50 below what would otherwise apply. Payment can be made by Visa or MasterCard by telephone, or possibly by cheque.

The plan for the pump-out service is dependent upon arrangements being worked out between Anglers Inn and Muskoka Septic Services. Subject to their agreement, the activity would likely be conducted on a weekday in early June.

If you wish to participate in the 2014 pump-out, please contact John Robson as soon as possible at: [john.robson@rogers.com](mailto:john.robson@rogers.com)

*When considering your decision regarding participation, please keep in mind that, unlike retail, operations of this nature maintain a 'Final Sale / No Returns / No Exchange' policy. Thus, if your product is pumped, it's gone and cannot be returned under any circumstances. (It's probably better that way.)*

## **2014 EVENTS**

### **GBBR Environment Day - Trees, Water and Wildlife**

**August 9, 2014**

9am. Crane Lake Resort

RSVP [metelka.jessie@gmail.com](mailto:metelka.jessie@gmail.com)

Come to Crane Lake Resort on August 9<sup>th</sup> at 9 am to learn about the health of the forests and water in your community, and tips for living with wildlife. You'll also learn

about the wide variety of “citizen science” programs that play a key role in monitoring environmental conditions of eastern Georgian Bay.

Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve is partnering with the Township of the Archipelago to offer this environmental workshop. It will feature a series of short presentations, opportunities to view displays from other Georgian Bay focused environmental organizations and ask your questions to the experts. You may also want to join the short interpretive hike.

Calling All Kids! - Concurrent to these activities for the adults, we'll also be offering activities for kids to get them exploring the ecology of the Bay and inland lakes! The kids' activities will also start at 9 am.

For more information, please contact: [info@gbbr.ca](mailto:info@gbbr.ca) or call 705-774-0978

### **GBBR Kids in the Biosphere Club**

#### **Runs all summer**

Call 705 203 0489 or email [metelka.jessie@gmail.com](mailto:metelka.jessie@gmail.com)

The purpose of the Kids in the Biosphere Club is to give kids some knowledge about the ecology at their cottage, a sense of connection with the area, and a sense of wonder for the natural environment around them. Kids receive a package containing various ecology and sustainability related activities for them to complete on their own time throughout the summer. According to a points system, kids will be eligible for prizes at the end of the season.

### **Shoreline Workshops**

#### **July 19, 2014**

1:30pm. Call 705 203 0489 or email [metelka.jessie@gmail.com](mailto:metelka.jessie@gmail.com) for directions

Our shoreline stewardship workshop requires a waterfront property owner to host the event, and invite their friends and neighbours for a 2 hour workshop. A group size of around 10-12 participants works best. We use the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Guide (link provided below) to facilitate the workshop. The Guide leads the participants through an environmental review of the host property, by asking the participants to assess the current environmental practices. Participants are encouraged to reflect on their property and to review their practices after the workshop. The Guide is divided up into different chapters, such as Before and During Construction, Living with Wildlife, Septic, Landscaping, etc. (visit the website below to download the entire Guide or individual chapters).

Life on the Bay - A Stewardship Guide for Eastern Georgian Bay, available here: <http://www.gbbr.ca/our-environment/life-on-the-bay-guide/>

### **GLBT screening of Edward Burtynsky & Jennifer Baichwal's Watermark Film**

#### **Thursday, July 24, 2014**

7 pm. Honey Harbour Catholic Church.

\$12 suggested donation.

*Watermark* is a feature documentary film that brings together diverse stories from around the globe about our relationship with water: how we are drawn to it, what we learn from it, how we use it and the consequences of that use. We see massive floating abalone farms off China's Fujian coast and the construction site of the largest arch dam in the world, the Xiluodu, six times the size of the Hoover. We visit the barren desert delta where the mighty Colorado River no longer reaches the ocean, the water-intensive leather tanneries of Dhaka and fly over our unique archipelago, Georgian Bay.

**GBLT's "Geology of Georgian Bay: 2 billion years of change" Rock Walk Series**  
hosted by GBLT rock star, Nick Eyles.

Bring your walking shoes, a picnic lunch and come spend the afternoon learning about the unique geology of Georgian Bay. Arrive early (11 AM) to enjoy your picnic lunch.

**Thursday, July 31; 1 PM; The Pancakes, Carling Township**

\*We will meet by the public docks on the Pancakes at 11:00 am. Please boat pool if possible.

**Thursday, August 7; 1 PM; Painted Rocks, Bayfield**

\*If you wish to convoy as a boat flotilla with us to the Painted Rocks, meet with your boats at the Bayfield Boat Club at 11:00 am. Contact info for Bayfield Boat Club: Tel: 1-877-244-1110.

Nick Eyles is Professor of Geology at the University of Toronto. He has authored more than 150 publications on environmental geology and is well known for his work with the CBC as a host of *Geologic Journeys - World* a five part "Nature of Things" series with David Suzuki. Nick was recently recognized by the Royal Society of Canada and awarded the prestigious McNeil Medal for his outstanding promotion and communication of science to students and the public across Canada.

**GBLT's Kids Conservation Quest Program**

**Thursday, August 7, 2014**

10:30 am to 2:00 pm on the Lizard, Cognashene

Please bring a bagged lunch and arrive promptly at 10:30 am.

A free program for kids ages 8 to 11 where they will learn about the natural environment of Georgian Bay and have fun! Kids will be teamed up and cycled through stations where they will be taught basics about conservation, species at risk and the flora and fauna local to Georgian Bay.

Honey Harbour, the Ojibway Club and the Sans Souci and Copperhead Association (SSCA) will also be running sessions at their respective camps; please stay tuned to their newsletters and websites.

More details will be available at [www.gbtl.org](http://www.gbtl.org).

## **Blackstone Lake Water Quality Testing 2013**

Two tests of water quality are sponsored by the Township of the Archipelago. One test measures bacterial concentration (total coliform and *E. Coli*) in water samples taken at five sites throughout the season. The second test measures water clarity using a Secchi disk, done at one site (main channel) throughout the season. Higher water clarity (greater disk depth) is correlated with lesser "enrichment" (phosphate load) of the lake, which reduces the probability and extent of algae growth.

Total coliform (TC) concentration averaged across sites and dates was  $648 \pm 955$  MPN in 2013. For perspective, the averages for 2011 and 2012 were  $448 \pm 495$  and  $801 \pm 930$  MPN, respectively. The  $\pm$  refers to the standard deviation (SD) of the average (mean) values. The standard deviations are quite large relative to average values, indicating both a large variation in measurements taken across sites and dates, and that yearly differences in mean values would not be considered "statistically significant". The seasonal average TC has exceeded the township objective (maximum of 100) for several years. In contrast the province, in recognition of large seasonal and regional variations in TC with no clear link to human influence, no longer sets a TC limit related to suitability for recreational water use. Given this and the very low EC concentrations in Blackstone (see below), the township is not concerned about the relatively high TC in Blackstone.

*E. Coli* (EC) concentration averaged across sites and dates was  $2.7 \pm 4.6$  MPN. For perspective, the values for 2011 and 2012 were  $3.1 \pm 5.7$  and  $3.7 \pm 4.0$  MPN, respectively. Similar to the TC results, the large EC standard deviations indicate little real change in average values over the years. The township objective for EC is a maximum of 10 MPN, whereas the province considers lake water with sustained concentrations above 100 MPN unsuitable for recreational use. Blackstone's EC results remained below the township objective throughout the season. The good EC results over the past several years indicate that Blackstone has not been adversely affected by human activity (e.g., faulty human waste disposal).

As in previous years, the 2013 Secchi disk depth readings increased throughout the season, from 3.7 m on May 18 to 5.8 m September 14. The season average was  $4.8 \pm 0.7$  m. For perspective, the averages for 2011 and 2012 were  $5.2 \pm 0.5$  and  $5.2 \pm 0.7$  m, respectively. The variability (standard deviations) of the yearly measurements indicate stable water clarity over a period of years. There is no township or provincial standard for Secchi disk depths. Blackstone's sustained average of ~5 m over a period of years indicates very good water clarity. Over time water clarity could decline due to increased run-off into the lake as a result of factors such as removing shoreline of vegetation, erosion or agitation of shorelines, and faulty septic systems. Increased run-off could increase phosphorus loading into the lake, which would reduce water clarity by promoting algae growth.

In addition to the bacterial and Secchi disk measurements sponsored by the Township of the Archipelago, our association also participates in the provincial Lake Partner Program. The program consists of a one-time test (in May) of water clarity (Secchi disk) and phosphorus concentration (water sample). Blackstone's 2013 phosphorus concentration was  $6.6 \mu\text{g/L}$ , a result similar to previous years and indicative of excellent water quality.

## **REPORT FROM THE GEORGIAN BAY LAND TRUST 2014**

### **Carolyn Rymell**

The lens of preservation is the driving force for the GBLT. This philosophy is shared by all the individuals who have and are helping to protect its 34 properties - 39 including easements.

2013 saw the first ever cross-border Ecological Gift (as qualified by the Canada Ecological Gift Program) involving both Canadian and American land donors in which the land has been gifted jointly to Canadian and American land trusts.

The preservation theme demands that we full understand what we are protecting. To this end Patricia Chow Fraser, biologist with McMaster University was invited to Oldfield Lake Reserve (Rat Lake) to take a closer look at the lake. This lake is south of Blackstone. This was done as part of a larger study on Blackstone Lake that was undertaken throughout the summer and fall of 2013. Oldfield Lake is one of the feeder lakes to Blackstone and is therefore key to Blackstone's health.

According to Pat's report the findings of elevated levels of total phosphorus and total ammonia nitrogen suggests that the lake is symptomatic of a lake that is either meromictic or one that is becoming so, because it is no longer able to completely mix during the spring and fall turnover. The vegetation surrounding the lake appears to be encroaching and may potentially alter the ecosystem. This ecosystem is naturally evolving and is not human induced.

Oldfield Lake Reserve runs across the south end of Blackstone from the river east and then runs north. Part of the east side snow mobile trail runs through the property. A forester from Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc. donated time to inspect the woods close to the trail and the trail itself during the first week of May. The condition of the snowmobile trail on the east side was reported as nasty. Mud holes exist in places, making the trail very rough, and are suspected to be the result of ATV or other motorized vehicle activity. In some places sediment is running off the trail from these mud holes westward towards Oldfield Lake. These condition are man-made and could impact the ecosystem long term. Signs stating no motorized vehicles other than snowmobiles were removed.

On the south side of Oldfield Lake signs have also been removed and a couple dozen empty beer bottles found.

As it is in the Interest of everyone who has property on Blackstone Lake to keep this property pristine, I am soliciting the help of all Blackstone cottagers. How can we best deter ATV traffic and uncaring behaviour on this conservation land? Signs and a gate are clearly not working. Any suggestions that you may have are welcome as are the efforts of anyone who would like to join in the stewardship efforts for this property.

Blackstone Lake Cottagers Association has also had a lens for preservation and I am convinced that individuals will want to help maintain this ecosystem.

### **Georgian Bay Association Update by Rob Moos**

As members of the Blackstone Lake Cottagers' Association we are also members of the Georgian Bay Association (GBA). I am our association's representative on the GBA Board of Directors.

Once again Lake Huron water levels received a good deal of GBA's attention. Thanks to a long snowy winter, and extensive ice cover slowing evaporation, water levels are up more than 30 cm from last year. This good news is an anomaly. In the long term water levels will likely continue to trend lower. GBA will continue to work for government action to slow outflow from Lake Huron, as a means to compensate for past man-made changes that increased outflow. This will be a long, hard political battle involving stakeholders in Canada and the United States,

If you read the GBA UPDATE newsletter you will have seen an article about species at risk. Many of these species may be found in or around Blackstone Lake. One that is definitely found is the Eastern Hognose snake. This harmless snake can readily be misconstrued as being poisonous. In fact they try to look dangerous when threatened. It is not. Please keep them safe if you see any.

Other subjects GBA is working on include cage aquaculture, invasive species, boating safety, fishery protection (GBA is represented on the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council), federal and provincial government policies and legislation, and municipal governance.

Some provincial legislation supported by the GBA - the Invasive Species Act and the Great Lakes Protection Act - has been put on hold due to the provincial election. We are urging all parties to support these acts once a new government is in place.

