

On Friday AM I attended the Lake Networking Group Meeting at Burgess Hall on behalf of BLPOA.

It was fun and interesting. I see now why Anita likes it.

There will eventually be a full report for the meeting, complete with attachments of any presentations.

That said, here are a few things that caught my attention that might be of value to BLPOA.

- (1) The Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) has been doing some water temperature monitoring, for input into other studies. They put out temperature loggers attached to a weight and with a buoy as a marker and then collect the data when they pull the monitor out, likely at season end (actual temperature readings are taken every 15 minutes). Some associations expressed an interest, maybe even funding logger acquisition, but I am not sure what interest we would have in such data and, in particular, what we could do about water temperature. That said, should RVCA ever be interested, for some research purposes, it may come up (like our aquatic plant survey).
- (2) Many lake associations in the MVCA watershed do their own lake water quality issues, and some issues have arisen regarding how testing takes place, including some concerns about lab consistency. It turns out that how and what you test depends on what you want to know. We are fortunate in having our long history of the RVCA doing the testing, hopefully consistently.
- (3) MVCA is going to integrate its various watershed and water quality reports to make them more integrated and more meaningful to people, a project that will take 2 years.
- (4) MVCA is planning a Spring 2017 field trip (2 hours to a half day) to see various examples of septic systems that have been set up at the Baxter Conservation area. Erik Kohlsmith would be involved in this. While I would have thought that septic systems all look pretty much alike, when seen from the grass side, those who have seen what they have done say it is very interesting.
- (5) RVCA talked about its shoreline planting, and are still available to do Fall surveys and plans for Spring plantings. RVCA does 'full service' shoreline planting (site inspection, selection, delivery and planting. MVCA just makes plants available.

- (6) The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests has 25 'partnership specialists' across Ontario. Ours is Elizabeth Holmes, who operates out of Kemptville. If unsure where to go for information or advice or even decisions, she would be happy to try and steer people the right way.
- (7) Many associations do have buoy programs, with those on the navigable Rideau needing to have Transport Canada approval for what they do. Associations were advised that if you do buoys do have insurance and to be careful about getting into the buoy business, as getting out is harder (more controversial?) than getting in.
- (8) New for me was that we have a Federation of Ontario Cottager's Associations (FOCA). They were represented at Lake Networking by Terry Kennedy and seem to be a good source of expertise. Their web site is here: <https://foca.on.ca/> They have sponsored some workshops on cottage succession planning issues and are quite aware of tensions regarding townships and the OMB.
- (9) I updated our contact information for BLPOA, used as well by the Leeds, Lanark and Grenville Health Unit for contacts in case of health issues, such as blue-green algae.
- (10) Some associations are quite strict about voting, using cards and verifying membership to ensure there is one vote per member. That said, some lakes allow multiple memberships (i.e. spouses), for multiple votes.
- (11) There is a wide range of lake association membership fees, with some as low as \$10 (a head, though, not per property) to some as high as \$75. Ours are in the middle and similar to the greatest number of associations.
- (12) One association remarked at how surprised a rep was to boat around their lake and see, on what should be a busy weekend, that only a minority of cottages actually seemed to show signs of being occupied at that time. One view was that families with kids now have some many organized activities that even getting to the cottage is hard to swing. Without a doubt as well there is likely a generational turnover taking place, as those who are getting on in age come up less but don't sell.
- (13) One association has started using PayPal as an option for membership fees. PayPal gets 80 cents a transaction, with (if I recall) a small flat fee for an account. This was though, by the association that did it, to make it easier for those who missed an AGM or a canvassing to pay, rather than going the route of finding a cheque, and envelope and a stamp, to pay (like the pioneers!).
- (14) The next lake networking meeting will be next Spring, targeting late April.

Each association also presented a brief update on activities. I just covered a couple of issues: our adventures with commenting on an ex post zoning application and the merits of bear sightings for Facebook activity. Lake Networking would like an electronic report. I need comments back soon as we go on holidays at the end of next week.

Black Lake Property Owners Association (BLPOA) Report on 2016 Activities for Lake Networking Group

Membership: Is largely stable, but likely represents about a fifth to a quarter of the lake properties. The membership level is high enough to cover costs, leaving our modest reserve intact. We did do a membership blitz before our AGM.

Buoys: We do have a program and the associated association insurance plan. That said, our buoy placement this Spring fell behind what was done previously as the person who had set out the most buoys was unable to. We will endeavour to do better next year.

Township Issues: Our most important issue in 2016 was when Tay Valley Township asked the BLPOA to comment on a rezoning application for a property where construction without zoning approval or a building permit was an violation of several of the original zoning restrictions on the property (including setbacks and lot coverage). The Board had an extensive debate about whether to respond and how. In the end, the Board decided that we should respond on behalf of the BLPOA because even if given time we have no truly effective means of gauging member opinions, other than the annual AGM. We also decided that our comment should be to that we supported the TVT Planner's recommendation that the rezoning application not be approved. The communication was then distributed to members via email and the web site. During that discussion we were of the unanimous view that we would never comment on a normal zoning application that goes through the normal process of seeking approval before starting a project. The issue then, as expected, came up at the subsequent AGM. In the end, the AGM attendees supported (a) that such a comment was something that the Board can make on behalf of the BLPOA and that (b) the position we had taken to support the TVT Planner was the right one.

Communications: Facebook is clearly the communications vehicle of choice, although the web site remains active and up-to-date. Many more members have joined the Black Lake Facebook group during 2016 and there are more and more communications through it, sometimes important news and sometimes just lovely pictures. Interest was stimulated this Fall by increased bear sightings near cottage lots, as a result of the drought forcing bears to go further afield in looking for food, including compost bins and bird feeders.

