



Water Sampling around Seeley's Bay

(By Peter Jarrett, Thomas Road area resident)

The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change in partnership with the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations has been operating the Lake Partners Program for over 16 years. In this program volunteers take water samples and measure clarity in over 500 of Ontario's lakes. Samples are then sent to MOE's Dorset Environmental Science Center to be tested primarily for their Phosphorous content but also more recently for their Calcium content. Why??

Phosphorous, more than anything else, controls the rate of weed and algae growth in our lakes; more phosphorous = more algae. So it is an indicator of the health of our lakes. Calcium is a vital element not only for our bones but for the structure of our fish and micro-organisms on which they feed. Environmental factors have been decreasing the Calcium content in many lakes to levels that may affect aquatic life. Full sets of the results for all of the lakes and more detailed explanations of the program can be found on the internet at either, www.foca.on.ca/lake-partner or www.desc.ca

So under the prompting of SBARA Board member Peggy Sweet McCumber, local volunteers joined this program to check on the state of our local waters. Mary Anne and Bruce Jackson sample in Cranberry Lake and Sheila Dunkinson currently samples in "The Bay" and at Haskins Point. Prior to his death, Jim McCartney and others sampled The Bay. I (Peter Jarrett) was already sampling in Whitefish Lake. So we have the state of the water leaving Whitefish Lake passing by Haskins Point and into Cranberry Lake and also in The Bay itself. So what is the story of the numbers?

Mary Anne and Bruce Jackson volunteer to take the water samples on Cranberry Lake as do Jan and Paul Holland.



PHOSPHOROUS

Normally 6 samplings are made per year one a month from May to October. Phosphorus concentrations vary throughout the summer often peaking in July or August. Scientists who study lakes divide them roughly into 3 categories with fancy names based on phosphorous content. Less than 10 micrograms per litre are Oligotrophic dilute unproductive lakes, no algal blooms and weed growth as you go through the range. Over 20 ug/L are Eutrophic and subject to nuisance algal blooms weed growth and the other dangers to the health of the lake. Whitefish Lake tends to vary between 10 to 15 ug/L over the course of the year. Cranberry Lake, south of Tiny Island, is slightly higher and usually varies between 12 and 18 ug/L except for one spell from August to October 2016 when it shot up between 30 and 40. Haskin's Point, which is found under Cranberry Lake in the results tables, varies from 12 to 23 ug/L.

This brings us to Seeley's Bay Deep Spot which is also found under Cranberry Lake. Here there is much greater variation in the results which vary between around 35 to 60 ug/L with outliers both above and below that range. There is little to be said except that they are very high with cause for concern. The reasons for these values could be storm water runoff, deficient septic systems and agricultural runoff. The situation is exacerbated by the narrow entrance to the bay allowing very limited outflow or flushing action from the bay. This limited flushing action presumably helps maintain the values off Haskin's Point.

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Upcoming Events

Aug 4 - 9am to sold out
Bake Sale on Carole's porch
across from Freshmart

Aug 8 -2pm
Ice Cream Social Lyndhurst

Aug 12 - 4pm to 7pm
Pork BBQ and Pies, Olivet
Church on County Rd 32

Aug 18 - All Day
Renegade Bass Tournament

Aug 18 - 8:30am to 2pm
Hazardous Waste Dropoff
2714 Outlet Road (Cty Rd 3)

Aug 22 - 6:30pm Public
Meeting Re: TLTI Official
Plan - Lansdowne Council
Chambers

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CALCIUM

Measurements from all the sampling sites covered here fall mainly in the range from 20 to 30 mg/ L. Critically low values for lake life are those below 1.5 mg/L, so our waters are in good shape there. Most of the lakes in the Rideau Canal system have been sampled in this program. One aspect of interest in comparing values for the lakes from Cranberry up to Upper Rideau Lake is that there is no cumulative effect as you work down the waterway. In essence each lake is acting independently and looking after itself. We are not seeing the phosphorous levels climb as we move down the system. Once more I would stress that I have taken liberties in presenting the above ranges and that the full results are available through the given web sites. Additionally greater explanation of the significance of the numbers can also be found there.

One Way to Help Improve Water Quality – Septic Rehabilitation

The Township of Leeds and Thousand Islands (TLTI) has been operating a mandatory septic re-inspection program for about 10 years. This year the program is focused on homes in the Seeley's Bay area - those that have not had a proper inspection done in the past decade. Our village is considered vulnerable because of the proximity to water, the density of housing, and potential for older failing systems. Councillor Liz Huff shared with us her experience with the program.

"Although there were no obvious signs of system failure at our house (such as greener grass over the septic field, or smells), on closer examination we learned that our system was likely almost 50 years old and it really wasn't doing its job." The first photo shows that many of the pipes were completely clogged with roots. The second photo shows a stage in the installation of the new system. Huff explained "Because our lot is undersized by today's standards, and because of the contemporary set back requirements from water courses and the well head, we are having an Eljen 'tertiary' system installed. Although the cost of the upgrade is challenging, Jamie and I feel good knowing that the system achieves greater environmental protection, which may help contribute to less algae in the Bay."

Consideration of offering a septic inspection loan program is part of the Strategic Plan for TLTI. The Municipality of Kawartha Lakes has such a program in place for several years in order to offer homeowners with a financing option for the costs to repair or replace their systems. <https://www.kawarthawaterfront.com/kawartha/news-blog/a-new-loan-program-will-help-you-fix-the-ailing-septic-system-at-your-cottage-in-the-kawarthas>

Volunteers vs. Vandals

Sadly vandals did some damage in the Bay recently, both at Haskin's Point and to a village entrance sign. Thankfully we have talented and caring people in the area to step up to help. Mary and Anna Peppard quickly put their skills to work to cover up the graffiti, and put our positive welcome message back in place. For those who may not know, Mary is a highly regarded artist and a founding member of the Organization of Kingston Women Artists. Thank you Mary and Anna!

Upcoming Events

Aug 24 - keep your eyes peeled on SBARA's FB page -tentative special event-

Aug 27 - 31
Archeological Dig at Furnace Falls National Historic Site

Sept 13 - Turkey Fair
Lyndhurst

Sept 22 - 4:30pm till sold out
Turkey Supper at
Community Hall

Sept 23 - 10am Truffle
Shuffle 5km fun run/walk
for ROLL AID Food Bank

Sept 28 - Festival of Small
Halls Ken Whiteley & The
Levy Sisters Play Seeley's
Bay Community Hall with
Kim Pollard



WANT TO KNOW MORE OR GET INVOLVED?

If you are interested in volunteering, have something to donate or would like more information about the Seeley's Bay Area Residents' Association, please contact sbara@seeleysbay.com.

This e-newsletter is currently sent to over 300 households every few months. To sign up, please email us at: newsletter@seeleysbay.com.

Please print a copy of our newsletter and post a copy on your public bulletin board and/or share copies with neighbours.



You can also join over a 1000 people and follow us on our Facebook page, [Support Seeley's Bay Ontario](#) – 'Like' us to get the latest area news. And there are lots more photos of our community in our Albums!

Read more at: www.visitseeleysbay.ca or www.seeleysbay.com