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RIPPLES

FLCA eNewsletter

Fall 2011



Perfect Day for a Parade

The 2011 Farlain Lake Annual Boat Parade was held on Saturday, July 30, 2011. The weather was ideal with not a cloud in the sky for the re-launch of this Farlain Lake tradition.

Participation for this first year back was even better than expected with over 15 official entries. The shoreline was lined with cottagers who came out to cheer on the participants. A social event was held afterwards for the parade participants.

Great prizes were awarded for the best decorated boat, most team spirit, best eco-themed boat and best "Farly" themed boat. Congratulations to the winners and to all participants. Many thanks to our prize sponsors Real Canadian Superstore, Kelsey's, Scully's Crab Shack, Boston Pizza, Balm Beach Go Karts & Minigolf and Foodland Penetang.

Thanks go out also to Bob Allan (Past President), Colleen Huck and Alicia Tuck for serving as Parade Judges. The Judges had a difficult decision with so many great entries including Mardi Gras, Flower Power and Christmas in July.

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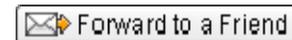
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Thanks also to the Boat Parade Committee of James Tuck, Tammy Turpin, Rob Walsh and Lisa Konnry for all their efforts.

For more information on the 2012 Boat Parade, please see the Association website www.farlainlake.ca or contact Tim Konnry, FLCA Director, at tkonnry@rogers.blackberry.net or 416-846-6361.

President's Message from Doug Kirk

Here we are in mid-November, an appropriate time to summarize the 2011 year at the lake and look forward to our priorities for the upcoming year. As your incoming President as of August 2011, I'm pleased to state that we experienced the best summer in recent recorded history at Farlain Lake. After a bit of a wet spring, we were treated to spectacular weekends almost without fail, topped off by an amazing Thanksgiving weekend in October. Even into November, there were many pleasant weekends without a hint of snow.

In 2011, your Association has been busy monitoring high priority issues facing our lake community. Our ongoing researching and monitoring of the septage disposal operation on the 17th Concession at the Southwest corner of the lake is our highest priority water quality concern. So far there is no evidence of detrimental effects to the lake. However, baseline data have been collected which are necessary to gauge future changes. Peter Andrews and Bill Sweeney have spearheaded the monitoring effort. Please see Peter Andrews septage update for more detail.

Your Association representatives have also been following developments in the search for a "Made for Tiny" solution to deal with septage, other than spreading it on land. This is the Township Class EA septage management planning process. Preliminary work has been done by Township of Tiny but no solution is clear at this time.

During the summer the Severn Sound Environmental group conducted a detailed water quality study of the lake's watershed. Their analyses should be available next spring and we'll communicate the results to you.

This past July, the FLCA held its first boat parade in several years to the delight of over 20 participants and a hugely enthusiastic group of cottagers greeting the imaginatively decorated boats as they cruised the lake. James Tuck did a great job organizing the committee that revived this lake tradition. Planning is already underway for next year.

Also this year, directors of FLCA (Bob Allan and James Tuck) made a presentation to the Township Council regarding traffic issues on Andrew Drive between Military Rd. and the 17th Concession. Township Council concluded at their October 11th meeting that a traffic problem exists on Farlain Lake and asked Township staff to further study the problem. We await the Township's conclusion on this issue.

Directors Elizabeth Di Chiara and James Tuck have made significant positive changes in our website and communications procedures to help the FLCA stay more informative and accessible to our members.

In September, your Association sent a reasonably comprehensive survey to our membership. The response rate was gratifyingly high and the results will be used to guide the planning and prioritization of the activities going forward. Thanks to all that responded. A more complete summary of the results is included in a separate article but a few highlights of this survey are as follows:

Most Important Values

1. Clean water
2. Swimming
3. Protection of natural environment
4. Public safety
5. Scenery/views

Most Important Issues to be addressed by FLCA:

1. Water quality
2. Septage management
3. Environmental issues
4. Land development
5. Water safety

Our 2012 priorities will be guided by your responses.

In closing, I want to thank all our Board members who volunteer their time (substantial amounts of time by many!) to move the FLCA's agenda forward with direct action. Your Board is what makes the FLCA work as an effective voice for our lake community. Also thanks is due to our members who are interested in and support what we do, particularly those members who contribute expertise and effort to FLCA initiatives.

Enjoy the upcoming holiday season and best wishes for 2012. Your Association is looking forward to pursuing its agenda in the new year for the benefit of the Farlain Lake Community in general.

Best Wishes
Douglas E. Kirk
President



Septage Issue Report ***By Pete Andrews***

Part of the Farlain Lake Community Association's mandate is to 1) protect, preserve, and enhance Farlain Lake and its watershed, and 2) speak as a strong voice to all levels of government.

Monitoring the Awenda (Concession 17 E) septage field involves visual assessments, information collection, water testing, and dialogue with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE).



Awenda Septage Field

The MOE Barrie District Office is one of the few Ministry administrative districts that require a

hydrogeologic study of a potential septage spreading field prior to approval. A hydrogeologic study provides an overview of the area's physical (i.e. soil types, percolation rate, etc) features, information on aquifers and their water-yielding capabilities, groundwater delineation, registered well information, and other related information.

A hydrogeologic study was commissioned by Regional Sanitation Disposal Ltd. as part of its septage disposal application process. The Association was able to obtain a copy of the study from Mr. Frank Duquette, owner of the Awenda site and the haulage company. With the assistance of FLCA members Dennis Jones and Bill Sweenie, we were able to assess the findings of the consultant that undertook the study. The Association submitted a letter to the MOE Central Regional Director outlining our concerns and requesting a meeting with MOE staff to discuss the findings of the study in greater detail.

On September 12, 2011, Dennis Jones, Bill Sweenie, and I met with the MOE district manager, area supervisor, and senior environmental officer in Barrie to discuss the hydrogeologic report. Our discussions dealt with the soils of the spreading site, private wells in the area, groundwater and the lake's surface water, monitoring efforts by both our Association and by MOE staff, risk assessment, and the terms of the agreement (Certificate of Approval) between MOE and Regional Sanitation Disposal Ltd.

The soil in the septage field is mainly sandy; the permeability of the soil is high. MOE informed the Association that liquid waste disappears into the soil within 20 to 25 seconds and that most of the liquid evaporates. The Ministry's position is that waste stays within the top 3 to 4 metres of where it is spread and degrades in that zone. MOE does not expect nutrients from the septage to migrate further to the nearest release of ground water or private wells.

While our discussions with MOE were enlightening, the Association is still concerned about the proximity of the septage field to a nearby area of land where groundwater emerges from the land's surface to create the headwaters of a stream. This stream merges with another nearby stream to create a larger stream that continuously flows into the lake.

Based on the hydrogeologic study findings, it is our understanding that a clay layer is situated approximately 15 metres below the surface of the septage field and the layer appears to slope in a northerly direction. Groundwater will follow the slope of the layer and emerge from the soil when the clay layer moves closer to the surface. One of the most important attributes of groundwater is its contribution

to surface water throughout the year. Our concern is that the septage field poses a potential threat to the stream closest to the spread site.

It is the position of the Ministry of the Environment that the Awenda septage field is a low risk to ground water, surface water, human health and the ecosystem. It is also MOE's contention that the risk of the septage field to the lake and private wells is the same risk level as existing septic systems in the lake community. The agreement (Certificate of Approval) between MOE and Regional Sanitation Disposal Ltd. expires December 1, 2012. If the haulage company applies for a new agreement, the Certificate of Approval would only be denied if major septage disposal infractions have occurred or if negative results from the on-site groundwater monitoring well were observed. A new Certificate of Approval would only be approved for a two-year period as the Township of Tiny is expected to have developed a strategy to centrally manage septage.

To monitor the potential short-term and long-term impacts of the septage field on groundwater and the lake's surface water, the Association is obtaining results from the analysis of the haulage company's onsite groundwater monitoring well. Data (i.e. nitrite, nitrate analysis) from downgrade private wells will also be monitored. An effort will also be undertaken to monitor water quality of the continuous flowing stream entering the lake.

We will continue to visually monitor the septage disposal activities, collect and analyze groundwater data, and discuss our concerns with the Ministry of the Environment until such time the disposal of septage in our watershed is discontinued.

Giant Floater - A Special Animal

By Peter Andrews

During an exploration of the lake's shoreline in 2009 I discovered freshwater mussel shells in a few areas around the lake. The shells were primarily clustered in undeveloped shoreline areas where vegetation and fallen trees were immersed in shallow water. Concerned that this freshwater mussel was an exotic (not native to the lake) or invasive species introduced to our watershed, I contacted the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Canadian Museum of Nature for identification and information. The species of freshwater mussel was identified as the giant floater (*Pyganodon grandis*) mussel. It is a native species in Ontario and is widespread across North America.



Exploring the lake's shoreline this past summer, I have determined that the giant floater mussel has become widespread around the lake. The mussel or its shells can be found in swimming areas, alongside docks, and in natural shoreline areas.

Many community residents are totally unaware of the presence of this unique mussel. The value of the mussel is subjective. Some people understand the important role the mussel plays in the ecology of the lake. Others consider it a nuisance and a hindrance to swimming.

The following information will provide you with some insights into this special animal.

Q: Why do you call it an animal?

A: Like a turtle, it has a shell and a soft body inside.

Q: Why is it called a mussel and not a clam?

A: While both a mussel and a clam are both bivalve (two shells connected by a hinge) mollusks, freshwater mussels have parasitic young, but clams do not. Mussels make pearls, clams do not.

Q: Why is it referred to as a giant floater?

A: Some mussels can reach a length of 17cm (6 inches) as an adult. Some biologists speculate that the giant floater mussel generate gasses or trap air bubbles inside their shells and float from one location to another.

Q: How does it move?

A: The mussel opens its shell, sticks out its single large muscular foot and slowly pulls itself along, leaving a snakelike track.

Q: How and what does it eat?

A: The mussel will use its single foot to burrow or position itself in the soft bottom of the lake with only its siphons poking up into the water. The siphons take in water, oxygen, and microscopic plants and animals. Essentially, mussels filter the water as they feed.

Q: What eats mussels?

A: These animals provide food for fish, birds, and wildlife such as muskrats and raccoons.

Q: How long do they live:

A: Most giant floater mussels live 10 to 40 years. Much like counting the rings on a tree, you can estimate a mussel's age by counting the rings, or annuli, that form on its shell each winter when growth slows or stops.

Q: When was the giant floater mussel introduced to Farlain Lake?

A: This is difficult to ascertain. The mussel could have been introduced to the lake as early as a decade ago or it could have arrived on a host fish many years ago.

Q: What is its connection to fish?

A: Female and male mussels don't mate the way many animals do. When mature (4 - 15 years old) mussels begin the reproductive cycle the male flushes sperm into the water towards a female mussel. The female draws in sperm to fertilize her eggs.

Unless males and females are close to one another, the odds for fertilization are slim. After the fertilized eggs brood inside the shell, the female waits until she senses the presence of a fish before releasing thousands of tiny glochidia (larvae) into the water; this occurs during the autumn-winter months. When the microscopic (0.3mm) larvae touch a tissue of a host fish such as a largemouth

bass, yellow perch, black crappie, or a bluntnose minnow, the glochidia attach themselves onto the fish's scales, fins, or gills. The larvae live as a parasite for several months without harming the fish. A layer of skin grows over the hitchhiking parasite forming a cyst. When large enough (0.3mm), the cyst opens up allowing the juvenile mussel to drop off from its host fish, settle on the bottom of the lake, dig in, and begin growing into adult mussels during the summer months.

Much is left to chance during the reproduction cycle of the giant floater mussel. Without a host fish, the mussels would not be able to reproduce.

Q: Why is the mussel important to Farlain Lake?

A: In addition to providing food for fish and wildlife, the mussels also clean the water by filtering out particles they eat. As filter feeders, any chemicals, heavy metals, and other contaminants will be concentrated in the mussel's tissues.

Like the miner's canary warning system, the giant floater mussel is an indicator of the lake's health. An increase in the population of giant floater mussels can be attributed to the planktonic (microscopic animal and plant life) growth because of a change in the ecology of the lake, such as an increase in nutrient levels. A decline in the population can be a result of a loss and/or degradation of habitat, water quality degradation and/or pollution, or a decline of host fish.

Q: The mussel is becoming problematic for swimmers. How do I cope with the giant floater mussel?

A: CO-EXIST! It is not known if the current population level is part of a cycle. The giant floater mussel population may continue to increase. Or there may be a pronounced decline in the population in the near future.



To safeguard against injuries caused by the mussel shells opened by animals or birds, carefully remove the shell fragments from your swimming area by hand.

Tiny Township Septage Management Class Environmental Study

The Association has been attending the Township's Class EA public information centre meetings to 1) represent the interests/concerns of the Farlain Lake community and 2) to contribute to the process in order to expedite the closure of the septage field in our community.

The environmental assessment study is being undertaken by Tiny Township to 1) determine the most cost effective manner to manage

1. Clean water
2. Swimming
3. Protection of natural shoreline
4. Scenery/view
5. Public safety (land and water)
6. Tranquility/peace
7. Night skies (no light pollution)
8. Enjoyment of non-powered water sports
9. Wildlife viewing
10. Community spirit

The following issues that should be addressed were identified, again in order of importance:

- Water quality
- Septage management
- Environmental (e.g. invasive species)
- Land development
- Water safety
- Fisheries
- Public safety (e.g. road use, speeding)
- Wildlife habitat
- Property taxes
- ATV violations
- Hunting violations
- Noise (nighttime)
- Lake access
- Light pollution at night

We were encouraged to see that 66% of the respondents visited the FLCA web site at least from time to time and we have been working hard to update it. Newsletters will be coming to you more frequently and continue to include updates from the Board and educational information.

The Board was reassured to hear that 94% of those responding were satisfied or very satisfied with our efforts on behalf of the FLCA. A key weakness in conducting surveys is the failure to follow-up with member's input. We are committed to using the detailed results of the survey throughout our discussions and to guide our efforts on your behalf in addressing the needs of our members and the issues facing our community and the health of our lake. As examples, we are continuing to monitor the septage field activities. The septage article in this newsletter provides another update on the septage disposal issue and we continue to build a strong working relationship with the Ministry of the Environment. This relationship is important to the long term protection of the groundwater in our community and to the ultimate closure of the septage field.

We are also looking at the social needs of the community. Another boat parade is being planned for next summer - so be prepared to participate either in your boat or in the cheering section onshore! As a result of feedback in the survey, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will revert back to the Sunday of the August holiday weekend. So mark your calendars for the 2012 AGM on Sunday August 6!

Community residents are key stakeholders because they have a direct interest in the lake's health and the community's well being. Residents participated in the survey because they care. The input

that they provided in several ways and with a variety of opinions will help form the basis of the Lake to Sky lake management plan that is being developed by the Board. We will be presenting the state of the lake report along with its companion piece the draft Lake to Sky management plan for Farlain Lake at the next AGM. Your volunteers have been diligently working on these studies for the past few years.

Download the more detailed membership survey report from the [FLCA web site](#) and please don't hesitate to contact us with your thoughts, concerns, ideas and suggestions! And once again - thank you to all who took the time to complete our 2011 survey! A committed Board of Directors depends on community participation.



As we approach the end of the year and Christmas, the FLCA Board of Directors wish you and yours all the best for a very happy holiday season and the upcoming year at the

Lake.

Merry Christmas Everyone!

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