

KENNEBEC LAKE ASSOCIATION

Summer/Fall Newsletter August 2005

A Word from the President...

In the Spring Newsletter I mentioned eagerly awaiting the arrival of warm weather. Well that has certainly happened! This is the kind of summer cottagers dream about all winter long. Day after day of endless sunshine has meant many long hours enjoyment of the waters of Kennebec Lake for all of us.

With the extensive use of the Lake we should remind ourselves, our friends and our guests that we depend on one another to use this treasured resource wisely and responsibly. We hope that the *Guidelines for Responsible Living by Water* distributed in May has proven useful. For additional copies please call me at 335-3606. They may also be found on the counter at Halladay's General Store in Arden.

In the last newsletter we reported that a loon nesting platform had been anchored on the north side of 'Green Island' in the east end of the Lake; now a second one has been placed on the west side of the bay where the Lake empties into the Salmon River. While there have been no occupants this season we have been advised that this is to be expected and we can remain hopeful for activity next spring. They certainly look attractive to me and several people have commented that they would love to move in if they were loons!

A recent editorial in the Frontenac News described the changed nature of Lake Associations as they grow from social groups and activity sponsors into environmental stewards and property owner associations. Certainly our Association is evolving and moving into many activities that are new and exciting for us. We look forward to sharing these in the Newsletter and at the Annual General Meeting on Saturday August 27 at the Arden Recreation Park. Please try to join us for Business at 11:00 a.m. followed by lunch.

Terry Kennedy

KENNEBEC LAKE ASSOCIATION



SATURDAY AUGUST 27 2005
11:00 a.m.

Followed by

CORN ROAST

RECREATION PARK ARDEN

Corn roast/hot dogs and soft drinks
\$3.00 per person
\$8.00 per family

It is a good idea to bring your own folding chairs
In case of rain bring a large umbrella!

Kennebec Lake Association enters the Web World!

As of mid July, KLA has had a new web page on the internet. The goal of this page is to disseminate pertinent KLA information to the Kennebec Lake community.

To view the current page please visit <http://www.kennebeclake.ca>.

There is still a wealth of information to be added to the page from many sources. If you have information or photos to be considered for the web page, please contact Noreen Dertinger at (613) 821-0682 or e-mail webmaster@kennebeclake.ca.

Noreen Dertinger

Water In - Water Out

An Information Workshop on Wells and Septic Systems with experts from Quinte Conservation and the Ontario Ministry of Health

How Well is Your Well? - How Well is your Septic System? Come and learn how to tell

We all know that here in the country we are personally responsible for the **water in** and **waste water out** of our own environments. Learn how to safeguard the quality and functionality of both systems.

If you pump surface (lake or river) water, you certainly don't want output from poorly functioning septic systems draining into your source.

If you pump from a well, you don't want any contamination of your well or of recharge flows into the ground water.

*This timely workshop will help you manage the **water in** and the **water out** of your personal environment.*

Saturday 24 September 2005 9:30 am - 1:00 pm

Kennebec Recreation Centre Arden

A light lunch will be available

Sponsored by KLA and Quinte Conservation Authority

Money Talks and the Association is Listening

KLA and lake associations across Ontario are concerned about provincial policy, introduced recently, that resulted in ongoing dramatic increases in municipal taxes on waterfront properties. Changes include: Current Value Assessment (CVA) that was intended to be a "fairer way to value properties for tax-ation purposes"; extra downloaded responsibilities for an array of "soft" services (e.g. social programs, land ambulance); and maintenance of former provincial highways (e.g. Highway 38).

KLA's Tax Committee (Mike Wise, John Duchene, Keith Feasey) is addressing these issues. It has been lobbying our Mayor and Councillors and scrutinizing Township activities and budgets. The 6% reduction in the Township's share of 2005 taxes indicated that Council appreciates our problems. Because the provincial mandate governing municipal councils severely limits their ability to keep taxes down, it would be unrealistic to expect such decreases in future. As well, MPAC resumes CVA for 2006.

The province holds the key to any meaningful reduction in municipal taxes. KLA continues to seek ways to address this issue. We need YOU to let YOUR MPP know our problems.

Individual letters are more effective than either petitions or form letters - ***please write to your MPP today.***

Kennebec Lake - After the Rain.....

Kennebec Lake has a watershed of about 66,560 acres. The surface of the lake itself is about 1,216 acres. For every one inch of rain falling on our watershed, if it all flowed quickly into Kennebec Lake, the surface of the water would rise over 55 inches - over 4.5 feet.

It does not rise so quickly nor so high. The salvation is that our watershed is well vegetated and not much is covered by impermeable roofs, driveways and lawns. A lot of the rainfall soaks into the ground or is soaked up by the living and dead vegetation. In addition, the Kennebec Wetland Complex north of the lake, an area of many wetlands, acts as a water-storage mechanism for the landscape and the lake. These wetlands catch rainfall that is running off and hold the water like the cells of a giant sponge. Water retained by our lake's watershed is released slowly, often over several months, and that prevents any severely rapid flow into the lake.

But there are a lot of bare rock areas, and roads with graded ditches to hurry the runoff and a significant fraction of each rainfall does flow off the watershed and into our lake. For example, in late June 4 inches of rain fell on Kennebec Lake. A KLA member reported that the lake level rose 14 inches. Assume that the whole watershed received the same 4 inches of rain. If all that water ran off into the lake within a few hours, the lake surface would have risen 219 inches, not just 14. In fact, only 6.7% of the rain falling on the watershed ran quickly into the lake to raise the water level.

Some rise in lake level is inevitable following one of the increasingly common multi-inch storms - remember last September, April, June....?

Kennebec Lake holds a large volume of water but has a narrow outlet that restricts the outflow. It is much like a narrow-necked bottle. In that situation, no control structure would prevent rises in lake level. The water volume will rise and then flow out over a few days, governed by the level of the bedrock of the outflow channel.

Gray Merriam

KLA and Quinte Conservation

Kennebec Lake is part of the watershed of the Salmon River, which in turn comes under the Quinte Conservation Authority (QCA). Late in spring 2005 a partnership was established between KLA and the QCA. A pilot project will encompass a number of activities and promises mutual benefits. QCA will supply staff expertise and some monitoring equipment; KLA will provide volunteer help, the data collected and the personal expertise of some of its members.

The first meeting, arranged by KLA Member at Large John Duchene, explored possible cooperative ventures. The second, at the QCA headquarters in Belleville and the third, at the home of Gray and Aileen Merriam, detailed seven areas where we can usefully cooperate. Quinte has already supplied us with rain gauges and a lake level gauge; a workshop on wells and septic systems has been planned (see above); and training workshops to help us monitor our lake are in the works.

Look for more information at the KLA AGM on 27 August.

Judy Kennedy

High Water -- Low Water

In nature, water levels vary a lot and despite beaver-like dam building by Canadians past and present, high water and low water are still with us.

We expend much effort trying to avoid high water but beneficial effects of high water are seldom considered. Silt-fertilization is a really widespread benefit. One of the most effective ways to keep up the productivity of a marsh or a low meadow or a hardwood swamp is to let the water flood over it in spring, carrying its load of silt. As the high water subsides, the silt is deposited on the flooded area. The surfaces of the fine silt particles attract and hold nutrient ions. Over the growing season, plants are able to pull the nutrients off the silt particles and use them to grow.

Other benefits of periodic high water are easier to see (and hear!). Shoreline or riverine marshes flooded in spring are major frog factories. Chorus frogs, spring peepers, leopard frogs, pickerel frogs, tree frogs and toads all use these flooded areas for courtship, egg-laying and habitat for the hatchlings. Without the temporary highwater caused by spring runoff and by the overwinter dams of beaver, there would be many fewer amphibians.

Shallow waters filled with noisy frogs and toads attract connoisseurs of frog's legs (and other parts). Bitterns choose areas covered by high water for their nest sites and for the food around them. Great Blue Herons commute from their heronries of many nests, possibly a few kilometers distant, to marshes and meadows flooded by spring high water to get the food to raise their huge chicks. Local mink find good hunting here also.

Many plant species require temporary flooding followed by lower water and drier roots to get them through their life cycle. Constant flooding won't do because trees and shrubs, like Sweet Gale, Buttonbush, native High Bush Cranberry, Winterberry Holly, Red Maple and others have no apparatus to let their roots breathe and they literally die of suffocation if high water persists too long. (Look at areas permanently flooded by highway construction to see the effect.) But temporary high water gives them life.

Herbaceous plants such as sedges thrive if their area has high water in spring and stays moist for the growing season. Many riverine meadows that flood at high water provide just what they need. Sedges contain even higher amounts of protein than hay and so a sedge meadow is like a good crop field implanted in the bush; hungry grazers come to it from all around - right through until the snow.

High water, variable water levels and seasonal change are all natural processes with beneficial effects to our lake environment. A basic question is: why is a static lake level desired by some? What are the costs to natural processes that will result from a static lake level? Constant water levels clearly are not natural. Lake dwellers must compare the human amenity value of constant water levels against the damages constant levels would do to natural processes around the lake.

Some of our local watersheds, such as the Mississippi, have hardly any lakes that are not levelled by dams. Lakes without dams, such as Kennebec, are special and could be considered to have special value.

Gray Merriam

STILL Looking Into Your Septic Tank!

You remember that scintillating article about you and your septic tank? (*KLA Summer Newsletter, 2003*). Well, here is a quick update. The bottom line is the same - *you look after your septic tank and it will look after you*. There are some newer cleaning agents out now that are lower in phosphates and do not contain chemicals that will harm the hard-working bacteria in your tank and tile field. The number of dishwashers is increasing and dishwasher detergents are usually high in phosphates. Phosphates, of course, are the main cause of a lake "aging" more quickly in a process called eutrophication. Look for "low phosphate" and "safe for septic systems" in all your detergents, in particular those for dishwashers.

Some other new products are on the market. One is a *septic tank effluent filter* that screens out solids that may escape from your tank and gradually plug up your tile field. When a tile field is plugged, the only solution is to dig it up and replace it. Normally, in a well-functioning tank, solids should not be getting out the effluent pipe. *The key is a well-functioning tank.*

There have been many additive products for septic tanks over the years. These add enzymes to encourage anaerobic bacteria growth. In a regularly used and properly maintained system, these are probably not required. But for seasonal users and small households, they can help kick start and maintain tank action. There are some new "high-power" additives now that claim to stimulate the process to produce a "clean flowing" tank.

Your KLA Stewardship committee will be researching additives and filters and we will let you know what we find. Meanwhile keep up your annual inspections and be good to your tank. *It's good for your wallet and good for the Lake.*

Tony Downs

Your Lake! Your Executive? Only YOU can decide!!

We have been fortunate to have excellent volunteers representing KLA over the years. *To perpetuate this new faces on the Executive are needed.*

Your Executive should represent all people on the lake and in the watershed: seasonal and permanent, from east and west, north and south. If you or a neighbour are interested in serving on the Executive or as a Member at Large your nominating committee would like to hear from you. In particular, we need representation from the west end of the lake.

It is also important that KLA meet newcomers; in recent years it has been difficult to keep the mailing list up-to-date. Please alert a member of the Executive if you have new neighbours so they can be included.

Bill Van Vugt

NATURE NOTES -- LOON ANTICS

Comfort Behaviours



Swimming Calmly
Body fairly high on water's surface; white breast showing; head and neck upright, bill horizontal



Peering
Peering below water's surface to locate prey or watch submerged chicks



Foot Wobble
Appears awkward but associated with stretching and settling down



Wing Flap
Comfort movement or settling down behaviour; loon rises out of water and vigorously flaps wings then settles down again



Belly Preening
Self-maintenance to preserve health of feathers; loon rolls over on side or back to preen belly feathers; looks awkward but loon is not in distress



Sleeping
Sleeping is sleeping!

Disturbed Behaviours



Lying Low
When threatened, loon may try to become inconspicuous; expels air from between feathers, sinking low in water; lowers neck and head; hides bright white breast



Anxiety Upright
Associated with threat; loon stretches neck, head and bill up in alert position



Aggressive Upright
Defensive first behaviour/action to protect territory or chicks; loon rises high in water displaying white breast as defense signal



Penguin Dance
Spectacular and alarming; highly visual with distress call (usually a tremolo); shows intense anxiety; used when they think territory, nest or chicks threatened (other loons, humans, boats, canoes..)



Rushing
Associated with territorial defense; may be involved with courtship; "running", belly down, neck extended, along surface. Often intruding loon is chased from territory. In courtship, pair may rush side to side.

Please respect Kennebec Loons - Give them the space they need!

Aileen Merriam

Adapted from *Living with Loons - Loon Preservation Committee (New Hampshire)*

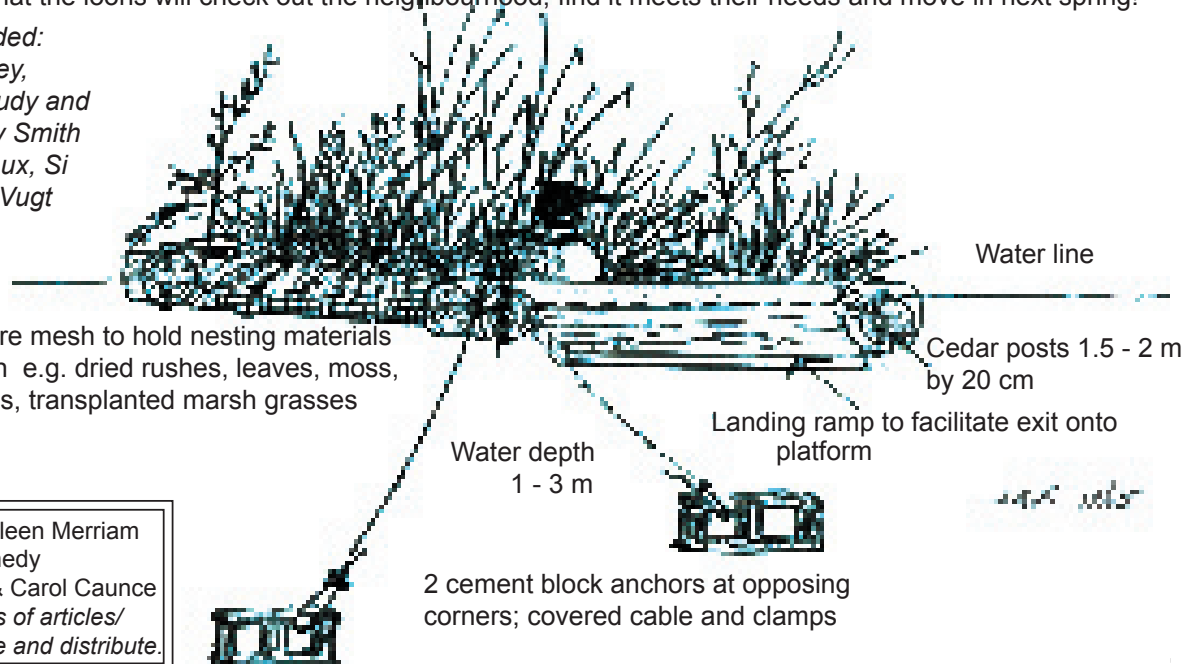
LOON ANTICS

A truly loony group of Kennebec volunteers spent time in spring 2005 constructing, vegetating and launching two loon nesting platforms. The first is sketched below. The second was built from part of an old dock.

It is hoped that the loons will check out the neighbourhood, find it meets their needs and move in next spring!

LOONANTICS included:

Keith and Kay Feasey, Rochelle Cahoon, Judy and Terry Kennedy, Gary Smith and Lorielle Chabeaux, Si Tucker and Bill Van Vugt



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