

# KENNEBEC LAKE ASSOCIATION

## SPRING NEWSLETTER

MAY 2010

### A Word from the President

With the mildest winter and one of the earliest spring arrivals ever, Kennebec Lake has awakened once again to the return of snowbirds and seasonal cottagers.

Over the winter, events concerning the Baker property development have progressed. The deal closed in mid-February, and McIntosh-Perry now has clear title. The company removed the five derelict buildings along Highway 7, which already represents a big step in improving the area. In the former chalet down in the valley, the company found a number of cross-country skis in excellent condition and has donated them to the children's camp, Circle Square Ranch.

The working committee established to prepare recommendations for the developer and the Township has grown since the last update to include Aileen Merriam, our former long-time lake steward; Judy Kennedy, KLA vice-president; and Jay Kruger, neighbour across from the property and former civil engineer. Laura Bisset, a lawyer who works with municipal issues, has also volunteered to provide us with advice.

The committee has been preparing material that seeks to identify "Best Practices" for this lakeside development. These are being shared in draft form with representatives from McIntosh-Perry, the Township planning department and Quinte Conservation. After their input, the results will be presented to the Township of Central Frontenac as recommendations for consideration in the development and approval of a site plan.

The longer-term intention will be to expand and extend these recommendations into a plan that could be applied to any lakeside development. It is hoped that the Township could use the "Best Practices" when considering future proposals for development on Kennebec Lake or potentially for any other lake within the Township. The plan is to present the material for approval at the KLA Annual General Meeting in August.

Happy Spring everyone, and welcome back!

— Terry Kennedy

**Don't miss the Kennebec Lake Association AGM  
on Saturday, August 14, 2010.**

### Building with Confidence

Are you planning to erect a new outbuilding, put on an addition or even a deck? Depending on its size and function, you might require a building permit. As well, certain types of structures close to the waterfront, such as boathouses, boat launches and stairways to the shoreline, may need additional permits or input from the Conservation Authority.

The municipal building permit and inspection process ensures that minimum health and safety standards are met under the Ontario Building Code. As well, requisites set out by the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw ensure property development respects environmental constraints and property setback and building density requirements.

If you decide to build without a permit — and even if a neighbour doesn't complain — it could catch up with you. There could well be a legal cloud over your property when you try to sell it later. So before you begin such a project, check with the Township of Central Frontenac (613-279-2935) or visit the website ([www.centralfrontenac.com](http://www.centralfrontenac.com)) for information. It could save you time, money and a lot of grief in the long run.

— Charlotte DuChene

### Mark your calendars

#### **Black Bear Talk**

**Saturday, June 19, 2 to 4 p.m.**

**Land O' Lakes Lions Hall, Northbrook**

Dr. Martyn Obbard, a bear research scientist with MNR, will provide the most up-to-date information about bear biology, movements, behaviour and bear-human conflict. Learn how to live with black bears in our lake-lands in a "Bear-Wise" presentation. This free event is sponsored by the Stewardship Councils of Frontenac, Hastings, and Lennox and Addington Counties. For more information, call Cam McCauley: 613-531-5714.

#### **Arden Artisans' Third Annual Garden Party and Open House**

**July 17, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Five artisans' studios in or near Arden will open their doors to the public and offer visitors the opportunity to explore different types of art media, meet the artists, linger in inspiring gardens and enjoy light refreshments. So come and immerse yourself in creative, exciting environments while having a taste of the hospitality of your numerous hosts. Don't forget to wear a fancy hat for a chance to win door prizes.

#### **Exploring the Night Sky**

**with Terence Dickinson**

**August 16, 7:30 p.m.**

**Kennebec Community Centre**

The editor of *SkyNews* magazine, author of 14 astronomy books and expert guide to the stars will show why the northern half of Frontenac County and most of L&A County are among the best places in southern Ontario to observe the starry night sky. Bright lighting is beginning to invade cottage country, but conditions are still relatively pristine. He will give photographic examples in the talk. Weather permitting, there'll be an opportunity to do some telescope viewing.

**Public Library Hours:** Seasonal resident? Show the librarian a copy of your property tax bill to confirm your resident status and receive your free card. Then borrow books from any branch and order books via the Internet ([www.kfpl.ca](http://www.kfpl.ca)) to be delivered to your preferred branch.

**Arden Branch, Community Centre  
5998 Arden Road, 613-335-2570**

Tuesday 2 to 6 p.m.  
Thursday 5 to 8 p.m.  
Friday\* 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
\*from July 2 to August 27  
Saturday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**Mountain Grove Branch, Old School  
1455 Mountain Grove Road**

Tuesday 2 to 5 p.m.  
Wednesday 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
Friday\* 2 to 5 p.m.  
\*except from July 2 to August 27  
Saturday 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

**What's Happening This Summer**

*Hiking, swimming, golfing, sightseeing — here are just a few ideas. Pick up activity guides (for Perth, North & Central Frontenac, Kingston) at tourist information booths for special events and attractions in the area.*

- Orchids at Purdon's Conservation Area
- Perth Wildlife Reserve Trail
- Local artisans
- Garlic Festival in Perth, August 14-15
- Parham Fair, August 27-29
- Verona Farmers' Market
- Swimming lessons at Big Clear Lake
- Kids' summer program on Thursdays and Fridays all summer at the Arden Community Centre

**Recreation Clubs and Activities**

**Kennebec Community Centre**

**Arden Seniors "Happy Gang"**

1st Tuesday each month, 11 a.m.  
Contact: Jack Patterson, 335-3469

**Glee Club**, Tuesday, 1 p.m.  
Contact: Helen Praskey, 335-2486

**Line Dancing**, Monday, 9:30 a.m.  
Contact: Rosemary Wadham, 335-2893

**Fit 'n Fun**, Tuesday, 9 a.m.  
Contact: Gloria Smiley, 335-2188

**Tai Chi**, Wednesday mornings  
Beginners at 9:15 a.m., veterans at 10.  
Contact: Helen Praskey, 335-2486

**T.O.P.S.**, Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.  
Contact: Helen Hoogsteen, 335-2700

**Sharbot Lake High School**

**Volleyball**, Monday, 7 p.m.  
Contact: Rick Greenstreet, 279-1962

**KLA Executive 2010**

*President:* Terry Kennedy 335-3606  
*Past President:* Bill Van Vugt 335-2082  
*1st Vice-President:* John DuChene 335-3567  
*2nd Vice-President:* Judy Kennedy 335-3606  
*Secretary:* Gloria Smiley 335-2188  
*Treasurer:* Mike Wise 335-2409  
*Lake Steward:* Bernie Dertinger 821-2101  
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**2011 Kennebec Lake Calendar:** Thanks to those who have submitted photos for the calendar. We are still accepting entries, particularly of winter scenes, until June 11. Email photos to [webmaster@kennebeclake.ca](mailto:webmaster@kennebeclake.ca).

**Classic Theatre Festival**

See Noel Coward's classic comedy *Blithe Spirit* (July 9-August 1) and John Van Druten's *The Voice of the Turtle* (August 6-29) performed by theatre professionals of Ontario's newest summer theatre located at the Studio Theatre, 63 Gore Street East, in Perth. Information and tickets, 1-877-283-1283. [www.classictheatre.ca](http://www.classictheatre.ca).

**Trash Talk**

**Household Hazardous Waste Day:** Take your hazardous waste to the southwest corner of Highways 7 and 38 on July 24, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Helpful hint: The longest lineups are usually caused by those who come early to avoid the rush. [www.centralfrontenac.com](http://www.centralfrontenac.com).

**Once a Year Free-Load Waste Disposal Program:** Between May 15 and October 17, take a single load (car, van or half-ton truck) to the Olden or Oso waste site during regular hours of operation at no charge.

**Drinking Water Testing**

The Kingston Regional Health Laboratory tests drinking water for free. Pick up sample bottles at your local Health Unit. Samples are accepted at the following times:

**Sharbot Lake:** 279-2151, Tuesday, 8:30 to 11 a.m.

**Cloyne:** 336-8989, Wednesday, 8:30 to 11 a.m.

**Kingston:** 549-1232, Monday to Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Friday, 8:30 a.m. till noon.

For faster results, deliver directly to the **Public Health Lab** (548-6630) 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 181 Barrie St., Kingston.

The ability to sit and flush without having to go out and fight the mosquitoes and blackflies or the weather is due to the convenience that our lowly septic tank and tile field provides. Our septic tank and tile field are living systems, operated by bacteria and yeast working hard on our behalf. For this, they ask for only a little attention now and again to keep them operating safely and surely.

If you are returning to the cottage after a long winter break, your septic system is probably now dormant, having exhausted the available food supply and gone into what scientists refer to as endogenous respiration. The bacteria will be dead or dormant. It's a good time to get the tank pumped out, if it is due, to get rid of the useless sludge that builds up in the bottom over the years and no longer contributes to the operating activity in the tank. It is worth noting that pump-outs in the fall are not a good idea, particularly if you are planning to use the cottage through the winter. It takes time for the bacteria to build up into enough mass so that the biochemical reactions create enough heat to counteract the cold. Fall pump-outs have resulted in tank freeze-ups that can severely limit your use of the septic system.

Once up and operating again, you must continue to treat the tank, and its inhabitants, with respect. Do not dump harsh chemicals like bleach, paint residues and cleaners down the drain. Don't overload them with frequent use of dishwashers and washing machines. Do not subject them to non-edibles like facial tissues, sanitary napkins and the like.

Also, do a visual inspection of the area once the soil is fairly dry. Look for wet areas over the tile field. When the grass is fully green again, check that the tile field area is uniformly green. If only the lower area is exceptionally green, your perforated pipes' drainage holes may be clogged. In the case of the old "real tile" fields, the drainage space between the tiles may be clogged with sludge buildup. If either of these problems is apparent, consult an expert on the remedy. The tile field should only be covered with grasses and other shallow-root plants that can provide an effective means of additional treatment of any liquid that moves up by capillary action.

Experience has shown that it pays to have the septic tank pumped out every three to five years, depending on usage. This removes the built-up indigestible solids that the bacteria can't handle, as well as excess scum. The aim is to prevent the solids from building up and exiting into the tile field, which will result in plugging the drain holes in the distribution pipes, and prevent the liquid from percolating out into the soil. During the pump-out, inspect the tank for cracks and for damage by tree roots, especially around the inlet pipes. A good contractor should provide this service.

Happy flushing!

### Septic System Self-Help Checklist

- Proper size relative to number of users
- 15 metres from any open waterway
- 5 metres from any building
- Ground slopes away from the system
- Pumping system (if required) is working
- No woody or dense vegetation on tile bed
- No ponding or visible outflow from tile bed
- No noticeable smell
- No extra green areas above the line from house to tank or above the tile field
- No excess algae around your lakeshore

### Wait! Don't Dump Your Bait!

Invading species, such as round goby, rusty crayfish, rudd and Eurasian ruffe, can have devastating effects on native species, habitats and ecosystems. More than 185 non-indigenous species have become established in the Great Lakes basin through ballast water from foreign shipping, aquarium and horticultural trades, live food fish trades and unauthorized fish introductions. To prevent their spread into inland waters: Never collect baitfish from the Great Lakes for use in inland waters. Never take bait from one water body and release it into another. Always dump bait buckets on land.

For more information and to download a *Field Guide to Aquatic Invading Species*, visit [www.invasivespecies.com](http://www.invasivespecies.com).

### DEADLY COONS

by Gray Merriam

Recent public health records show that raccoons can be deadly. Coons transmit the eggs of a roundworm parasite, *Baylisascaris procyonis*, in their droppings; if they get into people, they hatch and the larvae burrow into the brain. The parasite lives in the gut of coons without causing damage, but the larval form wreaks havoc in humans.

Ringworm is also transmitted from coons to humans, as is rabies, long known to be widespread in coons. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has developed a vaccine against rabies that is dropped in packets from aircraft. This has virtually eliminated the epizootic waves of rabies that used to be common in foxes and coons in eastern Ontario. But the object of the vaccine program is not to eliminate every last rabid coon. It aims to reduce the proportion of coons that get rabies to a threshold low enough to prevent wave-like outbreaks of rabies; some individual coons will still be rabid.

Nests of loons, ducks and turtles are also at risk from coons. So don't encourage dense populations of coons by feeding them or by allowing them to get food from your garbage. We humans have enough impact on the lake without bringing along the added impact of high-density coon populations.

## Why Is Kennebec Lake Producing So Few Loon Chicks?

by Rob Alvo

Kennebec Lake, in the heart of common loon country in eastern Ontario, is 14 kilometres long and is large enough for a few pairs of loons to breed each year. Although residents observe loons every year, until 2009, no chicks had been seen for over a decade. Why?

Having studied the effects of lake acidification from acid rain on loon productivity in Sudbury, I was naturally interested in the acidity of the lake. Gray Merriam told me that the pH was near neutral (or pH 7). No problem there. What about food for loons? There are plenty of fish, with a large range of sizes and with numerous species. Other food for loon chicks, such as vegetation, aquatic insects, clams, frogs and tadpoles, and leeches are all present. The only food type apparently missing is crayfish, but they are generally considered to be an alternative food source when insufficient fish are available.

Human activity? The presence of too many cottages and boats has caused loons to abandon thousands of lakes in the southern parts of their former breeding range. Cottages and boats are on Kennebec, but in similar density to other lakes in the area where loons breed successfully.

What about nest sites? Are there enough islands and marshy bays for loons to find a quiet place to nest? Yes, and a couple of artificial nesting platforms have been put in place to enhance nesting possibilities. But the loons have not used them.

So on July 25, 2009, Gray and I toured the lake by boat. Where the Salmon River enters Kennebec Lake, we observed a loon adult and a small chick. This was the same family that people had seen in this part of the lake since about July 10. This is the first loon chick observed on the lake in about 12 years. It remained to be seen whether the chick would survive the 11 to 13 weeks until it could fly. There should be plenty of food in the lake, but the critical factor is the behaviour of boaters on the lake. Harassment by boaters can cause the chicks to drown. Curious boaters can keep the loon families from foraging, thus causing the chick to starve. On the other hand, there seem to be enough concerned people on the lake who might act as loon wardens by informing boaters of the presence of a loon family and asking them to leave the loons some distance.

During our survey of the lake, it seemed to me that the west end of the lake could harbour a pair of loons in addition to the pair that nested on the Salmon River. Few cottages are at that end of the lake, and the inflow at the west end has many suitable natural plant tussocks for nesting. We saw two individual loons in the western half of the lake in addition to the parent with the chick and two other adults flying over. The eastern half of the lake, however, has many cottages and considerable boating activity.

Another consideration is the lake's shape. Very long and rather narrow, the lake has few bays. Loons raising young spend much of their time foraging along the shore-

line, and they prefer lakes with numerous bays. This becomes particularly important when the shoreline has a string of cottages, as in Kennebec.

So, given its great size, Kennebec Lake would seem to be large enough to harbour several loon pairs; it probably did a few decades ago, before the appearance of cottages and boats. Later, though, the loons were squeezed out by humans. The fact that a pair nested successfully last year is an encouraging sign. But the survival of the chick is not known; nor is the return of the pair this year. What is critical is the behaviour of the people on the lake, chiefly boaters, who should give loons, especially families, plenty of room. If a nest is found this year, people should stay away during the 28 days of incubation.

*Rob Alvo is a loon biologist living in Ottawa.*

**Note:** Seeing two loons together does not necessarily mean they are a pair. Many loons visit the lake, and large groups can be seen in late summer as they prepare for migration. These birds are visitors, not nesters.

"Our greatest need ... is to want less.  
Living more simply used to be the whole point  
of lakeside culture."

Allan Casey in *Lakeland* (page 15)

### **Kennebec Lake Fishery—Learning More**

by Bernie Dertinger

The Stewardship Committee continues to study the status of fish in our lake. Last summer's Near Shore Trap Net Survey gave us a good indication of the types of fish and their abundance in the shallower waters of the lake.

Sunfish were plentiful. There were lots of bullheads and suckers and a fair number of bass. As in previous surveys, northern pike were comparatively scarce and walleye even scarcer. Samples of fish scales were sent to a laboratory to determine the ages of the fish caught. We are waiting for the results, which will tell us the age structure of the populations of different fish species in the lake.

A "near shore" survey does not tell the complete story of fish populations. We know from previous surveys that cisco, or lake herring, are the most abundant fish in the lake, yet the trap nets did not catch any. Cisco prefer to stay in the deeper, cooler water of the lake. Pike and walleye probably would also hang out in deep water to be near their prey.

For 2010, we have applied for a CFWIP grant to do a gill net survey to determine what fish are present in the deeper parts of the lake. If the grant is approved, we will again need volunteers to help conduct the survey.

# SNAPPER FACTS

*Is the best defence a strong offence?*

by *Dora Hunter*

Consider the plight of the snapping turtle. When found in its usual water home, it is a shy, retiring reptile, happy to pursue its roll as garbage collector of the ponds.

Unlike that of its cousin the painted turtle, the snapper's plastron, the lower half of its shell, covers only a small portion of its underbelly. When threatened, the painted turtle withdraws its head, legs and tail into its little fortress. The snapping turtle must rely on its remarkable striking speed, agility, long neck and strong beak to give a good accounting of itself in any confrontation.



Illustration by *Aileen Merriam*

When the confrontation is one between turtle and automobile, the efficacy of the snapper's offensive defence becomes questionable. Threatened by an oncoming car, the painted turtle hunkers down and, if not blown over or struck by a tire, lives to complete its perilous crossing. However, even if the driver takes care to straddle the snapper, it instinctively strikes out at the automobile undercarriage.

I have removed many snappers whose only apparent damage is a broken jaw, an injury that dooms this magnificent reptile to a slow death by starvation. So, if at all possible, wait for the turtle to cross the road, or drive around it. Let us use what we know of the snapper's natural history to make life-saving decisions on their behalf.

"We consume wilderness even as we seek to take part in it, for consume is what we do. No matter where we go, we bring the ecological threat of our own presence along with us."

Allan Casey in *Lakeland* (Greystone Books, 2009), page 12

## The Dirt on Dandelions

A useful weed, the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is prescribed as a mild laxative and is one of the best herbs for building up the blood. Herbalists use the juice of its root to treat diabetes. Its leaves provide a healthy green in salads or can be sautéed, like other greens, and served as a vegetable accompaniment. And the bright yellow petals of its edible flowers can be used as a garnish.

### Dandelion Salad

2 slices bacon  
1/2 cup (125 mL) unopened dandelion flower buds  
2 cups (500 mL) young dandelion leaves  
2 Tbsp. (30 mL) oil  
1 Tbsp. (15 mL) vinegar  
Salt and pepper  
1 tsp. (5 mL) tarragon

Cook bacon until crisp. Remove from pan and drain. Wash dandelion flowers and leaves and pat dry with paper towels. Cook flowers in bacon fat until the buds burst open. Drain. Crumble bacon into salad bowl. Add leaves and flowers. Combine oil, vinegar and seasonings, pour over salad and toss. Serves 4.

(Source: *Harrowsmith Cookbook Volume One*)

## Ongoing Stewardship Activities

by *Bernie Dertinger*

**Walleye Spawning Beds:** In 2009, we continued to monitor walleye spawning sites. A Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) grant was received to create and/or improve some sites.

a) **Crooked Creek:** A load of river stone was deposited by machine in Upper Crooked Creek just before freeze-up. We hope the walleye use that spot for spawning this spring.

b) **Kennedy Point:** A load of stone acquired under a 2008 grant to improve a spawning bed at Kennedy Point was deposited last year on the Kennedy property, but we weren't able to put the stone on the ice until this past February; a congenial group of volunteers got the job done. The stones sank to the bottom just in time for a very early spawning run.

**Beaver Creek Beaver Baffler:** We have applied for a 2010 CFWIP grant to build and install a "beaver baffler" to make it easier for walleye to get to the upper reaches of Beaver Creek where they spawn. The first beaver dam in from the lake poses a formidable barrier to migrating walleye, and that is where we plan to install the device.

Most existing beaver bafflers are made of comparatively narrow plastic pipe to prevent flooding of upstream land. To allow the walleye to migrate, we will need a much larger diameter pipe. The planned installation, to be undertaken in partnership with the Frontenac Stewardship Council, will be an experiment to develop a design that works for the fish.

**Loon Nesting Platforms:** Another 2010 CFWIP application is for funding to replace one of the two existing artificial loon nesting platforms. The new one will be constructed of plastic piping and should last much longer.

**Watershed Stream Flow Survey:** Cliff Anderson single-handedly surveyed all accessible road and trail crossings in the extensive area north and east of Kennebec Lake, describing all the culverts and water flows. We now need to survey the area west of the lake. I'll be contacting volunteers.

# NATURE NOTES



## ANTS and our NATIVE PLANTS

by Aileen Merriam

Spring is here, and all around us, creatures and plants are moving and growing. Among the most active are the many varieties of ants. Usually we notice them only when they bother us! But ants have complex lives that interact with other parts of their environment. They are hugely important in nature — ants make up two-thirds of the biomass of all the insects on earth. They are constantly on the move. What are they doing?

Why should we care?



white trillium

A large number of our common early spring flowers — the ones that bloom between snowmelt and leaf out — are dispersed by ants. Some wildflowers produce an extra-soft, fleshy part on the outside of their seeds; this is like candy to ants. Once a ripe seed drops to the ground, it is only a short time before an ant harvests it and carries it back to the ant nest. Here the ants bite into the "ant-snack" and feast on the oily, nutrient-rich contents.



large-flowered bellwort

When the soft part is eaten, the hard seed is discarded away from the nest in the ants' "compost pile" — just the place you want to be if you are a wildflower seed. The seed sprouts in this fertile location, and we have beautiful new flowers in our woods. Ants help to disperse the seeds of about 30 percent of our spring beauties, including bloodroot, wild ginger, trillium, fringed polygala, Dutchman's breeches, violet, bellwort and corydalis.



bloodroot

Ants have been recorded moving seeds up to 10 metres from the parent plant. Seeds buried by ants are less likely to be eaten by birds or rodents. And it has been shown that in some species, seed germination is faster when the soft appendage has been removed.

Next time ants bother you, consider their work in spreading our native wildflowers.



## Going Wild in Our Gardens

by Bea Heissler

Illustrations: Aileen Merriam

The United Nations has marked 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity to bring attention to the unprecedented loss of the world's species due to human activity. In Canada alone, 467 species of plants and animals have become extinct or are at risk. About 60 percent of these are in this predicament because of habitat loss. In Ontario, more than 190 species are at risk of extinction.

As landowners, we have the opportunity to contribute to the recovery of some of these species. A person with a yard has great potential to make a difference by growing native plants that provide not only a feast for the eyes but also shelter and food for creatures that depend on them.



jack-in-the-pulpit

We do not contribute to global biodiversity by planting species originating from other countries. In fact, some garden favourites have caused serious ecological problems when a similar native species is forced to give up its niche in the natural community. Without the usual checks on population, these intruders can wreak havoc on the natural balance.

Native plants of this region are perfectly adapted to local conditions and have developed close relationships with other living things. Therefore, once established, these plants require no care and will continue to grace our yards whether we are there or not.

When we work with nature and live with consideration for those who naturally share our spaces, we help to ensure our own survival on this remarkable planet.



violet

For more information on native plants and plant sources, visit the North American Native Plant Society's website at [www.nanps.org](http://www.nanps.org) and the Canadian Wildlife Federation's website at [www.wildaboutgardening.org](http://www.wildaboutgardening.org).

Bea Heissler owns Natural Themes, a native plant nursery near Frankford, Ontario. [www.naturalthemes.com](http://www.naturalthemes.com). She cottages near the head of the Salmon River and is a frequent contributor to KLA Newsletters.