

The Leaflet

Lake Waseosa Ratepayers' Association Newsletter



A Message from the President

By Dwayne Verhey, President

All those who have complained that "we don't get winters like we used to" can eat their words this year. We are in the midst of a good ol' fashioned Canadian winter, complete with all the snow and ice you could ever wish for. In the spirit of Grin and Bear it, the LWRA will again celebrate our good (mis?) fortune with our annual **Winter Social on February 15 from Noon until 3 at 21 Cottage Lane**. Coffee Can Curling, hot chocolate, wieners and beans. Don't miss it!

The snow is also piled deep on the roof, and so some of you will be hiring someone to shovel it off. WSIB legislation changes to the definition of "employee" may make those that rent out the cottage at any time during the year or who run a business from home responsible for premiums, fines and interest if you do not have a clearance number or exemption certificate from your contractor. While private homeowners are exempt from liability during "renovations" (the definition excludes new construction), the WSIB considers that such activities make your place an "income property". It is unclear how WSIB classifies roof shovelling and they have not responded to our inquiry. If it is lumped in with "construction", then property owners could be charged if they hire someone who cannot provide WSIB documentation. For more information, see <http://needwsibcoverage.ca/who-needs-coverage/purchasers-of-construction-services-for-your-home>

Another important date this coming summer is the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, July 12. This is the time we elect our Directors to the Board. There will be at least one vacancy this year, so please consider adding your talents to the Board for a term or two. Many hands make light work.

Town Council – Committee of Adjustment Meetings

By Brian Gray, Secretary

Since the AGM, the Association Executive has made written submissions to the Town on five variance applications. One of these was a severance creating a new building lot on Waseosa, one was an innocuous rezoning on Ripple that did not affect the lakeshore, and the others related to new or

enlarged buildings, typically closer to the water than permitted by the Town's by-laws.

The LWRA attempts to work constructively with applicants and Town to find workable solutions. Building and renovations are inevitable and can be desirable. Our focus is typically on (a) the overall load on our very small, narrow and shallow lakes, (b) aesthetics (setbacks from the lake and retaining / re-establishing naturalized shorelines), and (c) nutrient run-off (septic system quality and setbacks, and naturalized shorelines).

Societies have always faced challenges in balancing the rights of the individual and the rights of the community. For us, this can mean a tension between the property rights of an individual or developer who wants to build more, bigger and closer, and the property rights of the existing landowners who want to preserve or enhance the quality of the lake water and shorelines. In our view, the current Town administration sides heavily with the rights of the individual or developer, and has very little time or respect for the property rights of existing landowners. This is neither right nor wrong in itself; it is simply a political choice. However you view this issue, responsibility for this and all political choices belongs to you and all voters.

Otters, other Mammals and Birds

By Brian Grey, Secretary

Thanks to the several of you who responded to our short note about otters, in our last e-mailed update. In addition to the North Waseosa viewing, you have reported sightings at the very south end of Waseosa, at the south end of Jessop Lake, throughout the year on Ripple Lake, and on the west side of Waseosa.

As we move towards spring, please let us know about any unusual bird sightings. Or just send us a list of those you have seen for certain in 2014, and specifically in the LWRA area (i.e., after you leave Hwy 11, not something you see through your windshield near Gravenhurst!). Send notes to Secretary@LWRA.net, and I'll try to create a list on the website.

Lake Waseosa Ratepayers' Association Membership Information Update.

Mail to: LWRA, c/o 1081 N. Waseosa Lake Rd., Huntsville, Ontario. P1H 2J4

Dues are \$35.00 per year, from January 1 to December 31 each year.

Name: _____ Muskoka Telephone: _____

Muskoka Address: _____

Off-Season Address (if applicable): _____

Off-Season Telephone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

And please don't hesitate to report any viewings of less-common mammals – certainly Otters, but perhaps Martens or Fishers, or even a Wolverine? Of course you don't have to report unusual sightings. But you otter.

Boating Laws and Regulations

By Bill Somers

Boating laws and regulations (Canada Shipping Act, Criminal Code) are enforced by the OPP, who are actively targeting smaller and smaller lakes and appeared on the water in our area several times last year.

Examples of Criminal Code offences include:

- Failure to watch person towed. You must have a RESPONSIBLE person on board keeping a continual watch on the person being towed.
- Towing a person on any skis, board, sled or other object from one hour after sunset to sunrise.
- Dangerous operation of a vessel or any skis, board, sled or other towed object in a dangerous manner
- Failure to keep a lookout
- Failure to have a PFD/lifejacket for each passenger
- Interfering with an aid to navigation

The general penalty for a Criminal Code offence is a fine of not more than \$5,000 and/or 6 months in jail and goes up from there. If there is bodily harm, the sentence is up to 10 years; in the case of death, up to 14 years.

Some Canada Shipping Act regulations are similar. Again, a spotter in communication with the operator is required, careless operation prohibited and towing hours are restricted to daytime. But the CSA adds new regulations, too. EG:

- There must be a seat on the vessel to accommodate every person being towed
- Every person being towed must wear a PFD/lifejacket or have it on board the boat.
- No person shall tow themselves by remote control or operate a propeller-driven surfboard-type vessel.

Penalties for offences under the Small Vessel Regulations vary. Some of the common ones range between \$100.00 to \$250.00 plus administrative fees.

The LWRA encourages you to enjoy your pleasure craft, to be mindful of others on the lakes and to familiar yourselves and to comply with the laws that govern you pleasure craft. Copies of Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide can be obtained from the LWRA or directly from www.boatingsafety.gc.ca.

Your Directors are:

Dwayne Verhey , President	705-788-3693
Brian Gray , Secretary	705-788-2984
Roxanne "Roxy" Bickell-Talbot , V-P	705-788-7816
Ambrose Adams , Director	705-788-3669
Paul Keighley , Director	705-789-4907
Sandra Heinz , Director	705-789-6604
Bill Somers , Treasurer	705-788-2015
Susan Han , Director	(705) 788-9853 or (416) 485-4703

Fire Safety at the Lake

There is an inherent conflict between the beauty of a natural Muskoka forest and fire prevention. For maximum safety we could pave for 30 metres around our concrete homes – but somehow that would detract from sitting by the lake on a summer afternoon. Fortunately, there are some simple things we can do, to improve the risk trade-off. At the last AGM, a representative of the Ontario MNR spoke to many of us. From her Firesmart materials, here are some simple tips.

1. Priority Zone 1 extends 10 metres around our homes. Prune or thin shrubs and trees, and remove deadfall and woodpiles. Keep your grass mowed. Consider replacing conifers with native hardwoods (e.g.: aspen and birch are much less flammable than pine and spruce). Keep the first 2m around the house and outbuildings completely free of any fuel for a fire.

2. Priority Zone 2 extends 10 – 30m. Thin trees and remove dead wood debris that might let a ground fire climb to the canopy ("ladder fuels"). Fires spread more rapidly uphill, so this is especially important on windward downhill slopes.

3. Priority Zone 3 extends beyond 30m – which often means you are at the lake or a property line. Where you have flexibility, the objective is not to remove all combustible fuels, but to thin the area so fires will be less intense and easier to extinguish.

4. Construction: metal, asphalt and ULC treated shakes provide much better roof resistance than untreated wooden shakes and shingles. For walls, wood and vinyl siding offer less resistance than heavier logs or timbers, or non-combustible materials like brick.

5. Heating: ensure any wood stove is professionally installed to current code. Ensure chimneys meet code, are cleaned regularly, and are screened with approved spark arrestors. Clear vegetation away from propane tanks, other fuel supplies, and power lines.

6. Burning: consider chipping and composting where possible. If you must burn, stay 5m away from any forest, with at least 2m of cleared mineral soil around your barrel. Use 5mm mesh to screen the barrel, and STAY WITH YOUR FIRE!

7. Equipment: in case the worst happens, keep shovels, rakes, axes, garden hoses and roof ladders available.

There is clearly much more than we can fit in this short newsletter. For additional information, please refer to http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/AFFM/Publication/ST_EL02_163790.html

Our e-mail address is: secretary@lwra.net

If you haven't received any e-mail notices lately, then you are not subscribed to our announcement list. Please visit www.lwra.net/announcements.html

to enter your email address in our automated

system. snail-mail: **c/o 1081 N. Waseosa Lk. Rd., RR#3**

Huntsville, Ontario

P1H 2J4