

# ***14 Island Lake Property Owners' Association***

*Spring 2006 Newsletter*

## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Hello to all of you on Fourteen Island and Mink Lakes. First, let me say thank you to many of you who got back to us via email and phone to say that you enjoyed the Fall/05 Newsletter. We hope that you will get value out of this one as well, and we'll do our best to keep them coming – once in the Fall, once in the Spring.

Barb and I just got back from a trip to Calgary to visit our sons, and while we had a great time in the mountains, and the scenery and weather was fantastic, as we sit on the dock here at home, we realize that those mountains have nothing to offer that's better than what we have right here on Fourteen Island Lake. We also just spent our second winter on the lake, and our only complaint is that there really wasn't much of a winter! The lake was frozen reasonably well, but there was too little snow and too much rain – hard to get out and enjoy what can be some of the best times of the year.

Unfortunately, we are probably going to see more mild winters as climate change continues to affect us.

Thanks also to everyone who sent in their membership fees and the completed surveys. We have a better idea now about the things that are of concern to you all, and we'll do our best to start addressing them. If you haven't sent your fees in for 2005-2006, we will still be happy to receive them, and apply them to 2006-2007.

Remember – *the lake association is here for you* – so please be sure to send along your ideas and comments to any of the executive members – the list is at the end of the newsletter.

See you at the Annual General Meeting on August 6<sup>th</sup>!

Gord

## **ICE OUT**

This year, the ice went out on April 1, seemingly an early date, but Dave Babcock's records show early dates in recent years: March 24<sup>th</sup> (2000) and March 26<sup>th</sup> (1995). Generally, we expect the ice to go out a bit later in April, but we might find that these early dates are going to start to become more common – global warming, you know....

It's also amazing that the day after the ice was out the loons and the osprey were back on the lake – how do they figure it out?

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Sunday August 6 2:00 pm**

**at Tuckers, 1045 Deer Park Drive  
(mid lake, east of Storms' Island in the bay)**

**Agenda items include:**

- **Lake planning**
- **Constitution**
- **Financial update**
- **Speaker Bret Colman**

**Social afterwards at neighbours, Curtis  
Armstrong and Elaine Aronson  
1022 Little Deer Lane**

## SURVEY RESULTS

In the fall newsletter, property owners were invited to fill out a survey. 49 surveys were returned and the results are presented below.

### A. Matters you would like the lake association to tackle in next 3 years.

17- water quality (septic systems, fertilizers, weed control etc.) 9- fish stock (development, overfishing, quality of fishing, etc.) 8- safe boating practices (speed, concern for swimmers, etc.) 6- development (what can the lake sustain? etc.) 5- zebra mussels 3- township should take over road responsibility 3- property taxes (increase, greater say in mill rate) 2- lake level 2- community watch, property safety 2 - exotic species introduction 2 - shore erosion, keep properties natural 1- increase in rental properties and impact on lake - deal with questions when they arise – don't invent them - monetary award to Austin Trousdale for boat launch	- development / approval of lake plan - increasing property taxes - development of hiking path - social events - loud radios - emergency plan (fuel leaks) - emergency energy backup - balancing boater/non-boater/wildlife - install dry fire hydrants - interface with council - charter - ban jet skis
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Comments to note:

- “I am concerned that the Association will take steps that affects others without the go ahead of all property owners on the lake. Only those who have paid dues can be said to have agreed the Association can speak for them.”
- “Local people do not accept the Sigsworth name. Fourteen Island Lake Property Owners Association (without more) should be preferred name.”
- “All property owners on Mink (Sigsworth) Lake must agree to changes – What are legal ramifications such as land deeds/surveys/transfers/Township tax roles/postal addresses, emergency response”
- “Fourteen Island / Mink-Sigsworth Association”

### B. Background, Skills, Knowledge

People identified skills in these areas: research, local history, military – leadership/organization, water testing – access to lab, organization, photography / layout, desktop publishing, lawyer, computer, resource management / planning, budget, recreation planning, purchasing / contracting, scuba diving.

### C. Name of Association

Suggested name was “Fourteen Island Mink Lake Association”. 37 indicated no objection to this name in the survey while 6 voiced an objection.

## FOLLOW UP TO THE SURVEY

Given the survey results, the executive and committees propose to take the following action -

**Water Quality:** There has been regular water sampling in the past but we propose to do more work to monitor water quality, either as a part of the lake plan initiative, or just as a part of our regular work. Note the report on water quality in the newsletter.

**Zebra Mussels:** There isn't much that can be done about the zebra mussel invasion, but we can deal with other potential invaders. We'll do our best to get information to you on what species might be coming next, and how we can avoid them – through speakers at the AGM, through information in the newsletter. For additional information check out the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters>outdoor issues>invading species>invaders>invertebrates>zebra mussels.

**Fish and Fish Stocking:** Although we have some sense of what's happening on the lake, and there has been some assessment work in the past, there might be value in doing a more intensive fishery assessment of the lake, and this could be one of the components of the lake plan. We'll also try to keep people informed about things like new fishery regulations, possibilities for stocking, through articles in the newsletter, and future speakers at our AGMs.

**Safe Boating:** We'll keep you reminded through articles in the newsletter and items at the AGM. Also, you can better inform yourselves by making sure you take the boaters exam.

**Development on the lake:** One of the best

ways to examine this issue is to do a lake plan, and ensure that our Township officials are plugged in throughout the process, and well informed of our final product.

**Lake Levels:** The dam operation was noted in the last newsletter, and Dave Babcock has agreed to continue to manage the dam's operation. The short answer to any issues relating to lake levels is that most fluctuations can be attributed to rainfall (or lack thereof), since over the summer the dam is kept at a constant level.

**Property Taxes:** We will do some more research on what is happening re. property taxes, and report to you in the Fall newsletter. There may be some changes to the way property is assessed in the province, and there may be some results from the pressure being brought to bear by groups such as FOCA.



The dam (September 15, 2005) when water was at its lowest point.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

*Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters*  
[www.ofah.org](http://www.ofah.org)  
*Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation*  
[www.wraft.com](http://www.wraft.com)  
*Goodle Earth*  
[www.earth.google.com](http://www.earth.google.com)

## WATER TESTING

Yes, we have been testing the water quality of the lake. It's been going on for the past 20 years. In the 80s and early 90s, the Ministry of the Environment ran a program that regularly tested the water quality of the lake. With government cutbacks in the late 1990s, this program was cut, and replaced with the "Ontario Lake Partner Program." This current program requires us to take the samples, and the Ministry of the Environment does the testing. The program measures two parameters: water clarity (through "secchi disk" readings); and Total Phosphorous (this gives a measure of the lake's nutrients, and is done through a lab test). Dave Babcock has been our water sampler over the years.

Secchi disks are black and white disks that are lowered into the water to the point where they can no longer be seen. Water clarity is measured as the number of feet down that one can still see the disk

**Results:** For the most part, our lake seems to be in pretty good shape. In 1993, six samples were tested for bacterial levels, and the lake's water was found to be suitable for drinking (**but please don't drink it without treatment!** – as today's levels might be different, and we may also have giardia (beaver fever) in the lake). As far as water clarity goes, we have average secchi disk readings of 15 feet, with the most recent results showing a reading of 17 feet. The improved water clarity isn't really good news, however – it merely reflects the work of the zebra mussels over the past few years. The phosphorous levels from our recent samples are also good, at 10 micrograms per liter; readings over 20 are cause for concern.

We will keep up the routine sampling, and may do more intensive sampling in future (looking at other parameters; sampling more locations) as a part of the work for the lake plan.

## PRIVACY

The lake association has collected names, addresses, etc. of members but due to concerns regarding disclosure of information, these will not be shared globally with the members. If you need to contact someone, (for example there is a situation with their property they need to be alerted to), and you do not know the contact information, contact our secretary Elaine St. John 374-1276 or email her at [elaine13@granite.anikast.ca](mailto:elaine13@granite.anikast.ca)

## THE NUMBERS

82 properties  
65 property owners  
Number of paid up members - 52  
size of lake – 605 acres  
depth – 120 feet at deepest point  
(see last page of newsletter)  
Number of islands (14?)  
Bank balance - \$1724. (May 22/06)  
Term Deposit - \$5250 (Feb. 3/06)

Our conservation authority is:

**Quinte Conservation  
Authority**

[www.quinteconservation.ca](http://www.quinteconservation.ca)



The osprey nest (between the dam and McLeod's Island).

## LAKE ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

One of the agenda items at the March 2006 Executive meeting was to discuss the need for a Constitution for our Lake Association. We reviewed information from various lake association websites and decided to develop a Constitution that lays out the basic rules for: executive responsibilities and appointments; membership; meetings; standing committees and amendments. Please find included with this mailing the three page proposed Constitution which will be voted on at our 2006 Annual General Meeting.

## FISHING

Those of you who enjoy fishing the lake will know that we have experienced some changes over the years. Although the assessment data we have is somewhat out of date and not complete, those who fish the lake know that: walleye are not as plentiful as in the past; bass and pike are quite plentiful.

In our area generally, walleye are a preferred species, constituting about 40% of the overall fishing. Most of the walleye in our lake are here because of stocking. Although we lost one of the best walleye spawning areas back in the 50s when a dam was put in above Mink Lake, there are still some places for the fish to spawn – but it appears they have not been doing so over the past 20 years. Stocking of walleye has taken place over the last 20-25 years, and we will want to look at whether and how we might do more stocking in the future. One of the issues is cost (can we find out the cost of stocking???) and the other is the question of whether we should stock, or try to re-establish a natural population. In order to establish a natural population, we'll need good spawning grounds, and prime spawning fish (18''-21'' in size). We might also want to carefully consider the future of walleye fishing in light of the restrictive regulations that are currently being considered by the provincial government. Although not yet finalized, what's being proposed is a new daily possession limit of two fish as well as a "slot size" restriction (this is where your catch is restricted to fish that are between a minimum and maximum length). In the meantime, the season is now open for walleye (and for pike as of May 13), and the bass season will start on June 24th.

**Fishing Out of Season:** If you spot someone fishing out of season, you may call:

- MNR: 1-877-847-7667; or
- Crime Stoppers: 1-800-222-8477

The question of what is happening to the fish on our lake may be one of those subjects we will want to tackle in more detail as a part of the lake plan. We might want to do a full fisheries assessment, to learn more precisely just what kinds and numbers of fish we have in the lake, what habitat exists for what species, if and where walleye are still spawning, what and how much is being caught, and what we can do to improve things.

## DOCK TALK

Since we all are trying to enjoy our time here at the lake, and often what we do will have an impact on our neighbours and/or the environment, we thought that a few words about “respect” might be in order.

**1. Boat Wakes:** As more boats, and larger motors are finding their way onto the lake, we can expect more people to have some concern about wakes. Whatever boat you drive, it is bound to put up some type of a wake, and the wake has the potential to: shake your neighbours’ docks, erode the shoreline, swamp the loons’ nests. And each boat is going to react a bit differently to speed – normally, your wake is minimized if you are traveling at cruising speed, with the boat on a plane; or when you are traveling at “dead slow.”

However, anything in between is likely to give off a wake, and often the worst speed is “slow” but not “dead slow,” when your boat is pushing a lot of water. Please get to know your boat, understand what speed throws up a wake, and then try to respect your neighbours’ shoreline and dock, and the environment, by avoiding the speeds that throw large wakes.

**2. Noise:** It’s amazing how far sound travels across water, and no matter how good your favourite music sounds to you, it might not sound quite as pleasant to your neighbours. So, please respect your neighbours by: keeping music to a reasonable level (at home, and in your boat); quieting the barking dogs; using your PWCs (Seadoos) responsibly;

**3. Night Sky:** Our sky still offers us an amazing sight at night, but if you look to the south and see the glow that comes from outdoor lighting in Kingston, you will see that the night sky can be significantly affected by our use of lights. Think about this when you install your lights, and when you turn them on at night – try to use smaller wattage lights, fewer lights, and

motion-detectors so that your overall contribution to lighting the night sky is minimized.

**4. Septic Systems:** Most of us around the lake rely on septic systems to treat our waste. And as everyone knows, a faulty system is going to lead to problems with water quality – we will get more bacteria in the water, possibly causing skin and intestinal ailments, and we will get more nutrients in the lake, causing more weed and algae growth. Please do your best to respect both the lake and all the users of the lake: upgrade your system if it is more than 25 years’ old; pump your system every 3-5 years, depending on the amount of use; don’t use septic tank additives. If you do not have a septic system, make sure your outhouse is well away from the lake, and in enough soil to keep seepage into the lake at a minimum, or better still, invest in composting toilets or a septic system – the lake will thank you for it! PS. South Frontenac Township has engaged the Health Unit in an ongoing (voluntary) program of septic re-inspection for properties around lakes, where the health unit will check your system and tell you whether it is working well or not. Their priority at present is “lake trout” lakes, as these lakes are more sensitive to disturbance than lakes like ours – but if we felt that this was important to our lake, we could request that the Township consider us in the future.

**Septic tank workshops:** There are three workshops coming up that address the proper care and feeding of septic tanks: June 18, 1:00-3:00pm at the Bedford Hall, 1381 Westport Rd., Glendower; July 8, 10:00am-noon at Kennebec Hall, 5988 Arden Rd., in Arden; and Aug. 12, 9:00am-1:00pm., at Ferrell Hall, 186 Gore St., in Perth. These free workshops will explain: how septic tanks work; what can go wrong with them, and how to know if something is wrong; how to maintain your system; what alternatives are out there; and what is involved in the re-inspection program.



## LAKE PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE

A Fourteen Island-Mink Lake Planning Subcommittee was struck at the last Annual General Meeting, consisting of Bret Dark (Chair), Mike Jennings, Jim Pine, and Gord Rodgers. They have:

1. Reviewed lake plans from other communities and established an idea of the size and required components of a 14 Island and Mink Lake plan;
2. Drafted a 14 Island and Mink Lake Vision statement and objectives, to be used to get discussions going when we have our first “lake community focus group” sessions planned for later in 2006/2007;
3. Drafted a three year funding strategy;
4. Researched external funding support, and plan to submit the first funding application in early June.

### What will the lake plan do for us?

1. It will pull together and improve our information about the lake – water quality, animal habitat and population (fish, birds, animals, special features), shoreline features, wetlands, history;
2. It will lay out the things that we need to do to improve our environment and our lives on the lake;
3. It will involve and help educate the members of the lake community;
4. It will forge partnerships with the township and other government officials;
5. It will help to set direction for future development on the lake.

**NOTE: A general outline of the plan, expected costs, and a request for seed funding will be presented at the Lake Association Annual General Meeting in August.**

### FEDERATION OF ONTARIO COTTAGERS (FOCA)

FOCA is “a non-profit, voluntary organization serving as an information centre, providing assistance and leadership to Ontario’s cottage associations and their members.”

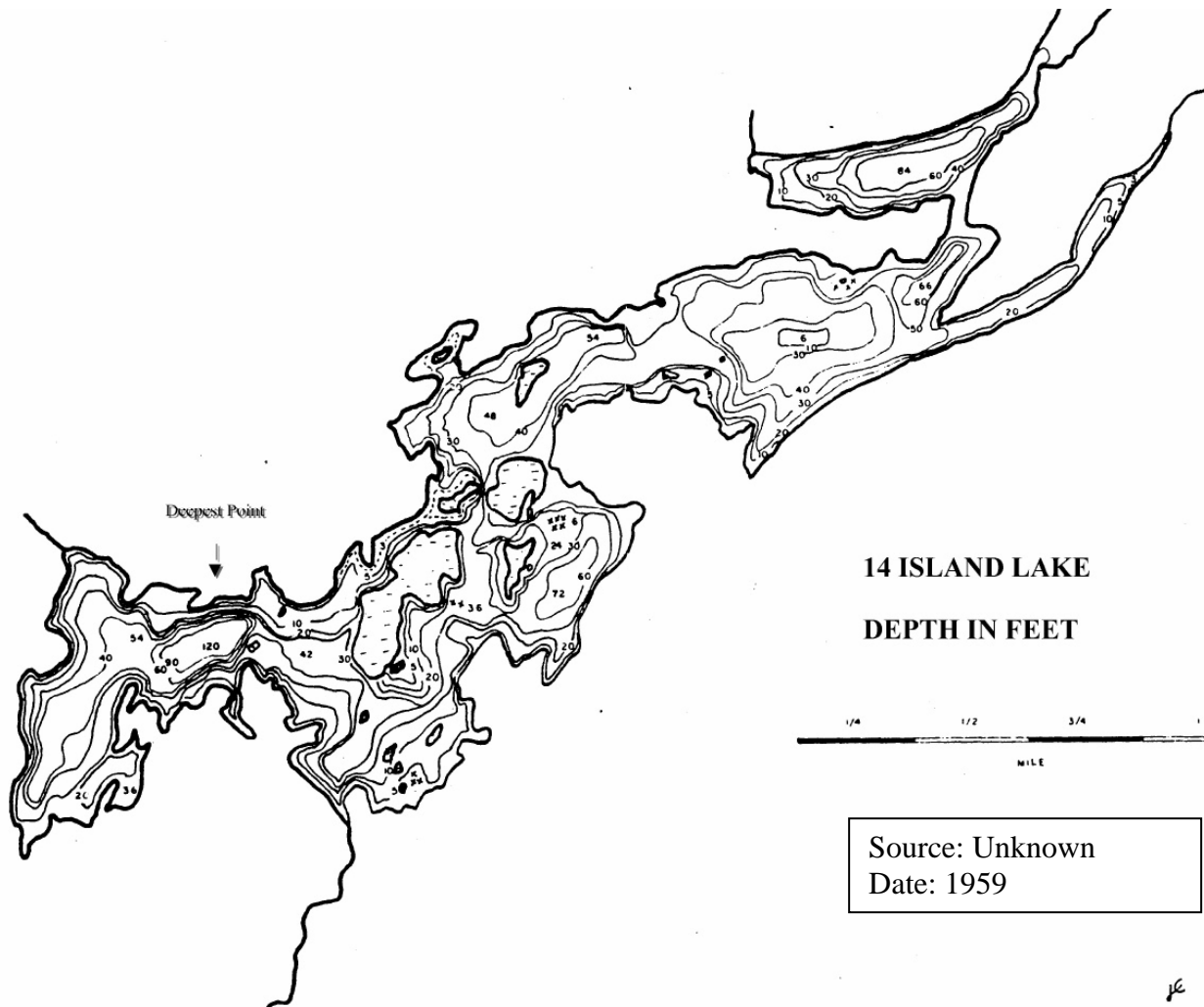
Membership: for an association, \$75 + 2.25/association member; for an individual, \$37.50/year.

Your executive considered whether we should join, and felt that we should not recommend membership at this time.

Check out their website at [www.foca.on.ca](http://www.foca.on.ca)

### ANNUAL MEETING SPEAKER

We are pleased to have Bret Colman from the Ministry of Natural Resources as a speaker for our Annual Meeting Aug. 6th. Bret is the Stewardship Coordinator for the Frontenac Stewardship Council. He’s also one of our neighbours, as he and his wife Sally recently bought the Desert Lake Resort from Sally’s parents. Bret’s going to talk to us about invasive species, fish regulations, and will host a question and answer session.



<b>EXECUTIVE 2005-06</b>			
President	Gord Rodgers	<a href="mailto:gord.rodgers@sympatico.ca">gord.rodgers@sympatico.ca</a>	374-3521
Past President	Anne Tucker	<a href="mailto:ethela@sympatico.ca">ethela@sympatico.ca</a>	613-966-7153
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Secretary	Elaine St. John	<a href="mailto:elaine13@granite.anikast.ca">elaine13@granite.anikast.ca</a>	374-1276
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