

2023 Annual General Assembly - North and South Otter Lake Association Minutes of Meeting

Adopted at AGM 2024 with one spelling correction, 'on' missing on Robertson

NSOLA AGM 2023 - August 20, 2023 @ 10 am
Outdoor Classroom, Frontenac Provincial Park

Meeting Chair - Piper Huggins

Minutes takers - Oriana Muzzin, Mike Kramer

In attendance

Laurel Hey	Catharine West	Jon & Marie Hulse	Don and Pam Stuart
Sarah Kilby	Anne and Barry Robertson	Anita & Keith Dunn	Edith Costello
Bill Racz	Joyce & Rudy Duncan	Aaron Zimmerman	Brigitte Roussel
Jean Hodgson	Gary & Gillian O'Connell	Mike Kramer	Heather Jamieson & John Hanes
Oriana Muzzin	David Crane	Simon Smith	Piper Huggins

1. *Word of Welcome - Piper*

- Piper proposed that, in the absence of a President or V-P., she could chair the meeting.
 - There were no objections
- Introduction of the current Executive Committee:
 - Anita Dunn, Past-President; Aaron Zimmerman, Member-at-large; Oriana Muzzin, Treasurer; Piper Huggins, Secretary.
- Piper spoke about the sad passing of Cam Kenny, a sitting member of the Executive Committee and long-time valued member of the Lake Association and its Executive Committee.

2. *Adoption of Agenda*

- Proposal by Piper: to move the Guest Speaker item up the Agenda, ahead of Water Safety and Shoreline Nesting/Erosion item, to accommodate her schedule.
 - Seconded by Mike; no objections

3. *Adoption of minutes from 2022 AGM*

- No changes were made
 - Proposed and seconded by Barry & Anita; no objections

4. *Business Arising from Minutes*

- None

5. *Reports*

5.1 Treasurer’s Report - Oriana

- Thanks expressed to everyone who had paid their membership dues.
- There has been a glitch with the online e-transfer payment method: at this point it is not possible to see who made the payments that have been auto-deposited into the account. Members were asked to indicate on the attendance list if they paid their dues by e-transfer.
- The following info was shared:

Treasurer Report’s Status of Accounts - July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023

Prepared by Oriana Muzzin, August 18, 2023

Opening balance July 1, 2022	\$1648.48
Deposits (membership dues)	\$191.00
Interest	\$0.14
Website hosting fee	-\$27.12
Loon raft repairs	-\$161.11
Donation to Friends of Frontenac (Outdoor Classroom)	-\$500.00
Service charges for account	-\$5.00
Closing balance June 30, 2023	\$1146.39

Keith Proposed the acceptance of the report. Seconded by Aaron. There were no questions. Motion passed without objection.

5.2 Changes to Properties - Mike

- The Late Carol Leeson’s property on Otter Point Lane is for sale.
- Property #32 was sold and the new owner (unknown) is using it as an AirBnB.
- Mike encouraged members to let him know if any contact info / other information regarding properties has changed.

5.3 Water Testing - Keith

- Keith collaborates with the Lake Partner Program, (along with 800 other volunteers), to provide lake data on water clarity, calcium, phosphorus, chlorine levels.
- Keith showed the Secchi disk used to test water clarity and described the procedure that is used to test on two sites in North Otter every 3 - 4 weeks.
- Samples of the lake water are sent to the Ministry of the Environment for chemical analysis of calcium, phosphorus and chlorine concentrations. Results have been quite consistent over the years with respect to chemical levels and there is approximately 4m of visibility.
- It was pointed out that the beaver dams on Anne & Barry’s property broke and affected the water clarity.
- Results from MOE tests can be found on the FOCA and Lake Partner Programme websites.
- If anyone would like to test the water in South Otter lake, they should contact Keith Dunn.
- South Frontenac has a Lake Ecosystem Grant programme:

- If we have a possible project related to lake health, we could apply for a grant for 2024 (as 2023 applications are now closed)

Additional Items brought up by Keith:

Use of Members Directory Membership in FOCA

- Keith Proposed that the directory of NSOLA members' contact info be emailed to all people on the NSOLA email list upon request, so that they could contact fellow members directly, (without having to go through the Executive).
- Discussion: The goal is to facilitate communication between members. So, as long as there is no abuse/complaint from members regarding inappropriate use, it's a good idea to share the info.
- All members present were in favour.

Membership in FOCA

- FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations) - Keith presented pros and cons of becoming members of the organisation: principle reasons we are not members is the prohibitive cost and its focus on the Muskoka Lake Region.
- The general consensus expressed by members was to continue as we are, while keeping abreast of FOCA's activities and revisit the question of membership at a future date.
- In the meantime, we could look into working in concertation with other lake associations in the Frontenac region. **(Mandate given to Executive).**

5.4 Web and Socials - Keith

- Keith is Webmaster of the NSOLA site.
- NSOLA.ORG is a repository for documents, interesting articles and relevant links, as well as meeting documents and meeting minutes.
- There is no discussion board on the website, so it was suggested that the NSOLA Facebook page be used for that. It's administered by Brian Roche, though access appears to be limited.
- **Keith** offered to speak to Brian about making a closed group on the NSOLA FB page.

5.5 Park Report - written by Ben Chabot (who could not attend)

- The full report is available on NSOLA.ORG and was also emailed to members on Aug 19, 2023.
- Piper highlighted some important points of the report.
- Simon, (who has retired from the Board of Friends of Frontenac, after 32 years of service), informed us the outdoor classroom has been operational since the spring of 2023, and there is work being done by park staff in collaboration with local school boards.
- He spoke about the grant and donations that were used to make the outdoor classroom.
 - A recognition plaque of donors will be posted in the outdoor classroom, and NSOLA will be among them, (thanks to the donation voted at last year's AGM).
- Simon also addressed the use of trees in the construction - every usable tree was cured and used to build the classroom, or as a learning tool.
- Parking issues will likely arise during the time of the Frontenac Challenge as the park gets very busy, so be sure to reserve early using the **NEW** ONLINE system if you foresee needing to park there Sept. thru Oct.:
 - Reservations are now done via the Ontario Parks website, **NOT the Frontenac Park website.**
 - Printing a parking pass is required, however, as of yet there is no 'print' option, so you'll have to do a 'screen-grab' and print that image.

- If the online process is not for you, you can still go into the Park Office during opening hours.

5.6 **Wildlife Sightings**

- Members were asked to document the wildlife they had been lucky enough to observe.

6. **Guest Speaker, Sarah Kilby, on Invasive Species**

Sarah gave an informative talk on invasive species, prepared with the help of Ben and Erica from Frontenac Provincial park. Below are some of the salient points that were brought up/discussed:

- **Dog Strangling Vine (DSV):** Outcompetes native species; Tricks Monarchs into laying eggs which can not survive on them.
 - Main control measures: Picking pods; or, full removal of the plant and root system; or, herbicide (as a last resort, and only if administered far away from water sources)
- **Invasive Phragmites:** Outcompetes native species; Takes up a lot of water, (have been shown to reduce water levels); Grows to 5 m tall; Densely packed growth.
 - Main control measures: Plants are cut off at the base of the stem, placed in heavy garbage bags to dry out, or are burned; herbicide is not commonly used on these.
 - Root removal is difficult due to the very extensive dense root system; presently working with an ecologist to best determine how to remove them.
- Informative handouts on how to identify Dog Strangling Vine and Invasive Phragmites were provided (Sarah will endeavour to make digital copies available).
- It was advised that the best practice is to ‘catch it early,’ so if you see the plants, remove them with their roots!!! Minimally, the seed pods must be removed before they open late summer.
- If you find a patch on your property and are unable to tackle it on your own, you could contact Walter, (an NSOLA member who has been very active in these projects). Sarah also mentioned she would talk to Walter about recruiting more people to help.

7. **Water Safety and Shoreline Erosion**

Proposal to Frame Debate on Initiatives (Keith): *As stewards of North and South Otter Lakes, the members of NSOLA are opposed to any use of boats that results in excessive speed, danger to swimmers, pollution, the introduction of invasive species, disturbance of wildlife, erosion of the shoreline or excessive noise. All agreed.*

Discussion on concrete actions to be taken:

- Past attempts to address the above issue were discussed: i.e. putting temporary signage on a tree off to the side was not very successful (either taken down or ignored); regulation to limit size of motor permitted on the lake was looked into, found to be a onerous process deemed not viable in our situation.
- It is noted that there are grants available to protect shorelines/water quality/invasive species.
- It is noted that the vast majority of boats that are being driven dangerously (endangering swimmers and people in smaller water crafts), and recklessly through the narrows (causing shoreline erosion and destroying shoreline habitat/nests), use the public access boat launch at the Salmon Lake Culvert
- Efforts should therefore be made to endeavour to reserve access to the boat launch at the Salmon Lake Rd culvert making it a “water access point” like at Elbow Lake, i.e. intended to be used for launching canoes and other small craft, and not boats with high-powered gas engines. Note - for residents of the lake, we have typically used the private launches at the end of private lanes like the one at the end of Otter Point Lane (Mike Kramer), or Birch Lane (Simon

Smith), (and Mason Lane?), to launch our boats, so access would not be blocked to residents. Note - If a resident is identified as boating in a reckless/dangerous manner, they can be approached directly by the Lake Association.

- It was also suggested that police be called if behaviour is unsafe. They can not respond quickly, but if the source of the problem can be noted, (i.e. licence plate/address), they should be informed.
- A suggestion was made by Anne to include on the sign(s) mention of the presence of unmarked shoals in the lake to encourage boaters to be cautious.

Resulting Mandates:

1. The Executive is mandated to look into ways of protecting the lake from dangerous and reckless boating. The judicial placement of a proper, secure, sign post with official signage, (grant application). And, to petition the township to change the status of the public boat launch to a 'water access point' for small crafts only (i.e. non-gas powered), like they have done at Elbow lake.
 - Proposal to adopt - Aaron; seconded - Keith
 - Passed Unanimously

Note - for property owners on the lake, there are launches on the lake's private lanes.

2. Caution Buoy, the following resolution was proposed by the Executive Committee:

Caution Buoy Pilot Project

Objective:

To lower the risk of motor craft causing danger to paddlers, swimmers, shoreline nests and erosion caused by excessive wake.

Considering that:

- *There have been two fatalities just this past week in Frontenac caused by inattention/speed of motorcraft on area lakes (source: Frontenac News, August 3, 2022, Vol. 23, No. 30); and,*
- *There have been near misses reported by swimmers on North Otter in June and July of this year;*
- *Water safety was brought up as a concern at last year's AGM giving a mandate to the Executive to look into what could be done; and,*
- *Past attempts to address the issue through signage on land has not yielded results, (signs have gone missing shortly after they are put up); and,*
- *There are buoys available on the market tailor made for this situation.*

Therefore, BIRT :

A mandate be given to the next Executive to acquire a Caution Buoy to be anchored in North Otter Lake near the culvert in such a way as to make it obvious to any motor craft that would be accessing the lake from the culvert's public access boat launch; and,

BIFRT :

Sufficient funds be made available for the purchase of the buoy, associated signage and anchoring mechanism. Estimated cost of \$400 to \$600.

- Discussion was had regarding strategic location for the buoy; possible inflatable buoys; messaging on buoy; target boaters accessing the lake from public access boat launch; safety gadgets for swimmers/small craft.

- **Executive mandated** with working out the details: i.e. researching and purchasing the sturdiest style of buoy; its signage; its transport, anchoring, maintenance and seasonal storage; abiding by any regulation.

Motion was introduced by the Executive Committee. No Objections. Adopted unanimously.

3. **Executive be mandated** to have a **sign erected** regarding the the danger of introducing **invasive species** into the lake, (like the sign that has been erected at the Desert Lake boat launch);
 - Discussion regarding the efficacy of such a sign; it was noted that location and size of sign is important; 'official' looking signs may be most effective.
 - Look into what funding/grant is available for such a project, (Township Ecosystem Grant?).

Proposed by David Crane; Seconded by Anne Robertson. Adopted without objection.

8 **Short Term Rentals (STRs)**

Proposal: *The members of NSOLA are opposed to properties in their area being rented out by absentee owners on a commercial basis, due to a history of renters of short term rental (STR) properties trespassing, and abusing the tranquillity and property of NSOLA members, and acting in dangerous and irresponsible ways that damage the lakes.*

Furthermore, NSOLA calls on the Township of South Frontenac to enact a by-law which controls STRs, monitors disruptive behaviour and if necessary cancels their use.

- Piper clarified that STRs, in this context, are understood as those properties which have been purchased as investment properties with the sole intent of renting them full time, and often for short periods, primarily using digital platforms (i.e. with little to no contact between renter and owner).
- Discussion ensued around a call for the township to regulate STRs and the action on NSOLA's part would be to send a letter and follow up with lobbying; questions raised whether other regions have been successful (yes!); people were encouraged to read the article on this topic (link sent out to members Aug. 19); idea to communicate and collaborate with other lake associations in the area; acknowledgement that even if it is not a big problem currently, it could become a huge problem, as it has in similar areas.
- No Objections, No Abstentions, PASSED UNANIMOUSLY
- If anyone wants to work on this please contact the Executive Committee.

9. **Election of New Officers**

- Open positions - President, Vice President, Members at large, Secretary.
- Treasurer has one more year left in term.
- Aaron Zimmerman agreed to stay on as Member at Large.
- Piper agreed to stay on as secretary.

President (Piper; Nominated by Anne Robertson. Nomination appreciated, but declined, will stay on as Secretary).

- **Marie Hulse**; Nominated by Jon, seconded by Oriana. Nomination accepted. **Acclaimed.**

Vice President - Simon Smith; Nominated by Keith, seconded by Anita. Nomination accepted. **Acclaimed.**

Member at large - David Crane; Nominated by Heather, seconded by Aaron. Nomination accepted. **Acclaimed.**

10. Other Business

- How can we increase member engagement and involvement???
- Suggestions: Hold AGM earlier in the summer. Bring lunches to meetings and eat together afterwards?
Bring back the post-meeting Potluck? Make AGMs more child-friendly?
- Mandate given to the New Executive** to follow-up on suggestions and think of more.