

Big Cedar Lake Stewardship Association

Spring Newsletter – March 2017

Please note: Next AGM is May 21st, 10am @ Wilson Park Community Centre

Another season is upon us at Big Cedar Lake...

Hello from Big Cedar Lake, I thought it would be a good time to update everyone on what is happening with the BCLSA. Four topics I would like to cover off with this newsletter are as follows:

- Your Association – Past, Present and Future
- Weevil program – Summary of the where we are and where we have come from
- New “Healthy Lake” Program
- Financial Support

Your Association – Past and Present

As we are entering our 7th year as an Association, it is a good time to reflect on what has been achieved and what the future will look like. When the Association was first conceived on a dock one afternoon, it was formed to bring people together for a single cause; but over the last six years, somehow along the way a Lake Community was created.

The benefits have been multifold. First and foremost, we now have a way of communicating the issues and sharing information. Our website (thanks to Cliff and Darcy) has been an excellent tool to keep people informed, and social media has allowed more people to connect in a different way. We now have a social aspect to our association, with many great events over the last several years, such as the Paddlefest (thanks Chris). The website has also allowed residents to share their lake history with the others which helps to build community. What we have also gained is an information network with other associations and government agencies (like Norkla, KLSA, Township of North Kawartha, Local Road Committees, etc.) that allow our members to keep informed and have input into the current issues affecting life on the Lake. Finally, we cannot forget the single issue that got us together on the dock in 2011, the weevil program and our ongoing battle with Milfoil.

In order to have the success the association has had over the last 6 years, we need to thank the Board members past and present for their ongoing hard work. In addition to the Board members, there are a number of other people who have contributed significantly with one issue or another.

Thank you to all.

The Future...

We need to think about the future. We want to keep the association fresh and share the work around, so as we approach the next AGM we are looking for **new Board members**. It would be great to have all areas of the lake represented – North shore, South shore, East, West and Islands.

Since we formed our Association, 5 Members of our Board have served every year for the last 6 years. We appreciate the efforts of these individuals, and understand that several will be stepping down from their roles in the coming year. In order to keep the Association together, we need new people to step into these roles.

Please consider putting your name forward, we need your new ideas.

Current Board members will be reaching out to people around the lake to test their interest. In the interim, if you have any questions please email any Board member and they will tell you what it is like to be a Board Member. To keep our Association moving successfully into the future we need your help.

This year's **Annual General Meeting** will be held once again at the Wilson Park Community Centre on Northey's Bay road on **Sunday May 21st at 10AM**.

Weevil Program – Report from 2016

The weevil program started in the summer of 2011. Since that time we have been able to stock the lake with 280,800 weevils, which in turn have significantly affected the growth of Eurasian milfoil in our lake. Eurasian Milfoil is a very aggressive invasive weed. We have been very fortunate to have both Envirosience and Trent University study the infestation in our lake and bring their solutions to Big Cedar. The full report from Trent University for 2016 can be viewed on our website. In summary, below are the highlights for the summer of 2016:

- 40,000 weevils were stocked in Big Cedar over 5 treatment areas
- In addition 5 control sites were monitored
- All sites were measured for weevil damage, Stem density & Biodiversity
- At the end on the summer all sites showed significant weevil/Eurasian milfoil damage - the control sites and the treatment sites had the same level of damage
- Concluded from this result was that the weevils are still having an impact on the Eurasian milfoil, but they are at the saturation point and adding more weevils in all areas would not be beneficial – they may still be helpful in select areas
- The second part of the program was the installation of vegetated benthic mats
- Early results show that where the native plants in the mats were stocked the result showed an increase in biodiversity – if biodiversity can be increased, then there is less opportunity for Eurasian milfoil to grow or regrow.

In addition to the report we received from Trent on our Lake, discussions were held last year with the Trent students on the question of how Big Cedar compares to other lakes with respect to Eurasian Milfoil infestation. All the Trent students gave the same response. They felt very strongly that our aggressive approach to managing Eurasian milfoil with weevils has had significant impact on the Eurasian milfoil levels in our lake. In addition, our Lake has significantly less Eurasian milfoil than similar lakes over the same period of time studied.

What's Next with the Weevil Program? ----> Healthy Lake Program

We're all excited to see the success that the Weevil program has had – to see that the financial contributions that have been made have had an impact, and to be able to enjoy the lake as we have in the past. It's easy to forget that before these efforts were put in place, the milfoil was changing the ways in which the Big Cedar Lake community was using the lake.

Here is what our neighbours have to say...

"At our location in the lake, we indeed had a Eurasian Milfoil problem, and it certainly seemed to get worse as each year passed. By the time the Weevil program started in August of 2011 we were at the point of having to cut and remove the milfoil around the dock just to have a swimming area. It was even difficult to drive an 8HP motorboat from the dock as the Milfoil was so thick. We were slightly sceptical about the Weevil program, but after being supplied plenty of information from the BCLSA and doing our own research we decided that this was an investment that had to be made for the health of the lake. We even went as far as to add additional Weevils every year together with our neighbours in order to hopefully speed up the process in our area, which from what I could tell was the worst area on the lake. Moving forward to the summer of 2016, it is a night and day difference in our area. While there is still some Milfoil in our area, we have not had to cut and remove it in four summers and we can once again drive our boat straight in and out from our dock without having to look for a feasible path through the Milfoil. As far as we are concerned the Weevil project is a success, however it does appear to be taking a little longer than originally estimated. We do plan on supporting the Weevil program until the entire lake is free of Eurasian Milfoil, not just our area. I hope to see all cottagers on Big Cedar Lake support the program going forward so we do not see a relapse in what we have achieved so far. In my opinion the Weevil plan has delivered positive results."

Craig Riethmacher – North West Shore BCL

"I am proud of the work we have done together, to take on the spread of invasive milfoil in Big Cedar Lake. I bought my island in September 1999. One of the things that attracted me to Big Cedar was its water quality. Big Cedar is a smaller, shallow lake which was perfect for canoeing and swimming. The water the first few years was amazing, I was swimming from June till September. By 2010 the milfoil, which I noticed in small patches in early years had completely filled the bays around my island and bays all over Big Cedar. I could only swim selectively, I gave up canoeing and boating was a problem. The afternoon sunset cruise around the bay and behind my island which was ritual for many of my neighbours had stopped completely as the water was completely choked with milfoil. I replaced my propeller on the pontoon 3 times in the heat waves of 2012. Since then, year by year, as the weevils did their work, the milfoil has retreated so that by last season swimming, canoeing and boating had returned to what I remember. Let's not let it slide back to the bad old days of 2011 and 2012 when milfoil ruined the water for us all. Support the Healthy Lake Program and encourage your neighbours to do so."

Leo deSorcy – Island 5 BCL

“In the minutes of the Annual General Meeting for Big Cedar Lake Road Committee (South Shore) held on May 22, 2005, Leo deSorcy made reference to the increase in weeds in the lake. This was more noticeable in the area of the lake where his cottage was located. It was not until 2010 that any action was taken, after EnviroScience visited the lake. BCLSA was then created by cottagers and formally registered in March 2011.

Since that time there has been a marked improvement in the lake so far as weeds are concerned. At the beginning, patches of weeds in the North West corner of the lake were such that no boat could traverse that area. To-day, most of the lake is now navigable.

At the start of the campaign for members in BCLSA, we on the South Shore had more than 70% of 46 cottagers join. Most members who are still in the programme have paid in over \$2,000.each

Some of those members have since dropped out as they could not see an immediate improvement in the lake, and some were upset that no weevils were put into their area of the lake at all.

Overall, I believe that the weevil project has been a success and should be continued now that we have gone this far.

Please keep up the good work and hopefully Trent University will be able to continue this programme for us.”

Robert Hogg – South Shore BCL

After spending some time discussing the long term health of our Lake with the Trent University team, we have come to the conclusion that we can no longer just focus on the weevil program when we are looking at the long term health of our Lake. The weevil program has served the community well and that program will continue to have a role into the future; but we now need to have a broader and more comprehensive view when we look at the long term health of our Lake.

We have been very fortunate to have established our relationship with Dr. Sager and his team at the Ecological Restoration Program at Trent University. The knowledge we have gained and experience that Trent has brought to our Lake has been invaluable. Being a not-for-profit group, their focus has been clearly been on finding healthy lake solutions and it is a relationship we feel very strongly we need to maintain for the long term.

Going forward, we will be moving from a **“Weevil Program”** to a **“Healthy Lake Program”**. The goal of this program is to monitor and find the right balance to managing the variety of issues that are facing our lake now and into the future, in a sustainable and cost-effective way. One of the great advantages of our Trent University Relationship is that we now have the knowledge of what challenges our Lake’s health may face now and into the future. Trent is knowledgeable about what weed infestations we may face next i.e.: water soldier, etc. or the various strains of algae or the fish species that could harm our lake. By having this knowledge and having Trent work in and monitor our Lake, we have a good chance of staying ahead of the variety of issues our Lake faces in the future. The ideal solution finds that natural balance that will bring back your swimming and boating areas and at the same time restore spawning areas and fish populations.

For the 2017 year, the Trent team is recommending that the **Healthy Lake Program** incorporate the following:

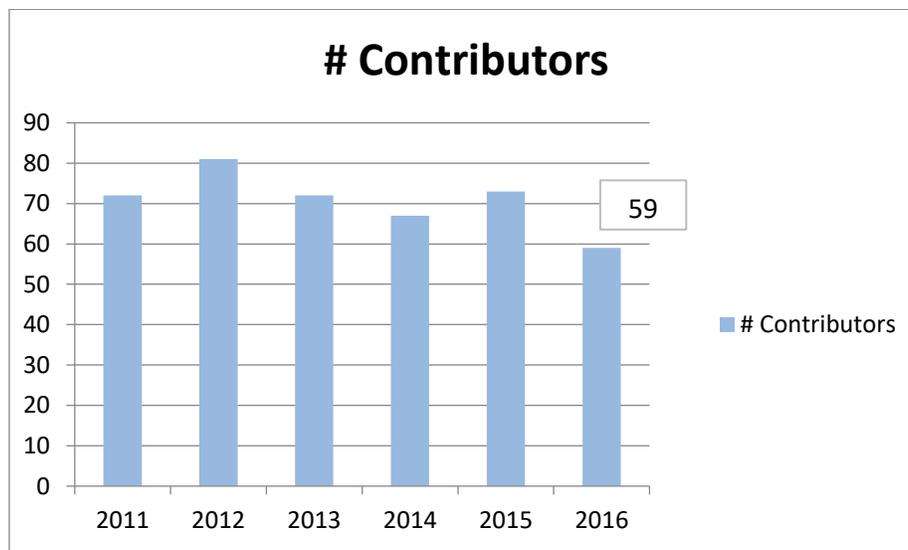
- Expanding the use of vegetated benthic mats
- Stocking of weevils in specific areas
- Working with local shoreline residents in developing a DIY program for controlling & managing Eurasian Milfoil at their own shoreline (including weed pulling and the DIY installation of vegetated benthic mats)
- Development of an ongoing Lake assessment program to monitor the lake over time

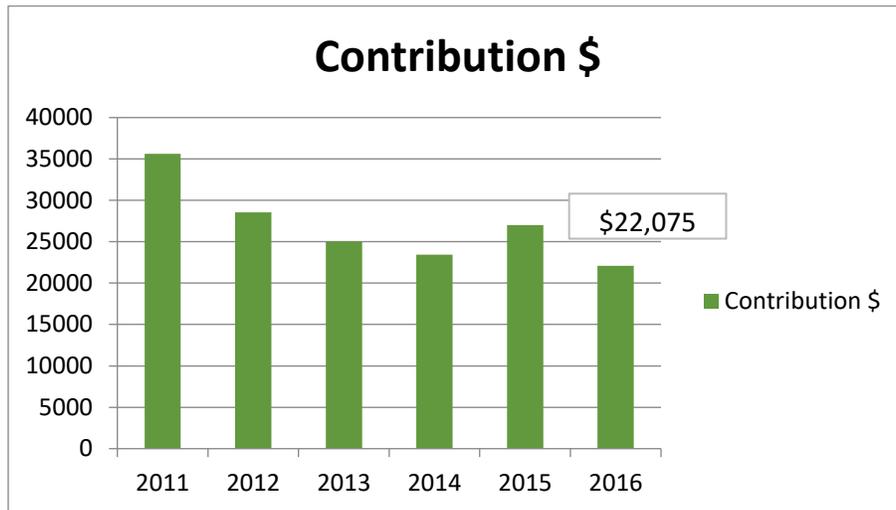
Financial Support

While Trent University is a very cost effective solution, and we are working towards more DIY solutions, we still need to raise the money to pay the summer staff to perform the work with the weevils, manage the benthic mats and monitor other risks that lake may face. We have applied for grants to assist in our work both from the Trillium Fund and the MNR, but unfortunately we will not know if we have been successful until the summer.

Consequently, we need to start our fundraising now. We are asking each lake cottage lot/residential lot to contribute \$360. Our goal is to have over 70 contributing residents/cottagers for 2017.

We need to remind all cottagers that continued financial support is crucial to maintain the progress we have achieved. As you can see from the charts below, our 2016 contributors in terms of numbers and dollars for the weevil program reached the lowest point we've experienced since the formation of our association in 2011.





We need everyone to contribute. Please talk to your neighbours and get them on board. As always, the Board members are always available to discuss the situation further with you.

In order to make our commitment to Trent, we need your commitment **by March 31st – please show your support today.**

In addition, we need to initiate a \$15 association fee for this year. Due to frugal management, over the last 2 years we have been able to wave the fee, but the reserves have been depleted and I hope you would find the \$15 is a good investment.

Lake Program Fee - \$360 Membership Fee - \$15 Total: \$375*

*You can pay the fee all at once now or in three post-dated cheques – one for April 1st for \$125, one for July 1st for \$125 and the final one for October 1 for \$125.

Payment summary below, but please see form included with this email for completion

Cheque payable to **Big Cedar Lake Stewardship Association** mailed to:

Don Austin
C/O Big Cedar Lake Stewardship Association
85 Somerset Road
London, Ontario
N6K 3M6

OR our preferred payment option:

Send via internet banking transfer to:
dbaustin@rogers.com with reference to your name/lot# and breakdown of fees.

Follow up with completed form to Don via mail or scan and attach to your email. Give answer to security question that you used in your Etransfer.

Thanks again for your support of the **BCLSA and the Healthy Lake Program**. I look forward to seeing everyone on May 21st at the AGM.

Brian