

Big Cedar Lake Stewardship Association

President Update – March 2019

March 19, 2019

Hello from Big Cedar Lake,

I hope everyone has enjoyed the winter; but if you are like me, you are very much looking forward to that first summer weekend on Big Cedar Lake.

Today, I am pleased to provide you with an update from the Board on the various issues your Association is currently dealing with:

- Healthy Lake Program
 - Trent University Report, Conclusions & Recommendations
 - Board Recommendations & 2019 Contribution Request (\$360)
 - Water Testing Program
- Annual BCLSA Membership Fee Request (\$15)
- AGM – Sunday May 19th – Wilson Park at 10 am
- Board Member Recruitment

Healthy Lake Program

The Trent University – Big Cedar Lake Milfoil Report

The Trent University Report for 2018 is now posted on the BCLSA website. What I would like to provide you with now is a brief overview of the report and outline what your Board is recommending for 2019.

Without question our battle with Eurasian Milfoil continues, but by having the Trent University team working on our lake for the past four years, Big Cedar is in much better shape with respect to the management of Milfoil than most other lakes in Ontario. In addition, we as a Board continue to learn more about what the challenges are in managing a “healthy lake”.

For 2018, five treatment and five additional monitoring sites were identified. The five treatment sites were stocked with a total of 25,000 weevils and five vegetated benthic mats. Over the season, the treatment sites and the control sites were monitored for weevil damage, stem density of the milfoil and bio diversity (the mixture of native plants). The Trent team made the following conclusions and recommendations after studying not only the 2018 data, but the data stream from the last 8 years.

Conclusions:

- *Although weevils may offer lake managers a degree of control over the invasive milfoil, it is unlikely that the milfoil will be completely eradicated with weevils alone.*
- *Average milfoil density for 2018 was relatively low, following a high year of milfoil density in 2017. This pattern has been observed since 2013, where densities have alternated from higher to lower each year.*

Recommendations:

- *Design the management plan to primarily focus on encouraging native plants to compete with milfoil, as this may be more successful at limiting milfoil abundance in targeted patches.*
- *Continue monitoring experimental patches(2015-present) throughout the lake. This will help to confirm conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the weevil program, milfoil abundance, as well as aid in site selection for preventative measures.*
- *Select mat material that can prevent milfoil from growing up through it, while allowing adequate spacing for native species transplanting.*
- *Install vegetated benthic mats when milfoil density is low, to allow native plant species to colonize without competition from milfoil. This will allow us to avoid mechanically harvesting milfoil, a process that often creates hundreds of plant fragments.*

In subsequent conversations with Dr. Sager at Trent, we further clarified some of the recommendations in the report. Some of those clarifications were as follow: a) with Weevils at a saturation point in the lake it allows an opportunity to adjust the level of weevils stocking in 2019, with the intent of using weevils in selective areas. This change would allow funds to be reallocated to other parts of the Healthy Lake project, b) Explore other mat materials, that minimize milfoil regrowth and or allow for better new native plant regrowth, c) spend more time on finding native plants that can replace the milfoil and are resilient and show regrowth more rapidly.

Although Big Cedar Lake is in much better shape than other lakes that are not managing milfoil, we still have a serious challenge with milfoil. Without question by being involved with Trent University, it has allowed our Lake to be on the leading edge of milfoil management. We are also monitoring other invasive plant management programs that Trent is working on like *Water soldier*, *Water Chestnut*, and *Starry Stonewort*, which we need to understand to minimize the risk of those invasive plants coming into our Lake. As many of you will remember, we shared the Trent program with Chandos Lake last year. Chandos is going forward in 2019 with a very large mat program, thus providing us with another excellent opportunity to learn from their results.

With the Healthy Lake Program, we are not only trying to protect the financial investment we all have in the Lake, but we are also very concerned about protecting the recreational enjoyment that all of our families take from the Lake. The Board is recommending that we continue with the Healthy Lake Project for 2019 and move forward with the following two-part action plan.

Board Recommendations

Part One – Trent University

- a) Continue with the milfoil/weevil/mat program in selective areas.
- b) Participate in a “Drone Identification Program” – this is a drone that would fly over our lake and be able to map the milfoil patterns on our Lake – this would help us to learn more about movement of the milfoil
- c) Source out new native plants for the replacement of the milfoil
- d) Source out new materials for the mats

Part Two – Weeds be Gone (WBG) Mat Installation

- a) After discussions with Trent on sources of new mat material, we have decided to contract WBG to install six larger mats in three high traffic areas. This opportunity allows us to try their new mat material while at the same time allows us to install the mats in areas of greater depth (since WBG utilize divers to install their mats). Our hope is that the new material will be more resistant to milfoil regrowth and at the same time if we can install these mats in deeper high traffic areas then the number of milfoil fragments will be substantially less. As noted in the Trent report, milfoil fragmentation is the number one enemy when it comes to fighting the spread of milfoil.

2019 Contribution Request

Healthy Lake Contribution (\$360 for 2019)

Based on the above recommendations, we need to start our fundraising campaign for 2019. Although we continue to look for outside funding opportunities, local fund raising from the residents on Big Cedar Lake is the primary focus. What we are asking for you to contribute in 2019 is the same as last year, which is \$360 per cottage/property. Attached to this email is the contribution form. We ask that you send in your contribution as soon as possible as we need to commit to our two project partners shortly.

BCLSA Membership Fee (\$15 / year)

In addition to the Healthy Project contribution of \$360, we are also asking people to renew their association membership for \$15. This fee funds the association's minor administrative expenses and external association fees that keep our lake in good standing with the Lake Associations that we interact with and learn from.

Thank you in advance for your support of both requests.

Water Testing Program

In 2018 under the direction of Board Member Diane Trauzzi and her husband Ralph, our water testing program has been greatly expanded. Preliminary water testing results for our lake for 2018 are now published on the website. Final reports will be published on the website prior to the next AGM. Please review these and provide any comments you may have. For 2019, the Board has agreed to continue to support this very important program.

We will continue with the testing performed for and reported by KLSA which compares us to other lakes. In addition, we will continue with additional eColi testing in various strategic spots on our lake, and we will also continue participating in the NORKLA/Trent University water testing program which provides us with many more advanced water tests not otherwise accessible to us. The Board believes water quality is of keen interest to all members thus a good investment for our association.

Association Business and Annual General Meeting

Annual General Meeting

The next AGM will be held at the Wilson Park Hall on Northey's Bay Road on Sunday May 19th starting at 10 am. Please mark this on your calendars.

Board Members

At the AGM, Board members will be elected. We are continuing to look for new Board members, so please consider joining the team – we always welcome and need fresh perspectives.

Take care, see you in the summer;

Brian Stock

President

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