



# Sand Lake Estates

Walnut Point Road, RR1, Elgin, Ontario K0G 1E0

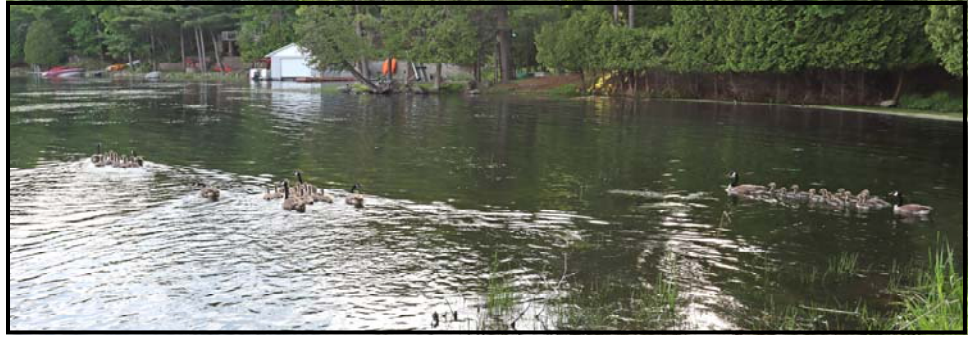
Newsletter

Summer 2020

## Wildlife and the Quiet Lake

Normally this would be a history piece about Sand Lake, but this year we're making history given the very strange year that has resulted from COVID-19. With many heeding the recommendations for people to stay at home (stay in their primary residence) and our American neighbours not allowed to cross the border, the lake has been strangely quiet. Most noticeable has been the general lack of boats, even the normal complement of pre-season bass poachers has generally been absent. The lake is now seeing a bit more boating activity on the weekends, but each morning I look out onto a quiet lake with nary a boat in sight.

The local wildlife appears to be loving the general absence of humans including one invasive species in particular, the Canada goose. Twenty years ago they were not nesting on Sand Lake. Our lake is not a natural nesting area for Canada geese, their normal nesting grounds are much farther north. But with overpopulation in those areas, geese are nesting further and further south, including our lake. They have large families and with no natural predators, there is no population control. It's unclear the ecological effect they are having on



**Geese making the rounds**

If you look closely at this photo, you'll see three family groupings with a total of 33 goslings. Geese are an invasive species on our lake and their populations are exploding.

the lake, other than there is one, likely problems with excess nutrient loading (goose poop) and potential e-coli issues. With fewer people and their associated goose deterrents (i.e. dogs), the geese have been making the rounds. Unless you have a property with nothing on it that the geese want to eat, then your best option is a physical deterrent, flagging tape or less visible wire along the shoreline edge.

While not an invasive species, deer are also becoming a greater problem as they get more acclimatized to humans. There is virtually nothing on my property they won't eat or at least taste – particularly anything newly planted. Both "deer resistant" plants and deer repellent sprays have been tried with no success. I've recently had a recommendation for Bobbex from a friend on Upper Rideau Lake who swears it works – so I will give that a go. The deer have treated prior formulations as a condiment, hopefully this will be more successful. It's



**Hello There!**

Photographing deer isn't much of a challenge these days when they pose outside of your office window.

### Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting has been postponed until later this year when we can safely hold an in-person meeting. If that's not possible we will look into a virtual alternative. We will inform members by email when the time comes.

Comments about the newsletter can be directed to the editor, Ken Watson, at [rideauken@gmail.com](mailto:rideauken@gmail.com)

not just a problem in our immediate area, anyone driving down Davis Lock Road will notice two gardens that now sport high, deer proof, fencing. With no natural predators left in this area and hunting in decline, the deer population is booming.

Our loons seems to be doing well. The pair that nest in Ransier Bay on an artificial nest platform maintained by Ken Watson hatched two chicks this spring. Unfortunately we lost one chick sometime on the weekend of June 20-21. Last year they also hatched two chicks, both of which survived to fly south in late fall. There appear to be fewer loons with chicks on our lake than in the past. The reason may be their need for artificial loon nesting platforms since there are few natural nesting spots on our lake. But many of these platforms have not been maintained over the years, resulting in fewer nesting opportunities for the loons. Peter O'Neill launched a new nesting platform, made of plastic piping, this spring. It is in the site of a former artificial nest, so, in the fullness of time, a loon pair will discover and use it. Nesting loons maintain a large territory so the distribution of artificial nesting platforms has to accommodate that.

Sand Lake has always had healthy fish populations. With far less fishing this year, presumably the game fish such as Largemouth bass and crappie will thrive. The lack of people fishing this year is likely a reflection of the fact that many are Americans (either cottagers or renters at places such as Battams), who are still restricted from crossing the border.

It will be interesting to see what will happen when life returns to normal, when all our cottages are occupied, with associated people and pet activity. We will see that as restrictions are eased and hopefully next year will return to a more normal cottaging season. In the meantime, I'll enjoy my morning coffee with a view of a boatless lake, the only sounds those of our local wildlife.

- Ken Watson



**Loon taking a mid-day nap**

The odd sight of a loon, fast asleep in the middle of the day. Photo taken near Davis Lock in early June, 2020.

## SAND LAKE ESTATES

Our 2019 AGM was held on Sunday, June 30, at the Elgin Community Hall. Several reports were presented including finances and road maintenance. The largest issue was a proposal to integrate the maintenance of Sand Lake Estates owned roads with the access roads that cross private property. It's a large and complex issue with legal and insurance implications. Peter O'Neill explained a detailed proposal for how this could be done. A motion to approve this proposal was passed.

Reports covering various other activities such as our Managed Forest, newsletter, the August volunteer roadwork day and picnic, plus other topics of interest were discussed.

The current (2019/20) Executive is:

President: Mike Miles

Vice-President & Secretary: Bill Touzel

Treasurer: David Alderdice

Director s at large: Peter O'Neill, Jennifer Quong.  
Our Lake Steward and Newsletter Editor is Ken Watson. Our Managed Forest Manager is Mike Miles. Our Road Superintendent is Peter O'Neill.

### Dues

2020 dues have been increased to \$125 and can be paid on-line, or by mailing your cheque and annual dues form to Sand Lake Estates, RR1, Elgin, ON K0G 1E0.

To pay your dues by credit card use the PayPal link on our website at [www.sandlakeestates.ca](http://www.sandlakeestates.ca)

For questions about your dues please contact us: [sandlakeestatesinc@gmail.com](mailto:sandlakeestatesinc@gmail.com).

### 2020 AGM

Our 2020 AGM has been postponed due to COVID-19. Information about when it can be held and what form it might take will be emailed to members.

### Directors

We're always looking for new blood. We're presently short 2 directors. If you have an interest in serving on the board, please contact us:

[sandlakeestatesinc@gmail.com](mailto:sandlakeestatesinc@gmail.com).

## The Battle for Garbage Pickup

In November of 2019, we were blindsided by the news that the township proposed to remove our roads (Walnut Point, Pine Ridge and Eden) from end-of-driveway summer garbage collection. Last fall, the Township invented a new set of private road standards and then, based on that, eliminated roads that didn't meet those new "standards." Of the 226 roads that were getting summer collection, they proposed to eliminate 108 (48%), including our roads. Throughout that flawed process, they never contacted the associations responsible for those roads, even though they have the full contact information for them. Information about why any particular road was eliminated from garbage collection was not made public, so we were in the dark as to why our roads had been placed on the "naughty list." It was a bit of a Gong show all around.

By this time, the grapevine was quickly spreading the word and John Ziegler secured a slot for a presentation to Township Council in early December regarding this issue.

We'd obtained some of the basic information about the new standards the township was proposing, including a new height clearance (16'), a new minimum width (12') and a new turn-around criteria, that of an oblong area 20' x 30' in size. John and Peter O'Neill made the presentation to council which provided a new perspective on the issue to the councilors and appeared to be an eye opener for some of them. Peter's characterization of the new circular turn-around requirement (as opposed to their previous t-turn requirement), as a "helipad," was a good visual characterization. It was now dawning on the township that they'd opened up a hornets' nest – waterfront owners tend to be sensitive to the fact that they supply the bulk of the tax dollars to the township and receive the fewest services in return. The township was trying to spin this new plan as one of equality, when in fact they were fostering inequality by removing roads that previously had summer service.

The township then opened up a public consultation period and several of our residents made submissions. We also found out that the main apparent deficiency for our roads was their minimum 12 ft width requirement. They'd measured the width of our roads in the fall and found them to be too narrow in spots. But what they apparently didn't

know, is that leaf litter obscures the true width of the solid roadbed, you can only properly measure the width of our roads by either taking the leaf litter into account, or by doing the measurement at a time when the leaf litter has been removed, which happens during spring road grading. The main problem are oak leaves, which, unlike other leaves, take years to decompose. Even after this was pointed out to them, they came back in secret in March to re-measure the roads. By this time they'd reduced their 12 ft width requirement to 11 ft. And, yet again, they measured the width between the leaf litter, even though they'd been made well aware that they shouldn't do that. As an example, they failed Walnut Point Road near the base of the hill below Tansley's, with a measurement of 10.5 feet. The actual roadbed width in that spot is 12.5 ft, it shouldn't even have failed their original 12 ft minimum.

Peter has done a yeoman's job at both working with the Township to try to resolve this "problem" and to



### Not a Problem

This spot on Walnut Point Road was identified as a problem by the township who originally measured the width as 10.5 feet, even though the actual roadbed, clearly visible in this current photo with the leaf litter removed, is 12.5 feet wide.

ensure that, when the township next inspects our roads, it will be crystal clear how wide our roads are until this fall, when our trees do their thing and again obscure the true width of the road. For people who have not yet had a chance to come out to the cottage this year, when you do, you'll notice our roads are in spectacular shape, graded initially by Peter (to remove the leaf litter) and then by Tackaberry who did several passes with a road grader.

Has the Township learned a lesson from this general waste of time and tax dollars? The fact is that there are

over 500 km of private roads in the township. These are part of the township, just as much as municipally maintained roads. Sand Lake Estates has always looked after the roads that run over its property with dedicated road superintendents and an annual road maintenance program. We have large trucks (propane, septic, delivery) that use our roads in the summer with no issues. There should be no problems for the township garbage trucks, assuming that they are being driven by qualified drivers. In fact, there should be no issues for anyone using our roads, as long as the posted speed limit of 20 kph is adhered to.

- Ken Watson



## Rideau Lakes Lake Association Committee

In spring 2019, the Township initiated a new grant program to lake associations in conjunction with a new committee of council, the Rideau Lakes Lake Association Committee (RLLAC). Ken Watson, as Lake Steward, agreed to be our primary representative on that committee with Peter O'Neill as alternate.

Ken has attended all the RLLAC meetings, which have covered a broad range of topics related to lake associations. Guest presentations to the meetings have included FOCA, the OPP marine unit and Parks Canada. Topics of discussion have included everything from invasive species to septic system inspections. The main topic in 2019, which is now continuing into 2020, is the need for the Township to have more formalized site plans, registered on title and embedded into the new Official Plan for the Township.

The main goal of a site plan is the environmental protection of the lake. It lays out conditions that a property owner will abide by, particularly with regards to the 30 metre buffer zone between the high water mark and the presence of permanent structures such as homes, cottages and garages. It usually involves things such as shoreline planting to re-naturalize waterfront areas and development restrictions within the buffer zone.

Site plans are required for any development within 100 m (300 ft) of a waterbody that is over 30 square metres in size (320 sq ft). Once that triggers the site plan process, then all the site plan regulations apply. Enforcement of site plans once the initial one is done is basically non-existent. Much discussion revolved around this problem (regulations with no enforcement). Site plans are also inherently unequal—you may have one since you triggered the need with a construction project, while your neighbours don't have one (and may never have one). It's presently an ongoing discussion.

The meetings have all been very interesting. In addition to the discussions about various issues, it's an opportunity to liaise with other lake association representatives and that in itself has been very valuable. It is a very good initiative on the part of the Township of the Rideau Lakes—I think both sides, lake associations and the Township, now understand each other a bit better. And, a huge advantage of a township-run meeting with the Mayor as Chair is that they always end on time (pretty much unlike every other meeting I attend :-)

- Ken Watson

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## TREES and ROAD TRAVEL

Every once in a while a tree comes down and blocks one of Sand Lake Estates roads (Walnut Point, Pine Ridge or Eden roads). The spirit of community and collaboration usually kicks in and the issue is generally resolved rather rapidly!

Here's some guidance on how to proceed in the most expeditious way when you find your way blocked:

1. Assess the situation - if power lines are down stay clear and contact Ontario Hydro (1-800-434-1235). **Remember trees and other objects in contact with high voltage power lines can be conductive for some distance! Stay away!**
2. If the tree can be safely pulled aside or sectioned and pulled aside to make the road passable, feel free to reach out for neighbours and make this happen. Then let the Road Superintendent know so final clean up can be done.
3. If the tree is partially fallen and hung up on other trees and is a dangerous or complex removal, go to step 4.

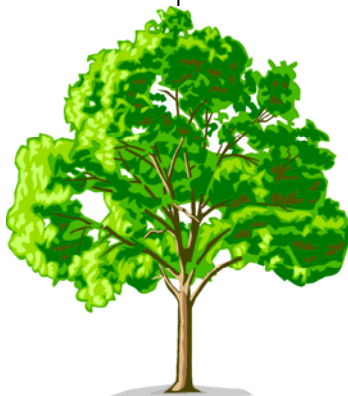
4. If no neighbour is around to assist, or the tree is a dangerous or complex removal, reach out for your SLEI Road Superintendent. (denoted by "R" on the SLEI phone list) or the President ("P" on the list). You can also email us at: [sandlakeestatesinc@gmail.com](mailto:sandlakeestatesinc@gmail.com)

These SLEI executives will undertake to move the tree using equipment or a qualified contractor.

In closing, we have to note that in most instances where trees came down on our roads, there was a local weather situation that caused similar issues across the region. So please be patient as steps are taken to resolve the inconvenience when your path is blocked. Chances are, other roads will be blocked too!!

What if a tree has come down across Davis Lock Road? If a tree falls on a township road, call the Township of Rideau Lakes during normal business hours at 1-800-928-2250, or at their after hours emergency number: 1-877-798-5725.

- Peter O'Neill



## ROAD MAINTENANCE

Almost half of your annual dues is used for the summer maintenance of SLEI roads. Our volunteer Road Superintendent is **Peter O’Neill** who does a wonderful job - **thanks Peter!**

As noted in the Battle for Garbage Pickup article, a lot of work has been done on the roads to remove the leaf litter and grade the roads to their full width. In addition, last fall the culvert at the entrance to Walnut Point Road was replaced with a larger diameter plastic (HDPE) culvert pipe. It worked very well this spring, there was no flooding in that area.

*Residents are asked to:*

- **Watch Out for Equipment** such as a tractor doing roadwork. *Remember*, if they didn't see you approaching they won't hear you over the equipment noise! Look for a wave or a wink before you pass!!
- **Adopt Your Road**—This year, we ask that each resident "adopt" the road adjacent to their property and head out with clippers to trim back the branches that are protruding over the road surface. A minimum 13’ 6” clearance height is desired above the bed of the roadway. See Peter’s Roads and Grounds report for details.

For more details see the document “Sand Lake Estates Roads and Grounds 2019/2020” by Peter O’Neill.

### Winter Ploughing

Sand Lake Estates does not do (or pay for) any winter maintenance/clearing of the roads. Private individuals are paying for all winter sanding and ploughing. Winter ploughing costs are shared on a volunteer basis. Contact John Ziegler for Pine Ridge/Eden roads or Bob Haapala for Walnut Point Road if you would like to contribute to the ploughing of the main access roads.

Our new snowplowing contractor is Jason Norris. Last winter was a bit of a learning curve for Norris, but in general the work was well done.

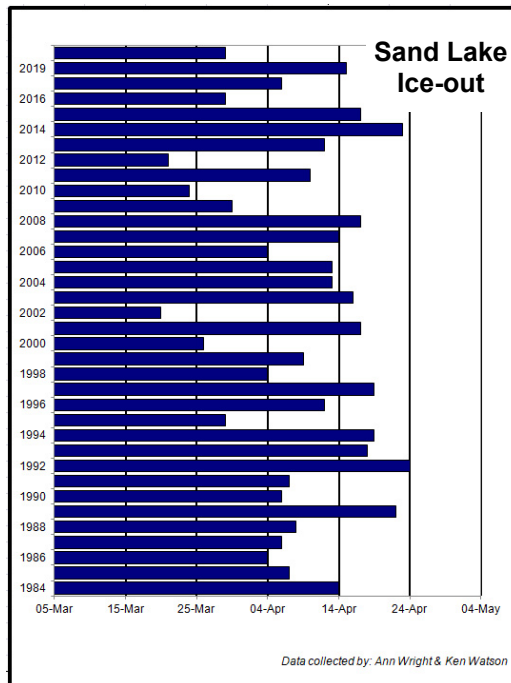
### RENTER’S GUIDE

As noted last year, Mike Miles has compiled a renter’s guide for those renting our their cottage. You’ll find it as a PDF download on our website at: [www.sandlakeestates.ca](http://www.sandlakeestates.ca)

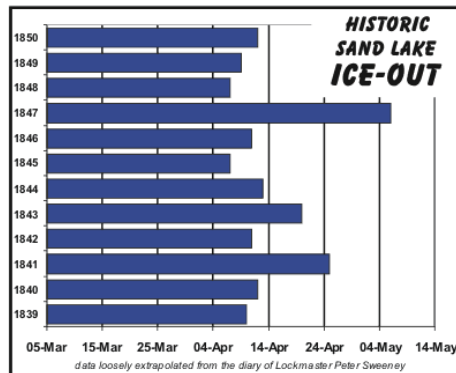
## ICE-OUT

In each newsletter the yearly ice-on and ice-out has been included. This winter ice-on was December 7, 2019 while ice out was March 29, 2020.

We have a long record on Sand Lake with dates going back to 1984. The trend over time is to a slightly earlier ice-out average date — the overall average is April 9 which represents a shift from an earlier average of April 10 to now about April 8. As you can see, it can fluctuate greatly from year to year, however the overall trend to an earlier ice-out date is consistent.



A few years ago I did the unscientific exercise of trying to figure out some very early ice-out dates based on the 1839 to 1850 diary of Peter Sweeney, the first lockmaster at Jones Falls. Peter was responsible for looking after Davis Lock in the winter—he would walk over the ice on Sand Lake to Davis, but at some point in the spring he would be boating. So somewhere in-between those dates was ice-out. That unscientific average is April 14.



## GARBAGE PICKUP

Garbage pickup for our roads (Walnut Point, Pine Ridge and Eden) is on **MONDAY** (or Tuesday if Monday is a holiday) - **summer and winter!** From Victoria Day to Thanksgiving the Monday pickup is at the end of **your driveway** (NOT at the end of the main roads) and from Thanksgiving to Victoria Day the Monday pickup is at the Davis Lock Road ends of Walnut Point Road and Pine Ridge Road.

If you're travelling to and from the cottage the best solution is to take your garbage home with you.

It is your responsibility to clean up any spills of your garbage in a timely manner. To ensure that spills don't happen in the first place, regular garbage should be placed in a "critter proof" container. Please note that containers you'll see along our roads, including the large one at the top of hill on Walnut Point Road opposite the Hunt property, are private.

To reduce the amount of garbage, it is a good idea to compost any organic material.

The recycling schedule of paper/cardboard/boxboard recycling one week and plastic/metal/glass recycling the next week, continues in 2020. You find the schedule on each page of your Township calendar. Calendars are available at the Post Office in Elgin. **Note that there are changes to recycling**, some items such as clamshell plastic containers are no longer allowed. Check the township website [www.twprideaulakes.on.ca](http://www.twprideaulakes.on.ca) for full details.

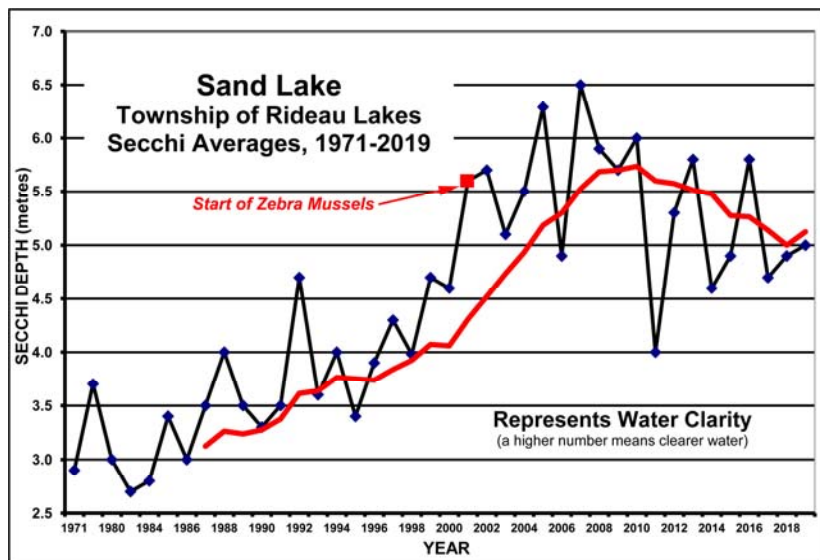
Garbage must be placed in a clear bag and have a Township bag tag attached. A bag without a valid bag tag will not be picked up. Tags can be purchased at Gordanier Grocery in Elgin. Recycling is free and must be in a clear blue bag. Fibres and paper may be bundled but must be tightly tied (or it won't be picked up). There is a limit of 2 bags of garbage and 5 bags of recycling per household, per week and each bag must weigh less than 40 pounds.

Please ensure that **all users** of your cottage (i.e. guests or renters) are aware of the rules.

**New for 2020**—the township has indicated that it would help the driver if something could be put out on a garbage container to indicate that there is garbage to be picked up. This only applies to those who have a large permanent container at the end of their driveway. Most people are doing this anyway, hanging anything from a bright Christmas ornament to red flagging on the container to show there is garbage that needs to be picked up. It's not yet a requirement by the township, but it a good idea for everyone to follow.

## WATER QUALITY

Your association's Lake Steward, Ken Watson, participates in the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's Lake Partner Program. This involves taking weekly water clarity readings using a secchi disk, taking weekly water temperature readings and taking six water samples, once a month, May to October, that are measured for phosphorus and calcium



content.

In 2019, the average secchi water clarity reading was 5.0 metres, up from 4.9 m in 2018. The average phosphorus content of our lake (6 samples) in 2019 was 14.2 ug/L, up slightly from 13.8 ug/L the year before (lower is better). The average calcium was 25 mg/L

Overall, clarity, phosphorus and calcium content remain very good for a lake of our type (Mesotrophic, moderately enriched with nutrients).

The program has been put on hold for 2020 due to COVID-19. They are not accepting water samples at this time. Ken continues to do secchi (clarity) sampling.



## BOATING INFORMATION

- Everyone who operates a powered pleasure boat must have a Pleasure Craft Operator's Card.
- No one under the age of 16 may operate a personal water craft (PWC).
- No one under the age of 12, and not directly supervised by a person 16 years of age or older, may operate a vessel with more than a 10 HP engine.
- No one between the age of 12 and 16, and not directly supervised by a person 16 years of age or older, may operate a vessel with more than a 40 HP engine.
- You must have a copy of your boat license with you while boating (same as vehicle registration, the OPP will ask for this if they stop you).
- Make sure you have all safety equipment required for your boat, which includes items such as a buoyant heaving line, a watertight flashlight (working with batteries loaded) and a manual sound-signaling device.
- There must be an Canadian Approved Life Jacket or PFD, of appropriate size, for every person on board. It must be in good condition (no rips/tears). If an inflatable PFD is used, it **MUST BE WORN** if you are in an open boat, or on deck or in the cockpit of a larger boat.
- For most boats (including canoes/kayaks), consuming alcohol or cannabis on board is against the law. And, just like a car, you have to be sober to operate a boat.
- If you are a tow boat for a water-skier, tuber, etc., you must have at least 2 people and 3 seats in the boat. There must be a driver, an observer and a spare seat for each person being towed.
- While refueling, all occupants of the boat must be ashore, all engines must be off, all open flames must be extinguished. Portable fuel tanks must be filled ashore.
- Stand-Up Paddleboards require a PFD and a sound signaling device. If you're not wearing the PFD, you must also carry a 15m buoyant heaving line.



**Bass guarding a nest**

## SEPTIC SYSTEMS

This is your yearly reminder to take stock of your septic system - is it working as it should? Have you had it pumped out recently?

An improperly working septic system will allow the release of harmful bacteria such as E. coli (fecal bacteria) into our lake. It can even contaminate groundwater (i.e. your well or your neighbour's well).



Follow these six steps to keep a healthy system:

- Step 1 – Do** have your septic tank pumped out every three years
- Step 2 – Don't** overload your septic system with water
- Step 3 – Don't** give your septic system indigestion
- Step 4 – Don't** drive or park cars or heavy machinery on the septic bed
- Step 5 – Don't** plant trees or shrubs on or near the septic bed
- Step 6 – Do** let your system grow with the family and usage – know its capacity

### ***Does your septic tank need to be pumped out this year?***

If you didn't know you had a septic system, If it hasn't been pumped out in the last 3 years, If you can't remember when it was last pumped out, then you should have it pumped this year.

Two local contractors who do this work are Bryan's Septic Service in Westport (**613-273-3078**) and Hogan's Septic Service of Seeleys Bay (**613-387-3432** or **1-800-395-1375**).

## BASS FISHING

A reminder to all that the bass fishing season does **not start until the third Saturday of June** (June 15).

The problem with pre-season poaching of bass is that if the bass are pulled off their nests, other predatory fish (sunfish, etc.) will swoop in and eat the bass eggs or fry. This means that even catch and release fishing is damaging to bass stocks.

It is illegal to fish for or take bass before the **third Saturday in June** or after December 15th.

This means that it is against the law to do any type of fishing which potentially targets bass such as casting in areas that are less than 1.8 m (6 ft) in depth, using bass lures or using live bait. ***This includes catch and release.***

If you see a poacher, report the license number of the boat to MNR at **1-877-TIPS-MNR** (1-800-847-7667).

## Soloing a Canoe

Earlier this spring, a few people took advantage of calm water and no boats to do a bit of canoeing. I pay attention when a canoe (or any boat) comes into Ransier Bay in May since I don't want to see people too closely approach the loon nest that I have in the back of the bay (a nesting loon needs space – loons have been known to abandon a nest if they get too disturbed). But what struck me right away with one canoe was that the solo canoeist was incorrectly positioned, they were sitting in the stern seat of a tandem canoe, with the bow elevated out of the water. This **is not** the proper way to solo a tandem canoe.

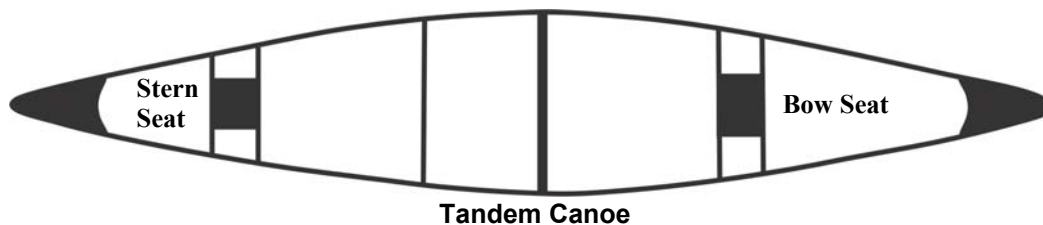
Canoes come in many flavours, but most are symmetrical – they can be paddled either way. The idea with any paddling is to put the centre of gravity near the middle of the canoe so that it will properly track and be less susceptible to wind. When you tandem paddle, the front person sits in a seat with leg room to the bow and the back person sits in a seat close to the stern of the canoe. If you solo a tandem canoe, there are generally two choices. Either you can kneel to position yourself

closer to the centre, or, if you're like me and prefer sitting to kneeling, and your canoe allows it, you use the bow seat as the stern seat (you can also sit on a thwart, but that's less comfortable than using a seat). In that seated configuration, to make the canoe flatter in the water (to track better), I either have a 70 lb dog in front of me or a 5 gallon jerry can with 50 lbs of water near the bow. With a proper J stroke and a balanced canoe, you shouldn't have to switch sides when paddling other than when your arms get tired (I flip sides every 100 strokes or so).

Bottom line is that the bow of the canoe should never be out of the water. The more the bow of the canoe is out of the water, the more difficult it is to paddle properly and the greater the risk that a gust of wind could flip the canoe.

At least one solo paddler I saw this spring was not wearing a life jacket which is also problematic. This spring there were two local drownings of canoeists (one near Smiths Falls and one on Lower Beverley Lake) – in both instances the canoeist was not wearing a life jacket.

- Ken Watson



A symmetrical canoe with two seats. When soloing, the single paddler sits in the bow seat, facing to the stern. The diagram is the configuration of the canoe I have, an 17 foot tripping style canoe. The center thwart is the yoke used for portaging the canoe. More typical is the slightly shorter and wider prospecting canoe. Thwart positions will vary depending on the design of the canoe, not all allow a comfortably seated soloing position.

## The Rideau Canal

### The Virtual Rideau

For those of you who can't get out or just want to enjoy a Rideau experience at home, the TVO "slow TV" show, **Tripping the Rideau**, a four-hour real time journey along the Rideau Canal from Manotick to Ottawa, which was first aired this spring, can now be viewed on-line by going to [www.trippingtherideaucanal.ca](http://www.trippingtherideaucanal.ca)

Also on that page are links to several 360 degree virtual reality videos. When watching these videos on your computer, you can see the 360 degree view by moving your mouse. If viewed on a smartphone, simply move your phone to see different views. And for those who happen to have a VR headset, you'll get the full immersive 360 degree experience.

### The Rideau in 2020

Parks Canada opened the Rideau Canal on June 1 with the exception of Jones Falls and Kingston Mills where infrastructure work was delayed due to COVID-19. Those two locks opened on June 24. All facilities all available except for group camping and oTENTik rentals. Lockage is the same as before except that the lockstaff will not handle your lines and will not allow rafting in a lock (likely not an issue this year with greatly reduced boat traffic).

Hours of operation remain the same as previous years.



New signs posted on the lock gates



## BE TICK AWARE!

This is an annual article since Lyme disease continues to increase in Ontario and it is present in our area. Lyme disease is carried by the blacklegged tick (aka deer tick) in our region— the tick picks up the disease from both deer and mice. If you've got a dog, you're well aware of ticks (and likely have some expertise in properly removing them).

**Prevention** – the best defense is to avoid getting a tick on you. Ticks generally hang out in long grasses and plants (such as we have on most of our properties and along the sides of our roads). Covering up (long pants, socks, long sleeves) generally works, but is often not practical in summer. Mosquito repellent containing Icaridin or DEET works against ticks – apply it to any exposed area of skin that a tick might latch onto. Don't rely on insect repellents that don't contain either of those ingredients. For more information see:

[www.cps.ca/documents/position/preventing-mosquito-and-tick-bites](http://www.cps.ca/documents/position/preventing-mosquito-and-tick-bites)

It is also recommended that you take a shower when you come in from being in a tick area (any area with long grass) to wash away any tiny ticks before they latch onto you.

**Clothing** places such as Mark's sell clothing containing permethrin, a natural repellent for ticks and mosquitoes. It's been available in the U.S. for years, but only recently received Health Canada approval (with the caveat that the clothing must have a non-permethrin liner).

**Removal** – you should do a tick check every day. They can be very small, but look for something that shouldn't be there (they can look like a small seed). They prefer a warm spot – neck, armpit or groin area. The good news is that it takes a tick carrying Lyme disease 24 to 48 hours to transmit the disease to the host – so you can avoid the problem by removing the tick early. The trick is to very gently pull or pry the tick away from the skin, taking care not to leave the head lodged in the skin. Gentle but firm pulling will force the tick to let go. Then swab the affected area with rubbing alcohol to remove any tick-borne bacteria and apply a topical antibiotic (i.e. Polysporin) to prevent possible infection.

**Lyme Disease** – this can be a debilitating disease for humans and may be hard to detect, although it is easy to treat with antibiotics **if caught early**. The symptoms vary and may include fever, headache, fatigue, depression, and a characteristic circular skin rash. The rash is a clear give-away – a bulls-eye pattern rash that can appear from a few days to a month after the initial bite. **BUT not everyone develops the rash** (about 80% do but 20% don't).

**If In Doubt** – if you have a tick that appears to have been on you for more than a few hours then save it once removed (for later identification of type). Unfortunately our nearest health centre, Country Roads Community Health Centre in Portland, does not do tick identifications. However they will do tick removals and if they believe that you've been exposed to Lyme disease, they can initiate a test. You'll be best off in the long run dealing with your own family physician. Be aware that even in 2020, Lyme disease is poorly understood by most doctors and the tests for it are unreliable. There is no vaccine for it and, if not caught very early, there no cure.

**Dog Owners** – there are new tick prevention meds now available. Ask your vet about your dog's best options.

**More Information:** the internet of course has tons of information, best to check with official health provider websites.



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## OUR LOONS

There are a number of artificial loon nesting platforms on Sand Lake. We ask that you and your guests avoid approaching any of these during nesting season, early-May to mid-June. This can disrupt the nesting loon, sometimes to the point of nest abandonment.

We also ask boaters to please be aware of the small loon chicks, especially during July and August. Also please make all visitors and renters aware of the fact that loon chicks are in the area and that they are very vulnerable to being run over by a boat or PWC. They are hard to spot in the water and too young to be able to avoid boats. It is up to you to avoid them.

