



SLA News and Views
Sparrow Lake Association

Serving Lakefront Property Owners and Cottagers
Lock # 42 Washago - Lock # 43 Swift Rapids

News Coordinator: *Jill King*
Editor: *Meredith Oberfrank*

News Writer: *Courtney Reistetter*
Web Master: *Karen Prendergast*

CONTENT

- 1. Greetings from the Sparrow Lake Association Executive Bob Corbett
- 2. FOCA *Working for You* - Annual General Meeting March 2, 2013 Jill King
- 3. Public Municipal Affairs—**The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly!** John Cooper
- 4. A *Darker Family Donation* to Protect our Environment Courtney Reistetter
- 5. *Member Bring a Member Volunteers Make Our Day!* Jill King
- 6. In Memory of Departed SLA Member Morrison Family
- 7. Cottage *Things To Know* Jill King
- 8. SLA *Fun in the Sun* Summertime Events Courtney Reistetter
- 9. *Kids Can Do...* at the Cottage! Courtney Reistetter
- 10. Volunteers Please - *Environment Watch - Weed & Water* Jill King
- 11. *The Good News:* Lake Simcoe Clean-up Funding Renewed John Cooper
- 12. Pro-Active Measures -*Lake Stewart Program /SLA Water Tests* Wendy Miller

1. Greetings from the Sparrow Lake Association Executive **Bob Corbett**

I can hardly wait for the real spring to arrive. We've had enough of the minus temperatures, the snow flurries, the grey rainy days well into mid- April. The Spring Cottage Life Show was a teaser to get people pumped up for the season, but with ice still in many bays and some cottage roads blocked with late melting snow, we are still a few weeks away from getting opened.

You will see as you read thru this Spring News Letter, our SLA directors and volunteers have been busy over the past few months. We were fortunate to have three great new volunteers (Courtney Reisetter, Meredith Oberfrank and Karin Prendergast) work with our directors to help put this letter together and added to our website. So what's new for 2013

Our SLA website got a new makeover with easy to navigate links for all kinds of news, information, business contacts and a new "classified" tab where our members can list articles for sale, looking to buy,



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babysitting, grass cutting services etc. that can be helpful to all our members ... Check it out at <http://www.sparrowlakeassn.com>

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association (FOCA) which represents 100's of cottage associations like ours is continually updating their website with environmental, safety and operational issues that affect us locally, provincially and federally. This is a great site to add as a "favorite" to reference. You will find several links to the FOCA site throughout this letter.

Your SLA directors continue to keep in touch with both Gravenhurst and Severn Townships, the Trent Severn Waterways and network with many businesses in the area. News and updates will be included in our newsletter and breaking news sent out in e-Blast format. Please make sure we have your current email information.

You will see several events planned for our SLA members including a golf tournament, fishing derby, picnic and social, regatta and AGM. These events require volunteers to help run them and need participation by our members, families and their guests to be successful. This is also a great opportunity to connect with old friends and create new ones. Please note the dates and perhaps pass the details along to your neighbor, who hasn't yet heard about the SLA.

So ... bring on the warm weather, the summer toys and heck ... even the black flies. Lets just get it started! I look forward to seeing you throughout the summer!

Cheers ...Bob

Bob Corbett, President Sparrow Lake Association

2. FOCA Working for You - Annual General Meeting March 2, 2013

Jill King

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations FOCA Annual General Meeting was well attended. The topics for the day were very dynamic:



- Adapting to climate change in Ontario—seeing the signs; managing what we cannot avoid and avoiding what we cannot manage (from the Ministry of Natural Resources)
- FOCA Achievement Award for this year's winning Member Association
- New Ontario regulations for the Not for Profit Corporations Act—changes and implications for Cottage Associations that will soon affect Member Associations
- Cardiac emergencies in cottage country—would you know what to do?
- Environment and Lake Steward updates (from the Ministry of the Environment)
- Lake Partner Program
- Blue-green algae monitoring



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To see details on the above points from the FOCA AGM meeting, click here:
http://www.foca.on.ca/news_and_events

I strongly suggest that you visit the [FOCA website](#) on a regular basis. There is a great variety of material posted that is most helpful to cottage owners. They publish “elerts” on this site to keep us apprised of the latest events, activities, and issues that are important to us.

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) is a non-profit, voluntary organization. For over 45 years, FOCA has been dedicated to supporting the interests of cottagers. FOCA promotes sustainable waterfront communities by encouraging positive environmental stewardship, by supporting strong community leadership, and by promoting fair and equitable public policy.

[FOCA](#) has “gone green.” It works on topics such as green cottage design; air, light, and noise pollution; and addressing new environmental issues that are facing waterfront owners today.

[FOCA](#) has great information on some of the hot topics that may interest you: land use, property taxation, septic systems, waterways, and fire and water safety.

FOCA advocates for five main areas:

Lake Environment—Water Quality; Wetlands; Crown Lands

Biodiversity of the Waterfront—Shorelines; Fisheries; Wildlife; Birds/Butterflies; Vegetation; Invading Species

Sustainability at the Lake—Sustainable Design; Septic Systems; Lights; Waterfront Pollution; Noise Pollution; Air Pollution

Planning and Protecting for the Future—Ontario Land Use Planning; Watershed Planning; Land Trusts; Protecting the Environment

Waterfront Groups in Action—Volunteerism; Recruiting; Communications; Fundraising

3. Public Municipal Affairs Town Hall Issues—The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly! John Cooper

Trent-Severn Waterway Status for 2013

All SLA property owners need to be aware of the current ongoing issues with the Trent-Severn Waterway (TSW) that affect the Sparrow Lake area. In 2012, several Town Hall meetings highlighted Sparrow Lake property owners' concerns about the TSW: its rapidly deteriorating infrastructure and the maintenance of reasonable water levels. Attendees questioned whether Parks Canada is the correct ministry to maintain this valuable heritage waterway. Dams, weirs, and other water-control devices throughout the system are badly in need of costly repair and replacement. This is a major challenge for our federal government in a time of necessary cutbacks.

Here is a link to an Ottawa Citizen article that indicates that Parks Canada has retreated again on the Rideau canal fees—they will lower mooring fees and will keep the unlimited single day pass, albeit at a 50% price increase from the current pass. We can assume that these prices will be similar or the same for the TSW.

For further information, check the Parks Canada website: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/agen/tarifs-fees/consultation/ann-app3.aspx#canal>



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So, how *is* the weather in cottage country? As of April 18, the ice is out in McLean Bay and the main river channel across Sparrow Lake is open, but most bays on the lake and to the sides of the river are still ice bound. Since we have had much colder-than-normal weather in March and in the first half of April, melting and runoff have been well controlled. While water levels are somewhat high, we do not expect any property damage. Unless we have heavy rains for a protracted period, we expect that water levels will be well under control for the spring season. Kudos to the TSW water control experts for running the levels lower through the winter to make room for the heavier snowfall melt!

To those of our members who pay their taxes to Severn Township, the 2013 tax increase is a modest 1.58%. Gravenhurst the tax increase, the weighted average of a 6.4% budget increase for the town of Gravenhurst, a decrease of 4.1% for the education component, and a .5% increase for the district share does represent a 1.3% increase in taxes for our SLA members who pay their taxes to Gravenhurst. This assumes, of course, that their assessment remains the same as in the past.

As a year-round lake resident, John Cooper is happy to field questions from our members. Feel free to call or email: 705-687-2133/ johnhcooper@gmail.com.

4. A Darker Family Donation to Protect our Environment

Courtney Reistetter

SLA members and conversationalists Amy and Dave Darker currently have a parcel of land that they would like to donate to a local nature conservation organization. Details of this particular donation have not been finalized, although the family has a history of making valuable contributions to our environment.

In 1999, Amy and Dave donated funds to the Couchiching Conservancy, which were used to purchase a 20-hectare property called the McDarker Wetland. The area located between Sparrow Lake and Highway 11 is home to black spruce, cedar, and white birch trees; rare orchids and northern wildflowers; moose, black bears, red foxes, beavers, and muskrats; and ovenbirds, blue jays and chickadees.



SLA members Amy and Dave Darker donate land to protect natural habitats



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In 1995, brothers Bill and Dave Darker donated 29 hectares of land in memory of their grandparents, who were the founders of Grandview Lodge and Roehls (the original camp on the land where Torpitt Lodge and Tory's Landing were eventually built). This scenic site is bisected by Deadman's Creek, which flows into Deep Bay on Sparrow Lake. This part of the Trent-Severn Waterway is one of the richest areas in Canada for aquatic plants such as pond weeds, water lilies, bladderwort, and water milfoil. Uncommon plants found in the area include round-leaved sundew (a carnivorous plant), rose pogonia (a species of orchid), and pink moccasin orchids.

"We want to protect land in its natural state for the benefit of all in perpetuity," stated the Darkers. Nature conservation organizations—such as the groups to which the Darker's donate—work to protect areas of natural diversity and to sustain these habitats for long-term survival.

5. Member Bring a Member Volunteers Make Our Day!

Jill King

SLA membership needs to grow! When we checked the Severn and Gravenhurst Township Office records, it was discovered that there are approximately 450 waterfront property owners who could become SLA members in the area between Lock 42 and Lock 43 Swift Rapids. SLA current membership reflects one-quarter of the 450 potential members.

SLA membership is initiating a "**Member Bring a Member**" campaign. All SLA members can all act as recruiters in their own cottage area. As a recruiter, we encourage you to *speak out* to neighbours and friends of the many benefits they receive as SLA members.

Print out and give the SLA brochure to give to potential members. Better still send potential members a link to the Sparrow Lake Association website, where everything is explained in detail.
www.sparrowlakeassociation.com

Please note: The SLA membership year follows the calendar year (January to December). The cost is \$30 for one year, or the best bargain is \$75.00 for a three-year membership. There is a printable membership form on our website that you can pass along to friends and family to complete. .

As a good will gesture SLA membership will give you a small thank you gift card for each new member you recruit. Make sure the new member gives SLA your name!

Volunteers Make Our Day!

The Sparrow Lake Association is built on volunteer help. We ask if any members are willing to lend their skills as leaders for SLA projects or lend their specialized expertise to benefit all SLA members.

SLA would be happy to hear from you. Here are just a few examples:

- Share information on important municipal issues affecting cottage waterfront property
- Organize the running of one of the SLA summer time fun events



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- Present your specialized knowledge in a SLA membership workshop i.e. climate change
- Provide or give advice on valuable resources for all members i.e. to reduced rates, costs,
- Monitor the invasive weed growth in the lake waters near your property.
- Report lake water changes or become a MOE Lake Partner to take samples for government testing

[For further information about any of the volunteer opportunities mentioned above, or to offer your assistance, please contact membership@sparrowlakeassociation.com.](mailto:membership@sparrowlakeassociation.com)

6. In Memory of Departed SLA Member



SLA sends our condolences to the family of Dale Morrison-Guerra (November 21, 1954–January 22, 2013).

At all ages, Dale constantly sought new adventures; always looking to put her insatiable love for life into action. Independence, resourcefulness, and a strong nature formed the backbone of the undeniably loving and selfless warrior that was Dale. Her instantly recognizable laughter will continue to ring in our ears even as her spirit moves on to new adventures.



Dale is sadly missed by her husband, Remo, and children Paul, Dan, and Jill. She is also survived by her parents James and Jacqueline Morrison and siblings Lynn, Dawn, Craig, and David.

Dale was a past President of the Sparrow Lake Association and spent many years cottaging on Sparrow Lake with her extended family.



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7. Cottage Things To Know

Jill King

It's Your Health!

This year, at the FOCA Annual General Meeting, a vital topic was highlighted that we urge all SLA members to note: *Would you know what to do in the event of a cardiac emergency in cottage country?*

This turned out to be one of the most popular FOCA sessions. Due to overwhelming demand, several forthcoming 90-minute sessions are being offered in central and southern Ontario.

SLA members are welcome to attend any of these sessions. The FOCA website lists the locations that are offering Cardiac Response Training Sessions in April and May.

BOATsmart!® Exam

If you operate a boat, please ensure you have a copy of your boating license in the boat.

Please be sure that each boat you use has a bailing device, a heaving line (rope), a sound-signaling device, and approved life jackets that fit each person. The OPP are extremely vigilant cruising the lakes on the busy Victoria Day long weekend, and check many watercrafts. If your boat is missing safety items, the fines are huge! Even paddleboats, canoes, and kayaks need to contain the correct items.

Take the *BOATsmart!®* practice test at <http://www.boatinglicense.ca/practice-test/boat-licence-test.aspx>.

In the summer of 2012, the SLA presented a workshop on Cottage Succession Planning. What are other SLA topics that would interest you for summertime learning sessions? Are there any volunteers who would agree to coordinate such workshops?

Please pick a topic and let us know. For example, solar panels, "green" cottage inspections, climate change, boating safety emergency preparedness, winter cottage closing tips, or any other topics that may interest you.

8. SLA "Fun in the Sun" Summertime Events

Courtney Reistetter

SLA Golf Tournament

Treat Dad to a round of golf this Father's Day! Family and friends welcome.

Saturday, June 15 at the Lake St. George Golf Club, Sparrow Lake Road. Tee-off time is 10 a.m.

Cost is \$55 per person: includes golf, cart, and lunch.



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Winning foursome of last golf tournament (2009) – Kyle Jones, Jill King, Dave and Sandy Cude

This year the SLA Golf Tournament is June 15. Yes, it is the same weekend as Father's Day! Start the day with a morning golf game. It's a great way to make Dad happy. The games start at 10 a.m. Foursomes will leave with a "shotgun" start. Golfing will be followed by a "meet-and-great" luncheon. We will post details soon on the SLA website and will send members a reminder.

Please contact SLA if you could lend assistance to coordinate the Golf Event or helping out contact info@sparrowlakeassociation.com

Fishing Derby and Family Picnic

Saturday, July 6 at Silver Pines Resort.

Price includes fishing derby, games, prizes and lunch. Fishing from 9:30–11:30 a.m. Lunch and games at 12:00 p.m.



Family Day Picnic

During National Fishing Week, from July 3–11, anyone can try fishing in Ontario without a license. Regular Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations and limits still apply. To celebrate, the SLA will once again host a fishing derby and picnic on July 6, using the Silver Pines Restaurant property as our base location. We are grateful to the restaurant owners for their hospitality. This derby is a fun event for those young and young at heart. There are great prizes for the kids. Age categories will depend on the number/ages of participants, and there will be two grand prizes:



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one for the largest fish caught, and one for the most fish caught. Participants must supply their own equipment and observe all fishing/boating safety rules and regulations. The cost is \$4 for children under 12, and \$5 per adult. These rates help to cover the cost of the barbeque. Fishing starts at 10 a.m. All participants must return to the tent by noon. Prizes and lunch will follow. Advance registration is required so that enough food and prizes can be ordered.

Please RSVP your participation or your offer to help that day: info@sparrowlakeassociation.com.

REGATTA 2013

What: SLA Regatta, games, races, contests, BBQ,

When: Sunday August 4th 2013, 9am sharp

Where: Bayview Wildwood Resort - on Sparrow Lake

Who: SLA members and guests of Bayview Wildwood - all ages.

Why; Fun for the whole family, friendly competition, social enjoyment, good food



Sparrow Lake Annual Regatta at Bayview Wildwood Resort

For years the SLA Regatta has been described as one of the most exciting events of the summer. Members come together for a fun filled day of friendly competition, games, contests, or to enjoy a BBQ lunch. You are welcome to attend as a participant or spectator, we have something to do for all ages such as kiddies games and scavenger hunt for the little twerps, or baking contests, fish casting accuracy or cottage carpenter for the old boys and everything in between. Test your skills in a swim, canoe, inner tube or kayak race, and run or walk in the 3km mini marathon. We have ribbons for everyone - even for just participating....lots of prizes too - and the odds of winning are high! It's always great to see the enthusiasm and devotion showcased by families eager to win a trophy for the "Cottage Cup", the "Spirit Award", or the "Bill Bowman Canoe Classic".

The Regatta's would not be a success without the generous support of volunteers and prize donators. We would be very grateful if everyone could bring a small gift for our raffle. Please email us at info@sparrowlakeassociation.com.



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9. Kids Can Do... at the Cottage!

Courtney Reistetter

Ontario Turtle Tally and Frog Watch

Help the Toronto Zoo preserve species of turtles and frogs by participating in two environmental initiatives this summer!

Ontario Turtle Tally: Help track the location of turtles throughout Ontario. If you spot a turtle, go online to report your sighting. The information kids and families track is kept and analyzed to identify species of turtles that may be at risk. Turtles are more often seen in June when they are travelling to their nesting sites.

FrogWatch Ontario: Listen for frog and toad calls in the spring and summer to help save amphibians in Ontario. Over time, trends in your observations may detect measurable climate change in Ontario. FrogWatch data also contributes to scientific databases on frog distributions in Ontario.

For more information about the Turtle Tally and Frog Watcher, visit the [Toronto Zoo's website](#).



Kids love to camp...sign up today!

Parents can now register children for the [2013 summer camp at Sparrow Lake Camp](#).

Sparrow Lake Camp offers a traditional overnight camp program with a number of activities that campers can participate in. Main activities are swimming, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, fine arts, performing arts, discovery, Wonders of Wilderness (WOW), sports, games, and challenges.

For more information, attend the Sparrow Lake Camp open house on June 29 from 1–4 p.m. Meet the staff, go for a swim, and join in the BBQ lunch!



You can also check out the [Sparrow Lake Camp website](http://www.sparrowlakecamp.com). www.sparrowlakecamp.com



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Sparrow Lake In Pictures

All kids and families love a good contest!

Drawing and colouring contest: children under the age of 12 can send us drawings of favourite cottage activities. Please include the child's name and age with the submission.

Photo contest: families are invited to send us favourite photos taken at the cottage or during an activity on Sparrow Lake.

Winners will receive a McDonalds gift card and will have their photos and drawings posted on our website.



10. Volunteers Please - *Environment Watch - Weed & Water*

Jill King

Invasive Weed Growth in our Lakes

Do SLA members want to participate in an Environmental Watch - ***Weed and Water?*** Members could monitor our shorelines to record occurrences and report changes. We do hope that Mother Nature has run her course and that there is no or very little invasive weed this coming summer. Last summer's extreme heat and dryness were unusual.



Sparrow Lake August 2012



Sparrow Lake - Entering Deep Bay!



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The Eurasian Water Milfoil is a fast-growing, very dense weed with a red hue that has taken over many areas of the lake. The weed can bring outboard motors to a halt, and renders some areas unusable for swimming, boating, or water sports

You would be a watchful eye volunteer on lake water growth in your lake area and report to *Environment Watch - Weed and Water*. You could take photos of the Eurasian Water Milfoil or algae and report this year's lack of weeds or increase growth in your area. SLA will then communicate the lake status to the Ministries.

We also encourage all members to be on the watch for blue-green algae, which are rampant in Sparrow Lake as in many Ontario lakes. Causes include extremely hot and dry summers and the accompanying low water levels. High phosphorus levels caused by deficient septic systems, fertilized and chemically treated lawns and golf courses, and the gradual reduction of marshlands that act, as natural filtration systems are other factors.

What are blue-green algae? In 2012, many SLA members saw these algae in their lake water and the "slime" on the surface of the water. Note: Not all algae are toxic. Click on the link below to learn what to look for and what to do if you find algae in your area of Sparrow Lake. Algae are small, mostly microscopic plants that live in virtually all water bodies.

http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2013/03/23/will_this_summer_see_another_toxic_algae_bloom_in_lake_erie.html



The SLA will be closely monitoring the Milfoil and algae issues, and will continue to cooperate with FOCA on identifying appropriate action. The SLA will actively participate with the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of the Environment, and Parks Canada in an effort to create best practice measures to control these weeds.

We invite SLA members to be proactive. Together we can endeavour to note new developments, seek the safest best practices guidelines to control growth, and find resources to eliminate invasive growth in our lake.

Please contact SLA if you are interested: [Contact info@sparrowlakeassociation.com](mailto:info@sparrowlakeassociation.com)



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12. The Good News: Lake Simcoe Clean-up Funding Renewed

John Cooper

The good news is that the federal government has provided funding to clean up the situation.

The federal government has renewed the \$29 million dollar clean up of Lake Simcoe and SE Georgian Bay <http://environmentaldefence.ca/issues/saving-lake-simcoe>

The phosphate levels in these two lakes have manifested in the great increase in blue-green algae blooms and extraordinary weed growth, particularly the Eurasian Water Milfoil. SLA members understand these concerns very well.

Since most of the Sparrow Lake and Trent-Severn River water originates in Lake Simcoe, we have paid a big water-quality price for this problem. Throughout our area, from Lock 42 to the Swift Rapids Lock 43, these two manifestations of phosphorous-rich water have reached epidemic proportions of significant concern. Property values are threatened because of these issues. There are many bays where it is not possible to run a motorboat, and quieter areas where it is a struggle to paddle a canoe or kayak, because of the density of the Milfoil. Swimming in many areas is out of the question because of the volume of blue-green algae. The algae used to disappear once the water cooled off, but it was still in evidence in great masses until the end of October 2012. It was easily visible from the air, as was the Milfoil.

Please consider being part of a larger movement. Restore our Water (ROW)!

Sign a petition if you feel strongly about protecting Ontario waterways: <http://www.restoreourwater.com>

For further information, please contact environment@sparrowlakeassociation.com

12. Pro-Active Measures- MOE -Lake Stewart Program /SLA Water Tests

Wendy Miller

SLA participates in the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) Lake Partner Program. Any cottager can receive the government test kit to take water samples to return to government lab to test. All SLA are encouraged to take pro-active approach to ensure their water is safe. Please register with the Ministry of the Environment and bookmark this site

<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/category/water/index.htm>.

The SLA also performs their certain specific lake water quality tests. The SLA water testing starts in selected lake areas in early May 2013 and goes throughout the summer months.

With the help of Certified Water Test Inspectors, your SLA volunteers will determine five key areas to test for water quality. The tests performed are for basic microorganisms, phosphorous, turbidity, or other issues that may cause health problems. In addition, metal concentration levels in the water will be monitored this year.

If you are concerned about your water quality, you may want to do your own testing. You will need to secure a sample test bottle from an independent private test laboratory and submit it for analysis.



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Here is a nearby Water Testing Resource in Orillia:

Central Ontario Analytical Laboratory (C.O.A.L.)

To view the Practices for Collection & Handling of Drinking Water Samples guidebook
www.coalab.ca/WaterSamples.html

Visit C.O.A.L.'s [website](#) to view the Courier Schedule and to see a copy of C.O.A.L.'s Guidelines for Depot Locations.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the lab at 705-326-8285 or contact coal@on.aibn.com.

For cottagers with well water the *Public Health Units* will test well water for free!

On behalf of the Sparrow Lake Association,

Have a GREAT Summer!

Visit our website www.sparrowlakeassn.com