



GREATER OTTER LAKE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2020 UPDATE

<https://www.gora-argo.org>

AGM/Board Positions

As you know, we had to cancel the 2020 Annual General Meeting due to the pandemic. In the absence of an AGM, thank you to everyone who paid the \$25.00 membership fee for 2020. For those who have not yet paid, please note that you can enjoy the simplicity of making your payment via e-transfer to gora.argo@gmail.com.

Four Board positions were up for nomination in 2020: Nick Cushman, Terry Lafleur, Dorothy Wheeler, Stewart Wilson. The Board extended these positions until 2021 (our next opportunity for an AGM).

We have also had one departure from the Board - H  l  ne Boulet has stepped away after many years of dedicated work for GORA. Thank you, H  l  ne, for all that you have accomplished over the years for GORA!!

New By-law: Mandatory Boat Washing

The Municipality of Otter Lake has enacted a new by-law that requires everyone to wash their boat before launching it into any body of water located in the Municipality. The by-law represents a huge step in the right direction in GORA's efforts to protect our lakes. We are pleased with the progress made so far by the Mayor and Councillors, particularly Robin Zacharias and Carlen Lafleur, who have worked together with GORA on the ad hoc "Boat Wash" committee.

We encourage you to review the by-law once it is posted on the Municipality's website at Local Government-Bylaws-Environment

(<https://www.otterlakequebec.ca/by-laws>). Although there are details to be worked out by spring 2021, here are a few main highlights.

Boat washing **must** be done at the hot water pressure wash station located behind the Municipal Hall at 15 Palmer Street. Hot water pressure washing is the most effective way to remove invasive species. The boat as well as the engine, trailer, holding tank, and any compartment that may contain or accumulate water (if applicable) must be washed.

How will it work for taxpayers?

- 1) It will be free - go to the Municipal Office to obtain a magnetic card that will exempt you from payment;
- 2) Attest to understanding and complying with the by-law;
- 3) Swipe the card at the payment kiosk located at the wash station and wash your boat;
- 4) The payment kiosk will issue a "wash certificate" and transaction receipt;
- 5) Keep the "wash certificate" as proof of washing and place transaction receipt on dashboard of vehicle;
- 6) Shoreline taxpayers who leave their boat permanently on the water will also be issued a sticker to affix to the front area of the boat;
- 7) The obligation to wash the boat remains if the vessel is moved to another body of water and returns for re-entry.

How will it work for non-taxpayers?

- 1) Non-taxpayers will need to pay \$10 per motorized boat (non-motorized boats are free);
- 2) Payment is accepted at the payment kiosk at the wash station;
- 3) Once the boat is washed, the kiosk will issue a "wash certificate" and transaction receipt;
- 4) The boat user must keep the "wash certificate" to show as proof;
- 5) The boat user must place their transaction receipt on the dash of their vehicle so that it is visible;
- 6) The wash certificate for non-taxpayers will be time limited. Duration of validity is yet to be determined.

Implementing the By-law

The Municipality applied for, and received, a grant from the Government of Quebec to do the following:

- Install a new hot water pressure washer at the boat wash station
- Install a payment kiosk and security camera at the wash station
- Develop communications material concerning the by-law and importance of boat washing
- Produce new signs to inform the public of the new by-law and direct boat owners to the wash station

The objective is to have the new equipment installed by end of March, in advance of the 2021 boat launching season. GORA is continuing to work with Councillors by contributing to the development of brochures and communications material, as well as the content of new signage.

The by-law involves a culture shift and it will require the entire community to respect and implement. While communications material will be widespread, we encourage everyone to talk to their neighbours and help ensure that they are aware of the by-law and understand its significance. There is a \$300 fine for non-compliance; we trust that there will be an understanding of the importance of boat-washing and we can continue to protect our lakes for enjoyment for many years to come.

2020 Lake Water Testing

Despite the pandemic, we continued to do the lake water testing (in a safe manner). A big thank you goes out to Valerie Buchanan (Little Hughes), Nick Cushman (Hughes), John and Maggie Madden (McCuaig), and Stewart Wilson (Farm) for collecting the samples throughout the summer. The regular Secchi disk testing for water clarity was completed and data was sent to the Province for analysis. Final results should be available on the Province's website by Spring 2021.

In addition, for the second consecutive year, separate sampling was done in July, August and September to determine the levels of phosphorus, chlorophyll, and dissolved organic carbon in the four lakes. As you may recall,

these tests are done periodically (last done 2010-2012) and typically over a 2-3 year period in order to get a representative sample. The water samples were sent to the Province for analysis and we will let you know the results once they are made available.

We are grateful to the Municipal Council for their 50% contribution towards the cost of these special tests.

Farm Lake Water Level Measurement Project

As of April 2020, GORA began recording the water level of Farm Lake to ensure that water is flowing out of the lake properly through the creek and culvert. Our goal is to ensure that debris does not impede the flow of the creek, which would result in elevated levels of lake water, an abnormally high water table, and flooding of basements in the spring.

Daily measurement of the lake's water level helps in two ways:

- it will allow us to develop a baseline to compare the level of Farm Lake between years;
- it gives us an early warning that the culvert at the creek may be blocked.

Here are the most significant measurements recorded in 2020:

- Peak = 17.5" above Summer Low* on April 15 (thankfully, this did not result in water infiltration of basements in 2020);
- Low = 2.5" above Summer Low on July 31;
- Current = 4.5" above Summer Low on November 20.

* Summer Low is defined as the lowest level seen on Farm Lake over the last half-decade, as agreed by owners of two of the low-lying properties.

We would like to thank the Municipality for checking the culvert regularly to ensure that the water is flowing freely and for responding quickly when blockages need to be cleared. The complete set of daily measurements is updated frequently (<https://www.gora-argo.org/farm-lake-water-level>).

We will continue to keep you informed of developments and we wish everyone a happy and healthy winter season!!