

PERCY LAKE NEWSLETTER – SPRING, 2010

President's message

Spring has arrived on Percy! Trilliums have been spotted, buds are on the trees, and soon we will welcome blackflies. Susan and I left Percy December 12 in a snow storm and got home April 6. There are many changes on the lake. One sees For Sale and Sold signs on cottages; new roads are being cut into the forest to accommodate the development, and we say farewell to permanent residents, Ken and Wendy Loney. Winter was short and a disappointment for many who ice fish and love snowmobiling - Ice Out day on April 3 was the earliest I can remember.

Your board has been busy over the winter dealing with development issues, shed issues, lake steward issues, and creating a new sign to be placed at the corner of Percy lake Road and Johnson Bay Road. This newsletter will include an update on each of these points along with some special insights into wintering at Percy, the Trent Severn Waterway, the Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners Association, and information about FIRA.

RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND OTHERS is prominent on our new Percy Lake Welcome Sign as is our website, www.plra.net.

The Percy Lake Watershed Plan states "This is your lake. You need to take ownership of your lake. Preserve and protect the good things, and do your best to ensure that the bad things aren't allowed to happen." I think we can all agree with this as I hear many refer to Percy as a bit of paradise. So what does it mean to preserve and protect the good things? And what are the bad things over which we have some control?

This winter your PLRA board has devoted hours to working with council on the new Official Plan for Dysart et al. and has lobbied for stiffer bylaws related to clear cutting of trees on newly developed lots.

The board also (thanks to Ken Loney and Jim Richert) presented yet again at council concerning the issue of allowing sheds on Percy close to the waterfront. The board has also been kept informed of Development on Percy and the placement of roads at the end of Johnson Bay Road and now at the end of the lake heading towards the dam and Haliburton Lake. And after many years of not testing lake water quality, the board will begin water quality testing under the direction of Susan Russel.

The board has also been an active member of the Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners Association (CHPOA) and will be working to create a handbook to be given to new property owners that will introduce them to their lake association and related bylaws.

Individually, each of us can have an impact on the good and the bad. We can respect privacy by keeping noise and light pollution down. We can think before we use the lake inappropriately by not bathing in the lake (yes, even the biodegradable soaps are not as completely degradable as we might hope); using the lake for washing tools and vehicles), and insuring our boat motors are working correctly with no gas leakage to name a few things. Many of us do these things without thinking and I myself am guilty. There is much we can do! With more development on the lake, we have more to do to insure that we respect the environment and each other. Please do not hesitate to contact me @ jack.susan.russel@gmail.com or 754-9405 if you have any concerns. See you on the lake!

Jack Russel – PLRA

**The AGM – Sunday, July 4,
9:30am at the FIRA Hall! Guest
speakers include Murray
Fearrey and Rob Davis, from
Septic Smarts, www.ecoethic.ca
- coffee and goodies will be served!**

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Calf moose, June 3, 2010 (near the Fosters)

Winter and Wildlife experience – submitted by Jim Richert

Winter started late with “ice in” on December 17 – normally “ice in” is the first week of December. As expected, we experienced a week in January of nightly temperatures at minus 25/30 degrees where oil furnaces and wood stoves were burning full tilt to isolate ole man winter outside. The season ended early from a snow perspective as the last significant snow fall was the second week of February. The total snow accumulation for 2009/10 season was 7.7 feet compared to 13.6 feet the previous 2008/09 winter, and 17plus feet the winter before. The ice has now been out for more than two weeks and I am itching to get the fishing boats and trout tackle ready for some early trolling.

The pure white snow blanket, endless visibility unobstructed by leaves and ground foliage, pure blue windless skies make for a picture perfect winter experience at Percy Lake. About mid January the lake ice was good with only slight traces of slush and this

made for great snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling conditions. Even the road excavating crew clearing the portage trail cooperated with the recreation activities by keeping the path open and passable.

Reports from local and out of town ice fisherman indicated that “tight line & fish catch” activity was off compared to previous years. Some attribute this to the late lake “turn over cycle”, meaning cold water layers sinking like a giant saucer stirring up the bottom, forcing the warmer water to the surface. This turbulence slowed down the formation of safe ice thickness and bottom water remained cloudy affecting fish feeding habits.

In past winters, several small groups of deer would travel the shoreline and mingle among cottages, but the numbers were significantly less this year. The occasional fox and moose tracks were spotted along trails and mink traveling the river bank snow looking for the next dinner minnow.

Numerous deer kills have been reported in the area. It is common knowledge wolves are the primary predator accounting for a majority of the loss. Local newspapers expressed concern over the growing wolf population, and reduced fear of humans, as loggers working in the bush and others have experienced close encounters by these mammals. Only a few years back one would hear the occasional howling of a wolf pack at night. Now we see wolf prints on paths, along the roadway, in cottage driveways and witness daylight lake crossing. One cottager woke up one morning only to find a dead deer in the drive. The half eaten carcass was removed but for several days following, two wolves reappeared at 4am to harass the pet dog inside the cottage. Eventually they retreated to the bush. It seems we are experiencing first hand the population rise and fall of various mammals due to the natural food availability cycle.

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NEWS FROM “THAT OTHER ASSOCIATION”

(FIRA: FORT IRWIN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION – submitted by G. Cochrane)

Can you belong to both PLRA and FIRA? You betcha! FIRA is just a social group! Anyone can belong, seasonal or permanent resident. Check us out at www.firahall.ca. Check it often for current activities and what's happening this year.

FIRA has a fabulous offering of restaurant quality meat! Special arrangements have been made with **MacGregor Meats** for a special sale. They are THE BEST ribs ever! Also available are steaks, burgers, and other special meats. Orders must be in by June 27, delivery on Friday, July 2, from 3 to 3:30 p.m. at the FIRA Hall. You can order by following the instructions on the website, www.firahall.ca.

Pancakes!! The annual Pancake Breakfast will be held on August 21 at the Fira Hall.

Pot luck dinners!! We meet once a month, on the third Sunday at 5:30 p.m. for pot-luck. Yum! Bring a dish to share and your drinks.

Gourmet Dinner! Once a year, the ladies of the lake cook up a storm and present haute cuisine to ticket buyers. Check out the website for time and price.

FAB ABS! Fitness classes occur three times each week. Check the website for the schedule and costs. Classes are led by Jane Jaycock, a professional physio-therapist and aerobics instructor.

GOOD GRUB! Come to **Summerfest** at the Fira Hall on July 3 and buy home-baked pies, cakes, brownies, cookies. There is an outstanding yard sale, book sale, craft exhibits, art exhibits, and tickets for the quilt draw (quilt is hand-made by our own lake ladies.) You can rent your own table for the yard sale.

CRAZY FUN! Pub nights, sock hops, talent shows, wine exchanges, karaoke nights,

card nights, progressive dinners, proposed overnight trip to Niagara on the Lake in September for shopping and Shaw, quilting, monthly ladies' luncheons, bbqs, movie nights, book exchange, dvd exchange, puzzle exchange. So much more!

The Trent Severn Waterway and the Coalition for Equitable

Water Flow – submitted by Brian Edey

Our annual water level swings (steep rise in the Spring and deep drop from June to October) cause property and boat damage, damage fish and wildlife habitat, expose navigation issues, etc. Since Percy is a headwater lake in the reservoir system, we are in the group with the greatest level swings (~2m).

When the Federal Government opened the door to comment via their 'study on the future of the TSW,' cottage associations banded together to respond. That initiated the creation of the Coalition for Equitable Water Flow as a single voice. (It has an interesting web site.)

The official action plan from the Federal Government in response to their study was to create the Water management Advisory Council on the TSW. It has a role to provide expert and stakeholder advice to Parks Canada on how to better carry out its responsibilities for water management and includes two representatives from Haliburton County; Keith Hodgson and Chris Riddle. (Chris is co-chair of CEWF and from the Kennisis Lake Association).

The recent (Spring, 2010) Newsletter “Where’s the Water”, prepared by the Coalition for Equitable Water Flow (CEWF) (www.cewf.ca), discusses the impact on lake level management after the 2009-2010 dry winter. As of March 22 the only dams spilling water will be Gull Lake, Moore, and Canning. All others will be in reservoir mode. The Gull River at Minden is in dry

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bed condition. Rate of fill will depend on rains. CEWSF projects include discussions on the Water Budget. Individuals can also find links to TSW water levels, which include Percy Lake as part of the Gull River watershed. As well you can sign up for email updates from their site. **Check out the site for new updates on water levels.**

Development Update on Percy Lake - Submitted by Jim Richert and Ken Loney



New road heading towards the Dam

On January 27, 2010 the Haliburton County Council met at the Minden County Building to hear the seven (7) applications for the Grief land development project on Haliburton and Percy Lakes. Each application, three (3) "common elements condominium roads" and four (4) "plans of subdivision", were summarized by the County Director of Planning. After questions and discussion from the attendees, plus review of written requests, the applications were approved, pending outstanding peer review and approval of various supporting reports. The reports include Site Evaluation (lake capacity, terrain conditions, lake trout impact, natural heritage), Archaeological/Heritage Assessment, Nitrate Loading Impact Assessment, Storm water Management Assessment and Site Development Plan. In addition to peer review requirements, the development proposal was circulated to several agencies, i.e. Municipality of Dysart et al, Bell Canada, Ontario Hydro, Canada Post, School Board, Emergency Services, etc.

During the fall of 2009 and this past winter, the road contractor has been active in clearing, roughing, trucking and grading gravel for the common element condominium roads. Progress as of March 2010 includes final fill and rough grading for the roads to access lots 1-15 beyond the Johnson Bay Road turn-a-round. In addition, the road is rough cleared from the Percy Lake Road turn-a-round to within 250 meters of Haliburton Lake at the point where lot lines start and portage easement to the lake.

For your reference, a proposed site map is available on the PLRA website (www.plra.net). Over the past 2 years PLRA Directors have met with Wilson Consulting Inc., the developer's representative, on several occasions to discuss requests and concerns. A couple of positives from the meetings are; the preservation of and dedicated portage trail between Percy and Haliburton Lakes and the sand spit beach just beyond the narrows. These land tracts are designated as Blocks 15, 16 & 17 that will be conveyed to Dysart et al and eventually managed by PLRA. Best estimate is that "For Sale" signs may appear as early as late spring for the 15 east shore lots.

One question frequently asked concerns the large lots, ie: What's stopping someone from buying one of these large lots and subdividing it into one or more small lots? The main issue is that it would be in violation of the Official Plan of the County of Haliburton and the Municipality of Dysart et al. The OP specifically prevents an owner from subdividing something currently designated as a "lot" without an amendment to the OP. The process is expensive and requires public hearings, at which time current property owners would have an opportunity to present their objections. Even if one were able to get an amendment to the OP, they would then face all the same difficulties that Wilson Consulting faced when developing the Greif property. Paul Wilson was required to identify two potential

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septic fields and two potential building sites on each lot. Subdividing any of the lots would make meeting this requirement difficult if not impossible.

Recycle and landfill hours – check it out @ www.dysartetal.ca

Waterfront Storage Sheds – submitted by Ken Loney

Ken Loney made a presentation to Dysart Council on December 14th, 2009 in an effort to finally get closure on the issue of waterfront storage sheds. All seven members of council went on record as supporting the allowance of sheds that meet the stated criteria. There was some discussion about the problem of making exceptions just for properties on Percy Lake.

Ken suggested to Council that, with such overwhelming support from Percy Lake property owners, it is likely that the same support exists everywhere else in the township. Council seemed to agree and added the item to their review of the appropriate section of the Official Plan that had just got underway.

We have since been in contact with Reeve Murray Fearrey who advised us that the review of the Official Plan went well and the Township will be making an amendment that will allow waterfront storage sheds that meet the required criteria. Check it out @ [http://www.dysartetal.ca/PDFs/Draft Official Plan Amendment No 8](http://www.dysartetal.ca/PDFs/Draft%20Official%20Plan%20Amendment%20No%208.pdf)

Lake Stewardship – submitted by Susan Russel

Did you know that.....the Lake Partner program will be starting up again this spring?

The goal of the Lake Partner Program is to better understand and protect the quality of our Ontario lakes by involving volunteers in a water monitoring program.

Your Lake Steward will collect phosphorus samples and make monthly water clarity observations on Percy Lake. This information will allow the early detection of changes in the nutrient status (too many nutrients are bad for our water) and/or the water clarity of the lake due to the impacts of shoreline development, climate change and other stresses.

On Percy we will be collecting water samples from both parts of the lake to test for phosphorous concentration and water clarity during Spring, Summer, and Fall.

So if you should see your Lake Steward leaning precariously over the water in a canoe and pulling a long rope out of the water with a bottle at the end, don't think she's lost her glasses or her mind, she's just being a Lake Partner!

ON ANOTHER NOTE.....I was walking along our beautiful Percy Lake shore the other day - admiring the views and listening to the newly returned birds, when I was most startled to see a large trout languishing along the shore and calling out to me. I don't know many trout that speak or languish so I was most curious and went over to check this guy out.

Excuse me miss," he called in his throaty trout voice, "I understand you are the Lake Steward around here." "You are a smart trout", I replied. "And whatever can I do for you?" "My name is Tom and I have a little bit of advice from me and my buddies who hang out near the bottom (of Percy Lake that is)." So.....

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ECO TIPS FROM TOM THE TROUT



“Welcome back everyone to Percy! I know that all of you are anxious to get your property looking real spiffy, your toilets flushing and your boats and ATVs all shiny and sparkly. Just remember that too many nutrients from fertilizers and poorly maintained septic systems can create real problems for me and my fishy friends. We don't get enough oxygen and that makes it tough to breathe!

If you could:

- *Reduce or eliminate fertilizer use

- *Pump out your septic system on a regular basis

- *Be careful with soaps – no bathing or other washing in the lake.

- *If you choose to wash cars, ATVs, people, boats, and your pet monkey and you are not draining into the septic system, be sure to dispose of the rinse water at least 60 meters from the water's edge.

Following these practices will help my fishy buddies and our food too!

That's enough SHOULD for one day! Remember to HAVE FUN, BE SAFE and I'll see you on or more likely in the lake!”(Tom the Trout)

The Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners Association

The purpose of this association is to allow member POAs to connect and discuss

common concerns and issues; to provide shared resources as deemed necessary; to publish a “lake area property owners' manual”, and to encourage POAs to develop and maintain relationships with the various levels of government, NGOs and other stakeholders.

At the current time there is not the will or the support for the CHA to become a political or advocacy group. At some point in the future, member POAs may choose to alter that and become more vocal for example in supporting candidates for elected office.

