

# BALSAM LAKE ASSOCIATION NEWS

Fall / Winter 2024 Edition

## BLA 2024 PHOTO CONTEST

We're excited to share the winners and honourable mention's from this summer's BLA Photo Contest where we invited you to share your cottage memories in 4 categories; Lake Scapes, Life at the Lake, Pampered Pets and Wildlife. We hope you'll consider participating again next year.



(Photo Credit: Diane Williamson, Title: "By a Swan's Ebon Bill")

## GRAND PRIZE WINNER – DIANE WILLIAMSON, SOUTH BAY

Some photos are just so good that you create a new category for them. We didn't start out with the idea of a Grand Prize but the judges agreed that Diane Williamson's image of a trumpeter swan, "**By a Swan's Ebon Bill**" deserved the honour.

When they retired, Diane and her husband Richard purchased their waterfront home on South Bay and immediately fell in love with the area - "the wildlife diversity and quiet of being in the marsh was just perfect." One day in early May Diane was at the beach with her granddaughter when a pair of trumpeter swans swam over. One walked right up as if to say "hey got any food?" Diane took this grand prize winning photo with her iPhone and said that "with a bit of editing to remove the background the photo came to life." The swan pair continued to visit regularly, bringing their brood of signets to show them off. Diane is an amateur wildlife photographer. See her images on her FaceBook page @ DianeLynPhotography

## FROM THE BLA EXECUTIVE

"It's official. Following our BLA - AGM held this Fall, I've handed the reins over to Doug Erlandson who will assume the role of BLA President for the next two years. You're in great hands with Doug. This will be his second tour of duty as your BLA President. As I reflect on the last two years, they were busy, with our annual membership meetings, water testing programs, hazard mark management and representing your interests when engaging with CoKL, Ontario and Federal officials on issues impacting lake health.

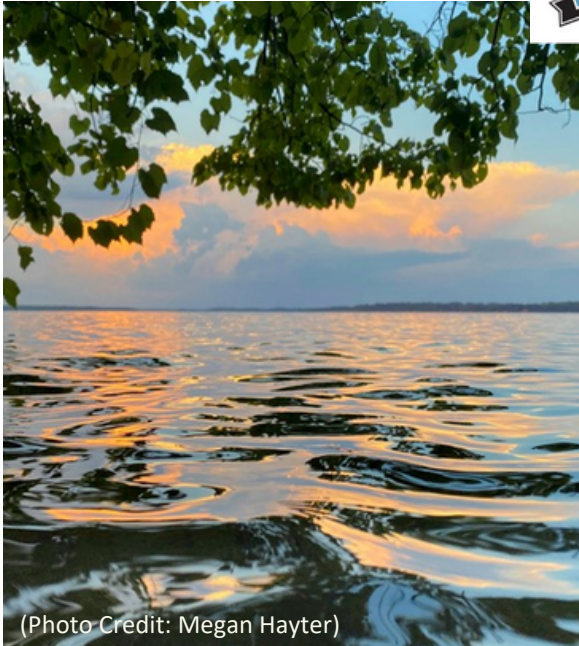
Our 2024 membership meeting was well attended as people left their docks on a warm sunny day to hear Brett Trugunno, Kawartha Conservation's Aquatic Biologist talk about lake health. I've included some highlights from Brett's presentation in this newsletter.

In 2024, we also dusted off the annual BLA Photo Contest The contest is proof that the best camera is the one you have with you. Most of our winners took their images with their smart phones. I'm excited to share the results with you in this newsletter.

If you'd like to know more about BLA activities follow us on the web at [balsamlakeassociation.ca](http://balsamlakeassociation.ca) or on Facebook.

Barb Callander  
(Past President 2023 - 2024)

## LAKESCAPES



(Photo Credit: Megan Hayter)

### WINNER – MEGAN HAYTER

Summer was coming to an end and Megan “took a moment to appreciate the beauty of Balsam, watching the colours reflecting on the lake.” Megan is a resident of South Bay.

## WILDLIFE



(Photo Credit: Mary Hickling)

### WINNER – MARY HICKLING

Mary took this winning image in the spring on a morning walk on Juniper Isle. While stopping to clear a culvert that beavers had blocked she heard a loud croaking. Mary’s parents built their cottage on Juniper in 1960. As a long time resident, Mary’s favourite times on the island usually involve an early morning kayak paddle into the area wetlands with her camera.



(Photo Credit: John Prikosovich)

### HONOURABLE MENTION – ROSEMARY & JOHN PRIKOSOVICH

Submitted by Rosemary Prikosovich, the image was taken by her husband John while paddling their small aluminum boat in the quiet of a beautiful morning.



(Photo Credit: Diana Valliant)

### HONOURABLE MENTION – DIANA VALLIANT

Diana’s chipmunk friend Steve loves to climb on shoulders to eat peanuts. Diana’s grandmother used to feed chipmunks at the cottage and she’s happy to carry on the tradition. Diana is a resident of Indian Point.

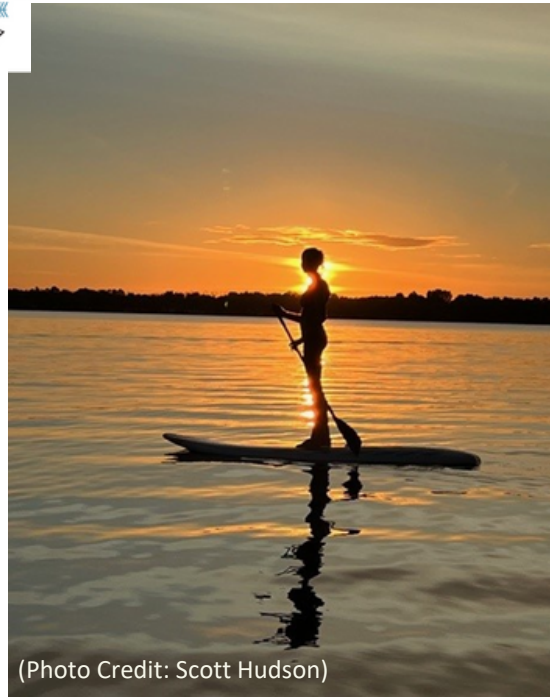
## LIFE AT THE LAKE



(Photo Credit: Tammy Best)

### WINNER – TAMMY BEST

Preston (Tammy's son) and his friend Summer were committed to make surfing work. They had a few tries and managed to get it with determination, strength and excellent balance. Tammy is a resident of Grand Island.



(Photo Credit: Scott Hudson)

### HONOURABLE MENTION – SCOTT HUDSON

Scott took this picture of his daughter while she was out paddling with her mom in South Bay. "It was too nice not to pass on."

## PAMPERED PETS



(Photo Credit: Erica Manger)

### WINNER – ERICA MANGER

Olive and Georgie (rescue pup) are the same age and love each other. George makes the trip to Balsam Lake every summer and it's her favourite place. It was a dreamy quiet afternoon at the dock. Erica is from Indian Point.



(Photo Credit: Kim Tyler)

### HONOURABLE MENTION – KIM TYLER

Kim and her husband wanted to see how Tess (2 years old pup) would react in the boat. To their surprise she was a natural and to this day is the first in and last out. Kim is a resident of Driftwood Village.

**BRETT TREGUNNO, AQUATIC BIOLOGIST**  
**EXCERPTS FROM 2024 BLA MEMBERSHIP MEETING KEYNOTE**

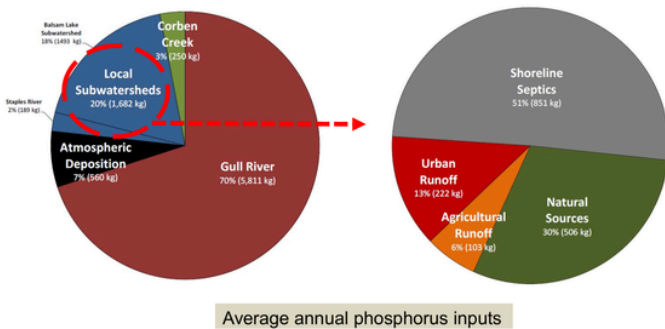


**KAWARTHA  
CONSERVATION**  
Discover • Protect • Restore

## Key Lake Management Issues

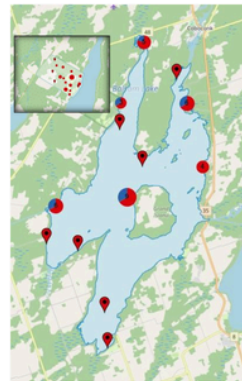
- **Water quality**
- **Climate change**
- **Invasive species**
- Watershed land use change
- Fisheries health
- Others (crowding, aquatic plants, short-term rentals, fish die-offs, water level management, closed beaches, blue-green algae blooms, flooding, erosion, etc.)

## Water Quality



**Note: Shoreline septic systems are a major contributor to phosphorous levels in the lake.**

## Invasive Species



EDDMapS  
find • map • track

Species Name	Count
zebra mussel( <i>Dreissena polymorpha</i> )	11
banded mysternail( <i>Viviparus georgianus</i> )	7
starry stonewort( <i>Nitellopsis obtusa</i> )	6
European frog-bit( <i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i> )	6
rusty crayfish( <i>Faxonius rusticus</i> )	4
spiny waterflea( <i>Bythotrephes longimanus</i> )	2
Eurasian watermilfoil( <i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i> )	2
coltsfoot( <i>Tussilago farfara</i> )	1
pale yellow iris, yellow flag iris( <i>Iris pseudacorus</i> )	1

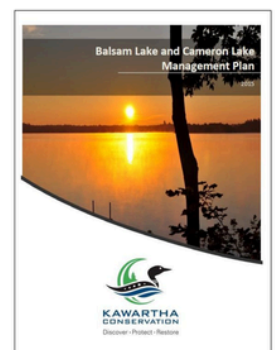
**Note: Preventing the spread of invasive species is the primary way to control them.**

## Key Take Home

- Invasive Species
  - 8 'documented' aquatic species, but there is a general lack of reporting.
  - Once established, elimination is impossible, therefore awareness and prevention is key.
  - Once established can cause significant risks for lake ecosystems, e.g., Muskellunge populations

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Let nature do the work!**
  - Keep a buffer strip: trees, shrubs, grasses
  - Provide shade over the water: keep overhanging vegetation, logs, boulders, and aquatic plants
  - No new hard surfaces
  - Cover bare soil
  - Maintain septic systems
  - Clean, Drain, Dry your equipment





## 2024 BALSAM LAKE E.COLI SURFACE WATER TEST RESULTS



Balsam Lake Association has been a partner with the Kawartha Lake Stewards Association for several years sampling shoreline sites for E. coli bacteria. Many Kawartha residents test their well water for E. coli and are familiar with that process. This program specifically tests lake water with the objective of building a long term dataset to monitor lake water quality. It has been running Kawartha-wide for over 25 years.

This year there were eight volunteers from around the lake that sampled 4 to 5 times through the summer. The BLA co-ordinates and funds this project for several sites around the lake. There are individuals and road associations that also participate and submit samples for shoreline locations that are of particular interest. This year there were nine sites around the lake.

The 2024 E. coli results are encouraging. In Ontario, a public beach is “posted” when the level of E. coli in the water exceeds 200 E. coli cfu/100ml (colony forming units). Above this result means the water is unsafe for recreational use.

**All 36 results for Balsam this year were considered normal for the Kawartha Lakes at less than 20 E. coli cfu/100ml.**

We would like to thank the volunteers for their efforts this year and encourage other residents or road associations to participate. Contact BLA if you would like to sample next season.

*a big*  
***Thank You***

BLA would like to recognize the volunteers that undertake water testing on Balsam Lake. These activities run in cooperation with Kawartha Conservation, Ministry of Environment, Parks and Conservation and Kawartha Lake Stewards Association. These volunteers contribute to creating long term datasets that will help monitor lake health over the coming decades.

Thank you for your time and contributions.

### **Kawartha E. coli Sampling**

G. Clark  
D. Hawe  
H. Keillor-Faulkner  
D. Paterson  
D. Pratt  
J.J. Salmon  
R. Tuckett

### **(Ontario) Lake Partner Program**

G. Clark  
D. Erlandson  
J. and P. Sanderson  
R. Tuckett

### **Water Temperature**

**Monitoring – multiple**  
D. Michel  
C. Lee  
R. Tuckett

### **New – Shoreline Sampling**

B. Callander



## DO YOU KNOW THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DUMPING RAKED LEAVES INTO THE LAKE



While leaf drop happens naturally it is not a good idea to rake into the lake because it is adding phosphorus and nitrogen into the water and that promotes plant growth (including algae) that most residents don't want. So raking into the lake it is exactly what is not needed. Feeding plant growth! Unlike a natural leaf fall into the lake raking is a very concentrated dump and increases the impact. Also, decomposing leaf litter encourages bacterial growth which uses up oxygen. When ice forms that can lead to creating low oxygen levels in the water, a situation we don't need.

A much better idea is to spread the leaves 4 to 6" on garden beds and help the pollinating insects overwinter. (Leave them in the spring to feed nitrogen and phosphorus into the beds through the summer. Don't rake them up). Or, get the lawnmower out and mulch them into the grass as a natural fertilizer.

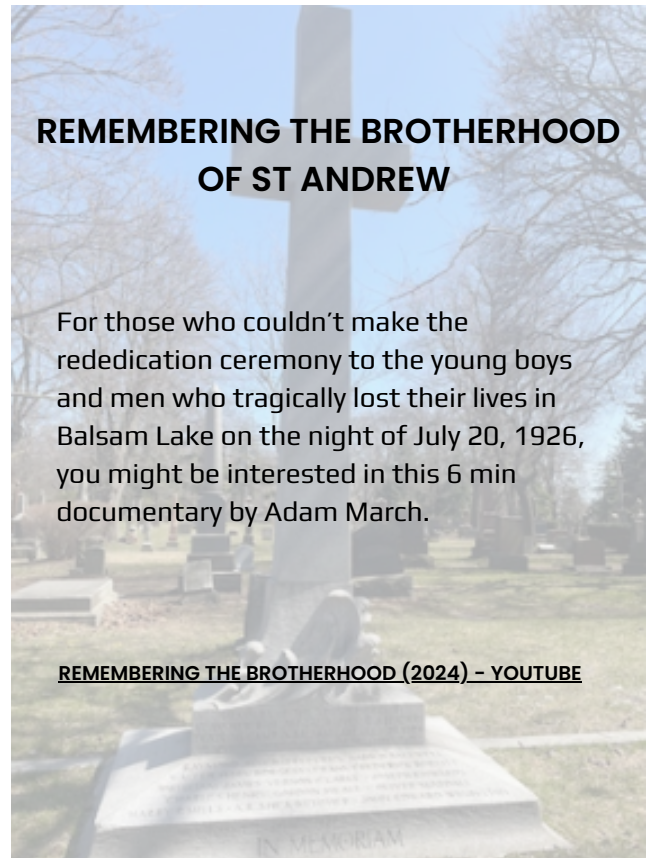


The first year of the Balsam Lake Sailing School (BLSS) got off to a great start this July with perfect weather, 8 amazing volunteers and 18 even more amazing students! The goal of offering sailing lessons to youth in our community was extremely well received. We're on track to repeat the program in July 2025. Follow BLSS on Facebook @ Balsam Lake Sailing School for more information on next year's programs.

## REMEMBERING THE BROTHERHOOD OF ST ANDREW

For those who couldn't make the rededication ceremony to the young boys and men who tragically lost their lives in Balsam Lake on the night of July 20, 1926, you might be interested in this 6 min documentary by Adam March.

[REMEMBERING THE BROTHERHOOD \(2024\) - YOUTUBE](#)





## **IMPORTANT SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUBBLERS REPRINTED FROM FOCA**

“With the temperature dropping, our thoughts turn to preparing our cottages for the cold and snow to come. For some, this means closing up the cottage until the spring. For others, it is a time to prepare for life on the lake during the winter. Regardless, we all do our best to prepare our properties to withstand the toughest weather Canada can throw at us. Some property owners have opted to give their waterfront structures a helping hand, through the installation of bubblers.

### **What Are Bubblers?**

For those who are unfamiliar, ‘bubblers’ are a type of de-icing system, intended to prevent the build-up of ice at or around waterfront structures like docks and boathouses. There are several different types of systems, but generally these devices use air or propellers to create zones of agitated and warmer water to prevent ice from forming. Protecting our cottage properties is understandable and an increasing number of cottagers in Ontario are turning to these devices as part of their winter preparation.

However, if you are a regular bubbler user, or if you are considering installing one at your property, it is important to plan carefully and be sure that you are not contributing to a significant hazard on the lake.

### **Creating a Hole in the Water**

Bubblers are often turned on and left largely unattended by property owners throughout the winter. Without careful planning, management and consideration of the nature of your waterfront area, your bubbler can de-ice a significantly larger portion of the water than is necessary to protect your property. This is especially true in shallow or sheltered areas, or when several bubblers are active near one-another, with multiple property owners inadvertently creating a massive hole in the ice, hundreds of feet in size. These holes in the ice can pose a serious safety risk to winter users of our lakes, especially at night or during storms with poor visibility.”

(Source: FOCA communication 2024)

## “Legal Implications

Section 263 (1) of the Criminal Code of Canada is very clear that those who make or cause to be made an opening in ice are under a legal duty to guard the opening in a manner adequate to prevent persons from falling in by accident, and adequate to warn them that the opening exists. If you fail to perform these duties, the Code states that you may be found guilty of serious offences, up to and including manslaughter.

## Risk Management Considerations

If you chose to operate a bubbler to protect your property, please make sure you are taking all steps possible to ensure the safety of all lake users and consider taking these risk management steps:

- Place and angle your devices with care to keep the impacted area as localized as possible;
- Talk to your neighbours to avoid doubling up in an area. It is possible that one bubbler will do the trick.
- Equip your system with a thermostat or timer control. Running 24/7 creates oversized openings.
- Place clear signs near the bubbling area, visible from all directions noting “Danger Open Water”.
- Run an amber light to mark the hazard at night and during storms. Do not use a red light, as this can be mistaken for the brake lights of a snowmobile and draw people towards the risk, rather than turn them away.
- Monitor your property. If you cannot be present, have someone check regularly to ensure the system is operating, the effected area is appropriate in size, and that the warning lights and markers remain in place.
- Where possible, a knowledgeable and experienced contractor should be used to configure the system.

Summer or winter, safety on the water is a top priority!

FOCA Members benefit from access to CottageFirst Insurance, a group insurance program designed specifically to meet the needs of cottage owners. The CottageFirst team provides knowledgeable and comprehensive guidance and will create a customized insurance solution specific to you. Cottagers benefit from bundling coverage for their home, watercraft, automobiles and more - all with discounting and coverage enhancements unique to FOCA members. Contact our team today!

www.cottagefirst.com | 1-844-CADE-15T

info@foca.on.ca www.foca.on.ca | 705-749-3622 “

(Source: FOAC communication 2024)

## FROM THE BLA ON BUBBLERS

**Note: Parks Canada requires a permit to install bubblers on the Trent Severn Waterway.**

In addition to the safety considerations FOCA outlines in their article above, bubblers disrupt the natural circulation of water which is an important seasonal condition for water bodies like Balsam Lake. These aerators impact water quality by disturbing sediment which changes water clarity and importantly bubblers alter natural chemical processes in the water column and lake bed. All these changes add up to promoting plant growth, disturbing fish habitat and spawning and elevating bacteria levels in the lake.