



Wolfe Lake Association | Looking back on 37 years A MEMORABLE JOURNEY WITH A HUGE IMPACT

By Bill Garland

The Wolfe Lake Association Westport (WLAW) was formed 37 years ago by a group of property owners concerned about the impacts of a proposed subdivision in Lee Bay. This planned lakefront and backlot development was to be located 400 metres from a Bald Eagle's nest on Fox Point and would have introduced significant human activity to the shores of a shallow, environmentally sensitive bay. At the time, Bald Eagles were a seriously endangered species in Ontario. Our Association protested to the Ontario Municipal Board and was successful in having significant limitations placed on the proposed development in Lee Bay. Thanks to Don Collison, Charles Wiseman, Aubrey Gray and others.

Since then, our Wolfe Lake Association has maintained a steadfast commitment to lake stewardship, as demonstrated by a series of impressive community volunteer initiatives.

Throughout the early 2000s, we collaborated with the Bedford Mining Alert Group in an effort to halt a planned open-pit graphite mining project along the north and northwest shores of Wolfe Lake. Numerous Wolfe Lake Association members worked tirelessly for a decade and were eventually successful in persuading the Ontario government to amend the Mining Act and

prevent the mining company from proceeding with the claims they had staked on private property along our shoreline. Thanks to Marilyn Crawford, Sharon Carr, Betty Jo MacDougall and many other association members.

A number of years later, Eurasian Milfoil (an invasive plant) was spreading across our lake, threatening native aquatic ecosystems and impeding recreational activities. This annoying water plant comes back to life even after being severed from its root system. In response, we purchased lab-grown milfoil

weevils, a species known to feed exclusively on milfoil, and placed them in 2 infested test sites. The test results were promising but our supplier eventually quit the business, leaving us with no commercial source for weevils. Our Association then attempted to cultivate our own weevils in a member's garage, but with limited success. We did, however, persuade Parks Canada to include Wolfe Lake in scientific studies aimed at finding remedies to eradicate Eurasian Milfoil, and our board members have attended seminars on invasive species to keep abreast of any progress towards a solution.

At the present time, there are a number of companies offering chemical solutions for the control of Eurasian Milfoil. None, however, are financially suitable or present a complete solution to the problem. Thanks to Paul Thompson and Duncan MacDougall for leading this effort.

In 1995, our Association realized that **Scanlon Creek had declined significantly as a Walleye spawning area**. A group of Wolfe Lake Association members, led by Glen Ewen, cleaned out some of the silt and placed rock in the upstream creek bed. Our Association spent \$2,200 on this rehabilitation project.

In 2019, the downstream area of Scanlon Creek was found to be silted up as well, to the extent that it no longer offered a **suitable spawning area for our Walleye**. Our Association raised \$4,474 and contracted Tackaberry Construction to upgrade a culvert, clear the silt and supply large river rock. The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA), Westport Outdoor Association, CAMP IAWAH, property owners and Wolfe Lake Association volunteers joined forces to place large river rocks strategically in Scanlon Creek, thereby improving spawning conditions for our Walleye. Thanks to Margie Manthey for her leadership on this successful project. This effort was reported in a Cottage Life Magazine article.

For 37 years our Association has worked to protect our boating community by **purchasing and strategically placing marker buoys over hazardous shoals**. Each spring our dedicated volunteers, led by Roy Chisamore, install the marker buoys and every fall they remove them – a significant effort that keeps us all safe.

In addition, our Association has conducted **water testing to ensure the health** of our lake for 36 consecutive years. Our **Water Quality Directors** have worked with technicians from the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA) and the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks to collect and test water samples throughout the lake. Decades of collected data allows us to monitor long-term water quality trends across the lake and respond proactively to emerging threats. Gord Moore, our current Water Quality Director, facilitates this effort 4 to 5 times annually.

To protect our loons and other waterfowl from becoming entangled in discarded fishing line, Brian and Margie Manthey

designed and built **three monofilament recycling receptacles** and installed one at each of our three boat launches. Thanks to Wayne Derbyshire for emptying these receptacles each year. It is gratifying to see that they are being used.

In 2016, South Frontenac Township proposed a **new bylaw affecting existing buildings which, while noncompliant with the 100-foot lake setback, had been grandfathered** as legally nonconforming. Under the proposed bylaw, if a nonconforming structure sustains significant damage due to fire, fallen trees, or other catastrophes, its grandfathered status would be revoked and the Township would require the noncompliant building to be relocated or removed. In response, **the Wolfe Lake Association Executive met with other Lake Associations to develop a strategy to oppose this bylaw**. The proposed bylaw was eventually dropped after hearings before the Ontario Municipal Board. Thanks to Paul Thompson and Bill Garland for their active participation in this effort.

In 2017 our annual newsletter transitioned into a **high-quality, professionally produced magazine** that not only keeps members informed but also celebrates the stories, people and activities that make Wolfe Lake so special. This change also facilitates fundraising by generating revenue through advertising. An enormous amount of work goes into producing each issue, all of it managed by our Communication Director, Anna Rijk. As editor she writes articles and arranges submissions from many contributors into each issue. Thanks goes to proofreader Betty Jo MacDougall, Marti Hansell, and all who make this magazine into one big story and attractive magazine.

To keep our lake **community informed and engaged**, we are available on the internet at **wolfelake.org** and **fishleadfree.ca**. These websites were built and are maintained by Donna Garland, our Director of Webservices. To date we have had over 6200 visitors.

Margie Manthey plays a vital role in managing our **Facebook** presence. Her responsibilities are integral to maintaining an engaging and informative social media platform that connects with our audience effectively and often.

We also communicate with our membership through emailed **News Flashes** and **news alerts**, managed and distributed by Anna Rijk.

In 2024, RVCA technicians, with the support of the Garland's grandson Aden Burton, conducted an **Aquatic Invasive Species survey** at multiple locations around Wolfe Lake and in Barr's and Scanlon Creeks. Thanks to Margie Manthey for arranging this survey.

The Wolfe Lake Association has placed **Turtle Crossing signs on North Shore roads** to help alert drivers and reduce mortality among nesting turtles. In addition, the Association has arranged to have **turtle nest guards**, wood duck houses, and bat and bluebird boxes built and made available for purchase at very reasonable prices at our AGMs. These structures provide vital shelter and safe nesting opportunities for species that depend on our lake's natural shoreline and woodlands. They can be seen protecting our wildlife around the lake.

The haunting calls of the **Common Loon** and their elegant presence on the water have made them a cherished part of our lake experience. However, in recent years, the loons on Wolfe Lake have faced significant challenges in bringing their offspring to maturity, primarily due to predation and environmental factors. In response to this growing concern, **two loon nesting platforms** were built to provide safe elevated nesting sites for loons, out of the reach of ground-based and flying predators. Unfortunately, one of the platforms was damaged beyond repair when a tree fell on it during winter storage. The remaining platform is strategically placed in Woods Bay and provides a secure environment for loons to lay their eggs and raise their chicks. The platform is moved into place just after ice-out in the spring and removed once the chicks leave the nest in August. Over the last three years, one pair of Wolfe Lake loons have raised four chicks to maturity. Thanks to Helene and Bruce Maynard, Adrianna and Sandro Gambarotta, and Bill and Donna Garland for the time and expense they have devoted to this very important loon initiative.

Four years ago, with the approval of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA), **our Association embarked on an innovative project to protect young fish in the lake. We collected used Christmas trees**, bundled them together, and submerged them in four strategic locations around the lake.

Since the inception of this project, RVCA has diligently monitored the submerged tree bundles each year. They have taken digital photographs of the schools of young fish that seek refuge from predators within these

bundles. These images provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness of our initiative in **providing a safe haven for the lake's young fish population**. Building on the success of the past four years, we plan to submerge additional tree bundles this summer. The goal is to further support and enhance the growth of our fish population. Thanks to Margie Manthey for her leadership and Camp IAWAH for their support.

The **Rideau Lakes Lake Association Committee** is an organization of area Lake Associations that meets quarterly to discuss topics of concern to the Associations or to the township. Greg Wetmore and Margie Manthey are the Wolfe Lake delegates to this group. One recent issue was the suggestion that Westport might consider disposing of excess wastewater in Upper Rideau Lake, Sand Lake or Wolfe Lake. The area lake associations made it clear to the Village that they are strongly opposed to this possibility.

In 2021 trees throughout Ontario suffered **severe damage from an infestation of Spongy (formerly Gypsy) Moths**. Bruce Maynard (Wolfe Lake Association) and Tom Myatt (Westport Outdoor Association) teamed up to find some way of slowing down the destruction of our trees. They connected with pheromone experts at the University of Waterloo, who were able to supply us with a significant quantity of pheromone-soaked elastic bands. The pheromone bands proved very effective in attracting Spongy Moths into traps that property owners could easily make themselves. Over 5,000 pheromone bands were distributed free of charge that summer from the Westport Lions R & R Centre to Wolfe Lake, Westport, Rideau Lakes and South Frontenac property owners. Thanks to Bruce and Tom for their leadership, and Anna for effectively communicating the project.

Five years ago, the **boat launches on both the 10th Concession and Wolfe Lake Road were in very poor condition** as a result of erosion of the road surface into the lake. In 2020 we invited the Township to inspect both launches with WLA board members. Finally, after lengthy discussions, the costs of rehabilitation were included in the 2021 Township budget and the launches were significantly updated. Thanks to Richard

Hazell and Brian and Margie Manthey for their persistence and to Rideau Lakes Township for an excellent job in rebuilding the ramps.

Three years ago, our Association embarked on an initiative **to address the environmental and health risks posed by lead fishing tackle**. With financial support from various grants, we launched our **"Let's Get The Lead Out"** program, dedicated to educating our community about the dangers of using lead fishing tackle and promoting safer alternatives. Our success represents growing awareness, changing habits, and multiple communities stepping up to safeguard the natural environment. Thanks to Margie Manthey and Donna Garland for their leadership and tireless efforts on this project.

In 2017, an amendment to the Township of South Frontenac's Official Plan was proposed to **permit significant expansion of an existing campsite on Lake Opinicon by increasing lot coverage from 25% to 83%**. The Wolfe Lake Association, along with other Lake Associations and environmental experts, wrote to the Township respectfully but strongly opposing the proposal. Why? Because it is **precedent setting** and there would be **no undo button** to counter the negative impacts on wildlife, the lake, Township and provincial services (including roads, garbage, policing, fire, and emergency services), property owners and individuals. The Township unanimously rejected the proposal. In January 2025, the proposal proceeded to the Ontario Land Tribunal, and we are awaiting their decision. Thanks to Donna Garland who attended the meetings and has kept our Association informed.

In 2024, we successfully built and installed **Boat Launch signs at our three boat launches**.

The primary purpose of these signs is to communicate essential information to the public. They enhance the overall boating experience by providing:

🌀 **environmental information:** guidelines to protect our waterways and local wildlife

🌀 **safety information:** Rules and tips for safe boating practices to prevent accidents and ensure a secure environment for everyone

🌀 **fishing information:** Regulations and best practices to maintain sustainable fishing and conserve fish populations

🌀 **legal information:** Important legal guidelines and requirements that all boaters must follow to comply with local laws

🌀 **map information:** detailed maps of the boat launch areas, providing easy navigation and orientation for all users.

Thanks to Brian Manthey, Gord Moore, Larry Arsenault and Bill Garland, who built the signs and worked closely with the Townships of South Frontenac and Rideau Lakes to secure locations, ensure compliance and partner in building the boat launch sign platforms. And we are now paying it forward: the architectural drawings created by Brian for the boat launch signs have been shared with other Lake Associations.

As you can see, our Association has been adding value to our lake community for over three decades. Association projects have provided significant benefits to virtually everyone on the lake.

Finally, I would like to give a shout-out to **our many past presidents who have played significant roles in carrying out all these activities:** Don Collison, Charles Wiseman, Jim Kennedy, Warren Snelling, Glen Ewen, Roy Sunstrum, Paul Thompson, Bill Garland (interim), Brian Manthey and Chris Chisamore.

IT'S TIME TO RENEW—OR SIGN UP FOR—YOUR WLAW MEMBERSHIP!

Please renew or sign up for your WLAW membership. Our \$30 membership fee is the financial life blood of the association.

We welcome members to join our board. The workload can be as much or little as you wish and the friendships you build will last a lifetime.

HEY YOU. YES, YOU! WHY NOT HELP YOUR LAKE ASSOCIATION?

We know you love our Wolfe Lake Magazine. Step up to the plate, become a volunteer and contact us by emailing com-wolfelake@outlook.com.