



# Sand Lake Estates

RR1, Elgin, Ontario K0G 1E0

Newsletter

Summer 2014

## The Changing Nature of Sand Lake

There's something new on Sand Lake this year, a nesting pair of Bald Eagles, with at least one eaglet in the nest. This is a rare event in this area, rare in fact for this part of Ontario. It's a reminder that the character of our lake is always changing, we've certainly seen quite a bit of change over the last 10 years.

The Bald Eagle is an extirpated species, at one time native, and more populous in this area, driven to local extinction by loss of habitat, hunting, and egg shell thinning due to DDT. The name "Eagle Point" on our lake perhaps derives from eagles that were previously resident.

The eagle is one of several raptors that make our area their home and other than displacing an osprey from its former nest, the eagle fits into the lake ecosystem.

The same cannot be said for some other newcomers to our lake, Zebra mussels and Canada geese, both invading species, are new to the lake.

The Zebra mussels arrived in their millions in 2001 and over the next couple of years we saw a 30% increase in our water clarity as a result. That caused several changes including allowing aquatic vegetation to take root in deeper waters (since sunlight now penetrated deeper into the water). Our green blobs, which used to only appear in the spring, now lasted through the summer, since zebra mussels eat single cell algae which are the competition to the blobs (filamentous algae).

### Notice of Annual General Meeting

**Date:** Sunday, June 29, 2014

**Time:** 10:30 a.m.

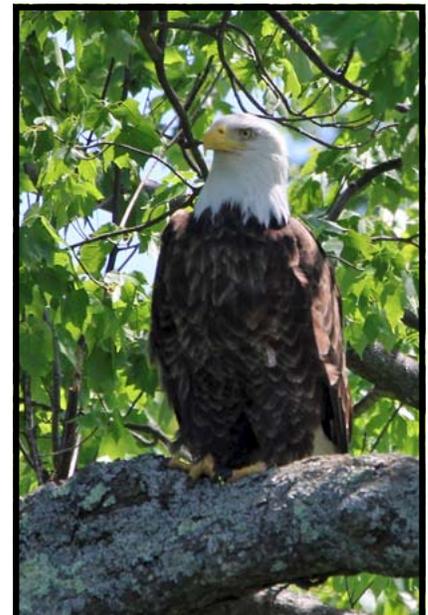
**Place:** Elgin Municipal Complex (beside the Post Office). Chairs will be provided.

**Bring:** your annual dues (\$100)

Any and all donations of refreshments (juice/water) or edibles (cookies/muffins) will be graciously accepted. Please call Paula Way Quong 613-359-6236 or email: pwayquong@hotmail.com, no later than June 25.

***See you there - everyone is welcome!***

Fortunately the zebra mussel population has now stabilized at a much lower level than their initial invasion and the lake seems to be returning to more "normal" conditions (see Water Quality on page 4).



Bald Eagle mom and an eaglet high up in a nest on top of a pine tree. Dad was sitting in a tree a few hundred metres away. The eaglet will stay in the nest for about two months until it is strong enough to fly.

## SAND LAKE ESTATES

Our 2013 AGM was held on Sunday, June 30, at the residence of Mike and Si Miles. Several reports were presented including the finances of the association and road maintenance. A resolution concerning the late payment of association dues was passed. Our Treasurer, Peter O'Neill also made an appeal to MPAC concerning the 232% increase in our taxes on the backlands. Reports on both these issues can be found later in the newsletter.

The slate of 7 directors elected at the AGM was:

Reid Barter, John Lewis, Mike Miles, Peter O'Neill, Stewart Touzel, Paula Way-Quong, John Zeigler

These directors chose the 2013 Executive which consisted of:

President: Paula Way-Quong (604-985-7086)

Vice-President: John Lewis (416-540-4032)

Treasurer: Peter O'Neill (613-822-9993)

Secretary: Stewart Touzel (613-359-9940)

### Dues

2014 dues are \$100 and can be paid at the AGM, or by mailing your cheque and the enclosed annual dues form to Sand Lake Estates, RR1, Elgin, ON K0G 1E0. Questions about your dues can be directed to our Treasurer, Peter O'Neill. See Page 7 for a new resolution, passed at the 2013 AGM, regarding late payment fees.

### 2014 AGM

A reminder that our 2014 AGM is on Sunday, June 29 at 10:30 am. It will be held in the Elgin Municipal Complex, chairs will be provided. The AGM is the best venue to chat with the directors and ask any questions you might have about our association.

Canada geese started nesting here in about 2005, initially one family over in Eel Bay and now several nesting families, including six adults with 8 goslings in York Bay (just across the lake from us). They aren't native to this area, they would normally be nesting further north. But the large population increase of Canada geese means that some are nesting much further south than normal. They compete with ducks for food and of course there are issues with e-coli in goose poop. The Rideau Lakes Day Camp (at the North East end of our lake) was closed due to a contaminated waterfront a couple of years ago and has now erected goose proof fencing around their beach.

It's unknown the full effect of geese on the lake, they are big birds, there are more of them every year, and they will likely be disrupting something in our local ecosystem.

Another new big bird, although not a water bird, is the turkey, an extirpated species that was re-introduced into our area a number of years ago. This is their native habitat and they appear to be doing very well.



Blue Heron mum with 2 chicks.

Keep your eye out, there will likely be more nature changes to come.

We also have a new Blue Heron rookery (a group heron nests) on the lake (first I've seen on the lake itself). The herons are native to the lake, but normally nest in dead trees in swamps or ponds – it's unknown what triggered them to nest on the lake.

Eagles, geese, turkeys, and zebra mussels are just the latest in changes constantly taking place in and around our lake.

- Ken Watson



Four adult Canada geese escort four goslings - part of a large family group found in York Bay.

## 2013 FINANCIAL REPORT

### Income

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Dues         | 4,700.00        |
| Back Dues    | 100.00          |
| Road Grant   | 797.00          |
| Interest     | 1.00            |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>5,598.00</b> |

### Expenses

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Taxes         | 1,879.76        |
| Winter Patrol | 0               |
| FOCA          | 198.75          |
| Insurance     | 1,026.00        |
| Roads         | 2,012.57        |
| Newsletter    | 15.25           |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>5,279.23</b> |

### Reconciliation

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 January 2013 - Opening Balance   | 5,511.81 |
| 31 December 2013 - Closing Balance | 5,951.12 |

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Opening Balance | 5,511.81   |
| Add Deposits    | 5,718.53   |
|                 | 11,230.34  |
| Minus Expenses  | (5,279.23) |
|                 | \$5,951.11 |

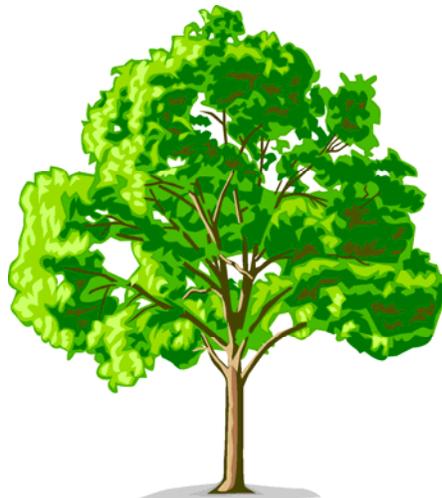
|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| BMO Term Investment | 4,302.98 |
| (contingency fund)  |          |

## TREES

We want to remind members and their guests that the backlands are a forest, not a park. If people are strolling through the woods they are reminded to be vigilant for partially fallen trees or other hazards. Hiking through the backlands is done at your own risk.

For trees that fall or partially fall on the road allowance, residents are asked to contact i) the Road Superintendent or ii) Ontario Hydro (if trees are or may potentially interfere with hydro lines) so that an assessment can be made to ensure no one is hurt dealing with tricky removals.

If the need arises, the Road Superintendent will utilize a professional arborist.



## ROAD MAINTENANCE

Almost half of your annual dues is used for the summer maintenance of SLE roads. Our volunteer Road Superintendent is John Ziegler who does a magnificent job - **thanks John!**

Thanks too, to Bernie Stene and his wonder tractor. Bernie has been doing a great job of touching up any problem areas on our roads and keeping them looking great. Thanks as well to other volunteers who keep the front "lawns" mown and the sides of the roads brushed out.

John notes that road work has been delayed a bit this year, but the roads are still in excellent shape and will be graded in the fullness of time.

### Winter Ploughing

Sand Lake Estates does not do (or pay for) any winter maintenance/clearing of the roads. Private individuals are paying for all winter sanding and ploughing. Winter ploughing costs are shared on a volunteer basis. Contact John Ziegler for Pine Ridge/Eden roads or Bob Haapala for Walnut Point Road if you would like to contribute to the ploughing of the main access roads.

Those wishing to have their driveways ploughed should contact our contractor, Terry French, of French's Trucking, directly at: 613-272-2465.

## FLOODING

Sand Lake flooded this year for the first time in memory. It rose to almost 20 inches (0.5 m) above normal navigation level.

Parks Canada is partly responsible since they brought the water up to navigation level in early April before the spring freshet was done. Rain combined with the melting of snow and ice did the rest.

The lake rose above the normal high water level on about April 9 and peaked on about April 18.

In the winter, the lake is kept 15 inches (0.39 m) lower than summer levels in order to be able to accommodate the spring runoff. But that extra capacity was removed by bringing the water up early. Hopefully Parks Canada is reviewing their rule curves (managed water levels) and how they are applied in the spring so that this won't happen again.

## GARBAGE PICKUP and CHANGES TO RECYCLING

Garbage pickup by the Township during the summer (starting after Victoria Day and going to Thanksgiving) is at the end of **your driveway** (NOT at the end of the main roads) every Monday (or Tuesday if Monday is a holiday). It is your responsibility to clean up any spills of your garbage in a timely manner. To ensure that spills don't happen in the first place, regular garbage should be placed in a "critter proof" container. Organic material should be composted (as opposed to being put in your garbage).

**2014 RECYCLING CHANGES:** Starting this spring, specific types of recycling will be picked up on alternate weeks, paper/cardboard/boxboard recycling one week, plastic and metal recycling the next week. A copy of this pickup schedule has been included with this newsletter.

Garbage must be placed in a clear bag and have a Township bag tag attached. A bag without a valid bag tag will not be picked up. Tags can be purchased at Gordanier Grocery in Elgin. Recycling is free and must be in a clear blue bag. Fibres and paper may be bundled but must be tightly tied (or it won't be picked up). There is a limit of 2 bags of garbage and 5 bags of recycling per week and each bag must weigh less than 40 pounds.

Details about the Township's waste collection policy, including a full list of how to sort your recyclables, can be found on the Township website at: [www.twprideaulakes.on.ca](http://www.twprideaulakes.on.ca)

Please ensure that **all users** of your cottage (i.e. guests or renters) are aware of the rules.

## WATER QUALITY

Your association's Lake Steward, Ken Watson, participates in the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's Lake Partner Program. This involves taking weekly water clarity readings using a secchi disk, taking weekly water temperature readings and taking six water samples a year that are measured for phosphorus content.

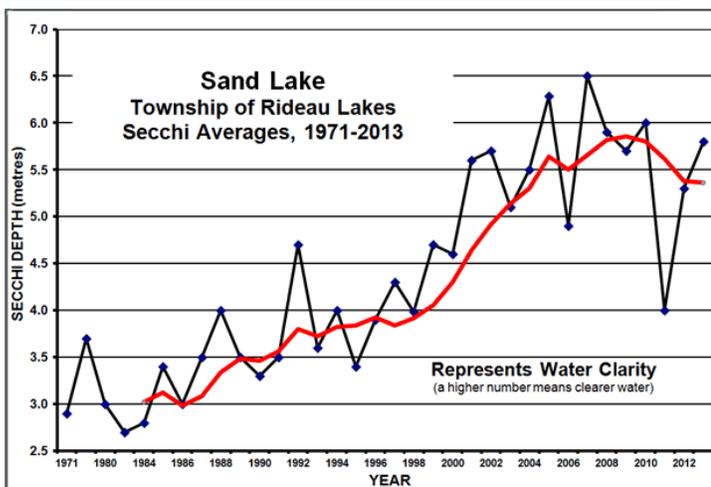
In 2013, the average secchi water clarity reading was 5.8 metres, up from 5.3 m in 2012. The average phosphorus content of our lake (6 samples) in 2013 was 11.0 ug/L, down from 12.4 ug/L the year before (lower is better).

The large dip in 2011 was likely an adjustment to new (lower) levels of zebra mussels. The 2012 and 2013 numbers are more consistent with long term averages.

The chart below shows the secchi (clarity) readings since 1971 - the red line is a moving average trend line, showing the steady increase in water clarity of our lake. Year by year it can be up or down but the overall long-term trend is in the right direction.

Historic water clarity and phosphorus results for Sand Lake and other lakes in our area can be found by going to:

[www.rideau-info.com/canal/ecology/water-quality.html](http://www.rideau-info.com/canal/ecology/water-quality.html)



## OUR LOONS

You'll note a number of artificial loon nesting platforms on Sand Lake. We do ask that you and your guests avoid approaching any of these during nesting season, mid-May to mid-June. This can disrupt the nesting loon, sometimes to the point of nest abandonment.



We also ask boaters to please be aware of the small loon chicks, especially during July and August. Also please make all visitors and renters aware of the fact that loon chicks are in the area and that they are very vulnerable to being run over by a boat or PWC. They are hard to spot in the water and too young to be able to avoid boats. It is up to you to avoid them.

The loons in Rancier Bay hatched one chick on June 8 of this year. Last year they hatched 2 chicks, both of which appeared to survive until fall when they would have flown south (in late November).

## ICE IN - ICE OUT

Our past winter was very long. Sand Lake froze over on November 29 (quite early) and the ice was gone from the lake on April 23, 2014 (second latest in the last few decades; in 1992 the ice went out on April 24).

## BOATING INFORMATION

- The following is our annual review of some of key boating information items:
- Everyone who operates a powered pleasure boat must have a Pleasure Craft Operator's Card.
- No one under the age of 16 may operate a personal water craft (PWC).
- No one under the age of 12, and not directly supervised by a person 16 years of age or older, may operate a vessel with more than a 10 HP engine.
- No one between the age of 12 and 16, and not directly supervised by a person 16 years of age or older, may operate a vessel with more than a 40 HP engine.
- Make sure you have all safety equipment required for your boat, which includes items such as a buoyant heaving line, a watertight flashlight (with batteries loaded) and a manual sound-signaling device.
- A personal flotation device of appropriate size must be available for each person on board (i.e. if you have children in a boat, you must have child-size PFDs.)
- For most boats (including canoes/kayaks), consuming alcohol on board is against the law. And, just like a car, you have to be sober to operate a boat.
- If you are a tow boat for a water-skier, tuber, etc., you must have at least 2 people and 3 seats in the boat. There must be a driver, an observer and a spare seat for each person being towed.
- While refueling, all occupants of the boat must be ashore, all engines must be off, all open flames must be extinguished. Portable fuel tanks must be filled ashore.

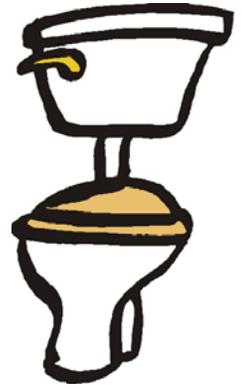


For more information visit the Office of Boating Safety website at: [www.boatingsafety.gc.ca](http://www.boatingsafety.gc.ca)

## SEPTIC SYSTEMS

This is your yearly reminder to take stock of your septic system - is it working as it should? Have you had it pumped out recently?

An improperly working septic system will allow the release of harmful bacteria such as E. coli (fecal bacteria) into our lake. It can even contaminate groundwater (i.e. your well or your neighbour's well).



Follow these six steps to keep a healthy system:

- Step 1 – Do** have your septic tank pumped out every three years
- Step 2 – Don't** overload your septic system with water
- Step 3 – Don't** give your septic system indigestion
- Step 4 – Don't** drive or park cars or heavy machinery on the septic bed
- Step 5 – Don't** plant trees or shrubs on or near the septic bed
- Step 6 – Do** let your system grow with the family and usage – know its capacity

### ***Does your septic tank need to be pumped out this year?***

If you didn't know you had a septic system, If it hasn't been pumped out in the last 3 years, If you can't remember when it was last pumped out, then you should have it pumped this year.

Two local contractors who do this work are Bryan's Septic Service in Westport (**613-273-3078**) and Hogan's Septic Service of Seeleys Bay (**613-387-3432** or **1-800-395-1375**).

## RENTAL COTTAGES

A concern was brought up at the 2013 AGM that not all cottage renters are aware of local rules, particularly relating to garbage and recycling. Those renting are encouraged to ensure that their renters are fully aware of these rules.

There was also a concern that renters may not be aware that loon families should be left alone. Baby loons are especially vulnerable, they are not strong enough to get out of the way of fast moving boats until late August. Information about keeping a distance from our local loon families should be passed on to the renters.

## THANKS FOR THE QUIET

Our appeal last year to be considerate of your neighbours (both human and wild) and avoid the use of fireworks outside of Victoria Day and Canada Day appears to have worked. 2013 was much quieter in the evenings than 2012. We hope this is a long term trend.



There are local fireworks available for viewing, the Big Rideau Lake Association will have a firework display in Portland on Saturday, June 28. There is good viewing of these in Hanna Park (waterfront in Portland).

## SLEI TAXES

SEL members should be pleased that we were able to take steps to avoid a 200% hike in the value (and thus tax assessment) of one backland lot coupled with an almost 400% increase in the value of another; 2 of the 4 backland properties we all own as members of Sand Lakes Estate.

What the hike would have translated into was an increase in each member's annual dues of \$35 just to cover the cost of the re-assessment.

Unfortunately we also had to over-pay our taxes last year by the first of 4 yearly hikes that soften the impact of large re-assessments like the one we experienced. The province received the benefit of \$600 additional SLE dues dollars in the coffers until our 2014 interim billing arrived. This was because MPAC were inundated with appeals from across cottage country and were not able to process them in time for the Township to reflect any adjustments in tax bills.

The good news is we're down to a \$120 credit balance with the township tax office which should clear on the next tax billing and we'll be back in our routine.

What lessons were learned from this:

i) the backlands with water frontage are going to be subject to this type of situation because our "no development possible" status for these lands seems to fall off the classification schema with MPAC when they run their formula en mass.

ii) steps need to be taken to ensure we minimize our tax exposure. At the AGM in 2013 it was agreed to pursue a managed forest plan for eligible backlands. Applying for and developing a managed forest plan will cost us \$700 up front and will save approximately \$475/year in taxes on the 2 eligible backlands lots. The plan stands for 10 years and would provide a 1.5 year payback. Most importantly, over



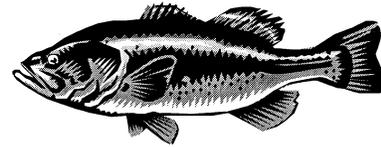
the 10 years the plan is in effect we'd save over \$4,000 in taxes assuming taxes remain flat, even more presuming there is no such thing as zero tax increases!

iii) We need to monitor the work of FOCA, the cottagers association we belong to. There is excellent work being done to ensure creative taxation doesn't put cottaging out of reach for many Ontarians.

We'll be looking forward to implementing a managed forest plan and tax credit based on direction at the 2013 AGM. Anything we can do to reduce our tax burden will also protect members from potentially jarring increases in dues should we have to pass a tax hike along.

- Peter O'Neill, Treasurer

## BASS FISHING



A reminder to all that the bass fishing season does **not start until the third Saturday of June** (June 21 this year).

The problem with pre-season poaching of bass is that if the bass are pulled off their nests, other predatory fish (sunfish, etc.) will swoop in and eat the bass eggs or fry. This means that even catch and release fishing is damaging to bass stocks.

It is illegal to fish for or take bass before the **third Saturday in June** or after December 15th.

This means that it is against the law to do any type of fishing which potentially targets bass:

Casting in areas that are less than 1.8 m (6 ft) in depth.

Using bass lures and live bait.

***This includes catch-and-release.***

If you see a poacher, report the license number of the boat to MNR at **1-877-TIPS-MNR** (1-800-847-7667).

## COMING EVENTS

For more details on events see: [www.twprideaulakes.on.ca/rec-events.html](http://www.twprideaulakes.on.ca/rec-events.html)

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| June 22    | Queen's University Biological Station Open House, noon to 3 p.m. - on Opinicon Lake                        |
| June 28    | Canada Day Fireworks – at dusk on Big Rideau Lake near Portland (good viewing from Hanna Park in Portland) |
| June 29    | Sand Lake Estates AGM – 10:30 a.m. at the Elgin Municipal Complex  |
| July 4 - 6 | Rideau Lakes Garden and Studio Tour (look for brochures in Elgin)  |
| July 12    | Elgin Days – includes a BBQ and a parade   |
| July 24-27 | Delta Fair   |

Comments about the newsletter can be directed to the editor, Ken Watson, at [rideauken@gmail.com](mailto:rideauken@gmail.com)

**Members are asked to take note:  
Important Resolution regarding Membership Dues passed at the 2013 AGM**

A report was put forth at the 2013 AGM chronicling the financial challenges we have faced in the recent past as a non-profit Corporation.

We are a corporation with financial obligations. In recent times we were in a situation where our cash flow was stretched. Of course as a non-profit we have little spare cash and we must live within our means. We had got to the point where a large percentage of members were overdue for multiple years in paying their dues. We were using next year's money to pay for last year's expenses.

What does this mean?

- We were paying some bills on reminders, with overdue premiums; thus escalating costs
- We were putting at risk our annual road grant with the township
- Individual members in arrears were at risk of not being covered under our commercial insurance policy
- Our ability to obtain fabulous pricing for road work and other services becomes challenging with suppliers
- We were stretching volunteers at Sand Lake Estates to oversee what was a difficult situation

When you enter Sand Lake Estates lands it is apparent we have something special here! The roads are some of the best in the region, the grounds are pristine and the pride of ownership demonstrated for individual cottages permeates the common lands. And our dues are also some of the lowest in the region too!

We've brought the situation around, dues are covering expenses for the intended year, our bills are paid on time and financial statements are crisp and proudly anchor our yearly and successful road grant application.

However every year 35% of the membership must be reminded via a multi-media campaign (email, flyers, regular mail) over a period of 4 to 5 months so as to ensure they send payment along.

In its wisdom, the membership discussed and approved a resolution at the 2013 AGM aimed at correcting this last remaining challenge:

Effective this year: members are now required to pay their dues by Canada Day (the AGM weekend).

If the dues remain outstanding by Labour Day (by Midnight on Labour Day Monday) a late payment charge of \$15 will become due.

If the Dues remain unpaid into the following calendar year, (by midnight on January 1), an additional late fee of \$10 is due or \$25 total.

- Peter O'Neill, Treasurer

**Resolution: Sand Lakes Estates Inc. 2013 AGM – In the matter of Annual Dues**

**Recognizing;** the operations and management of Sand Lakes Estates Inc. occurs through substantial use of volunteers in order to keep costs under control,

**Acknowledging;** that annual membership dues are due by the AGM on the Canada Day weekend at the latest,

**Noting;** the Sand Lake Estates Inc operating costs such as taxes and insurance are due on fixed timetables and the road and emergency maintenance costs must be paid on completion of work, or late payment fees are borne by Sand Lakes Estates Inc,

**Further Acknowledging;** the membership of Sand Lakes Estates appreciate the efforts taken to refurbish our road system early in the cottage season thereby creating receivables to the road contractors,

**Further noting;** Sand Lake Estates Inc volunteers must, at their own time expense, regularly issue dues reminders, via different means, to a certain percentage of members in order to receive late dues payments,

**The membership therefore pass the following resolution:**

Members are reminded that annual dues are due at the AGM in order to retain good standing.

Effective 2013 and carrying forward to future years; Dues that remain unpaid until the end of the Labour Day weekend (midnight on Labour Day Monday) shall be subject to a late payment charge of fifteen (\$15) dollars.

Dues remaining unpaid into the following calendar year, e.g. not paid by midnight on January 1, shall be subject to an additional late payment charge of ten (\$10) dollars, or twenty five (\$25) dollars total.

Payments shall be deemed to be received if postmarked prior to the dates noted above, or if handed or delivered to any member of the Sand Lake executive prior to the dates noted.

Late payments shall be applied as follows:

- payments shall first be applied to late payment charges and thereafter,
- payments will be applied towards outstanding dues.

In the event a balance remains, the member shall be reminded of their standing by the Sand Lake Estates executive and late fees shall continue to accrue into the subsequent deadline noted above.

In instances where extenuating circumstances apply, members in arrears can submit a request in writing to the Sand Lake Estates Executive for review and possible relief of late payment charges on a case by case basis.

## TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES ALTERNATING RECYCLING COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Recycling material is now being collected on alternating weeks. This means plastic/metal recyclables will be collected one week, while all fibres (cardboard, newspaper, boxboard) will be collected the next week. Collection alternates weeks throughout the entire year, so please use the calendar below for easy reference.

Yellow weeks are plastics and metal, while orange weeks are fibres (cardboard, newspaper, boxboard). If you set out your recyclables on the wrong week they will not be picked up and a "sorry tag" will be left on the bag letting you know. Recycling is free and does not require a bag tag, however, it must be clean & in a clear blue bag and each bag cannot weigh more than 40 lbs. There is a 5 bag limit per week and it must be set out for collection by 7:00 am, on your scheduled day.

**APRIL 2014**

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| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |    |    |    |

**MAY 2014**

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**JUNE 2014**

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**JULY 2014**

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**AUGUST 2014**

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**SEPTEMBER 2014**

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**OCTOBER 2014**

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| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |

**NOVEMBER 2014**

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| 30 |    |    |    |    |    |    |

**DECEMBER 2014**

| S  | M  | T  | W  | T  | F  | S  |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  |
| 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 30 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |    |    |    |

Save room in your recycling bag by crushing/squeezing/flattening your cans and plastic bottles.

All boxes must be flattened.

Stop by the Office and **pick up your free can crusher.**

Questions?

Call Michelle at 1-800-928-2250 x 230 or

Email : [michelle@twprideaulakes.on.ca](mailto:michelle@twprideaulakes.on.ca)



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|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Plastics<br/>&amp;<br/>Metal</b> | <b>Paper,<br/>Cardboard,<br/>Boxboard</b> |
|-------------------------------------|---|