

A Note From the Chair

Changing Sudbury's Image from Smokestacks to Lake trout and Loons

We are proud to present our first newsletter for the Greater Sudbury Lake Improvement Advisory Panel (GSLIAP). In our first year we have accomplished much and look forward to the improvement of lake water quality throughout the Greater Sudbury area.



Sudbury's mining heritage is rich. Mining has formed the backbone of the economy for most of Sudbury's existence.

But, with mining operations comes the legacy of environmental degradation. Looming smokestacks, barren landscapes and acid clear lakes have become synonymous with Sudbury. However, water quality has shown tremendous improvement through remediation methods. Evidence of this can be seen in reproducing lake trout lakes and loons raising their young. These easily identifiable species have the potential of becoming the new icons of Sudbury's environmental healing. They can be used to promote our city as a world-class, environmentally sound community.

GSLIAP will work with the community and business organizations to help promote this new image for Sudbury. Sustaining this image however, will take the efforts of all who live, work and play around our vital water bodies. Stewardship groups have started to play active roles in maintaining and improving conditions in our lakes and watersheds. We now need more grass roots involvement to see our lakes, rivers and streams improve over the next decade.

GSLIAP is a consortium of people and organizations representing the public, the city, and lake water quality experts including provincial ministries and area learning institutions. Our mission is to serve as a watchdog on behalf of all citizens in the community and actively promote the ecological health of the lakes within the City of Greater Sudbury through scientific research, public education, policy advocacy, community partnerships and strategic community initiatives.



GO NATIVE!

When planting your garden consider using native plants on your lakefront property. Native vegetation along your shoreline is very important to protect the water quality and the natural balance of your lake. Non-native or ornamental plants alter the ecology of your lake and do not support the same wildlife communities as native species. Also, non-native species need fertilizers and pesticides which pollute your lake and stress the ecosystem.

Benefits of Natural Shoreline

Vegetation

- provides shelter and food for wildlife
- stabilizes your shoreline against erosion
- supports spawning beds for fish
- enhances water quality
- traps run-off and excess nutrients
- shades and cools water
- discourages algae and weed growth
- needs minimal maintenance and no fertilizers



Meadowsweet

Tips:

- plant a 3 metre strip of sweet gale, shrub willows and speckled alder just uphill of the high water mark.
- Further inland, plant red-osier dogwood, meadowsweet, highbush cranberry and speckled alder. Their roots form a web that extends a half-metre down and are more effective in protecting property from erosion and nutrients, than the roots of grasses.

GO Pesticide Free at the lake!

When you or your neighbour use fertilizers/pesticides on your waterfront lawn you are not only fertilizing your lawn but you are also contaminating your lake. And if you take your drinking water from the lake you are **DRINKING PESTICIDES!** Try using alternatives to pesticides, They are easy and safe to use around children and pets. Spread organic compost, grass clippings and/or slow release organic products such as well aged-manure and seaweed on your lawn in the spring and fall.

Tip: Use a vacuum to remove bugs from your plants. In your garden, try a hand-held rechargeable vacuum to gently skim the tops of infested plants. This works for potato and cucumber beetles, aphids, earwigs and many other pests. Empty the vacuum into a bucket of soapy water to drown the bugs.

Science Corner - Spring Phosphorus Sampling

Every spring more than 25 lake residents and lake stewardship groups in Greater Sudbury participate in the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's Lake Partner Program. The goal of the Lake Partner Program is to create a valuable, long-term database to track the nutrient enrichment (eutrophication) of Ontario's lakes. Volunteers collect water samples once a year before the May long weekend and measure water clarity using a Secchi disc every two weeks during the summer. A Secchi disc is a round flat disc with alternating black and white quadrants that is lowered into a lake to visually measure water clarity, indicated by the depth at which the disc disappears.



Secchi Disc

If you are interested in participating in the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's Lake Partner Program, contact the City of Greater Sudbury's Lake

Water Quality Program Co-ordinator at (705) 671-CITY (2489), ext. 4604 or the Lake Partner Program directly at 1-800-470-8322.

Water clarity is an indirect measure of the amount of algae in a lake. Water clarity is affected by total phosphorus, the principal nutrient that makes lakes more fertile and contributes to excessive algae and weed growth. By taking both total phosphorus and water clarity, you can track two trends that confirm each other. Water clarity is also affected by swamps and watershed runoff which make your lake tea coloured.

City of Greater Sudbury's Lake Water Quality Program

The City's Lake Water Quality Program monitors approximately 35 lakes every spring on urban priority lakes. The lakes are chosen based on high phosphorus concentrations, their susceptibility to lakeshore development and the influence of human activities. These lakes are re-sampled throughout the summer to determine if the phosphorus is flushed out of the lake and if there are phosphorus inputs from the surrounding watershed.

Ask a Lake Water Quality Expert

If you have questions about the science of lakes and lake water quality, ask a water quality expert from the Greater Sudbury Lake Improvement Advisory Panel care of Lana McKinnon at 671-City (2489), ext. 4604 or email lane.mckinnon@city.greatersudbury.on.ca.

Love the Loons, Love our Heritage!

For many of us, loons are as much a Canadian symbol as the moose or the beaver. But the loons have a special place in our hearts. The sound of a loon's piercing call and mournful wails are thought of as a sign of what's right in the world. But all is not well. The loons are under stress from a loss of healthy habitat and breeding areas. Healthy loon populations are in danger from shoreline development, acid rain, water level fluctuations, lead poisoning, and watercrafts.

People and loons can co-exist.

Tips for a Loon-Friendly Lake:

- Keep your shoreline wild and natural: Plants provide habitat and shelter for loons and fish.
- Watch your wake: Use sensitive boating practices and steer clear of loons.
- Lead poisoning and fishing line: Use non-lead fishing jigs and sinkers.
- Acid rain: Acidic lakes reduce fish populations that feed the loons. Get involved in a lake group in your area.
- Water level fluctuations: Talk to your local officials to ensure that lake-level manipulations are timed to occur outside of the nesting season from May through June.
- Predators: Don't feed nest predators such as raccoon or gulls.

Answer the call!

It's so easy!

Loving the loons is taking pride in our Canadian Heritage! Caring for loons today is caring for the loons of the future! For more information about loon surveys in Greater Sudbury contact Marliese and Dieter Schoenenfeld at 522-3085 or visit the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey, Bird Studies Canada at www.bsc-eoc.org

Did You Know?

- There are currently 31 lake stewardship groups in Greater Sudbury.
- Lake Wanapitei is the City's largest (13,257 ha) and deepest (142m) lake. It is also the only one created by a meteorite impact.
- 16.5% (601 square kilometres) of the City's total surface is covered by water.
- The City of Greater Sudbury is divided into two main watersheds:
French River Watershed to the east and the Spanish River Watershed to the west.

What everyone should know about maintaining their Septic System

Most common warning signs that something is wrong with your septic system:

- Slow or backed up drains
- Patches of lush growth
- Unpleasant odours around the yard
- Sewage surfacing on lawns or ditches
- Significant algal growth in lakes or other water bodies

Septic System "DO's"

- Have your tank pumped every 3 to 5 years depending on the size and amount of use.
- Septic system professionals should inspect the entire system - field, distribution box and pump chambers.
- Practice water conservation by using low flush toilets, water saving faucets and shower heads.
- Take hazardous wastes to approved disposal centres.
- Divert roof, patio and driveway runoff away from the field bed.

Septic System "Don't's"

- Don't pour harmful chemicals down your drains: no paint, kerosene, solvents, antifreeze, gas, oil, herbicides or pesticides.
- Don't use commercial septic tank additives; they are unnecessary, expensive, may cause pollution and can damage your tile bed.
- Don't drive or park on your tile bed. This will compact the soil and reduce the water absorption of the soil surrounding the tile bed.
- Don't stress the system with multiple laundry loads in one day.

For more information about septic systems in Greater Sudbury,
contact the Sudbury and District Health Unit at 522-9200.

We want to hear from you.

If your lake stewardship group has news or an upcoming event you would like us to advertise or if you would like to receive a copy of our newsletter, please call 671-CITY (2489), ext. 4604 or email ana.mckinnon@city.greatersudbury.on.ca

Lake Stewardship Resources

1. www.ene.gov.on.ca

Click on Judge Dennis O'Connor's Report Part 2 following the Walkerton tragedy and inquiry; Protecting Ontario's Drinking Water: Toward A Watershed-Based Source Protection Planning Network. See page 63 for recommendations on septic systems and underground fuel storage tanks, wells, and landscape restoration.

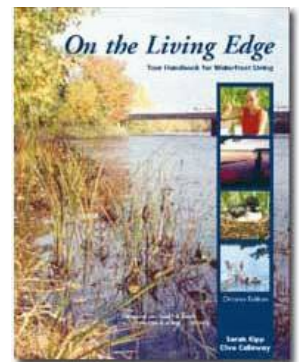
2. www.livingbywater.ca

Learn what you can do to protect and restore shorelines. They have many useful resources, programs and services.

On the Living Edge

Practical information on a range of subjects is given: shoreline landscaping, erosion prevention, native plants, septic systems, wells, water quality, environmentally-friendly cleaning products, etc.

It costs \$18.70 + GST and shipping. Bulk discounts are available. Contact the Living by Water Project office (613) 692-3571 ext. 122.



3. www.environmentalchoice.ca

This is Canada's only national and comprehensive eco-labelling program; the program's official symbol is the EcoLogo. The site has a list of certified "green" products and services.



Upcoming Events

Next meeting of the Greater Sudbury Lake Improvement Advisory Panel (GSLIAP) will be September 17th 2003 at Tom Davies Square, from 7.p.m. to 9 p.m.

New and improved website. The Lake Water Quality website is getting a face lift. Look for it soon at www.city.greatersudbury.on.ca/

