



# BALSAM LAKE ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY NEWS

## Summer 2023 Edition



Photo credit BJC

### THE SOUNDS OF SUMMER

Nothing says Canadian summer like the call of the loon. For those growing up at the cottage, in many ways it defined our childhood. Did you know that the common loon has 4 distinct calls? The **wail** (if separated from a chick or mate), the **tremolo** (signals distress), the **yodel** (expresses aggression) and the **hoot** (signals curiosity).

While not currently designated a species at risk in Ontario, the common loon is considered an "indicator" species. If you have a healthy loon population it's a sign of a healthy lake.

While our changing climate is a threat to loons we also have a more direct role to play in ensuring their safety. As shoreline nesters, loon nests are easily swamped by high waves and boat wakes. If a nest is lost the loon pair may try to nest a second time but this leaves chicks with limited time to grow to maturity before their migration south.

Loons are also vulnerable to boat strikes especially when they have chicks because adults won't dive or fly to avoid a collision. It might surprise you to know that boat strikes are the leading cause of deaths among loon populations. So heads up when boating and know that Ontario lakes have a speed limit of 10 km/h within 30 meters of shore.  
<https://www.bewakeaware.com/>

### FROM THE BLA EXECUTIVE

Summer is in full swing, school's out and cottages around Balsam Lake are coming to life.

Mark your calendars, the Balsam Lake Association will be hosting our first "in-person" meeting since 2019 on **Saturday August 19, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm** at the **Coboconk Legion**. We're excited to have Chief Dave Mowat, Chief of the Alderville Band and First Nations historian joining us to talk about the **Indigenous History of Balsam Lake** along with CoKL Mayor Doug Elmslie who will share the city's strategic plan, a key pillar of which is protecting the environment. Jeff Berthelette of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters will also be joining to review ways to protect the lake from invasive species and Jennifer Wilson of the Coboconk, Norland and Area Chamber of Commerce will share an update on the Summit Wellness Centre. We'd love to see you there.

One of the important roles that the BLA plays each summer is water sampling. We support two important sampling initiatives with a network of volunteers around the lake, including E. coli testing and the Lake Partners Program. We're looking for a tester in Killarney Bay for the E. coli program. If you're interested please contact us via our web site.

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 (BLA President 2023/ 2024)

Note: all wildlife photos were taken from a respectful distance.



Photo credit BJC

*Acknowledging that we are on the traditional lands  
of many First Nations including the Mississauga Anishinaabeg People*



*Presents*

# Understanding the Indigenous Roots of Balsam Lake

with  
Chief Dave Mowat



Dave Mowat is Chief of the Alderville Band and First Nations historian passionate about understanding the treaty and settlement history of Alderville, Balsam Lake and the Mississauga Nation as a whole. His knowledge acquired over the decades, including his academic pursuits, allows Dave to defend the Mississauga Anishinaabeg presence in southern Ontario with confidence and commitment.

**Date: Saturday August 19, 2023**

**Time: 10am - 12pm**

**Location: Coboconk Legion, Free Admission**

Mayor Doug Elmslie, of the *City of Kawartha Lakes* will be in attendance to present the *City of Kawartha Lakes Strategic Plan*

***Other Presenters Include:***

Jeff Berthelette of the *Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters* on protecting Balsam Lake from invasive species

*Coboconk, Norland & Area Chamber of Commerce* on the Summit Wellness Centre

Balsam Lake Association Protecting our Legacy



Corben Creek Wetlands, photo credit BJC

## **OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND ... THE IMPORTANCE OF BALSAM LAKE WETLANDS CHAT WITH STEVE DENURE**

Wetlands that sit on the fringe of Balsam Lake play an important role in protecting lake health. Connecting lakes and rivers throughout the Balsam Lake watershed, wetlands are the nurseries of the lake, providing important wildlife habitat for native and migrating species as well as helping to ensure a supply of clean water. Wetland conservation and restoration is an excellent nature-based solution on our path to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, providing carbon storage, mitigating extreme weather impacts by reducing flood risks and supporting biodiversity.

**BENEFITS OF WETLANDS INCLUDE:  
WATER PURIFICATION / WATER RETENTION, REDUCING RISK OF FLOODING /  
KEY WILDLIFE & FISHERIES HABITAT**

In our lifetime we've seen a significant reduction in wetlands throughout Southern Ontario due to pressure from development, invasive species and changing weather patterns. Kawartha Lakes is fortunate to have many of the remaining Ontario wetlands. 50 of which are designated as provincially significant (PSW) and 6 PSW's are found on the shores of Balsam Lake. But what does it mean to have a wetland considered provincially significant? Earlier this year, to address the housing crisis, the Ontario Government made significant changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System (OWES). Wetlands are evaluated based on biological, social, hydrological and other features. The January 2023 changes removed consideration for species at risk and wetland complexes, putting many of the wetlands currently designated as provincially significant at risk.

But there's cause for celebration. If you've followed the Kawartha Lakes news recently you would have seen the exciting announcement from the Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) that 39 acres on the north-east side of Balsam Lake will be forever protected through a Conservation Easement Agreement (CEA) between Steve and Ali DeNure and the Kawartha Land Trust. The majority of the property is part of the Corben Creek PSW.



I caught up with Steve at his cottage on Ball Island to talk about the Land Trust agreement and the importance of protecting wetlands from further development.

**As a long-time resident on Balsam Lake, what's special to you about the lake?**

What's remarkable about Balsam Lake are the parts that are unchanged over time, like Grand Island and Indian Point Provincial Park. It's an interesting combination of highly developed and undeveloped shoreline. What's unique about this lake at the top of the Trent Canal system is that it only has a few sources of water feeding it. The Gull River is a big source, but Corben Creek delivers 3-4% of the water flowing into the lake.

**Wetlands are often forgotten areas of the lake ... out of sight, out of mind. Why do you think they're important to protect?**

Wetlands and riparian lands offer an amazing filtration and buffer zone. We've seen lots of wildlife around the Corben Creek property. Paddling up in the spring you see spawning muskie, snapping turtles and last year we were surprised to see migrating sandhill cranes. You know if left undisturbed it becomes an incredible magnet for all kinds of wildlife but it's easy to overlook it.

**Your family bought the properties back in 2003 and 2004 and have had a vision of protecting the area for some time. Why is the Corben Creek wetland important to you?**

I grew up at Driftwood Village and Corben Creek was a favourite spot for canoeing and kayaking as a family. Once when we were paddling up the creek, we found that a lagoon had been dug and it had breached the bank. We later learned that the property had been subdivided and sold as Balsam Lake access, so we set about protecting the wetland and unwound the development. Our whole family, especially our mother Dorothy, was keen to purchase it to preserve it. Developers will develop the landscapes they have permission to develop. It was nice to be able to protect it.

**Corben Creek is designated as a provincially significant wetland which offers a level of protection. Tell me more about why you decided to engage with the Kawartha Land Trust?**

As you look around at what lands people choose to preserve, there are provincial parks, designated conservation areas and there is also a network of Land Trusts across the country with significant land under their management. The opportunity to engage with Land Trusts transcends politics unlike organizations under provincial jurisdiction. I've had a long-term interest in conservation. We looked for the best option to preserve the property for the long term. When we acquired the Corben Creek properties 20 years ago the Kawartha Land Trust was early in its formation. The timing seemed right now.



If a wetland is designated as provincially significant, any development must be assessed by the local conservation authority. In theory it's protected but that doesn't mean it won't be developed. The Land Trust represented the best opportunity to protect the properties for the long term. KLT have superb staff who are incredibly knowledgeable on flora and fauna, perform reviews for landowners, and make recommendations on how to improve stewardship. Land can be protected in partnership with KLT either by donating or through an easement (restrictive covenant) that lives with the title, where you undertake to do certain things, agreeing not to develop it and managing it in partnership with KLT. The tax benefits fall under the Federal Ecological Gifts act.

Kawartha Land Trust protects 33 properties and 5,350 acres across the City of Kawartha Lakes. The DeNure CEA is the second property that Kawartha Land Trust manages on Balsam Lake. The first was the 72-acre Balsam Lake South Bay PSW announced in 2021. Follow the link for more information on the Kawartha Land Trust: [KLT Home](#)

**Your support for wetland protection is key in continuing to enjoy a healthy lake.**

Sources: Steve DeNure, Kawartha Field Naturalists, Kawartha Land Trust, The Land Between, ON nature

## Attention all Sailors

The Balsam Lake Open Sailing Race will be taking place again this year on Sunday August 6th, 1:00 pm start. The race will begin between Long Point and Grand Island. All classes are welcome. Please arrive 15 min early and identify yourself to the Race Committee. (Name, boat class and email if you'd like to join the sailing list). There are trophies for first place overall (the Frank Shannon Trophy), first single hander (the Kitty Griffin Trophy) and the Helliwell Handicap for the first boat using adjusted times based on class. For more information please contact Doug Paterson at [thepatersons@rogers.com](mailto:thepatersons@rogers.com).

