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OATHILL ON THE UPSWING

Joanne Oostveen



Oathill Lake supporters attended a show and tell session on June 26. (Contributed)

Oathill Lake is making a comeback from an unhealthy past.

Five years ago, some residents were concerned enough about the lake that they formed the non-profit Oathill Lake Conservation Society (OLCS).

They saw considerable shoreline damage. Oathill was so popular for fishing that the shoreline was being

trampled away. And the fishing never stopped at that lake. Overstocking made for even more issues. There was a steady decline in the water quality — too many nutrients entering the lake produced too much plant growth. When the dead plants fell to the bottom of the lake, it used up the oxygen.

And Oathill was experiencing a “silence of the frogs.”

The problems were huge. And the results were not good.

“Years ago, the lake would just roar at night with frogs croaking and peepers peeping,” said Terry Rowell, who has lived in the area for more than 45 years. “There was an obvious decline in amphibian populations. You could really notice it. One woman joined our group because she noticed the lack of peepers. But she hated them back when they were going full force. You don’t miss something until it is gone.”

Rowell became director of the OLCS and set about taking action. Work needed to be done to bring the lake back to a healthier ecological balance.

The membership of the group has now grown to about seventy families.

On June 26, the OCLCS held a show and tell session. This event served two purposes.

“We wanted to let people know what had been done to get us on the right track and to thank those supporters who have helped us get here,” said Rowell.

The OLCS has completed the following projects at the lake.

**Oathill Crescent outfall**

Before modification to the storm sewer, the outfall entered directly into the lake, carrying with it all the pollutants from the streets. With the help of HRM’s Energy and Environment office and Halifax Water they were able to have the system restructured so that the outfall now enters a retention pond where settlement and absorption of many of these pollutants can take place before the water finally enters the lake.

Additionally:

— The purchase and installation of Aquago, a recirculating system that slowly pushes lake water from the depths to the surface, where it will be reoxygenated. Oxygen levels were very low below five metres in depth. But this solar powered system has brought oxygen levels back to where trout and vegetation need them to be. This is the only system of its kind, in place, east of Quebec. It was purchased with financing by the OCLCS and others. They also thanked Councillor Gloria McCluskey, Amy Weston from the NSLC Adopt-a-Stream, Dr. Cathy Conrad and Oliver Woods from SMU and

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CALENDAR

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