



Amphibian Voice

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Waterfront Stewardship

Waterfront property owners can mitigate the threats of habitat loss, road mortality, and deliberate persecution, making their impact on wetland biodiversity significant. After working with property owners across Ontario we have seen incredible dedication to the preservation of waterfront environments, from small scale actions like those taken by Pat Smith and Glen Brodie (pg. 2); to larger scale initiatives like the creation of a lake plan, as suggested by lake planning consultant Randy French (pg.1). This issue of Amphibian Voice is dedicated to waterfront stewardship and the opportunities available to make a difference for the wildlife of your property.

Big Words on the Environment

Randy P French

When environmental organizations, scientists, and politicians talk about protecting our environment, they use terms like "cumulative impact", "threshold limits" and "sustainable development". "Cumulative impact" is simply the end result of many small actions. Although cumulative impacts can be both good and bad, the term is usually applied in the negative sense.

Here's an experiment to better explain: Take a cup of water, and fill it to about 3 cm from the top. Place it on something that is precious to you, like your favourite antique wooden table. Now slowly put a small stone inside the cup, one at a time. When you look at the cup from far away, there does not appear to be much change.

almost full. The end result of these series of minor changes is called the "cumulative impact". Every time you add a stone and there are no negative consequences, call that action "sustainable". The point at which the cup is about to over flow is called the "threshold" limit, and the action of adding stones beyond the threshold limit is no longer sustainable.

Call each one of your stones "development", or more specifically, homes, cottages, or golf courses. Pretend that your table is your lake, and add a few more cups to represent wetlands, fish habitat, or endangered species. If we apply the same process of gradually adding "development" stones to the cups, do you think the wetlands, and wildlife habitat will survive? How will the impact of these changes affect the future of your lake? How can you plan ahead to ensure that the state of your lake is maintained? There is a definite similarity between your watermarked table and your lake. We must be careful that our "cumulative impacts" are "sustainable" and do not cross "threshold limits", as they do when the quality of our lakes is what is at stake.

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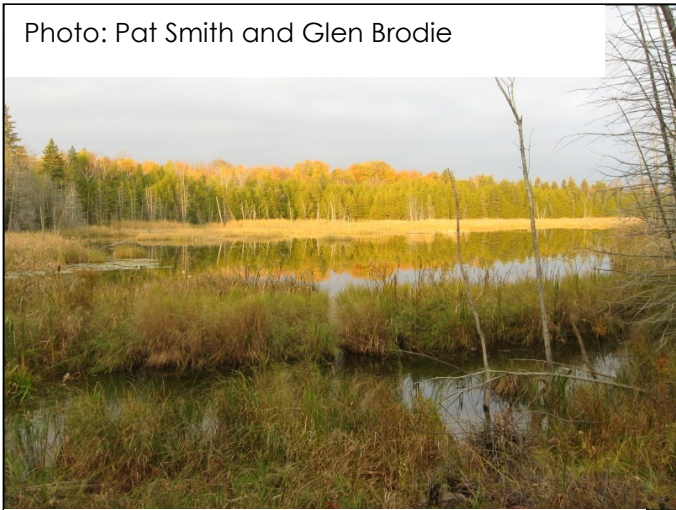
However, when you look at the cup up close, you notice the impact of adding stones. Add a few more stones until the cup is

Helping the Turtles of Kawartha Lakes

By Pat Smith and Glen Brodie
Coboconk, Ontario

We moved from Saskatchewan in October of 2004 to a location outside Coboconk on Hugill Road in the City of Kawartha Lakes. We have an acre of land and there is a small pond across the road from our home.

Photo: Pat Smith and Glen Brodie



Pond habitat across the road from Pat and Glen's house

In the spring of 2005 we noticed a lot of turtle activity in and around the pond. We often spotted painted turtles on their way across the road or on the side of the road laying their eggs. A handful even trudged up our long driveway to lay their eggs in our yard. There is one snapping turtle that occasionally suns itself on the side of the road, too, and apparently he or she has been around here a long time.

However, we became concerned about the turtles' safety on the road as there is quite a bit of traffic from May to September as cottagers travel along our road to their summer places on Four Mile Lake. Many times we have stopped to assist a turtle across the road or to "stand guard" on the road as it makes its way back to the pond.

We made two metal signs warning of the turtle activity and hung them on a tree in each direction on the road near the pond. One disappeared two days later and the other was damaged, so we applied to the township to have signs erected by them. Unfortunately our application was not approved.

We mentioned our concerns to our neighbour, and, being a very creative gentleman, he designed and built a sign to be placed at the end of our driveway. We love it and hope that people seeing it will slow down and watch for "our" turtles on the road.

Photo: Pat Smith and Glen Brodie



Pat with sign designed by a neighbour

Need a Crossing Sign to Help Turtles on Your Road?

- Step 1:** Identify a turtle crossing hotspot
- Step 2:** Contact your municipality to obtain permission to install a sign
- Step 3:** E-mail Adopt-A-Pond at aap@torontozoo.ca

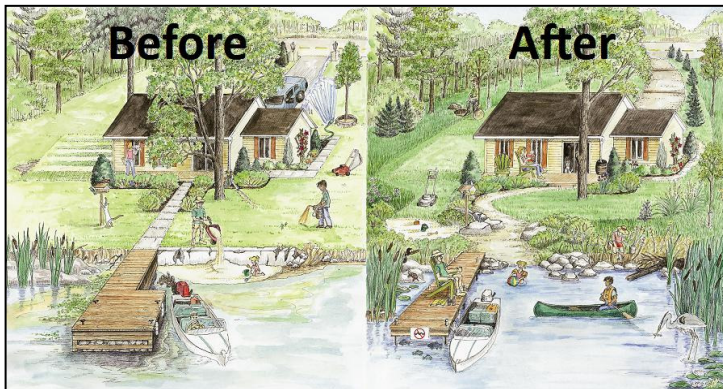


Healthy Shorelines for Habitat and You

By The Centre for Sustainable Watersheds
Portland, On



Do you live, rent property or play on a shoreline? If so, you have a huge role to play in protecting this unique and sensitive area. A healthy shoreline has many benefits including: filtering pollutants, protecting against erosion and providing habitat for fish and wildlife.



Caring for your shoreline means less work, not more! The easiest way to protect water quality and the value of your property is to keep your shoreline natural. You can help with these simple steps:

- Start a buffer strip by leaving grass uncut near shore
- Replant shoreline areas lacking vegetation with native trees and shrubs
- Leave woody debris for wildlife habitat
- Protect wetland areas and aquatic vegetation for birds, fish, turtles and other species
- Build at least 30 metres away from shore
- Don't use fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides
- Pump out your septic tank regularly – every 3-5 years
- Avoid septic tank additives
- Use phosphate-free or biodegradable soaps
- Conserve water by using low-flow showerheads and toilets
- Install a rain barrel to use as a water source

- Upgrade to a 2 or 4 stroke boat motor
- Limit 'hardened surfaces' such as pavement, patios and decking
- Choose an environmentally friendly dock such as a floating, cantilever or post dock



Participants of a shoreline assessment



Landowners involved in a shoreline replanting

About Centre for Sustainable Watersheds

Centre for Sustainable Watersheds (CSW) is an environmental, charitable organization that seeks to protect and preserve freshwater in Canada's lakes and rivers. We reach stakeholders through training programs, educational materials, web-based information sharing, sustainable wastewater technologies and hands-on initiatives such as habitat and shoreline protection.

Contact us at: 14 Water Street, Portland
Ontario K0G 1V0;
(613) 272 5136
info@watersheds.ca

Finding the Right Dock for You and for Wildlife

By Erin Nadeau, Adopt-A-Pond Programme

As a child there is nothing better than running to the end of the dock and jumping into the cool, blue water. Docks can be a fun and functional gathering place on the water, but the wrong style of dock can have negative consequences for both wildlife and water quality. In your quest for the perfect dock be aware of the impact that these structures can have. The shoreline area is a haven for wildlife and the shallow water zone of a lake is some of the most important to breeding and feeding birds, fish, frogs, and turtles. Beyond this, a healthy shoreline area can help in maintaining the water quality at your property.

Dock options that use cribs or concrete can not only be expensive to maintain but can be devastating for wildlife communities. These types of docks often cover a large area of the lakebed, smothering the vegetation and limiting the habitat available for wildlife. They can also lead to the breakup of wave action, the alteration of currents, and the erosion of shorelines. In addition to this, docks such as these that create a barrier between the water and the shore that does not allow animals such as turtles to exit the water and find nesting sites.

If you are interested in maintaining wildlife habitat, suspension and cantilever docks are two of the best options. Since these designs do not require fixing the dock to the lakebed, there is minimal disturbance to this important habitat. While anchoring the dock to the shoreline can still cause damage to shoreline habitat, this is a preferable option to lakebed damage. The only downfall to a cantilever dock is that, because they are built outwards from the shoreline they can only be installed in areas that have a deep enough shoreline to provide adequate leverage. As suspension and cantilever docks can require professional installation, floating docks may be more affordable for many property owners and are

also an excellent choice from a wildlife perspective.

If you do opt for a dock that is anchored to the lakebed, look for post or pole options. These will keep the dock secure but will have less long-term impact on the lake community, as the lakebed is subject to less damage, water currents can be maintained, and wildlife and vegetation can continue to exist beneath the dock. This style also represents a better choice if you reside in an area with water level fluctuations.

No matter what type of dock you choose, seek out non-toxic materials, minimize the size of the dock, and be aware of the modifications that you are making to the shoreline. Also, consider your needs before you begin construction or installation of a dock on your property. Perhaps you can forgo having a dock entirely and would be able to function well by utilizing a public dock or by sharing a dock between neighbours. Lastly, check in with the municipal authorities to ensure that the style of dock you choose meets regulations. For more information on dock types visit the Department of Fisheries and Oceans website at <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/central/pub/dock-quaion/index-eng.htm>

Boating This Summer?

Look for Eco-Rated Marinas when you stop to fill up or when you decide on a location for your boat. Each of the marinas awarded a green leaf anchor have achieved an environmental standard for marine operation.



Certified marinas will fly the Eco-Rating flag and will be listed on the Boating Ontario website so that you can easily find them.

www.boatingontario.ca/CleanMarine/EcoRatedMarinas

Saving turtle nests and a heap of knowledge for Leonard Lake!

By Erin Nadeau, Adopt-A-Pond Programme

Several months ago the staff at Adopt-A-Pond had the privilege of meeting the Riley family, owners and operators of Brooklands Farm in Milford Bay. After learning of their phenomenal property and interest in conservation we thought it would be an excellent site to host a workshop for local area property owners. Individuals owning waterfront property are incredibly important to turtle conservation. As habitat loss and degradation are some of the most significant threats to these animals, those individuals who can create, maintain, or improve habitat are critical.

For many, wildlife is one of the reasons for buying their property, and this message was echoed by the individuals from Leonard Lake who came out to spend the afternoon with the Adopt-A-Pond team. Participants of the workshop had a chance to learn more about wetland wildlife and some of the ways that property owners can have a positive impact.

The day began with a presentation about how to identify local species of turtles, frogs, and toads by sight and by sound. It discussed the threats to turtles and some ways that these can be addressed, such as with proper land management, road signage, reduction of predator abundance (e.g. raccoons), and by reporting turtle sightings.



Photo: AAP
Training participants in turtle nest protection

As Brooklands Farm is a hotspot for turtles we were able to show everyone some techniques for assisting turtles on their own property. While handling the eggs of a species at risk is an offence, there are a few other options that property owners have when they come across turtle nests on their property. One of the actions is protecting the nest from predation using a cover of domed mesh. These can easily be constructed using some wood and hardware cloth, and should be secured to the ground using stakes. Nest protection covers should always be removed from the nest by the end of July to ensure that hatchling turtles are able to escape naturally.

As the final component of the day participants of the workshop had a chance to take a stroll around the farm, where we spoke about strategies for living with beavers, the unique habitats and traits of salamanders, and the calling rituals of local frogs and toads. This was a great opportunity to answer questions of property owners and to show the diversity of habitat types that exist across the Riley property and the Muskokas.

At Risk!

The turtle survival challenge video game hits the internet!!!



You will face multiple threats as you travel across land and water and attempt to complete missions like finding a basking site and an overwintering pond. If you are successful at all your missions and learn enough about the threats facing Ontario's turtles you will become a certified Turtle Expert. To download this FREE game go to the Games section of the Adopt-A-Pond website at: torontozoo.com/adoptapond/AtRisk.asp

Your waterfront property...How do you rate?

Ever wondered how suitable your property is for wildlife. Is it a perfect oasis for local species or do you have some work to do? Take a look at these aspects of your property to make a quick assessment and see where you can improve.

| | Best | | | Poor | Score |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|---|--------------|
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| Land Management | | | | | |
| Habitat Management | Areas of the property have been altered to benefit wildlife | Habitats that effectively support species are left alone | Small alterations have been made to habitat, but sections have been left for wildlife use | Areas that could provide habitat for species (e.g. rock piles, wetlands) are removed or altered | |
| Wetland Management | Healthy, undisturbed wetland/pond is left to function on its own | Wetland/pond has been altered but still supports a diversity of plants and animals | Wetland/pond has been damaged by removing vegetation | Wetland/pond has been drained or filled in | |
| Special Features | Natural wildlife habitat features are provided (e.g., fallen logs) | Natural wildlife habitat features exist, but artificial features are also used | Natural wildlife habitat features are rare, but artificial features are used | No natural or artificial wildlife habitat features are provided | |
| Shoreline Buffers | | | | | |
| Size | Buffer is 30m or greater, in sensitive areas buffer is 150m | Buffer is 30m in all areas | Buffer is less than 30m | Grass extends to shoreline. Buffer is 0m | |
| State | Buffer is continuous along the shoreline | Buffer has only small gaps or punctures along its length | Buffer is punctured but vegetation can re-establish naturally | Buffer mostly punctured or non-existent | |
| Composition | Comprised mostly of native vegetation | Comprised mostly of native vegetation, and some non-invasive, introduced species | Comprised of some native vegetation but mostly non-invasive introduced species | Comprised of no native vegetation and entirely invasive and non-invasive introduced species | |
| Dock | | | | | |
| | No dock, shared or public dock is used when needed | Floating or cantilever dock | Crib dock | Cement dock/pier/wall | |
| Boat Use | | | | | |
| | No motorized vehicles used | Use motorboats infrequently and reduce speed to 10km/h when near shore (30m) | Use motorized vehicles often but with awareness of aquatic wildlife | Use motorized vehicles often and with no consideration given to aquatic wildlife | |

| Wildlife | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|
| Familiarity with Wildlife | Knowledge of local species of wildlife and those that are species at risk | Good knowledge of local species but no familiarity with those that are species at risk | No knowledge of local wildlife but a desire to learn more | No knowledge of the wildlife that live on your property, no interest in gaining knowledge | |
| Wildlife Monitoring | Sightings of wildlife are frequently reported | Sightings have been reported either infrequently, or in the past but not at present | Wildlife sightings have never been reported but there is willingness to do so in the future | Wildlife sightings have never been reported and there is no interest in reporting them | |
| Wildlife and Roads | Wildlife assisted off the road when seen | Wildlife not always assisted off the road but effort made to slow near them and to avoid collisions | Wildlife never deliberately hit but driving style leads to frequent collisions with animals | Wildlife deliberately hit on roads | |
| Pets | Pets are leashed so as not to bother wildlife | Pets are supervised and controlled when outside | Pets are allowed to roam outside unsupervised | Pets frequently harass or consume wildlife | |
| TOTAL SCORE | | | | | |

*** This table has been adapted from the Lake Huron and Lake Simcoe Stewardship Guides*

How did you do?

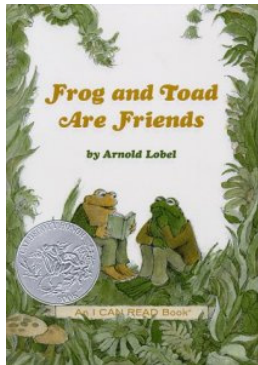
41-48 Best
 32-41 Good
 22-31 Fair
 12-21 Poor

Need to make some changes? Use these resources to learn what you can do:

- Adopt-A-Pond Wetland Conservation Programme (Turtle Tally and Frogwatch Monitoring Programs)
<http://www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond/>
- Canadian Wildlife Service
<http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/docs/considerations-e.html>
- Centre for Sustainable Watersheds (shoreline home visits, property owner training workshops)
<http://www.watersheds.ca/whatwedo/lbw.html>
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Dock Primer and Shoreline Primer)
<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/regions/central/water-eau-eng.htm>
- FOCA (Healthy Waterfronts Handbook, Take the Plunge- A Guide to Stewardship of Ontario's Waters)
<http://www.foca.on.ca/environment>
- Living by Water Project
<http://www.livingbywater.ca/main.html>
- Ontario Road Ecology Group (Wildlife on Roads Monitoring Program)
<http://www.torontozoo.com/conservation/RoadEcologyGroup.asp>
- The Society for Ecological Restoration (Native Plant Resource Guide)
<http://www.serontario.org/publications.htm>

Ribbit's Review- Frog and Toad Are Friends

Written and Illustrated by Arnold Lobel
Reviewed by Matthew Kivlahan, Age 12



The book that I have chosen to review is called Frog and Toad Are Friends. This book is made up of five small stories about two amphibious friends (a frog and a toad) who go on many adventures together. They have lots of fun together, but they also encounter many obstacles that affect their friendship. But even though they fight, they will still always be ready to help each other whenever they need assistance. I think this is a really good book, although the target audience is definitely younger kids. This book is perfect for ages 6,7 and 8 to read alone and ages 3-5 to read with an adult. The illustrations are excellent, depicting Frog and Toad's amazing adventures and comical dilemmas. My sisters, Kait and Kiera, were very amused with the pictures and were laughing hard. So, all in all, I think this is a very good book and I would definitely recommend it, especially to young kids.

Publishers: Harper & Row
ISBN: 0064440206
Publication Date: 1970

Save the Date!

On Saturday November 6th Adopt-A-Pond invites you to be part of the 2010 Turtle Tally and Frogwatch Appreciation Day!

More details to follow via e-mail.
Hope to see you there!

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Amphibian Voice is distributed to schools and communities participating in the Adopt-A-Pond programme. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information on amphibian, turtle and wetland biodiversity conservation issues and efforts in Ontario.

Send in your stories, drawings and photographs to the address below and we will "hoppily" include them in future issues.

Editors:

Julia Phillips
Adopt-A-Pond Coordinator
Bob Johnson
Curator of Reptiles & Amphibians

Contributors:

Erin Nadeau Randy French
Pat Smith Glen Brodie
Matthew Kivlahan
Centre for Sustainable Watersheds

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The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Species at Risk Stewardship Fund
Toronto Zoo Foundation
Canadian Museum Association

Adopt-A-Pond is a non-profit wetland education programme. Costs to produce this newsletter, and other resources, are funded by grants and private donations.

We welcome support of our programme! Please make cheques payable to "Toronto Zoo" and send them to the following address. Thank you!

Adopt-A-Pond
Toronto Zoo
361A Old Finch Ave.
Scarborough, ON M1B 5K7
Fax: (416) 392-4979
aap@torontozoo.ca



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