

October 2023 Lake Networking Group: Cataraqi Conservation Staff Brief

Watershed Science:

- Phragmites removal kits were funded by the Loughborough Lake Association. There are two kits that can be signed out through our website (<https://cataraquiconservation.ca/pages/invasive-species>) during the growing season and outside of fish spawning times. Kits include the tools and materials listed below.

Phragmites Removal Kit Checklist



- 1 Storage Bag - to store equipment
- 8 Raspberry Cane Cutters - to remove phragmites using the cutting to drown method
- 1 Tarp - to place the phragmites stalks on and transport them
- 8 Safety Glasses - to protect eyes when removing phragmites
- 3 Bypass Pruners - to remove phragmites seed heads if they are present
- Paper Yard Waste Bags - to place the phragmites seed heads in
- Phragmites Removal Quick Guide
- 2 Spade Shovels (Optional) - to remove phragmites stalks by spading

- Community leaders in Elizabethtown-Kitley Township participated in three work bees to remove invasive Phragmites using the cut-to-drown method from an area of 1,140 m²
- Invasive Water Soldier spread from its original location on Red Horse Lake (Gananoque River watershed) to several other locations on that same lake which were subsequently hand removed through the Invasive Species Awareness Program (OFAH). Monitoring (eDNA) was done by Cataraqi Conservation in downstream locations along the Gananoque River system and no evidence of this plant was found.
- Some in-water and shoreline vegetation surveys were updated on Dog and Cranberry Lakes as part of an ongoing partnership project.
- Through an opportunity with Health Canada, September water samples from select Provincial Groundwater Monitoring wells will be tested for pesticides.
- Financial contributions from the Dog & Cranberry Lake Association and the Loughborough Lake Association made it possible to hire a 16-week summer contract position. Work included the Priority Aquatic Invasive Plant Project, boat ramp use and invasive species control practices surveys, boat ramp invasive species control options report, the in-water vegetation survey noted above, and further contributions to the Dog & Cranberry Lake Association's State of the Lake and forthcoming Lake Plan.
- A method to identify fish species in hard to monitor locations was refined (underwater game camera mounted on a tripod).

Forestry:

- If interested in tree planting, please contact Rick Knapton directly (rknapton@crca.ca).
- TD Tree Planting Day is on October 14, 2023, at Lemoine Point at 9am and the Mac Johnson Wildlife Fall Festival is October 21, 2023 from 10am-2pm - <https://cataraquiconservation.ca/pages/events>

Water Level Management:

- Every fall, water levels are managed with discharge adjustments at water control structures to accommodate, as much as possible, any heavy rainfalls. The goal is to maintain adequate downstream flow while minimize flooding and reducing upstream water levels in anticipation of winter and the coming spring melt.
- Over the summer, July was drier than normal, while August was a heavy rainfall month. At the conclusion of September, we are preparing a report to recommend the first low water condition declaration of 2023.

- At this point water levels at Cataraqi Conservation managed water control structures are in the normal target range. Staff will continue to monitor water levels closely and make necessary adjustments to maintain levels within the target range, to the extent possible. Ultimately, water levels are subject to the weather.
- The following are Cataraqi Conservation managed dams (lakes):
 - Wilton Road Dam (Odessa Lake)
 - Sydenham Lake Dam
 - Temperance Lake Dam
 - Fred Grant Dam (Lees Pond)
 - Broome-Runciman Dam (Buell's Creek Reservoir at the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area)
- The following link has more info about dams and water control structures:
<https://cataraquiconservation.ca/pages/dams>
- Other Water Managers are performing similar operations this fall. The following link has a list of water control structures and owners in the area: <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0496/7242/1533/files/WCS-Owners.pdf?v=1613660651>

Drinking Water Source Protection:

- Cataraqi Conservation has partnered with other eastern Source Protection Regions for a Five Part 'Drinking Water Wise' webinar series. The first on Harmful Algae Blooms was well attended. The next one is on October 26.
- Source Protection Plan comments were received by the Ministry and amendments were presented to the Source Protection Committee in September. Municipal consultation on the proposed policy updates will take place this fall.

Education:

- Public programming (<https://cataraquiconservation.ca/pages/events>) is back for another fall/winter season and we have hired nine contract staff to help support our events and education at the Outdoor Centre

Development Review:

- Permits and enforcement are at a record high this year.
- Development Review Team staff, in collaboration with Queen's University and other eastern Ontario CAs, is working to develop policies for ecological offsetting in the Cataraqi region. Ecological offsetting, otherwise known as ecological compensation, is an approach that the Authority has been forced to consider in very limited circumstances due to provincial legislative changes (e.g., Minister's Zoning Orders) which require the Authority to issue approvals for development in locations that normally would be protected. Offsetting is a last resort in these circumstances where the Authority has no legal ability to deny approvals. The offsetting approach for Cataraqi is being developed on a science-based approach with the intent to achieve net environmental benefits where possible. Details of the policies will be provided for stakeholder consultation before adoption.
- Through a partnership with the City of Kingston, Cataraqi Conservation has developed a new suite of information graphics, diagrams and an educational video intended to inform landowners of the importance of waterfront property stewardship and to guide owners towards acceptable development practices that avoid impacts to the riparian and aquatic ecosystem and avoid natural hazards. These resources will be shared widely with the public, municipalities, lake associations and other relevant groups.

Administration:

- Cataraqi Conservation is updating our Strategic Plan (2024-2027). A public and stakeholder survey was circulated over the month of September. Thanks to all those who participated. A final copy will be available Spring 2024.
- We are preparing our 2024 Operating and Capital Budget. We will be bringing a draft to the Board in October for circulation to participating municipalities. We are also working with our municipalities to finalize service level agreements for our Locally Supported Services, including monitoring and reporting. We have two municipalities left to finalize – South Frontenac and Brockville, both scheduled this fall.
- Cataraqi Conservation's Administration Office will be moving. We will be sharing Frontenac County's administration office (2069 Battersea Road in Glenburnie) starting January 2024. More details will soon be available on our website.

New Legislation we are tracking:

- Bill 134: Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act, 2023
 - On September 28, 2023, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing introduced a bill that proposes to amend the definition of “affordable residential units” to include an income component. More information is available through the open [ERO proposal](#).

- Environmental Protection Act, Ontario Water Resources Act, and Clean Water Act – Proposed Changes
 - [ERO-019-6928](#) proposes the following changes:
 - Exempt owners of certain stormwater management work from current approval processes and allow to self-register on the Environmental Activity and Sector Screening;
 - Exempt some types of stormwater management work from current approval processes, specifically low impact development;
 - Exempt some drainage works for roadways and railways from current approval processes; and
 - Remove permitting and potential other requirements for allowable but regulated activities subject to the Cataraqi Source Protection Plan and instead allow a Licenced Engineering Practitioner to determine the risk and how to mitigate through project registration on the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry.
 - Staff will be reviewing the proposed changes. Comments are due October 30, 2023.

Update prepared by Holly Evans, Watershed Planning Coordinator:

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