

# The Freshwater Connection

Publication of the Central Algoma Freshwater Coalition - Summer 2019



## CAFC Office

The CAFC Office in Bruce Mines is closing August 20, 2019 to reduce our operating cost overhead. CAFC will continue as a volunteer not-for-profit organization. We can be reached by email at [cafreshwatercoalition@gmail.com](mailto:cafreshwatercoalition@gmail.com)

## Beach Combing by Bob Kellum - (August 2019)

As the son of a geologist and archeologist, I learned early-on to survey the ground where I walked. One of my favorite pastimes is combing North Ontario beaches to peruse what wind and wave have brought to shore. What I find on Big Basswood Lake is a cross section of lake happenings, delivered like a newspaper to my porch. I frequently comb a long stone beach on a shallow north-shore bay that catches more than its share of lake flotsam.



Early in the year there is a predictable accumulation of tree branches, leaves, needles, cones and bark pushed up where it will stay until greater waves redistribute them or they are assimilated into the near shore habitat. I scavenge for unique driftwood, miscellaneous

lumber, smooth stones, pudding conglomerates and jasper pebbles. I am then challenged to find ways to showcase the value I have seen in each find. The real prizes are pieces of well-worn glass, also known as "angel tears". Seeded decades ago, one can only guess how broken glass ended up in an area used for swimming and boating. I display these colorful gems prominently in two old canning jars.

Inevitably I must clean up the residue of carless anglers, boaters and shore dwellers. Occasionally I find the lost Frisbee, boat bumper or child's toy, but more often I find mindlessly discarded debris. Among these are straws, bits of rope, cigar mouthpieces, water-bottle caps, cigarette butts, monofilament line, plastic wrappers and broken pieces of plastic. Most people would put these in the trash and be done with them, but I treat them as an objective historical record of disregard for the lake and the integrity of natural systems. For a decade I have placed beach residue in large, clear-plastic jars where the unflattering habits of lake humanity can be seen and studied, like specimens in a museum.

Beyond the desire to find treasure and keep the beach free of trash, I am motivated by a therapeutic exercise that disarms the conscious mind and permits the subconscious to percolate to the surface. I know of no pleasure finer than to expectantly comb a beach while emptying one's mind of life's urgent concerns. Not only is it an antidote for pessimism, beach combing is a positive action in the face of incremental degradation.

### **Sustain Algoma - CAFC Theme This Year- Plant a Tree - Help Your Local Water Watershed**



Thank you to all those who participated in and organized the Sustain Algoma event. Through a generous donation of more than 500 tree seedlings by Sault College – CAFC was able to give away the tree seedlings to be planted in the Central Algoma Watershed. Thank You – for planting 500+ trees! The tree species included cedar, tamarack and white spruce- all the species are suitable for planting near lakes and streams. This interface is called a riparian zone and is very important to water quality.

Riparian areas are the lands adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands, where the vegetation and soils are strongly influenced by the presence of water. Although they make up only a small fraction of the land, they are among the most productive and valuable of all landscape types.

Riparian zones slow the flow of water, which reduces soil erosion and flood damage. Sediment is trapped, reducing suspended solids to create less turbid water. Pollutants are filtered from surface runoff, enhancing water quality via bio filtration. They provide

wildlife habitat, increased biodiversity, and wildlife corridors. Riparian zones are also important for the fish that live within rivers.

From a social aspect, riparian zones contribute to nearby property values through amenity and views, and they improve enjoyment. The riparian zone acts as a sacrificial erosion buffer to absorb impacts of factors including climate change, increased runoff from urbanization and increased boat wake without damaging structures located behind a setback zone.

If you are interested in larger scale plantings of riparian areas on lands adjacent to streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands, we may be able to help.

### How to Plant a Seedling – In Six Easy Steps

1 – Find a Spot

2 – Roots go Straight Down

3 – Dig a Hole

4 – Cover the Roots

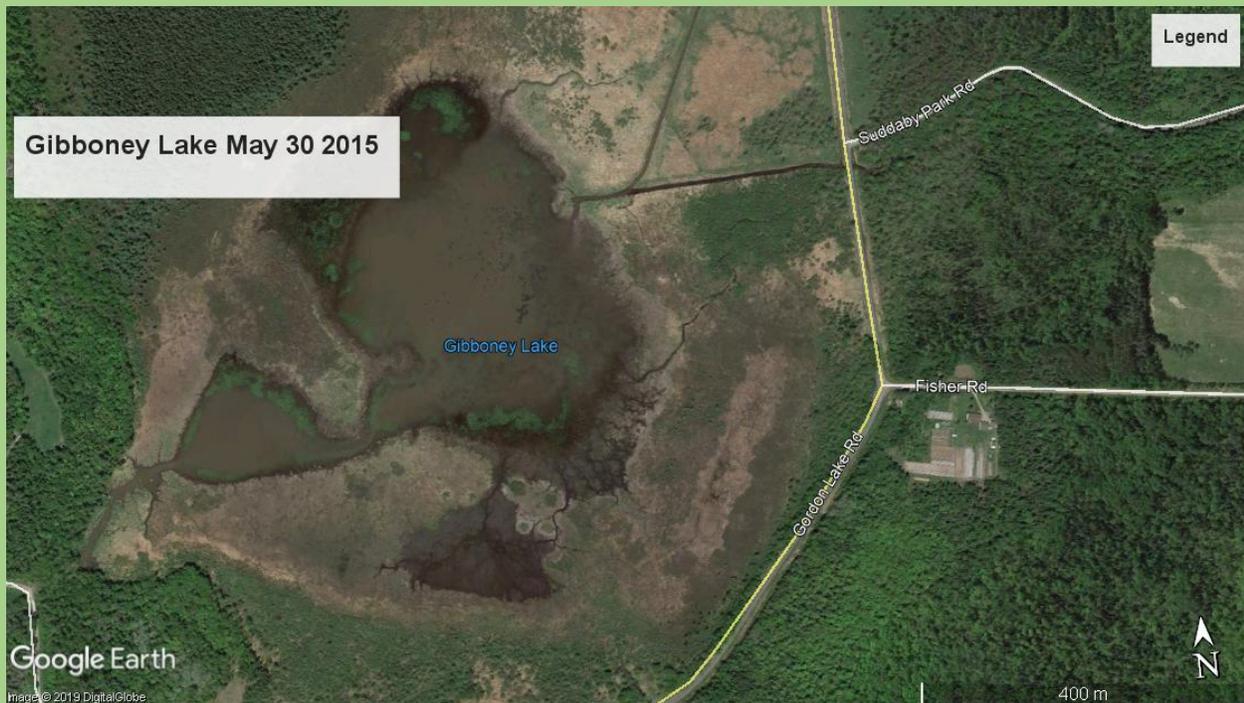
5 – Water the Seedling

6 - Mulch Around the Seedling

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giXfCHT05wk>

### Gibboney Lake - Important Wetland

Wetlands are important for both storage of floodwaters and biodiversity. Wetlands can help reduce the impacts of flash flooding by storing water and releasing it over a longer time period.



Unusually large rain events however can also be detrimental to wetlands if water levels fluctuate beyond normal ranges.

A TNC- Gund Study published by the University of Vermont - suggests that wetlands and floodplain restoration – can improve water quality (reduce phosphorous) and increase flood resiliency.

[https://www.uvm.edu/gund/news/restore-wetlands-cut-flood-costs-phosphorus-pollution-tnc-gund-study?utm\\_source=GundNews&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_campaign=TNC](https://www.uvm.edu/gund/news/restore-wetlands-cut-flood-costs-phosphorus-pollution-tnc-gund-study?utm_source=GundNews&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=TNC)

Volunteers have been out in May and June doing surveys of turtles and other incidental species in the Gibboney wetland by canoe starting at the Black Creek Bridge at Suddaby Park Road.

The large culvert at Black Creek was recently rebuilt and the road bed raised. During the public consultation turtle nesting along the road was noted and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry worked with the municipality to mitigate harm to these species at risk by making suitable turtle nesting habitat part of the project. This is an excellent example of how minor cost effective modifications can have a positive on species at risk. Turtles are at risk due to loss of habitat, road mortality and increased egg predators (racoons) – the result of development.



Painted Turtles were the most commonly observed with 9 being seen on each day generally basking on mud hummocks offshore (within 5-10 m of shore). On both occasions snapping turtles were seen underwater in about 25 cm of water. The turtles were different in size indicating more than one individual. Another snapping turtle was later seen in the area along the road and again was a different size.

Other species included frogs and bird species inventoried included Canada Geese, Mallard, Gull (sp), American Bittern, Sandhill Crane, Common Snipe, Northern Harrier, Broad-winged Hawk, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Turkey Vulture, Black-billed Cuckoo, Northern Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, American Crow, Common Raven, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Veery, Black-and-white



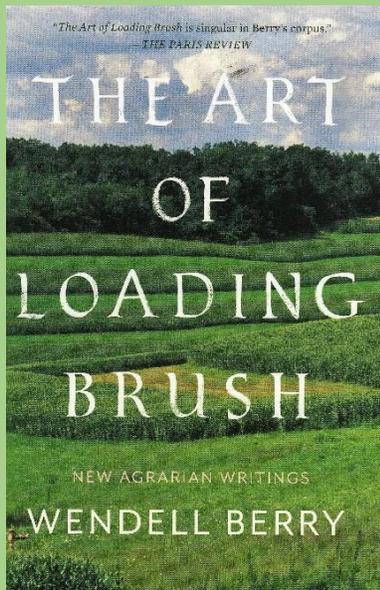
Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Ovenbird, Red-winged Blackbird, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Greater Yellow legs, Lesser Yellowlegs and Caspian Terns. Black Terns, a species at risk – historically seen in the wetland were not present.

### Septic Smart

[http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/facts/sep\\_smart.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/facts/sep_smart.htm)

Summer is here - concerned about your local water supply - If you have a rural septic tank - here are four short videos that are worth watching - You may want to share these videos with other organizations and cottage association members - or perhaps show them at one of your meetings.

### Book Review - The Art of Loading Brush - New Agrarian Writings



Wendell Berry is an agrarian essayist, novelist, and poet. In 2010, he was awarded the National Humanities Medal by Barack Obama. This book contains new essays and was published in 2017.

In the essay Leaving the Future Behind: A Letter to a Scientific Friend. We all depend on agriculture, forestry and mining to survive but that these resources are assumed to be limitless – and we are about to find out that there are limits – “where we deferred payment of our perhaps unpayable ecological debts.” “Global climate change has become a catch all phrase for destruction of the earth but that we blame governments by looking for global solution – when the reality is that all climate change has local causes. Actual changes can start only at the bottom, at home and underfoot, where the causes and effects

actually reside.” The ideas of “enough” and “plenty” – have been overruled by the ideals of all you want and all you can get.

Worth a read.