

Spring Newsletter

MPCA Commissioner Brad Moore Delivers Roadmap for International Action on Lake of the Woods

The Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency called for the establishment of an international pollution control board for Lake of the Woods during his address to the assembled scientists



Commissioner Brad Moore, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, calls for an IJC board for Lake of the Woods at Foundation's reception March 12.

at the International Lake of the Woods Water Quality Forum, March 12 in International Falls.

Commissioner Moore drew on the experience of the clean up of the Rainy River as the model for how international coordination can work.

Citing the success of the International Joint Commission's Rainy River Pollution Control Board, he stated that there should be an IJC pollution control board for Lake of the Woods and preferably, a single integrated board for the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River watershed.

Commissioner Moore was the Foundation's guest speaker at the reception during of Forum. The Foundation is greatly appreciative of the Commissioner's comments and his call for a IJC pollution control board for Lake of the Woods. Since its inception, the Foundation has been advocating for an IJC Reference from our national governments for just such an international board.

International Lake of the Woods Water Quality Forum

Record attendance reflects increased research and policy focus on Lake of the Woods



The Foundation and its partners held the International Lake of the Woods Water Quality Forum, March 12-13 in International Falls. This year marked a milestone with the fifth anniversary of the Forum. What started as an ad hoc conference has grown into a two-day annual event, attended by over 100 scientists, resource managers, and policy makers from Canada and the USA.

The main themes of the conference this year focused on the State of the Basin Report, aquatic invasive species, and nutrient and algae research.

With 27 research projects presented, it's impossible to represent them all here. Proceedings of the Forum should be compiled soon and will be posted on our website (www.lowwsf.com) when they are available. In the meantime, let me highlight just a few:

- Anna DeSellas, Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, and Dr. Andrew Paterson, Ontario Ministry of Environment, presented a preview of the State of the Basin report. This report will provide the baseline of information about the current condition of the lake that can be used to assess future changes in water quality and ecology. They also



Katt Rühlend (Queen's University) and Dick Sjöberg (Foundation Director from Minnesota) discuss results of Katt's research into tracking historical water quality changes using diatoms in sediment cores taken from Bigstone Bay, Lake of the Woods, Ontario.

presented an assessment of gaps in our knowledge and future monitoring needs. Importantly, this will help inform development of future research plans. The State of the Basin Report is currently being reviewed by our agency partners and will be finished this summer.

- Environment Canada had a significant presence at the forum, reflecting its upcoming involvement in water quality research on Lake of the Woods. John Lawrence, Director of Aquatic Ecosystem Management Research, presented details of their emerging research plan for the lake and announced that they will have a team of researchers working on the lake starting this summer to implement monitoring programs.

With the arrival of Environment Canada, there is now an important opportunity for developing a research plan that builds on and complements the nutrient loading studies being initiated by Minnesota.

- The “emerging issues” session focused on assessing the risk of aquatic invasive species and policy options for preventing and controlling invasions. Dr. Norm Yan of York University reviewed our current understanding of spiny water flea invasions in lakes in south-central Ontario, what constitutes potentially suitable habitat, how quickly it is spreading, and what ecological changes to food webs in lakes could be expected. Other aquatic invasive species topics included assessment of the ecological effects of rainbow smelt, invasions of *Didymosphenia geminata* (a non-native algae colloquially known as “rock snot”), and a presentation by the Minnesota DNR on its invasive species program and efforts in the Lake of the Woods basin.
- Nutrient and algae research continues to be a focus at the forum, with a working group session and a main symposium session. A variety of studies were presented, ranging from the role of phosphorus in controlling eutrophication, factors affecting production and occurrence of microcystin (an algal toxin), to the effects of water level regulation on phosphorus levels in lakes upstream of Lake of the Woods.



Hedy Kling presents results of her analysis of algae remains in lake bottom cores at the Nutrients & Algae working group session.

Foundation Launches The “Larry Kallemeyn Award” at the Forum

New Award Recognizes Scientist’s Achievements in the Lake of the Woods and Rainy Basin

The Foundation and the organizing committee of the Forum launched a new basin achievement award at the Forum this year. This award recognizes an individual’s outstanding professional achievement and contribution to scientific research and resource management in the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River Basin.

The inaugural award was presented to **Larry Kallemeyn** and will henceforth be known as the “Larry Kallemeyn Award” in his honour.

For nearly 30 years, Larry’s research has contributed significantly to our understanding of water quality, fisheries ecology, mercury contamination, invasive species and the effects of water level management on all of these. Larry’s special interest in the ecology and recovery of sturgeon populations was recognized with a companion presentation of a sturgeon, hand carved by Bev Clark of the Ontario Ministry of Environment.



Larry Kallemeyn is the first recipient of the new achievement award presented by the Foundation and the organizing committee of the Forum. Front: Todd Sellers (Foundation), Kelli Saunders (LOWDPOA), Larry Kallemeyn (USGS-Voyageurs National Park, retired), Bev Clark (OMOE); Back: Matt Julius (MN SCSU), Don Carlson (MPCA), Nolan Baratono (MPCA), and Andrew Paterson (OMOE). Bev Clark is the talented carver of the sturgeon presented along with the award plaque!

Larry’s commitment to working collaboratively has helped foster cooperation and communication among researchers and members of the public on both sides the international border in the Lake of the Woods and Rainy basin. In accepting this award, Larry, ever gracious, credited the Forum with opening up the lines of communication around the lake basin and made special thanks to LOWDPOA for having initiated the Forum five years ago, and to the Foundation and all partners in the Forum for keeping it going.

OMOE Appoints "Lake of the Woods Coordinator"

Kenora Office Appoints Kelli Saunders to Term Position Focusing on Our Lake

The Ontario Ministry of Environment has hired a Lake of the Woods Coordinator, to coordinate its activities with other agencies and stakeholder groups working on Lake of the Woods and the broader Lake Winnipeg basin.

Kelli Saunders, M.Sc. has been hired for a six month term to fill this role and is working out of the Kenora office of OMOE to:

- provide technical support on surface water research and pollution prevention initiatives
- take part in working groups on international and interprovincial strategies for protection and sustainability of these watersheds.



Kelli Saunders, OMOE's new "Lake of the Woods Coordinator"

Many of you are familiar with Kelli, from her ongoing work with LOWDPOA and the Foundation.

The Foundation applauds OMOE for taking this initiative and we hope that this becomes a long-term role for the Kenora office.

Nutrient Budget Study for Lake of the Woods

Foundation moves forward with government and academic partnership

Our feasibility study for a nutrient budget, conducted last year in partnership with Environment Canada, concluded that most of the necessary data now exist to prepare a preliminary nutrient budget for Lake of the Woods.

Building on this, the Foundation has assembled a research consortium of governments and universities to develop a preliminary nutrient budget for Lake of the Woods. We are currently working with the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Minnesota Pollution Control agency and professors at Trent University and Minnesota St. Cloud State University to finalize the research plan.

Just as a financial budget accounts for income and expenses, a nutrient budget will account for the nutrients in a lake - where

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

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they come from and where they go. A nutrient budget would account for nutrients from all major point and non-point sources, both natural and human caused. It would also determine outputs (e.g., via flow to the Winnipeg River) and in-lake retention. Knowing how (and where) nutrients are entering the lake and in what amounts will be an important step towards developing a nutrient reduction strategy.

The project plan should be finalized soon and I'll have more information on this project in our next newsletter — stay tuned for more!

Thanks For Your Support

With just a few weeks to go until the ice is off the lake, I am thinking about our magnificent lake and its importance to so many of our families. With the generous support of many lake families, the Foundation was established, our first two research projects undertaken and the profile of the lake raised with policy makers around the basin.

I am encouraged to see results emerge, with governments building on our research and awakening to the need to work together on both sides of the border to the benefit of our lake. There is increased focus from Ontario and Environment Canada is becoming active on Lake of the Woods. We are assured that Manitoba will have a role on Lake of the Woods as well, joining with the Foundation, Ontario, Minnesota and Canada in partnership to address the problems of our lake. The struggle to make Lake of the Woods a high priority for our governments is a continual challenge. This work must continue.

The support of lake families and businesses has been tremendously important in assisting the Foundation to carry on its advocacy and research work. On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you all very much. With your help, we will continue our efforts to get all of the government agencies focused collaboratively on the Lake of the Woods and launch our Nutrient Budget Study this spring!

We believe our lake is worth the investment of time and money

Our lake needs your help
