



Water Quality Working Group ((WQWG))

The WQWG is a newly created group which values the health of the Big and Little Hawk Lakes, Halls Lake and the Kennisis River which connects our lake communities together. The WQWG plays an active role in protecting our incredible natural heritage to pass onto future generations.

The objectives of the Water Quality Working Group are to maintain the health of our lakes and river through:

improved water quality monitoring programs;

expanded educational programs and;

more cohesive stewardship across our three lakes and river.

As a very new group within the Halls and Hawk Lake Association, we have already experienced several successes. A number of our recommendations to the Board of Directors for improvements to our current water quality monitoring practices were approved such as the addition of funds to rent equipment to test dissolved oxygen levels (DO).

It is important for all Lake Associations to significantly improve water quality testing capacity in the face of the severe cutbacks to MOE and MNR funding and staffing levels. These cuts have reduced the frequency of testing and created a growing scientific information gap at a time when water quality indicators are raising important warning signals. This gap is where groups like the HHLPOA can step in. With the appropriate training, education and support, "citizen science" can take over some of the data collection responsibilities essential to monitoring the health our lakes and rivers.

Barriers to this happening on the scale required include standardized water quality data collection training and the cost of equipment. To address these obstacles, we (Water Quality Working Group) are collaborating with the Haliburton Stewardship Council and the Coalition of Haliburton Property Owner Associations. Together we are investigating joint cross-association educational workshops, standardized training for Lake Stewards/data collectors, and a community equipment lending program. We are also working with MOE and MNR to ensure that government agencies have confidence in the data collected by "citizen scientists".

The Lake Partner Program is co-ordinated by the Ministry of the Environment and involves "Total Phosphorus" and "Secchi Disk" water clarity data collection by hundreds of volunteers across Ontario. Members on Halls and the Hawks have been doing this work for years (with some exceptions) and the data collected can be viewed on the website. It is this sort of work that the WQWG hopes to build on as we develop our own testing program.

If you would like to be an active member of WQWG or if you have any comments, suggestions or questions please feel free to contact the Chair, Debbie Balika, via email at dbalika@lakeheadu.ca or by phone at 705-627-2223 or the co-Chair Shirley Moore via email at smoore7031@gmail.com or 705-489-2619.