

# Leech Lake **Cottagers' Association** **NEWSLETTER**

## LABOUR DAY WEEKEND 2023

### **President's Message** – Susan Baskin

Every year, as the summer flies by we inevitably comment on how fast it has gone, and how hard it is to believe that the days are shorter, the nights are cooler, the leaves are already changing, and the birds are migrating. For many, school and work will soon be calling us away from our beautiful Muskoka community.

As the seasons go round and round, we are indeed 'captured on a carousel of time' as Joni Mitchell put it so well. I hope that everyone found time to enjoy the lake over the summer and have memories that will sustain you through the year ahead.

There was a lot of fun to be had at our annual LLCA Regatta on Sunday, August 6. We had a wonderful turnout at the Boat Launch for a BBQ and our traditional games and races for all ages. Once again, we tested the skills of our community with favourite games like: the egg toss; musical buckets; eat the donut on a dangling string attached to a moving ladder with your hands behind your back; family relay races; and swimming races for the kids.

Although we tried, we only found one family wanting to do canoe and kayak racing. Next year we'll try to get the word out earlier and more effectively. I remain determined to get actual racing back into our regatta. We have a superb trophy to award, but for now it will continue to remain in the safe hands of the Henderson family.

Our Stewardship Committee was also at the Regatta, with excellent literature about our 'Shoreline Revitalization Program'. You can still sign up for this important program and get some of the literature.

A HUGE thank you goes out to our entire hard-working LLCA executive and their family members who pitched in to make the event happen. Special thanks go to Kasey McCoy, and Chris Trevelyan and Kirsten Ainswoth-Vincze who did a terrific job running the games. It was especially great to see Kasey McCoy, who grew up on the lake and attended many regattas, running the games.

Thirty years ago, I started contributing to the LLCA on the Regatta Committee, along with Kasey's mom Valerie McCoy, and our immediate past president Caroline Meek. As always it takes a team to pull off any event and to run our Cottage Association. At present, we have an amazing LLCA team, but we always need to look to the future and bring new people into the association leadership. We are actively recruiting new people to join the LLCA executive and our committees. Is it your turn to step up? If you are interested, please get in touch.

Happy Labour Day and best wishes for the upcoming year to everyone!

## **Leech Lake Regatta A Smashing Success!**

Our annual Regatta on Sunday August 6th was a rollicking good time at the boat launch!

More than 80 people joined the fun as we ate burgers and dogs and watermelon and chips, and played lots of great games. There's nothing like the squeal of laughter as people vie for a seat during musical-upside-down-buckets (chairs), look away after they miss a catch during the egg toss, or chomp the air as they miss the donut in the great donut eating contest.



Thanks to the many people who volunteered and worked hard to bring this event to our community, including: Kasey McCoy, Alex Westlake, Kirsten Ainsworth-Vincze and Chris Trevelyan who organized the wonderful games; Valerie McCoy and Rob McGill who organized and manned an informative stewardship table; and overall organizers/helpers Susan Baskin, Jack Micay, Shelley Bumstead, Vaughn Bumstead, Blair Clark, Guy Pattison, Rick McCoy, Leslie Wood and Don Wood.

We want to continue this great lake tradition, and encourage everyone to join the fun next year by helping out and by participating.



## **Fleming College Program 2023 – by Valerie McCoy**

As the days grow shorter and the lake water cools, planning for the Fall semester begins across schools in Ontario. For Josh Feltham, PhD, Professor, Environmental & Natural Resource Sciences Coordinator, in the Fleming Ecosystem Management Technician/Technologist Program that means planning for the first time the 2023 Credit for Product program. Josh has taken over from Sara Kelly who has retired from teaching.

Josh will now accept proposals from interested organizations that in the past have included the Kushog Lake Property Owners Association, Haliburton Highlands Land Trust, City of Toronto, Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust, South Lake Association, and of course the Leech Lake Cottagers' Association.

Students registered in this program often come as graduates of related programs and/or have valuable field work experience. The professor forms teams of the students that balance out the type and level of experience. Next the interested organizations rank the teams according to who they think would be the

best fit for their project's needs. The professor will then match projects with teams. The LLCA has been fortunate over many years to get their first-choice teams. That has been due to the professor's opinion that our project and the related experience of lead mentor offer a rich learning experience for the students.

LLCA is responsible for water testing, student mileage, providing a warm place for the students to sleep and work, and food costs. The students' time and expertise comes at no charge. If we were to pay for this work it could be thousands of dollars.

Last year was unusual in that we had a larger project undertaken by 5 students and the field work took place over 3 full days instead of a weekend. The students completed a vast amount of work including an extensive Shoreline survey. This has formed the basis of the ongoing Renaturalization movement on Leech Lake and will be a baseline for evaluation of the impact in future years.

We need to submit a project proposal very soon. Should we be fortunate enough to get a team we will continue the water quality testing. **If you would like to submit an idea for any other work please send suggestions to [leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com](mailto:leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com)**

Hosting students during the field work weekend in mid to late September is a rewarding investment. The students are passionate, intelligent and hard working. Mornings begin early and work goes on until late in the night. Hosts are in tune with the tight schedule and provide 3 hearty meals a day and 2 snacks. Most years food has been donated by the hosts. Last year with the extended stay, bigger team and high food costs it was expensed. **If you would like to volunteer to host and/or cover food expenses please email [leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com](mailto:leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com). This is an important volunteer opportunity.**

## **Update on Fraserburg Road Construction** – by Don Hill

In the last 10 years the Muskoka River has flooded twice at Fraserburg Road to the point where vehicle traffic has had significant restrictions at the intersection of Sherwood Forest Rd. and Fraserburg Rd. (Regional #14). In 2019 the floodwater was 24" high and in 2023 it was 17" high. Also, multiple times every year just due to rain fall, east of that intersection (towards the bridge) has major pooling. Even so, only once in that time frame has the road been closed to traffic due to flooding over the road, that was in 2019 and it closed for 12 days from April 25 to May 6.

The 2019 flood and road closure caused the District of Muskoka to look at options to correct the flooding issue at Fraserburg/Sherwood Forest roads. The original proposal was to raise the road to almost the height of 24" and install concrete mats on the river side of the road to stop river-edge erosion. This option was met with a petition to Council from individuals to not proceed because of the 'endangered species' legislation relating to the nesting areas of turtles along the river's edge. Also, the engineering department said that raising the road more than 12" would have a negative effect on the foundations of the bridge over the river and further review would be required if that option was to be pursued.

Primarily based on the petitioner's presentation at the District Council meeting and the foundation issue of the bridge, the project was paused and returned to District Staff for re-evaluation. On review, District staff commissioned an environmental assessment through a third party qualified to do the work. They found 2 turtle nests in their review and recommended both nests could be relocated to outside the construction area with no harm to the turtles.

District Staff then presented three (3) options to the Roads Committee recommending option two (2). The first option (1) is do nothing and repair the area effected by the flooding; The second (2) is to raise

the road 12" and line the riverside with 3"-4" rock to stop erosion; and the third option (3) is to proceed with the original fix and move the turtle nests via the third party who is qualified to do such work.

On June 21st this year, the Engineering Roads Committee met and recommended Option 2 with the addition of relocating the turtle nests. Council accepted the Roads Committee recommendation of Option 2 at their July 17th meeting and authorized Staff to proceed with the work.

Fowlers has been issued the contract to begin in October of this year to reconstruct the road between Colony and Clifford, primarily to raise the road by 12" at the intersection at Sherwood Forest and Fraserburg Roads, and add reinforcement stone on the river side of the road to mitigate the bank being eroded during flooding. The road will then be resurfaced in the spring or summer of 2024.

A third-party consultant has also been hired to locate and transport any turtle nests within the construction zone, prepare and provide support for their relocation and monitor the construction process and the turtles over the next egg-laying period.

It seems the logjam about this situation has truly been broken, and action is coming soon. Take note that there may be some delays when travelling along Fraserburg Road during construction.

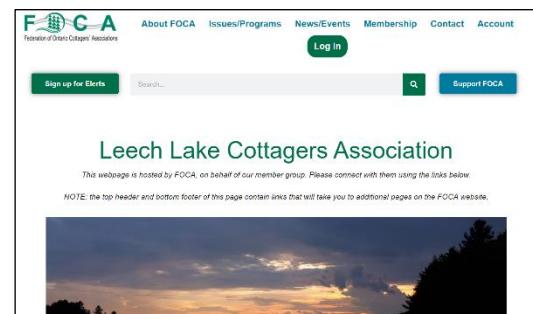
## **Leech Lake on the FOCA web site!**

Leech Lake and the LLCA now have a presence on the FOCA website. This is the start of an enhanced web presence for Leech Lake and the LLCA. We are working on a standalone website that will complement this FOCA page, where you will be able to find our important documents (incorporation, meeting minutes etc.) and newsletters.

You can find our FOCA web page [here](#).

Members of LLCA are also members of FOCA, the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations. Members are encouraged to create an account on the FOCA website that will allow access to members-only material, including codes to access special offers and discounts. Members can go to the LLCA Members Community Hub (private group) on Facebook where the link will be posted. Alternatively, members can email Leslie Wood at [leechlakesecretary@yahoo.com](mailto:leechlakesecretary@yahoo.com) and she can send you the link.

We'll let you know when our very own website goes live!



## **BOLO – be on the lookout!**

We have had reports of a fox with broken front leg. Some say left, some say right. During August it has been spotted around Leech and Pine Lakes and at places along Fraserburg Rd. It has lost weight and is unhealthy looking, it seems its condition is on a downward slide as a few weeks have passed since the wounded animal was first seen. If you spot the fox use caution, do not approach it and don't let any pets near it.

## **Green Bins Have Arrived on Leech Lake!**



Green Bins were delivered to every Leech Lake property on Tuesday August 29th. Collection of green bin waste will start at Leech Lake on Monday September 18 – and don't forget, our collection begins right around 7am so get your bins out early. We don't recommend putting them out the night before unless they are in a bear-proof container.

There is an information package inside the bin. Note that if you take the envelope from this package to the Rosewarne transfer station (the dump in Bracebridge), you can trade it for a free kitchen catcher for your indoor use. FYI you have to use a certified compostable bag for your green bin waste.

Important note – you can't put pet waste in the green bin. Please pick up after your pets and put that in your regular garbage!

## **Interested in a Shoreline Assessment?**

Further to the June 14<sup>th</sup> Zoom meeting about shoreline remediation by Rebecca Wilson of the Muskoka Watershed Council, Rebecca came to Rob and Candace McGill's property (1194 South) to do an assessment. She and her crew talked with them, went through the property, took pictures and within a few days emailed a plan of action for planting natural species.

Rebecca and her team are small and very busy, but she said she would come to anyone's property free of charge to do this assessment. At the Regatta we got a list of six or seven people who are interested in having assessments done this fall. This is a real opportunity to get information about the health of your shoreline/property, and simple steps you can take to help improve and renaturalize.

If you are interested in having Rebecca Wilson and the Muskoka Watershed Council assess your property, email Rob McGill at [rob@ramlaw.ca](mailto:rob@ramlaw.ca) and he can provide your info to Rebecca as part of the Leech Lake group.



## **August bottle drive – one more collection**

This is a month-long annual event at Leech Lake that will see the proceeds of donated bottles and cans going to two local charities, which have yet to be determined. Give us your beer and liquor cans and bottles for a good cause. We promise no judgement!

**This coming Labour Day weekend is the last bottle collection in our drive.** Please leave your empties off the road at the side of your driveway – but away from where you leave your regular garbage/recycling. In order to work around the Town's early collections of waste and recycling our collection teams will be picking up on **Sunday between 4:00pm and 7:00pm**.



## Muskoka in September – by Leslie Wood

We're coming into one of my favourite months of the year. It can be warm, sunny and summery, and yet there is fall in the air, especially with the cooler nights. I hope we can keep swimming throughout the month, but sometimes we look for other things to do during this fine month. Below are a few thoughts of things you might try that are relatively close to 'home'.



### Circumvent Leech Lake

I walked all around the lake on Tuesday of this week. It was a glorious walk in sun and dappled shade, and the bugs weren't too bad going through the swampy crown land. The 'offroading' section is well marked, and there are boards/logs that help you to cross the swaggiest parts. It's like a 'staycation'!

### Hikes close by

I've been to all of the following trails and they are most enjoyable. It means driving in order to hike, but these are well worth the trip, especially once the fall colours start.

- Wilson's Falls Hiking Trail (Bracebridge)
- Dorset Fire Tower lookout Trail (Dorset)
- Huckleberry Rock Trail (lookout pictured at right; between Bracebridge and Port Carling)
- Walker's Point Lookout (N of Gravenhurst on 169)



### Fall Fairs

These are always fun and full of local colour! There's food, games and some rides for the brave among you. I've been to the Bracebridge fair in the past, this year I might try Huntsville on for size.

- Bracebridge September 13-15
- Huntsville September 20-22

### Barn Quilt Trail



If you like to head out for a drive, you should check out a Barn Quilt trail one day. It's fun to spot the participating barns, and to figure out what the designs represent. There are many barn quilt trails, find a map of the one closest to Leech Lake [here](#).

These last couple of things I have not undertaken, but I thought they might be fun to try!

- Muskoka Lakes Farm & Winery (near Bala) – you can go every day, but Cranberry harvest starts Sept 23! Book Wagon Tours, Wine Tasting, Cranberry Plunge and more
- Sail Lake Muskoka on the Wenonah II or RWS Segwun from the Gravenhurst wharf, on the Peerless II out of Port Carling, or Lake of Bays on the SS Bigwin from Dwight Beach or Dorset

Join me in celebrating September at Leech Lake and in Muskoka – we are so fortunate to have the tremendous bounty of Muskoka on our doorstep!

## **Keepers of the Lake**

It takes an army of people to build community. We know there is lots of helping and kindness that goes on around Leech Lake, and we want to call out some of our helpers in each newsletter. If you know someone you'd like to have recognized for something they did, please email [leechlakesecretary@yahoo.com](mailto:leechlakesecretary@yahoo.com) and we will get it in our next newsletter.

For this edition, we want to call out and give a big thank you to a few Keepers of Leech Lake:

**Ian Stewart** – for trying to help the male loon, and kindly burying the body

**Guy Pattison** – for cutting and cleaning up the ‘sign tree’ that fell, endless road work, and organizing the annual lake bottle drive (among multitudes of other things)

**Lloyd Watson** – for consistently caring for our roads, fixing up road edges, removing rocks etc.

**Valerie McCoy** – for clearing out culverts to improve lake outflow

## **Bits ‘n Pieces**

1. **FOCA Alert:** the most recent Federation of Cottage Associations newsletter is full of great [information](#).
2. **Labour Day, now you know!** – Our Labour Day national holiday was declared on July 23 1894 by Prime Minister John Thompson, but the day has its roots in an 1872 printers’ strike in Toronto. The strikers fought for a nine-hour workday, and their victory was a tipping point in changing relations between Canadian workers and their government. Read more [here](#).

## Photo Contribution

Thanks to Blair Clark for sharing this photo, it will keep memories of summer alive for a long time!



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