



Leech Lake Cottagers' Association **NEWSLETTER**

October 2024

Membership and Dues

We are pleased that LLCA membership has increased from past years! There are 124 members on the lake, and this amounts to 94 per cent of property owners who are members. The lake community is thriving and there is a real sense of community and helping your neighbour.

It is incredibly disappointing that there is still 6 per cent of property owners who have not joined the LLCA. Our dues go mostly for road maintenance and improvement, and stewardship activities, for the benefit of everyone on the lake. If everyone paid their fair share, we would be able to do even more!

Our 2025 dues invoice will be sent out in January.

Winter Lakeside Garbage Collection

The off-season garbage/recycling collections began this week, Oct-27-2024.

The district's waste management vehicles will be parked around the Canada Post mailbox at the intersection of Fraserburg Road and Lorne Road every other Sunday from 12:30pm to 1:30pm.

Fleming Project – by Valerie McCoy

It was a pleasant surprise mid-August to hear from Professor Josh Feltham, who leads the Environmental & Natural Resource Sciences program and is Coordinator for the Ecosystem Management Technician/Technologist Program. Fleming decided they did not want to lose the continuity of the Leech Lake project started in 2010, so the project was back on.

The Fleming team arrived Sat Oct 5th to do their field work for the annual State of the Lake report. The team members are Leah Lewis, Mackenzie Barker, Andrew Frampton, Owen Dobbin-McIsaac and Tal Sarig.



Murray Hall took the students out in the boat for collection and Kasey (nee McCoy) & Alex Westlake hosted the students for the day.

The intention this year was to replace some of the paid water analysis at Centre for Advancement of Water and Wastewater Technologies with field testing to reduce the project cost. Fleming had purchased a new piece of equipment called the SpinTouch that would enhance the field testing. Despite training, the team encountered issues with the equipment. Benthics were collected with no issue. Prof. Feltham is working with the students to determine next steps. The project closes in December and we will have a report then.



'The Link' is finished!

Have you ever walked ALLLLLLL the way around Leech Lake? Those who have will regale you with stories of the swampy section that's part of the crown lands between the ends of the North and South roads. It's been a precarious trek that often resulted in soakers, and sometimes even lost shoes as the swamp/mud has an amazing sucking ability! In 2024, with all the rain, the swampy part was particularly hard to traverse.

Chris Trevelyan (1089 North) wondered if there was a way we could make the swamp passable, and a group including Chris, Blair Clark (1054 South), Guy Pattison (1098 South), Shelley Bumstead (1011 North) and Leslie Wood (1173 North) went along the trail with some old lumber in a wheelbarrow to see if they could make things better. What they took with them that day was a starting point, and the

investigation sparked enthusiasm, some hard work (thank you Blair and Guy) – and much donated lumber from folks around the lake.

By Thanksgiving, they had completed 'The Link', and our community now has a very sturdy, stable walkway through the crown land swamp. This fall at "The Link" there have been some great days for afternoon pics, e.g. mist on trees, mist on spider webs, slices of sunshine in between the trees, the sounds of the forest. Just like Ontario, it's yours to discover.



Hello Winter! Or... Wherefore Art Thou, Snowplow? – by Guy Pattison

Our search for a winter services provider continues to be a challenge. Early this year our current contractor (Muskoka Landscapers) informed us that they are getting out of the snow services business due to high costs around liability insurance. Over the past three months we have reached out to more than 30 contractors/service providers, requesting their services.

A third of the companies we reached out to did not even reply, even after several emails/voicemails. Other companies told us we were "Too Far" or "Out of Their Service Area" or "They have gotten out of the snow services business altogether" or "Minimal Staff and Minimal Equipment". Others said they could offer up some, but not all services to our lake but did not want to commit to a contract.

A small handful asked us to reconnect with them in 2025.

Where we stand right now is that three of four companies who expressed an interest in working with us have come back with estimates and/or quotes. Their winter road clearing costs range between \$18,000 - \$36,000 - \$56,000. For some those prices did not include the pricing for driveways, or sanding as these would be extra charges.

The cheapest price for driveway clearing for the 2024-2025 winter season will be \$750.00. For those interested in having their driveway cleared over this winter please email leechlakeroads@gmail.com to get on the list.

The new, cheaper option will only get our roads plowed this winter (as opposed to blowing the snow). This could present problems later on in the winter season as there is the potential for the roads to narrow down to a single lane as the plow is unable to move the snow into the forest once the snow banks get higher than the plow blade. A benefit of blowing rather than plowing is that the blower can throw the snow higher/farther than a plow blade can push it.

We will continue to work on this, and keep everyone posted on the result.

Clean as a whistle

Our annual Septic Systems pump out program managed to get 25 properties pumped out in 2024. From a historical perspective, in the last 4 years 62% of all septic systems have been pumped out. Three lake residents also had new or upgraded septic systems installed. These statistics are great, and we will continue to promote the pump-outs every year. All of this helps to keep our lake healthy.

It depends on how big your septic system is, and how heavy your usage is, but as a general rule of thumb septic systems should be pumped every four or five years. It's a great idea to keep a record of your last pump-out date so you can keep your septic system healthy and happy.

Fish Stocking

On the afternoon of Monday October 28 we introduced 400 Rainbow trout into Leech Lake. They will be safe from most predators through the winter.

South Muskoka Hospitals Update

In 2023, the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare Centre (MAHC) announced the development of two new hospitals in south Muskoka in an effort to increase healthcare infrastructure in the key communities of Huntsville and Bracebridge. There has been tremendous back and forth on this, and considerable acrimony from those who generally access healthcare in Bracebridge.

There is a good article [here](#) that was originally written last year, but updated recently. Now you're up to date!

So Long October, Welcome to November

Kick off the holiday season in Downtown Bracebridge on Friday November 22nd from 6pm - 9pm. Enjoy some great shopping, sing along to Christmas carols, visit with Santa and check out the trackless train for the kids. Get more details [here](#).

Scrap Metal Drive - August-September – by Guy Pattison



Our biennial scrap metal drive took place in Aug-Sept. A designated drop-off area was set up between properties #1194 and #1198. It took a few days before residents started dropping stuff off. Over the weeks the pile became bigger and bigger. Most of the lighter scrap metals were transferred every few days to the dumpster on the drive at #1198. The heavy scrap metal would be the last thing to get loaded into the bin before it was picked up by the recycling company on Sept 30th.

Thieves put a crimp in the scrap metal collections in mid Sept. One day someone (or somebodies) helped themselves to all of the heavyweight metals. Maybe it was not a thief but a good samaritan who saw junk lying on the side of the road for weeks and weeks and decided to cart it away as a good deed. Or, maybe it was an actual thief who loaded up their trailer with their ill-gotten gains and took those to the scrap metal folks and cashed out.

The collected scrap metals should have netted approx \$300 - \$400 but instead with a little over three tons of materials it generated \$90.00 in funds once the bin delivery and bin pick-up charges were paid out.

Bottle Drive Results – Chin Don!

The annual August bottle drive helped to offset the meagre gains made from the Aug-Sept scrap metal drive. Even though a few rainy day weekends put a crimp on contributions we still generated \$495 for local charities. Some residents on Pine Lake made a large donation to us as well, and a few residents on our lake kicked in some extra cash and we ended up with \$600.



These charities will benefit from everyone's previously enjoyed beverage containers.

\$300 - [Andy's House](#)

\$300 - [The Children's Foundation of Muskoka](#)

A Kick in the Ash

Friends Of The Muskoka Watershed have cancelled the Fall ash drives for Oct and Nov due to issues with their location at the Rosewarne transfer station (Town dump). They are still procuring new equipment needed for these ash drives due to losses that stemmed from a fire in 2023. If you have saved ash it can be brought to the town dump during the December / January ash drives. Find more details [here](#).

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 and we will get it in our next newsletter.

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

Lloyd Watson: For keeping things neat and tidy around our lake, grading and some minor landscaping along the boat launch access road for the regatta. A big thank you to Lloyd for taking the time to clear all of the fallen leaves at the road edges. It makes all the road surface visible and less slippery.

Lloyd also assisted a few hunters this week who needed some extra help getting their two Moose into their trailer. It's amazing the things you can lift up with a tractor.

During the moose follies he also spent a few hours helping one of our service providers (Robinson) get unstuck after they delivered a load of gravel to the North Rd.

He is a superman.

Dennis Hodges: For his time to make calls, reaching out to others who know people in the fish hatchery business. Dennis talked to the fish guru on Pine Lake to see what/why and how they are doing fishwise this year. Through his persistent work we found a supplier who could provide us with the price and quantity that we wanted.

Chris Trevelyan, Blair Clark and Guy Pattison: for having a thought, that turned into a question, that turned into action and produced 'The Link' that joins up the north and south portions of the lake so now all residents can walk around the entire lake via the forest walking trails.

Guy Pattison: For all his work on the roads. For his leadership on the Bottle Drive and the Scrap Metal Drive. For his organizing of the septic system pump-outs. For his regular contributions to the newsletter. For his work on The Link. And for everything else he does, behind the scenes and with humility. Our Leech Lake community would not be the place you know and love without him.

Bits 'n Pieces

1. **FOCA Elert:** the most recent Federation of Cottage Associations newsletter is full of great [information](#).
2. **FOCA webinar recording on Wake Impacts:** FOCA's partners at Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL) held a public webinar earlier this summer that was filled with new wake impact research statistics presented by Dr. Chris Houser of the University of Waterloo. Get a link to the webinar recording and related wake resources, here: <https://foca.on.ca/boating/#wake>
3. **Tick Check:** the Public Health Agency of Canada has a map that outlines areas of risk of ticks and Lyme disease. Check it out [here](#).
4. **Clearance time:** Late fall is a great time for clearance sales by sellers of canoes/kayaks/paddleboards and associated gear.
5. More info on Friends of the Muskoka Watershed (FOTMW) can be found here – <https://fotmw.org>. **For the kids, check out how you can become a Citizen Scientist with FOTMW.**

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