



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

April 2025

2025 Dues and Membership Update

Thanks to all those who have paid their 2025 LLCA membership dues!

We have currently received 91 payments which equates to 68.4%. Last year we had 93.2% membership and are hoping to exceed that percentage in 2025.

When everyone contributes by January 31, it allows us to set budgets for the year, keeps increases to a minimum and allows us to be better prepared for emergency situations, especially on our roads which we all use to get to our cottages and homes.

For those who have not yet submitted their membership dues, please see the link to the invoice and payment details [here](#).

One Seventy-One – A Roads Report

The snowfalls and squalls received late November and in early and mid December were not kind to the residents, to their properties or to the private roads in Muskoka this winter. Add in the March month end freezing rain and it just made winter here more interesting and infuriating.

We've seen tremendous tree damage around our lakes, in town and on local roads and highways.

With this weekend's rain, freezing rain, snow and ice pellets it made most of the roads and properties look like a war zone. Most of the Leech Lake properties will have some sort of tree debris; snapped tree limbs or fallen trees on their property will be most common. The larger-needed pine trees have taken the worst hits brought on by this weekend's weather. There has also been property, roof, shed, garage and deck damage as well. Some decks have been pulled away from the cottages / homes due falling roof snow during a few rainy, warm weather days in February and March.

We have a minor washout on the South Rd, which also damaged a resident's driveway. The washout area is passable, you just need to proceed with caution. Repairs will take place in the first or second week of April, weather, melting and potential flooding permitting.

The South and Point Rds have been damaged over the winter in some sections while the North Rd only has a few areas of damage. All of this damage was due to heavy equipment, contractor vehicles and gravel truck traffic required for the new builds taking place on the Point / North Rds. These vehicles with their heavy weights created ruts on portions of the roads, and road edges that will require additional gravel to firm them and fill them up.

At this point there has been no significant flooding to either Lorne or Fraserburg Rds as the warm weather and rains have been spaced apart for a more gradual snow melt.

To date the lake has received 171 inches of snow, which is the average height of a female giraffe.

Bracebridge - Ice Storm Damage

The Town of Bracebridge declared a state of emergency on Sunday March 30 due to the ice storm. Clean-up will be a huge undertaking, and the Town is waiving dumping fees for all ice storm-related damage to brush, trees, shrubs, branches and trunks. This offer has a limited time span. It's possible they will push the end dates out if the volume of damage is more than expected. More info [here](#).

Membership Survey Coming Up

If you are a LLCA member, we want to hear from you!

The LLCA exec is designing a membership survey to cover off some things we'd like to have your thoughts on. There will also be open-ended space for you to tell us what you think about things we haven't even asked about!

Our plan is to have survey results in time for the annual meeting, so we have some direction to share.

Watch your email for a link to the survey. Please take a few moments to tell us what you think.

Town Of Bracebridge – Traffic Disruptions

If you exit at Hwy#118 to get to your cottage you will have some road closures to deal with. From Hwy#118 exit you have no access over the Silverbridge from Ecclestone Rd. If you access Hwy#118 from Manitoba St. then onto Ecclestone Rd that access will be closed to you as well.

These closures are due to structural issues (deformed trusses) found with the bridge brought on by cold, rain, winds, or other events over the winter. There is no info on when it will reopen. The sad Silverbridge saga can be found [here](#).

2025 Save the Date!

Ash Drive (Friends of Muskoka Watershed) See more details later in this newsletter	Saturday, April 26
Curbside Garbage Collection resumes	Monday May 5, 2025
Annual General Meeting on Zoom	Wednesday June 18, 2025
Bug Count (benthic monitoring)	Saturday, July 19, 2025
Photo Contest – deadline for entries	Saturday, July 19, 2025
Leech Lake Regatta	Sunday August 3, 2025 12:00 noon-3:00 pm
Bottle Drive	Every Sunday in August

Shoreline Regeneration Works! A Case Study – by Lia and Jim Arner

We celebrate our 17th summer at Leech Lake. The previous owner had replaced the original cottage and cleared much of the vegetation leaving a grass lawn from the cottage to the water's edge.

Here is what we faced:

1. lawn and shoreline cleared except a few small bushes and trees
2. lawn had new grass struggling to survive on limited soil cover
3. a big fire pit was close to the water's edge
4. there was a flower garden planted at the shoreline right behind the exposed rocks, allowing for possible erosion into the lake

Over the years we asked questions about what to do to restore the land and were told a few key points:

1. don't cut the grass, let it go natural and nature will regenerate
2. or if you do cut, don't cut the grass where you don't walk
3. put in a buffer of 3 m (10 feet) along the water's edge
4. restore as much length of waterfront as you can to a natural state, leaving a small path to a dock

After many years our work in progress has improved our shoreline:

1. we have 3-5 m (10-15 feet) of buffer along the shoreline except for a 1.5m (5 feet) wide path to the dock (that's 5% of the lot width)
2. each year I'd cut less and less grass so now the front lawn has about 1/2 the area still mowed, enough to play a few games or spread out around a campfire
3. no cutting is done in the regeneration areas, no removing small branches, leaves on the ground are left to mulch naturally
4. native ferns have sprouted everywhere, protecting smaller plants until they could establish themselves, wild blackberry bushes are now sprouting up to help encourage people not to venture into the thorns, small seedlings are naturally germinating
5. we planted service berry and red osier dogwood along the perimeter, and nannyberry and high bush cranberry below the septic bed
6. we planted white and red pine, maple, ironwood, spruce, and a tamarack, many of which were purchased through the Native Plant Sale, some of which were relocated from our garden area behind the cottage, some small seedlings have naturally germinated
7. sweet gale and other bushes have stretched along the shoreline
8. we have an 's' shaped pathway to the dock so that birds (geese) on the water don't see a tempting smorgasbord on our lawn
9. we rebuilt the dock, replacing the galvanized pipe with a floating dock and we removed the old dock ladder which was repurposed from an old antenna tower, all of which was heavily rusted
10. we rebuilt a smaller fire pit back a few feet to give more space to the buffer
11. the flower garden along the shoreline was replaced by the buffer zone
12. we removed invasive yellow iris from the shoreline

We are not 'finished'; more changes will continue as ideas come to mind. Here are before and after transformation pictures.



Hopefully this will make it easy to see that by doing just a little and having patience, nature will recover with time. All it took for us was to stop interfering. As for the two trees we planted at just the right distance apart, I eagerly await the day I can string up my hammock to enjoy the lovely breeze off the lake.

By all means please stop by to say hello if you see us 'sittin on the dock of the bay'.

Jim and Lia Arner
1092 Lakeshore Drive S

Native Plant Sale

As you saw from Jim and Lia's experience, the Muskoka Native Plant sale is a great place to get plants that will thrive at Leech Lake.

Pre-order [here](#) while quantities last! Payments are collected on "Pick-up" day, **Saturday May 10, 2025**. They accept **Cash & Credit** Cards only. There are three pick-up locations available, make sure to select the correct location for your pick up when you order- **Bracebridge, Huntsville or Gravenhurst**.

District Of Muskoka Wants a Clear View of your Past (aka clear garbage bags)

As of March 1, 2025 **ALL** curbside garbage picked up by the District of Muskoka must now be placed into clear plastic bags. You can no longer hide your waste behind Green or Black garbage bags. This change has been put in place in order to reduce both recyclables and organics finding their way into the garbage streams. By redirecting the Recyclable and Organic wastes the DOM can extend the lives of the region's dump sites. No changes have been made with the recycling streams as you still place your curbside recyclable materials into the blue bags or blue bins.

The LLCA Needs YOU!

We are currently operating without a president, and our treasurer position will be open as of the annual meeting in June when Shelley Bumstead steps down after four years of doing a bang-up job in the role. The stewardship chair position may also be available to someone who has an interest in this area.

We need people to step up to help – our small but mighty executive can't function if it gets much smaller! Volunteering on the executive helps you to better get to know people on the lake, and better understand the issues we face. It's also fun!

Please contact vice president Rob McGill at rob@ramlaw.ca or secretary Leslie Wood at leechlakesecretary@yahoo.ca to find out more.



Fleming State-of-the-Lake Study Update – by Valerie McCoy

For over a decade Leech Lake has been fortunate to have a State-of-the-Lake Study conducted as part of a course at Fleming College in Lindsay. Part of the study was analyzing the results from water chemistry testing. For many years the cost for the testing was subsidized by the college. Once the college could no longer afford it, LLCA paid for the testing. In recent years as costs rose for the association, we eliminated the water testing analysis to reduce costs.

Last year, the cap on international students had a huge financial impact on colleges and the Fleming program was cut. Despite this, because of the value of tracking changes to a lake over many years, the new professor decided to proceed with an abbreviated State-of-the-Lake Study in Fall 2024. To eliminate external testing, the students used a new instrument in the field. Unfortunately, the instrument did not

work as planned. We expect the 2024 Fleming report in April but we're unsure how comprehensive it will be.

Even if this year's Fleming report is minimal, we will have data to look at. The District of Muskoka (DOM) tests lakes every few years. Leech Lake was monitored for phosphorus etc. in 2024 and the resulting water quality report will go to Community and Planning Services Committee in April. Once it goes to Committee it will be posted on the DOM website and the Lake Data Sheets will be posted to the Muskoka Water Web. The next sampling at Leech Lake is scheduled for 2027.

The good news is that we were able to put the budget for the water testing cost back into the LLCA reserve fund.

Next steps are to review the Fleming report in April and figure out if we/students can successfully use the new instrument for 2025 and/or incorporate DOM data into the report. Let's hope this program continues at Fleming in 2025 and beyond.

Septic System Pump-outs

We will be organizing septic pump-outs again in 2025.

Prices have not yet been negotiated.

Contact leechlakeroads@gmail.com for more info and to book your spot.



Volunteer for the 2025 Leech Lake Regatta

The 2025 Regatta needs a committee of volunteers to take on the planning of the event. Following is a list of the roles / tasks required. Please email leechlakesecretary@yahoo.com or leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com to let us know your interest and we'll connect the volunteers to take it from there. LLCA will provide the committee with a budget for the event.

Site Co-ordinator (plus two other volunteers)

- Site prep - tidy boat launch area – raking, clean-up as needed
- Arrange for BBQs and transportation to boat launch
- Arrange for tables transportation to boat launch and set up
- Arrange for kitchen tent and set up
- Arrange for garbage and recycling containers and transportation to boat launch
- Site take-down and clean-up
- Garbage/recycling disposal

Food Co-ordinator (plus two other volunteers)

- Plan and purchase food
- Plan and purchase supplies as needed (tablecloths, napkins, ice, etc.)
- Arrange for 2 coolers
- Recruit cooks (2)

- Set up food area
- Support cooks and keep food area clean/tidy
- Support site take-down and clean-up

Prize Co-Ordinator

- Ribbon planning & procure if needed
- Prize count from last year & procure as needed
- Co-ordinate system of giveaways with games volunteer
- Support site take-down and clean-up

Games Co-Ordinator (plus two other volunteers)

- Plan games & schedule (favourite past games have been Musical Buckets, Sack Races, Donut Eating Contest, Egg Toss, Swimming)
- Pick up & inventory supplies from previous year. Procure supplies as needed
- Procure megaphone / loud volunteer
- Co-ordinate award of ribbons & prizes with prize coordinator
- Support site prep - raking, clean up as needed
- Support site take-down and clean-up

We will also need volunteers to undertake communication pre-event and prepare signage as needed on the day.

Let's make this a regatta to remember!

What the Hill?

What's in a name? On the North Rd, the nasty paved hill has been called the big hill, Bigley Hill or Killer hill. Maybe you know this hill by another name. Well, let's officially name this hill. Send your hill name ideas to leechlakeroads@gmail.com and we will pool them, pick three and then we can vote on the new name. We'll even make up a sign with the hill's new name.

Camp Muskoka Launches Day Camp!

Here is a communication we are passing along from Camp Muskoka:

As families plan their summer at the cottage, we know that evenings around the campfire, making memories, are some of the best moments of the season. But what about the days? For many families, the chance to relax (editorial comment: or work!) while ensuring their kids are engaged in fun and enriching activities is a win-win. That's where we come in!

We're offering a **Day Camp for children aged 6-12**—a place for adventure, growth, and FUN right in the heart of Muskoka. You can now enroll their children in a program designed to keep kids active, engaged, and learning, while giving parents a bit of well-deserved downtime (editorial comment: or quiet time to work!).

Why is this a great opportunity for LLCA members?

- **Convenient Location:** Just 8 minutes from downtown Bracebridge
- **Affordable & Full of Fun:** Only \$495/week + tax, with a variety of activities (arts & crafts, sports, mountain biking, archery, swimming, and more)!

- **LUNCH and Snacks Included:** All-you-can-eat buffet with 2 snacks daily—no lunch packing needed!
- **Transportation Provided:** Round-trip bus transportation from Monck Public School in Bracebridge, ON. to/from Camp Muskoka.
- **FREE T-Shirt:** Enroll by April 15th to get a Camp Muskoka T-shirt!

Learn more about dates, rates, and how to enroll, [here](#).

Gravenhurst wants Students who want Jobs!

Do you know a high school or post-secondary student looking for a summer job that makes a difference? Help them connect with the Town of Gravenhurst and launch their career!

Every summer, we hire a dynamic team of students to join our vibrant community. It's more than just a job; it's an opportunity to:

- **Develop valuable skills:** Gain practical experience you can take anywhere.
- **Explore career paths:** Discover if municipal government is your calling!
- **Build your resume:** Stand out from the crowd with a summer of impactful work.
- **Be part of the Gravenhurst family:** Join a supportive team and make lifelong connections.

Exciting Summer Positions Available:

- **Parks Crew:** Keep our beautiful green spaces thriving.
- **Waterfront Instructor/Lifeguard & Beach Patrol:** Ensure safety and fun at the beach.
- **Student Municipal Law Enforcement Officer:** Help maintain a safe and secure community.
- **Infrastructure Office Assistant:** Support our vital infrastructure projects.
- **Septic Re-Inspection Program Student:** Contribute to environmental protection.
- **Summer Children's Program Coordinator (Gravenhurst Public Library):** Foster a love of reading in our community.

Learn More & Apply:

See [here](#) for full details and application instructions.

Don't miss out! Help us build a fantastic summer team. Applications are being accepted now!

ASH Drives – Friends of the Muskoka Watershed

The FOTMW March ash collection drive netted over 1300kg of ash donations.

The January and February ash collection drives added another 1705 kg in donations. In imperial terms that's 3.3 tons of ash which will find its way back into Muskoka forests this year.

The last ash collection drive this spring will take place **Sat April-26 from 9:30am to 01:00pm** at the transfer station (Town dump) located at 1062 Rosewarne Dr. More info / resources, e.g. ash spreading at home or cottage can be found [here](#).

Happy Birthday – Town of Bracebridge

You look like you're 29! Many planned events over the next few months will celebrate the 150th birthday of the Town of Bracebridge. It's a shame, about the Silverbridge issues putting a crimp on the 150th Celebrations though. There is something for everyone, over many months. More info [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.

There were many folks from the Anonymous Family who have helped out over the past few days, weeks and months. We are very grateful for all their hard work, time and efforts as they make our lake better for all of us. A few others also helped out who are not from that family.

Ernie Mederios - For taking the time over a few days to fill in the South Rd ruts, sinkholes, and potholes.

Guy Pattison - For doing the same as Ernie but on the North Rd. Also for removing broken branches and trimming broken branches from the North, South and Point Rds due to ice storm damage. For organizing septic system pump-outs, and the August bottle drive. And everything else he does quietly and modestly, with a smile and a wave for everyone.

Bits 'n Pieces

1. **FOCA Alert:** the most recent Federation of Cottage Associations newsletter is full of great [information](#).
2. Bracebridge provides free drinking water at two locations – further info [here](#)
3. Interesting 2024 cottage taxes info [here](#)
4. Info about [cottage insurance rates](#)
5. Muskoka Home Builders Association show May 24-25 in Bracebridge. Tickets and info [here](#)
6. 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.**

LLCA Contact Information

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