

Leech Lake Cottagers' Association NEWSLETTER

Thanksgiving 2025

Garbage Collection Update!

The last curbside garbage/recycling/compost collection day is Monday October 27 2025.

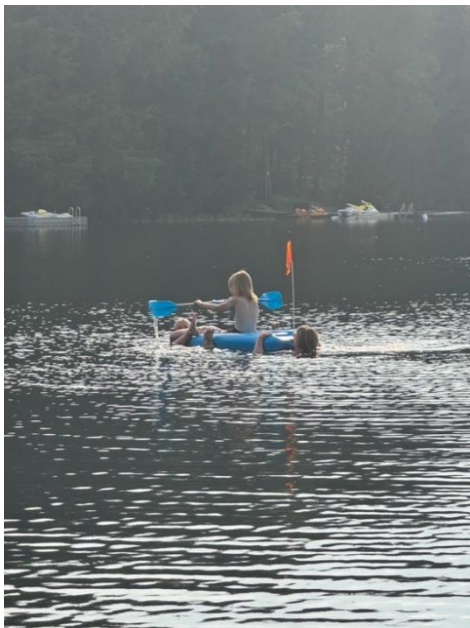
Fraserburg Lakeside Collection starts on Sunday, Nov 2. At the intersection of Fraserburg Rd and Lorne Rd. 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm.

If this timing doesn't work for you, you can take garbage/recycling/compost home or to Rosewarne Transfer Station or Landfill (1062 Rosewarne Dr., Bracebridge)

A Love Letter to Leech Lake – by Karen Henderson Towsley

Dear Leech Lake,

Thank you for yet another amazing summer. It was truly incredible! We are now welcoming the 4th generation of cottaging and traditions and insights and wonder. We did ALL the things this summer...the same things my parents did with us when they bought the cottage so long ago (including red wine at happy hour). Two of my granddaughters are the same age I was when I first discovered the splendours (11)!



My favourite weeks of the summer are when my grandchildren are here and we truly did everything: fishing off the dock and catching a first fish, stand-up paddleboarding, kayaking, sit-on kayaking, paddle boating, boating around the lake on the Seadoo, kamikaze tubing behind the Seadoo, slow cruising around the lake, jumping off the raft competitions, medals for swimming from our cottage to the island (almost a kilometre), playing on the Lilypad, building forts in the woods, calling the Loon and Geocaching! The only thing we didn't do this summer was have a campfire while they were here. Next year?!

My absolute favourite memory, though, was the amazing few days my grandkids had with our neighbour's, The

Whitney's, grandkids! Oh, my goodness the shrieking, the giggling, the earnest conversations, and the sharing of all the water toys! Nothing warms my heart more than hearing a child call out across the bay inviting another child over or discussing plans for the day. And that is exactly how my Leech Lake journey began with our then neighbours, the Mitchells!

So, thank you Leech Lake! And thank you Craig and Carol Henderson for making the right decision, sitting in a Bracebridge coffee shop, 57 summers ago.

Winter Road Maintenance 2025-2026

Yes, there will be road and driveway plowing over the winter of 2025-2026. We are working on organizing things and when details are finalized we will send an email with all the information.

The winter/snow services supplier market has shrunk by 22 per cent over 2024. Many providers exited after last year's snow and ice storms, states of emergency and rising day-to-day costs. Costs are higher for the remaining providers, so we can count on the prices for winter road and private driveway clearing to reflect the increased costs of suppliers. One of the things we are considering is to perhaps have a joint contract covering Leech and Pine Lakes. The higher volume may help keep costs down.

Charity Bottle Drive 2025 Results

The month of August we had our summer bottle drive for local charities. We lost all of the previously enjoyed beverage bottles and cans in week two of the bottle drive as there was a new driver in the town's recycling truck who mistakenly took it all and recycled it. When the month was over, we totalled \$450, which worked out to \$150.00 for each of these local charities:

- Salvation Army Food Bank
- Manna Food Bank
- Alzheimer's Society of Muskoka

Thanks to all of you who participated.



The Lazy Cottager

Dear Leech Lakers,

Don't you hate raking leaves in the fall? I do!



Once again, I have the perfect excuse for my messy yard: overwintering pollinators.

Plant litter provides shelter for overwintering pollinators and insulation for perennials and native plants.

Let's all avoid autumn work

so the bees thrive in the spring.

Lots more information here if you're interested!

<https://davidsuzuki.org/living-green/support-overwintering-pollinators-in-your-garden/>

<https://xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/nesting-overwintering-habitat>



Protecting the Night Sky – by Leslie Wood (and the township of Muskoka Lakes website)

The starry night sky is a miraculous sight at Leech Lake. If we're lucky we may even get a chance to view the glorious northern lights as their colours dance across the sky.

Sometimes, we're torn between using artificial lights at night for practical reasons, and keeping the lights off to allow the majesty of the night sky to shine. There are good reasons other than the stars to keep artificial lights to a minimum as well, including:

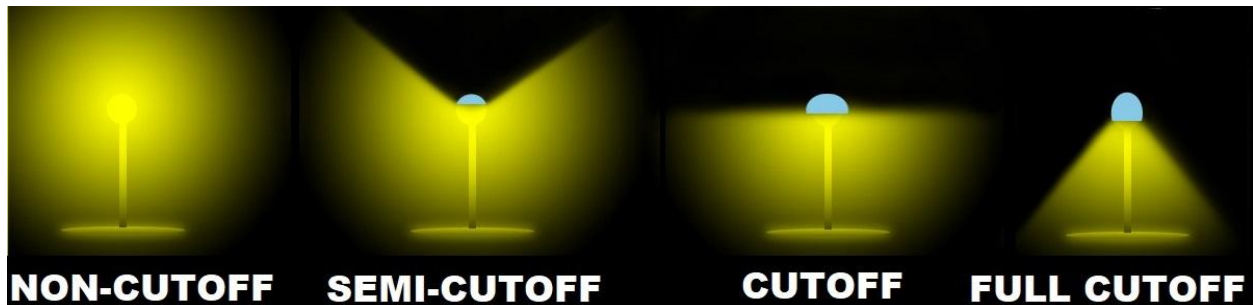
- Wildlife disruption: Nocturnal animals rely on darkness, and light pollution disturbs their natural behaviours.
- Insect decline: Many insects are fatally attracted to light. Their loss affects species that rely on them for food or pollination.
- Human health: We've evolved with natural light cycles. Bright nights can interfere with sleep and well-being.

It's true that sometimes we need lights. But there are ways that we can get the light we need and minimize the impact on our natural dark skies.

Turn your lights out if you're not there, indoor and out! Smart lights, motion sensors and timers can help here.

Think about where you're putting a light fixture, and what the impact will be on the environment, the wildlife and your neighbours. Maybe forego an outdoor fixture all together and use flashlights or headlamps instead.

Direct light where it is intended to go. If you need to light a pathway, use lighting that only shines down onto the path. Here is an example of different kinds of lights – the full cutoff style is best!



If lights are on after dark, think about using dimmers so you can get the minimal brightness you need.

Finally, use 'warm' light rather than 'cool' light outdoors. A guideline for outdoor lights is that they should be no brighter than 2700 kelvins. A good way to think of this would be that you are trying to imitate the colour of a flame from a candle.

Mice Don't Pay Rent – keep them out of your cottage! – Leslie Wood

As the weather cools our friendly neighbourhood mice start searching for places to be warm, and find food. This year seems to be particularly 'mousey', at our place anyway. As much as I generally believe in leaving nature alone, I do not like seeing and having to deal with the evidence that the mice have visited overnight.

If you're looking for a way to keep the mice away, look no further. This 'mouse bag' solution is easy, it's natural and it works! You'll need:

- Sachet bags (cut up loosely-woven cloth so the smell gets out, cheesecloth or dishcloths work)
- Cinnamon sticks
- Whole cloves
- Chili flakes
- Star anise



Figure out how many places you want to put them, that's how many bags you'll need. Place about a tablespoon of each ingredient, and approximately an inch of cinnamon stick, in each bag. Tie them up, and toss them wherever you think mice try to gain access.

These smell great (kind of like Christmas) but the mice hate them!

Cottage Closing Tidbits ... or Winter Cottaging Tidbits! – by Leslie Wood

Cottage closing. If you don't come to the lake in winter, it's bittersweet. It marks the end of



another season, and a time to say goodbye for a few months.

Cleaning and storing outdoor toys, and readying the inside of the cottage, can take a fair bit of time and energy, but it's worth it to come back in the spring for an easy opening.

There are a billion cottage closing checklists, you can find them everywhere so I won't waste space with that here. But a few things that make a huge difference to us when we close up might be helpful for you too. They include:

- Empty and clean the fridge, and leave the door open so mold doesn't develop
- Unplug every single thing that is plugged in, to avoid 'phantom' energy costs
- Take home batteries, aerosol cans, sunscreen, paint and anything else that doesn't freeze well – we have a big bin we pack all this stuff in, and it sits untouched in our basement all winter just waiting to come back up in the spring.

We're lucky at Leech Lake. Our lake is small and that means the ice doesn't damage floating docks. We don't need to bring in our floating docks, but tying them down is always a good idea in case they do break away as they could float off once the ice goes out.

For those who have fixed docks, some people take them out while other leave them in – how that works may depend on your location on the lake. There isn't a need for a bubbler on our small lake, but they are legal so if bubblers are used, take care to have them checked frequently to ensure they are working properly, and to have appropriate signage to warn people who use the lake in winter.



For visits to your cottage in the winter, here are a couple of great tips I found in Cottage Life magazine:

- Store some drinking water in plastic pails. Fill them half full and put a top on. If you manage to get up over the winter, you'll have some drinking and wash water available. The water in the bucket will thaw as the cottage does, and be ready for use a few hours after arrival.
- To use the toilet, store a large bucket of water mixed with windshield washer fluid to keep it liquid. You can just dump a small pail from this big bucket into the toilet after use. A plumber told me this trick; not sure what it might do to the septic.

Red, Purple, Orange and Yellow

Fall is here, along with the spectacular fall colours.

There are many ways to see and enjoy the fall colour show. You can enjoy it, by boat, helicopter, rail, plane, hot air balloon, or by walking.

In Gravenhurst you can take daily or sunset steamship tours on Lake Muskoka. Some of these tours also offer lunch and dinner packages. Get more details [here](#).

Fancy an old time train tour of fall colours? Find out more [here](#).



Walk Among the Wildlife

Looking to get up close with Muskoka wildlife this fall?

Head out to the Aspen Valley Wildlife Sanctuary. Gather up a group of friends or make it a family event and take either a group or private tour.

More info [here](#).

It's Cranberry Harvest Time



Looking for something a little different to do? Make a day of it and come out to the fall cranberry harvest. Foods, wine, events and more.

What's on now and future events can be found [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.

Bits 'n Pieces

1. **FOCA Elert:** the most recent Federation of Cottage Associations newsletter is full of great [information](#).
2. **Listen to Muskoka Information Radio:** Did you know about the Muskoka Information Station? It's at 98.3 FM on the radio dial, and you can find out more [here](#).
3. 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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