



# Leech Lake Cottagers' Association NEWSLETTER

Victoria Day Weekend 2026

## Membership Update

Reasons for paying cottage association dues include ensuring year-round road access, continuing lake stewardship, FOCA membership, participation in the regatta on August 2, fish stocking, access to the Facebook group, and attendance and voting rights at the June 2026 AGM.

As of May 10, 2026, 85% of property owners have paid their LLCA dues. Last year, 90% of cottagers joined the LLCA. Let's all contribute to preserve access to our cottages, take care of our lake and build our community. Remember, only paid-up members can attend the AGM and voice their thoughts.

## Save the Date

Culvert repair and installation	Last two weeks of May
Full road grading	First two weeks of June
<b>LLCA Annual General Meeting</b>	<b>Wednesday June 17 2026 over Zoom</b>
<b>Bug Count</b>	<b>Saturday July 25 2026</b>
<b>Leech Lake Regatta</b>	<b>Sunday August 2 2026</b>
Charity Bottle Drive	Sundays in August

## LLCA Annual General Meeting – Join the Association, Join the Meeting

The annual meeting will be held over Zoom on Wednesday June 17 at 8:00 pm.

Official notice and meeting materials will be distributed this weekend, as required by regulation prior to the meeting. We will include online voting on motions as in past years.

We will be having elections for the positions of President and Secretary. The basic role descriptions are in our bylaws which are posted [here](#) on our website. We need volunteers to step into these roles to help guide and build our lake community. If you would like to join the executive and take a turn supporting your lake community, please let our acting President Rob McGill know by emailing him at [rob@ramlaw.ca](mailto:rob@ramlaw.ca).



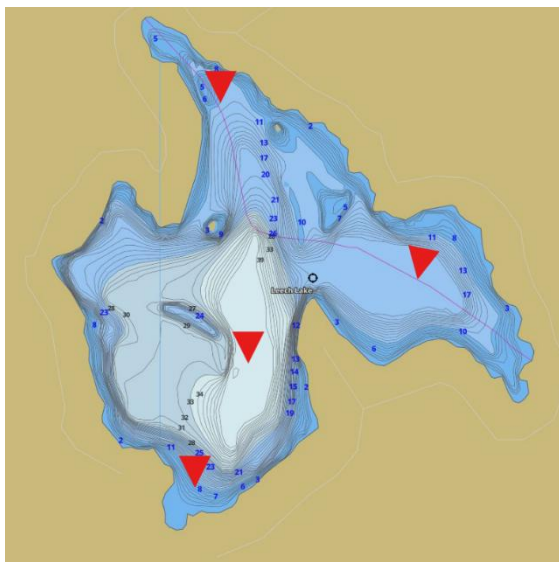
## Water Quality Testing with Muskoka Lakes Association Kicks Off – by Valerie McCoy

We're excited to kick off water quality testing this month in association with the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA).

The MLA has been an advocate of environmental protection since the early 1900s. You can watch more on YouTube [MLA - Muskoka Water Quality Awareness w/ Chris Craag](#)

This program coordinates testing of 17 lakes and rivers in 54 areas shown on the map. It involves 100 volunteers.

Collection begins each year at spring turnover and ends at fall turnover. Leech Lake will commence testing at 4 sites for total phosphorus (TP) and bacteria (E. coli and total coliform), with water and air temperature and Secchi depths recorded at each site.



The red arrows indicate the approximate location of the 4 sites. They are 1) boat launch corridor at the North End of the lake, 2) high boat activity at southeast corner of the lake 3) deep water site near the middle of the lake 4) less disturbed, near shore at SW corner by the crown land.

Final results will be compiled in an annual report by Hutchinson Environmental Sciences.

Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup> we will join other volunteers at the Port Carling Community Centre for training on the program.

Climate change and human activity have a big impact on water quality and we're seeing the results in rising incidences of blue green algae, for example. We are happy to be involved in a

bigger group with more resources and a bigger voice.

Stay tuned for Further updates.

## 2026 Road Report – Leech Lake Roads

Culvert repairs and new culvert install will take place in the last two weeks of May (Dates - TBD)

Full road grading and new gravel where needed will take place over two days during the first two weeks of June (exact dates TBD).

Sometimes we don't have much advance warning due to suppliers' scheduling and weather. We will do our best to let you know exact dates as far ahead as possible.



## Water Levels – by Valerie McCoy

Many of us have driven through Fraserburg and witnessed how extraordinarily high the river has been. Some years water has overflowed the banks and has been problematic for man and man-made structures - forcing us to adapt and/or to wait out the flooding. It's hard to remember during these frustrating times there is an ecological reason for higher levels in the spring. "High water levels in early spring are natural occurrences which help to recharge groundwater supplies, transfer nutrients and sediments to wetlands and shoreline riparian zones, and provides spring spawning fish and amphibians with access to wetlands and shoreline habitats". [Muskoka Water Web](#).



On landlocked Leech Lake, both high and low water levels are cause for concern. It is important to strike a balance between flooding of properties and "reserve" water in the case of hot dry summers such as 2025.

The only control of water levels is at the NW outlet. Typically, the rate of outflow slows as the outlet gets jammed with debris such as sticks and mud – much of it put there by beaver.

High water levels can make shorelines soggy, encourage bugs and make it difficult to put docks in. Many years, property owners frustrated with water levels take it upon themselves to clear out the debris to increase the water release from the North side outlet. Sometimes this makes sense in the moment then becomes a bad decision later with hot weather and little rain. The summer of 2025 was one such example.

There are many drawbacks to low water levels. Our already rocky lake reveals more hazards for boaters. The rate of water flow from the SE inlet to the NW outlet slows causing stagnation and concentration of chemicals such as phosphorous. Warmer, still water combined with more concentrated water promotes algae growth. We must do everything we can to discourage conditions for algae growth. Blue green algae is a toxic, serious and complex health problem that impacts both the ability to enjoy the lake and property values. [Climate Corner July 2025 - Water Quality and Climate Change - The District Municipality of Muskoka](#)

Whenever possible structures should be planned to take into account a large fluctuation from spring to fall water levels and patience exercised with higher spring water levels. It would be wonderful if we had a crystal ball and could see what the summer would bring but unfortunately, we just need to wait. Before clearing the outlet or considering taking beavers off the lake - consider the long-term impacts to all property owners and err on the side of caution.

## Old hydro poles being switched for new

Hydro pole replacements will take place on Fraserburg Rd. (county road 14), and on all lake roads that feed off of Fraserburg Rd. between June and September, 2026.

Hydro One has out-tasked the pole install activities to a 3rd party supplier. This project will span several months and with each pole swapping there may be small power outages 10 to 40 minutes in duration. The only risk to you, the cottage owner, is how well the electronics within your cottage react to the off-on-off-on-off-on of power to those devices. There may also be traffic slowdowns.

There may also be some blocked off areas of our roads while the service providers bring in rock boring machinery in order to drill into Mother Muskoka for the new pole installs. The drilling will be noisy and dusty in the areas where it takes place. If it's close by, you may even feel your cottage shake/vibrate.

You can check the "Future Planned Outages" on the Hydro-One [website](#). As there are several handoffs between third party service providers and Hydro One, getting timely planned outage information may be problematic for our lake residents.

## Septic System Maintenance

Their #1 concern is your #2.



As part of the lake's Stewardship program we are offering a group discount for those property owners who will get their septic holding tanks pumped out in 2026. The septic system services company will also clean the filters and baffles in your system and note any anomalies.

**The septic pump outs will take place on the 2nd week in June and 2nd week in July. Specific dates will be forthcoming.**

The group discount price points for this year:

- <1000 gallon system - \$450 plus HST
- >1000-1500 gallon system - \$650 plus
- >1500-2000 gallon system - \$800 plus HST

**If interested in having your septic pumped this summer, email Guy at [leechlakeroads@gmail.com](mailto:leechlakeroads@gmail.com) to get added to the list.**

## Alternatives to the Septic System – by Leslie Wood

A few years ago we looked at adding a second bathroom to our cottage. It turned out our septic system wasn't big enough to handle two toilets. We did not want to replace the septic, and ended up getting a composting toilet instead. This adds no strain to our septic, requires minimal upkeep and gives us rich compost material to use on gardens.

If you're wondering about different alternatives to the septic system, [here](#) is an article which looks at different options.

This article doesn't include comparison to an outhouse, which is still an option in Muskoka. However, if you add an outhouse you must conform to a number of regulations. Under the Ontario Building Code, outhouses are classified as Class 1 Sewage Systems. As well as the building code, you need to be sure you're in line with District of Muskoka regulations, things like setbacks, water table, distance to water/wells and construction requirements. Finding the specifics on the DOM website is not easy, but you can start [here](#). If you get frustrated with the website like I do, it may be best just to call 705-765-3156.

## *The Lazy Cottager*

Dear Leech Lakers,

A woodland garden is basically an eco-goldmine already—so the best “low effort” tasks are about doing less, but smarter. Here are a few that fit that perfectly:

Let the leaf litter stay (or even move more in): Instead of tidying everything up, let leaves sit under shrubs and trees. It feeds the soil, protects insects, and keeps moisture in. If anything, just gently tuck leaves into beds rather than removing them.

Add one log or branch pile: If you've got fallen branches, stack them in a quiet corner. It becomes habitat for insects, birds, and small animals—no building required, just a pile.

Plant one native woodland species: Instead of redesigning anything, just add one plant suited to shade—like trillium, ferns, trout lily or wild ginger. One plant still supports pollinators and fits naturally into your space.

Delay your “tidy-up”: If you usually clean in early spring, wait a bit longer. Many beneficial insects overwinter in stems and leaf litter—leaving things alone a few extra weeks helps them emerge.

Pull one invasive plant: Not a full cleanup—just remove a small patch of something like garlic mustard if you see it. Even 5 minutes helps native plants thrive.

The nice thing with woodland gardens is that the most eco-friendly move is often restraint. You're supporting biodiversity just by not over-managing it.

- The Lazy Cottager

### **For Sale?**

Looking to get more friends and family up to Muskoka?

There are some real estate opportunities on our lake for those who are interested. You can search for these available properties:

1019 Lakeshore Dr. North  
1032 Lakeshore Dr. South



## Dealing with mouse clean-up – by Leslie Wood



There's no way around it, cottage country living includes managing mice. They get in through the tiniest spaces and leave what feels like the biggest mess behind. Mouse poop everywhere, chewed up nesting material – over the winter we're always wondering if our attempts to keep them out have succeeded and, if not, how much damage have they done?

Sometimes cleanup is daunting if the wee beasts have made themselves at home in your cottage. Given the recent hantavirus reminder that these (and other) rodents carry diseases, I did some reading on cleaning up and below share an aggregation of what I found.

- It's best to tackle the mess wearing gloves and a mask. It sounds absurd, I know, but you want to keep yourself safe from all the bits and pieces whether sedentary or airborne.
- Open windows and doors to air out the space for 30 minutes before cleaning
- Spray droppings, urine stains, nests and dead rodents with a disinfectant (1 part bleach to 9 parts water) and let it sit for 10 minutes
- Wipe it all up with paper towels or a wet mop if dealing with a large area
- Double bag the waste, and disinfect the area again after pick-up (also disinfect the mop if used)
- Never sweep or vacuum dry droppings as this releases particles into the air (I ALWAYS did this in the past – never again!) Some sources suggested that once you have sprayed the offending waste with disinfectant and let it sit for 10 minutes, then you can safely sweep or vacuum it up.
- When finished cleaning, wash your gloves in disinfectant and hot, soapy water before taking them off, and then thoroughly wash your hands
- If you used a mop, it should also be cleaned with disinfectant and hot soapy water.

If you have peroxide bleach you can use this straight, you don't need to mix it with water. Please take pains to use as little bleach as possible, as it's not great for the environment to have it in the septic system or in the soil.

If this approach doesn't clean things up to your satisfaction, you could try a specialized cleaner designed to treat dog kennels, cat litter boxes, and chicken coops. Again, try to get as much of this wiped up and bagged as possible, so it's not going in the septic or the soil.

Apparently, the diseases in mouse poop are active for only three or four days, so if what you've found is old, it is less likely to be harmful to your health – just gross.



## 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).

## Bits 'n Pieces

1. **FOCA Elert:** the most recent Fdn 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>. **Kids can become a Citizen Scientist with FOTMW.**

## LLCA Contact Information

<b>President</b> - vacant	<b>Vice-President</b> - Robert McGill <a href="mailto:rob@ramlaw.ca">rob@ramlaw.ca</a>
<b>Treasurer</b> – Anne Hampton <a href="mailto:leechlaketreasurer@gmail.com">leechlaketreasurer@gmail.com</a>	<b>Secretary</b> - Leslie Wood <a href="mailto:leechlakesecretary@yahoo.com">leechlakesecretary@yahoo.com</a> 416-464-7000
<b>Road Advisory Committee Chair</b> - Guy Pattison <a href="mailto:Leechlakeroads@gmail.com">Leechlakeroads@gmail.com</a> 705-646-3565	<b>Road Advisory Committee Vice-Chair</b> - Blair Clark <a href="mailto:revblairclark@gmail.com">revblairclark@gmail.com</a> 289-259-9543
<b>Stewardship Chair</b> - Valerie McCoy <a href="mailto:leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com">leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com</a>	

**Happy Victoria Day weekend!**