



Leech Lake Cottagers' Association NEWSLETTER

Canada Day 2026



With summer in full swing, there's lots to share — so pour a coffee, pull up a Muskoka chair, and enjoy the updates.



We've Got a New Email Address!

The Leech Lake Cottagers Association now has an official email address: admin@leechlakecottagersassociation.ca

Whether you have a question, feedback, or information to share, we'd love to hear from you. Be sure to save our new address to your contacts and watch for future updates in your inbox!

Leech Lake Events

Bug Count

Saturday July 25th at 9:45 am, 1037 Lakeshore Drive North

Fun for the whole family! Join the Leech Lake Stewardship Committee for a hands-on morning of **citizen science** as we count the tiny aquatic critters living in lake-bottom samples — from scuds and dragonfly nymphs to caddisfly larvae tucked inside tiny protective cases. These small water creatures tell an important story about the health of our lake, helping us better understand water quality, habitat, and the overall ecosystem.

After the bug-counting fun, stick around for lunch, prizes, and a chance to connect with neighbours who care about keeping Leech Lake healthy.

RSVP with any dietary restrictions to leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com



Regatta

Sunday August 5th at noon, Leech Lake Boat Launch



Get ready for one of the best lake traditions of the summer! The Leech Lake Regatta is a chance for neighbours, families, and friends to gather at the boat launch for an afternoon of food, fun, and friendly competition. Join us for a BBQ, picnic games, prizes, and plenty of lakeside laughs.

Volunteers needed! We are looking for a few helping hands to organize games, assist with setup, and help with clean up after the event. Many hands make light work — and more fun for everyone!

If you can volunteer, please email admin@leechlakecottagersassociation.ca by **July 25** and let us know how you would like to help.

Out and about in Muskoka

Downtown Bracebridge Canada Day Celebration

- Live music in Memorial Park: 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Street Party on Manitoba Street: 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Food trucks, local shopping, pickleball, badminton, cornhole, and family activities
- Bandshell concert featuring Northern Lights Steel Orchestra: 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Fireworks over Bracebridge Bay: 10:00 p.m.

Peer Under the Surface cruise with Dr. Norman Yan

The Peer Under the Surface cruise on Monday, July 13 offers a two-hour educational trip from Port Carling, where Captain Randy Potts, Dr. Norman Yan, and Ron Ingram will explore Lake Muskoka's waters and give passengers a close-up look at zooplankton and lake life. [Additional Details](#)

Cinema Under The stars

FREE outdoor movie nights at the Muskoka Wharf in Gravenhurst.

Bring a cozy blanket, lawn chair, friends & family and enjoy full-length feature films.

Thursday July 9, 8pm: Dog Man

Thursday August 6, 7pm: Zootopia 2

Thursday July 23, 8pm: Lilo & Stitch (2025)

Thursday August 13, 7pm: Wicked

Bracebridge Bandshell Concert Series

Wednesday evenings throughout July and August Free outdoor concerts in Memorial Park featuring local and regional musicians. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy live music under the stars.

Festival of the Sound:

July 22 to August 8, 2026. Each summer, the Festival welcomes thousands of residents, cottagers, and visitors to Parry Sound to enjoy world-class musical performances featuring acclaimed Canadian and international artists.

<https://festivalofthesound.ca/>

Take a Loop Around the Lake

If you are new to the lake, or you have yet to take a walk around our lake start a new tradition this Canada day by taking a stroll around our lake. Maybe you'll even see some wildlife.

You can access the trail entrance at the end of the North Road by #1209 or from the end of the South Road at #1288. Follow the flagging tape to find the path/trail.

Happy Canada Day!

Loons, Geese, and the Very Canadian Art of Sharing our Lake

There's an unspoken hierarchy on every Canadian lake, and it goes something like this: the loon thinks it's the soul of the water, and the goose thinks it owns the place. Neither is wrong, exactly. Both are insufferable about it.

The Loon: Lake Royalty

The loon shows up in early spring like it's auditioning for a nature documentary. It dives, it surfaces fifty feet away with zero splash, it does that haunting tremolo call at 4 a.m. that makes us all whisper "did you hear that?" like they've witnessed something sacred. The loon knows it's pretty. It knows its call sounds like the lake's own heartbeat. It is, frankly, a diva, and it has earned the right to be one. What the loon does not do is share airspace, dock space, or general vibes with anyone uninvited — least of all a goose.



The Goose: Leech Lake's Self-Appointed Shoreline President



Meanwhile, the Canada goose has appointed itself head of lake security. It patrols the shoreline in tight formation like it's running drills. It hisses at kayakers and loves our docks and shorelines.

Where the loon is mysterious and aquatic-royalty-coded, the goose is loud, territorial, and deeply unbothered by anyone's personal space, including yours.

So What Happens When They Meet?

Mostly: a very cold détente. The loon stays out in the deep water doing its elegant submarine routine, surfacing with fish like it's nothing. The goose rules the shallows and the grassy banks, marching its goslings around like a tiny, feathered parade nobody asked for. They tolerate each other the way two strong personalities at a dinner party tolerate each other — minimal eye contact, maximum side-eye.

The Real Winner

Whoever's sitting on the dock with a coffee, watching this entire saga unfold. One bird brings the eerie midnight magic. The other brings chaos and a faint odor of aggression. Together, they're basically the whole personality of a Canadian lake in summer — equal parts breathtaking and slightly threatening.

Loon Fun Facts

- **Red eyes for a reason:** A loon's eyes turn deep red in summer, which scientists think helps them see underwater in low light — basically built-in polarized lenses.
- **Bones like a brick:** Unlike most birds, loons have solid (not hollow) bones, which helps them dive up to 200 feet deep. Great for diving, terrible for takeoff.
- **Ancient lineage:** Loons are one of the oldest bird species alive — fossils almost identical to modern loons date back 20+ million years.
- **That iconic call:** The wail, the tremolo, the yodel — loons have four distinct calls, and the yodel is *only* performed by males defending territory.
- **Awkward walkers:** Their legs are set so far back on their body (great for swimming) that they can barely walk on land — they basically push themselves along on their bellies.
- **Mostly monogamous:** Loon pairs often return to the same lake and same partner year after year, though they renew the “relationship” rather than mate for life unconditionally.

Canada Goose Fun Facts

- **Lifelong partners:** Unlike loons, Canada geese genuinely do mate for life, and they grieve visibly when a partner dies.
- **Built-in GPS:** Geese have a stunning homing ability, navigating thousands of miles using the sun, stars, and Earth's magnetic field.
- **Family loyalty:** Goslings imprint fast and stay with their parents for up to a year — that whole “tiny parade” thing is a real family unit, not just chaos.
- **Surprisingly fast:** Despite looking like waddling lake bureaucrats, geese can fly up to 40 mph and have been recorded at altitudes over 29,000 feet — higher than Everest.
- **The hiss is a bluff... mostly:** Geese rarely actually attack unless defending a nest, but their hiss-and-charge routine is enough to make most humans concede the sidewalk.
- **Not actually Canadian by law:** Canada geese live across nearly all of North America and have become a year-round, non-migratory presence in many U.S. cities — much to everyone's mild dismay.

Goose Deterrents

1. **Let the shoreline grow up** Geese want a clear sightline from water to land (to spot predators) and easy grazing on short grass right at the edge. Letting a 3-4 foot buffer of taller native grasses or shrubs grow along the bank breaks that sightline and makes landing/grazing awkward. Loons don't care about shoreline grass length at all — they need open water for takeoff, not lawn.
2. **Skip the chemical repellents** Some grass treatments (like methyl anthranilate, a grape-scent compound geese hate) works well on lawns but should be avoided to not risk other wildlife and our lake.

- 3. Use visual deterrents on land, not water** Things like predator decoys (coyote silhouettes, mylar tape, flags) placed on the grassy areas geese frequent — not out on the lake — keep the open water undisturbed for loons.
- 4. Don't feed them — and ask neighbors not to either** Geese return to reliable food sources. If anyone's tossing bread or feed near the water, that's likely the biggest magnet pulling geese in.

Paul Bunyan was here

Do you have any trees on your property(s) that could use some pruning, limbing or need to be taken down? The cottage association is looking for a tree services company to spend a day or two or three at our lake. They can drop a tree on your property so that you, the property owner, can cut it up on your own time or they can chipper shred it onsite and you get free wood chips or they drop it and chipper/shred it then take it all away. The association will also require these services for some limbing of a tree on the south road by #1064 and the take down of the dying tree at the entrance to the boat launch.



Pricing would be dependent on the number of cottages that have an interest and the work involved based on tree size, tree height, customer requests, etc. If you are interested, please reach out to admin@leechlakecottagersassociation.ca with your contact information.

Septic System Pump Outs

We are now looking at the next wave of cottagers who would like to have their septic systems pumped out. We had four cottage properties pumped out in June.

The current provider will charge us \$462 plus HST if we can get three or more cottages participating. A single call out for septic pumping would be \$485 plus HST. These prices are based on an average tank size of 800 to 1000 gallons

Email leechlakeroads@gmail.com to sign up.

Road Work Ahead!

The following road work projects were to take place in June, but contractor equipment and staff availability pushed the work out three weeks:



Turnaround Area

To improve access for contractors, Hydro One, septic and propane services, snow removal equipment, and first responders, we are expanding part of the turnaround area at the end of the South Road. We also plan to add fresh road gravel to several hundred feet of road leading into the turnaround. Most of the preliminary clean-up work has now been completed. The contractor will return to assess whether any additional work is required and to update the original quote. Looking ahead, we also plan to contact ambulance services about the possibility of having this area designated as an emergency location in the event air ambulance access is ever needed. More details will be shared in the weeks and months ahead.

Road Grading: Pre-Grading work - July 2 to July 3

Pre-grading work will include relocating and placing rocks in various areas around the lake, trenching some ditches, installing a new culvert on the North Road, repairing a culvert on the South Road, and removing tree stumps and large rocks from the road edges.

Road Grading Work - July 6-10

Grading of all Leech lake roads. Actual dates are TBD. Notes will go out prior to the south and north road closures. Grading will take place over two days.

Hydro-1 Onsite

There are potential delays to our lake road access while Hydro-1 is onsite to continue their pole replacement/upgrade project. Delays would be up to 30 minutes if they are boring into the granite / shield rock. Road access is still possible via foot traffic, motorbike, SBS, or ATV. Some vehicle traffic may be possible, but no contractor or service vehicles will have access during these activities.

This work is required as a precondition to bringing broadband service access to cottagers. There is the potential for brief power outages during these ongoing system upgrades as well.

If you're signed up with the outage alerts app from Hydro-1 they will also notify you of future planned outages so you can be prepared.

Stewardship Update

Stewardship is about taking care of something that has been entrusted to us. For the Leech Lake Association, that means working collectively on things we can control to leave our lake and surrounding lands in as good—or better—condition than we found them.

With limited resources – the Stewardship Committee focuses on practical actions that support protect water quality. Our community is fortunate that many members already practice stewardship every day. Whether it's motivated by environmental values or protecting property values, a healthy lake benefits everyone.

Here's an update on our five priorities for 2026.

1. Implementation of the MLA Water Quality Monitoring Program

This spring, the Leech Lake Association officially joined the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) Water Quality Monitoring Program. [Muskoka Lakes Association - Water Quality Monitoring](#) Following volunteer training over the May long weekend, we began sampling at four locations around the lake.

The four monitoring sites were selected to represent different conditions around Leech Lake:

1. **North boat launch corridor** – an area with regular boating activity.
2. **Southeast corner** – another high boat traffic area.
3. **Deep water site** – near the centre of the lake.
4. **Southwest shoreline** – a relatively undisturbed nearshore location adjacent to Crown land.

Water samples are collected four times throughout the season, measuring:

- Total phosphorus (TP)
- E. coli and total coliform bacteria
- Water clarity
- Water and air temperature



Results from participating lakes are compiled annually by Hutchinson Environmental Sciences, giving us valuable long-term data while allowing us to compare trends with lakes across the region.

Launching this program has been a true team effort. Thanks to support from the MLA and donated funds and equipment from our neighbours our first-year startup costs were largely covered.

Thank you to Deborah Martin Downs and the MLA team, Damien O'Flaherty, Louis, Alex Westlake, Rick McCoy, and especially Kasey McCoy for helping bring this important initiative to life.

2. Natural Shorelines

Healthy shorelines are one of the most effective ways property owners can improve water quality and wildlife habitat. Many members participated in shoreline assessments and native planting projects over the past several years, and it's rewarding to see those efforts paying off. Native vegetation is becoming established, shorelines are becoming more resilient, and even a maple tree cut down by a beaver managed to recover and thrive!

To keep the message front and centre, we launched a new "Go Natural" stewardship campaign featuring a fun, tongue-in-cheek logo celebrating natural shorelines. Adult and youth T-shirts and hoodies were offered at cost, with proceeds simply covering printing expenses.



Those who ordered shirts will receive an email with pick-up details, and orders will be ready for pick-up by the Bug Count.

We hope you'll wear yours proudly and help spread the message. Stay tuned on our Facebook page for future opportunities to order yours!

3. Benthic Monitoring (All ages "Bug Count") July 25th, 2026

One of our longest-running stewardship initiatives is benthic monitoring—better known as our annual "bug count."

Since 2006, volunteers of all ages have worked with the District of Muskoka's Biological Monitoring Technician to collect aquatic insects and other bottom-dwelling organisms that serve as important indicators of water quality. The event combines citizen science with education and a chance to connect with neighbours.

4. Stewardship Communications

Throughout the year we'll continue sharing stewardship tips, seasonal reminders, and lake information through our Facebook page and newsletter. Our goal is to post useful stewardship content each week and keep members informed about simple actions that can make a positive difference.

Our current topic is a call to share "fish stories". Over the years there have been many species have been reported in Leech Lake as native or stocked. Fish nests are often spotted spring through mid-July. We want to hear and see what you've spotted or caught in the last couple years.

If there are other topics you'd like us to cover, please let us know.

5. Watershed Resilience Funding Opportunity

The District of Muskoka has introduced the **Watershed Resilience Action Program**, offering grants ranging from **\$1,000 to \$10,000** to support local watershed initiatives.

Eligible projects include:

- Developing or updating a lake plan
- Creating a stewardship action plan
- Expanding citizen science programs
- Improving communications and community engagement
- Organizing stewardship events

Information on Lake Plans can be found on the FOCA site [Lake Planning for Community Groups - FOCA answers Ontario cottage country questions](#).

Any project undertaken would need to consider whether we had committed volunteers to implement. Ideas and offers of assistance can be sent to leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com Applications are due August 31st.

Protecting Leech Lake is a shared responsibility, and every stewardship action—large or small—helps preserve the lake for future generations. If you have comments, ideas, or would like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you at: leech.lake.stewardship.committee@gmail.com

Muskoka Lakes Leadership Forum

In June, our Treasurer, Stewardship Chair and Water Quality Program coordinator attended the MLA Leadership Forum held in Bracebridge.

The MLA Forum included three keynote speakers. Below are the descriptions of each and link to video.

Session 1: *Protecting and Enhancing your Natural Shoreline to Promote Native Wildlife Habitats.* Presented by **Scott Young, Executive Director of the Muskoka Conservancy**, this session will focus on two different types of nature conservation critical to Muskoka – science-driven protection of large patches of ecologically sensitive land with species at risk, and waterfront development placing intense pressure on few remaining fragments of natural riparian area-littoral zones on our lakes. Protecting both are equally important and Muskoka Conservancy is experiencing strong demand in both areas.

Muskoka Conservancy and Shoreline Protection - Scott Young

Session 2: *Advocating for Responsible Development.* Presented by **Ken Pearce, President of the MLA**, this session focused on the MLA's advocacy work which positively influenced development in Muskoka. This includes defending the Township of Muskoka Lakes Official Plan from appeals before the Ontario Land Tribunal by a developer group and two aggregates industry players; the proposed Cliff Bay/Muskoka Regional Centre redevelopment in Muskoka Bay, Gravenhurst; Official Plan updates in Seguin and Bracebridge; the Comprehensive Zoning By-law update in the Township of Muskoka Lakes; and the update of the District Official Plan (in particular, concerning resorts, the environment and lake health). Attendees will have the opportunity to share any proposed developments of concern to them.

Responsible Development and Political Action - Ken Pearce

Session 3: *Boat Wakes on Inland Lakes: Impacts, Evidence, and Research Needs.* Presented by **Chris Houser, Dean of Science, University of Waterloo**, this session provided an overview of recent research from the region and beyond, showing that in sheltered or confined environments, wake energy and impacts often exceed those of locally generated wind waves, making recreational boating a new source of high-energy, long-period waves in inland systems. As a result, wakes can resuspend sediments, accelerate shoreline erosion, increase turbidity, alter nutrient and contaminant fluxes, degrade aquatic habitat, and pose risks to safety and infrastructure. The presentation concludes by outlining research priorities needed to better understand and manage boat wakes.

The Impact of Boat Wakes - Chris Houser

The LLCA attendees agreed at the end of the day that while LLCA has issues - we are incredibly lucky to not share some serious concerns others on big and small lakes are experiencing. These included large commercial development, blue green algae blooms, airport traffic over the lake, golf course and farm runoff.

These discussions underlined the importance of Lake Association to band together for advocacy and pooled resources. It also underlined what a special place we share here at Leech Lake.

No Wake Signs

Boating season is underway, and the Muskoka Lakes Association's NO WAKE signs are once again available for purchase for \$20. Signs can be purchased online through the MLA Shop section of the MLA [website](https://www.mla.on.ca), or by contacting the MLA office: info@mla.on.ca



The MLA first launched its NO WAKE sign initiative as a pilot project in 2020 to help raise awareness about the impacts of excessive boat wakes on shorelines, wildlife, property, and fellow lake users. Based on valuable feedback from our members, the sign has been redesigned to improve visibility and effectiveness. The current sign measures 24" x 24", with NO WAKE displayed prominently as the largest and most visible feature.

Demand for these signs has been strong in previous seasons. If you are considering adding a sign to your waterfront, order as soon as possible.