

BBLA Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2019



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Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the Big Basswood Lake Association's spring/summer 2019 newsletter.

We hope that you are looking forward to a great summer on the lake. After a long, snowy winter (we had the most snow in recent memory in Algoma) and a cold and wet spring it certainly has been a beautiful start to the summer. Here's hoping that this lovely weather keeps up.

The lake association has once again been very busy over the winter. We continued our dialogue with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Fisheries (MNRF) - see the articles in this newsletter on the dam and the broad scale fishery inventory. We also followed up with Mark Richard, the Ontario negotiator on the Thessalon land claim and attended the FOCA spring meeting.

We also spent a considerable amount of time working with Huron Shores and Tulloch Engineering to organize and kick off the septic inspection program that we committed to for this summer. That program is now under way – see the article later in this newsletter for a status on the initiative. We would ask that you read this article carefully and make your appointment for a septic inspection right away. This is one of the largest and most important initiatives that the lake association has undertaken. It is a perfect example of how we can partner with our members to protect the health of our beautiful lake.

The board had several changes going into this year. Joining the board for this term will be Phil Conely, Joanne Falk and Cynthia Wood. We welcome them and thank them for volunteering their time. Cynthia has stepped up to replace Ron Trivers as the association treasurer and is already heavily engaged with running our finances and keeping our books in excellent shape. Phil is looking after the redesign of our website and Joanne has volunteered to take charge of membership. There is still room for a couple of more board members so please let myself or any others on the board know if you would like to join us during this exciting time at the association.

As many of you know by now, we bid farewell in early June to our former president, Mike Hunting after a valiant yearlong battle with cancer. Mike was a great president, a great friend to many of us on Basswood Lake and always, always concerned with the wellbeing of his beloved Big Basswood Lake. As late as April, he was emailing and calling me to check on progress of membership and the status of the septic project. We miss Mike greatly.

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Membership Matters

Finally, another summer season is upon us, and it's wonderful to see everyone enjoying time at Basswood. Permanent residents are particularly grateful for the warmer weather, having made it through a good old-fashioned Northern Ontario winter – with lots of snow!

We'd like to encourage you to renew your annual membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association and enjoy several benefits:

- Attendance at events focused on
 - o Lake stewardship
 - o Area history
 - o Ongoing education
- Participation at the Annual General Meeting
 - o Providing input on issues that affect property owners and the preservation of Basswood's pristine waters
 - o Electing directors to represent your interests
- Savings on your cottage insurance through FOCA – the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

Last year, we achieved a total of 120 members, and we'd love to see that number go even higher in 2019.

If you don't yet have a membership, please consider joining us as we work together to protect our lake environment and support the community that has continued to grow over many generations of cottagers.

Did you know that membership is still only \$25 per year? It's a deal you shouldn't pass up! Friends and family who don't own property, but visit regularly, are welcome to join as non-voting associate members for the same great price.

You can join or renew your membership at the AGM on July 21st, or by visiting our table at the Round Barn Market at Sowerby. We're there each Saturday until Labour Day from 9 – 11:30am.

As part of our upcoming website redesign, we're building an online renewal process that we hope to have operating in 2020. Please visit www.bigbasswood.ca for more information on our activities and the benefits of membership.

We look forward to seeing you soon - submitted by Joanne Falk

Mark These Dates for 2019

Annual General Meeting	July 21st, 2019
Sweet Sowerby Social	Date Being Determined
Fall Board Meeting	September 16th, 2019

MNRF Broad Scale Fish Monitoring

Over the years, we have been aware of the presence of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNRF) on our lake. They are charged with the responsibility of monitoring the health of lakes in our province. One of the main indicators of the health of a lake is the health of the fish that live in the lake. In order to catch a variety of fish to test, the MNRF uses the method of gill netting. Unfortunately, it appears to many of us, that gill netting may be occurring at a cost, as the net catches a large number of fish. Last year we contacted the MNRF and discussed our concerns about using this technique to catch fish for testing. They have repeatedly assured us that the benefits of catching the fish and monitoring, far outweighs the impact on the healthy fish population. They have also stated that the number of fish caught is a very small fraction of the overall fish population.

As a result of our concerns, the MNRF has responded by scheduling Preston Lennox to attend our AGM on July 21st. Our understanding is that Mr. Lennox will share the results of last year's fish inventory and explain why they use the gill netting process to perform this inventory. If you have concerns about the fish populations in the lake, this will be an ideal opportunity to have your questions answered



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Our membership continues to grow. It currently sits at 120 property owners, which we are pleased with but we believe it can be much higher. We believe that with all of the activities that we have underway – all for the good of the lake and the enjoyment of property owners on the lake - there is no reason that we can't improve this number substantially this summer. Please continue to talk up the good work of the association with your friends and neighbors and urge them to join – either online, at the AGM or at our table in the Sowerby market on Saturday mornings.

Our AGM will be held this year on Sunday, July 21st from 10AM to 12PM at the Sowerby Hall. Also, again this summer, we will partner with the Sowerby Hall and Heritage Committee and the North Shore Sentinel to sponsor a series of local history nights. Two events are planned, one each in August and September

In addition, we continue to engage on a number of other project/activities which are each described in this newsletter. So as you can see, there is a lot happening. If you want to be personally involved in any of these initiatives, please let us know.

Thank you for your support in 2018 and we look forward to seeing you on the lake this year.

Larry Allcorn

Chairman

Lake Partner/Water Quality

2018 NUMBERS— — —

Secchi disk reading (water clarity): **10.7**

Total phosphorus:

1.6 West Basin

1.6 East Basin

Calcium: 2.7

AND WHAT THEY TELL US— —



Water clarity has been the benchmark quality indicator for Big Basswood since BBLA began participating in the Lake Partner Program (LPP) in 1999. The annual average secchi disk readings have been consistent through the years at 10-12 meters making us one of the clearest lakes in Ontario.

Total phosphorus is a measurement used to manage and assess lake nutrient status and algae growth. Phosphorus occurs naturally but also finds its way into lakes via human pathways: e.g. septic wastes, fertilizers, laundry detergents, etc. Human caused changes can impact the natural phosphorus cycle. An example of this would be recent algal blooms. Big Basswood Lake TP is, and has been, consistently low.

Calcium is an essential element that is present in natural waters. It's in limestone and other types of rocks. Calcium gets into the water through leeching of soils, weathering of rocks, effluent and other point sources. It is important to all life forms, both aquatic and terrestrial. Calcium levels are declining in Canadian Shield Lakes which are proving to be a stressor for many aquatic species. Calcium levels are essentially unchanged on Big Basswood. The range of Calcium levels reported by LPP participating lakes is approximately 2-37.

For more information—check out:

<https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program-overview/>

<http://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program-sampling-assistance/>

https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Secchi_Summary_September_2017.pdf

Septic Inspection Program

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Big Basswood Lake Association (BBLA) has a long time commitment to maintaining the pristine water quality of Big Basswood Lake. Last year BBLA was successful in obtaining a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to review on-site sewage and surface water drainage systems on our lake's shoreline properties. So THIS summer, it is happening!!!

This is an opportunity to analyze your drainage systems and learn what can be done to improve functions. Septic system maintenance, surface water management, water conservation and other best management practices can be discussed. Basically we can all learn about our systems. Trillium grant funding and a contribution from the lake association makes this available to each of us. The site visit and assessment are **FREE**, but the window of opportunity is just for the 2019 season.

Many of you have already scheduled a site visit, but if you haven't done so yet, call the Municipality of Huron Shores (705-843-2033) to schedule your appointment. Brysin Shaw, from Tulloch Engineering, will be making the property visits and if possible, it is best for the property owner to be there. Bryson will ask questions and you are encouraged to ask him questions in return.

Note that this inspection is totally non-invasive. No digging up of tanks is required as Brysin does surface inspections only.

Septic systems are out of sight and surface water drainage is only a problem when there is a water event, but anticipating problems is key to functioning systems and maintaining water quality. It falls to each of us to assure that our lake remains clear and beautiful.

Septic Smart—check out the link below to these four short videos:

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/facts/sep_smart.htm

AND SCHEDULE YOUR SITE VISIT TODAY



Photo Contest 2019 - 2020

"Life at the Cottage"

Returning this year by popular demand is the 2019-2020 Photo Contest. Your mission is to capture family friends and pets doing what they like best at the cottage.

How to Enter

Submit your photos between July 21st 2019 and June 1st of 2020.

To www.bigbasswoodlakeassociation.ca

Entries must be in digital form only as jpeg files. They must be 5 megapixels or 2560 x 1950 pixels for good image quality. The photos must be original not scanned or reproduced. Previously published photos are ineligible. All photos submitted are the property of the BBLA.

Judging

A panel of judges will be appointed by the BBLA. They will weight the following criteria for each of the photos:

- Adherence/Appropriateness
- Uniqueness of concept
- Framing and balance of image
- Clarity of the photo overall
- Creativity
- Composition
- Lighting

Judging will be completed June 15 th 2020 and the winner announced at the AGM in July 2020.,

2018
Winning
Entry



2019 Loon Survey Report

Our Basswood Lake loon survey ,which is a contribution to the Canadian Bird Studies Loon Survey, continues this year. There are participants from five sections of the lake—SE, SW, NE, NW, and Big Island-Center area. This is the third summer of recording loon observations and submission results to CBS. We welcome new participants.



The survey is completed on a simple form, documenting number of observations of the lake for loons, number of pairs observed, number of chicks, and other bird species that have been observed.

More information is available at the 12 sided barn in Sowerby on Saturday morning market days. If you wish to participate in the survey contact Dixie Olmstead at 651-271-6558 or dixie_olmstead@yahoo.com or leave your name with anyone at the Big Basswood Lake Association table at the barn.

There is interest in working with the Kensington Conservancy (www.kensingtonconservancy.org) located in Desbarats, to find ways we can become more involved in citizen science around Basswood by monitoring birds, plants, and insects that we see frequently. More information on this in the future!

For more information contact Dixie Olmstead (Photo Credit Jill Glaser)

Website Redesign

One of the Board's goals this year is to find an economical way to upgrade our current website, allowing for a better user-experience.

We are currently in discussions with a company that can assist our association in the planning, design, and development of the new site for a reasonable fee. It is our goal to make it easier to find, access, and use this website so that members can stay informed and connected. Part of that work will involve ensuring that the new site is mobile-friendly and compliant with all current legislation applicable to non-profit organizations.

Currently, the website has information about Basswood Lake Association Events, Meetings, Newsletters, Wildlife and Fishing Reports, Photos, and Historical Information. Much of that information may be migrated to the new site, but we are also considering updates and other content that would be valuable to add in the future.

If you have suggestions or comments that would assist in this process, we invite you to send your feedback or ideas to my email listed in the newsletter. The plan is to begin this process in early fall for completion by next spring, in time for next year's membership registration, and busy spring / summer months.

Submitted by Phil Conley

Dam Operating Plan



On July 30, 2019 the MNRF held a meeting with representatives from Bright Lake and Big Basswood Lake to present information and answer questions about the Big Basswood Lake Dam Operating Plan. Shannon Hobbs, Research Management Technician from the MNRF, provided an overview of the dam operating plan, the interactions between both lakes and factors that are considered in determining water levels.

All lakes go through cyclical water level changes. The water level changes (the highs and lows) are moderated by dam operations. The operating range at the Big Basswood Lake Dam is only 10 cm and there is little room to adjust water levels. Water from Big Basswood has been used to flush through Bright Lake during blue-green algae break-outs (1999 and 2011) and to benefit walleye spawning. It is a balancing act. The amount of rainfall, either too little, too much or too fast, will affect water levels. The MNRF uses one month and three month forecasts from the Aviation and Forest Fire Emergency Services. A lake's watershed is also affected by weather trends. A draught results in dry wetlands, ponds and streams so little additional water reaches the lake. In flooded or saturated conditions, water is not absorbed and the run-off almost immediately flows into the lake.

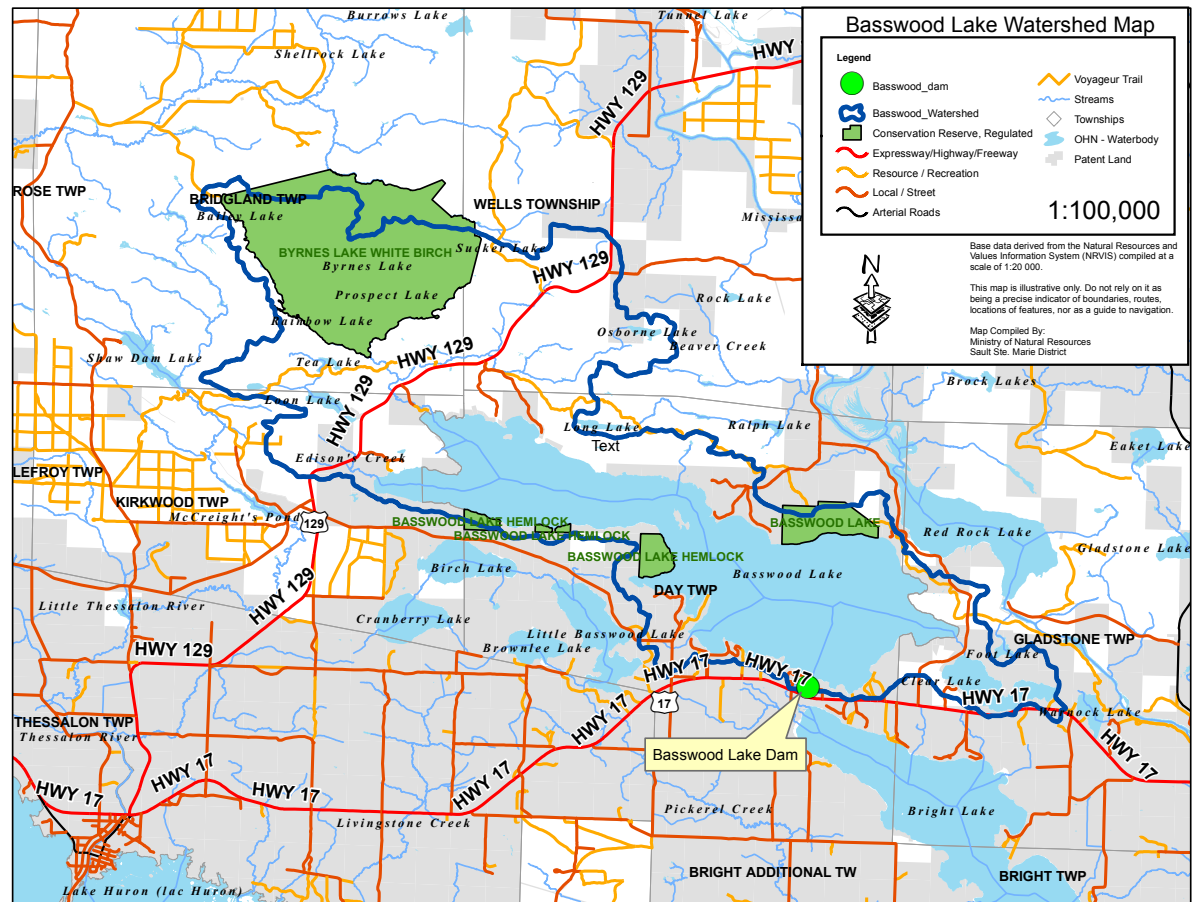
The replacement of the Big Basswood Lake dam is in process although presently there is not a timeline for this project. The Dam Safety Assessment has been completed. When the dam replacement is approved the MNRF is expecting up to 3 years notice. There will be an Environmental Assessment done which will include public comment.

This information illustrates just how complex and dynamic water is. Managing lake levels, just one aspect of water management, is dependent on numerous factors and changing conditions. Thank you to the MNRF for providing the opportunity to meet and inform lake residents about dam operating procedures.

Update – Summer 2019 ... a number of residents have contacted the lake association with a concern about how low the lake level was this July in spite of the fact that Bright Lake and the Mississagi River continue to be at very high levels after our excessive snowfall levels this winter. The MNRF has been contacted and explains that the water levels have been reduced slightly (1 inch below the wing wall at this writing) to allow for an engineering inspection of the wing wall which is scheduled in the next 2 weeks. We will continue to be in touch with the MNRF to understand the results of this inspections and next steps in the repair and/or replacement of the dam.

Dam Operating Plan (cont'd))

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Big Basswood Watershed Map



Lake Level Satellite Monitoring Device - installed by MNRF on Harris Creek Dam this year to enable real time monitoring of Big Basswood lake levels



Mark Your Calendars

2019 Annual General Meeting

July 21st, 2019

Sowerby Hall

10AM - 12PM

Special Presentation by Preston Lennox MNRF
on Broad Scale Fish Monitoring

Sweet Sowerby Social

We will once again this year be holding a seperate social event/speaker night.

This year we will be partnering with the **Sowerby Hall and Heritage Board** to hold two hitorical speakers nights - one in the last half of August and one in September. Please stay tuned for eaxact dates.

History Update

As reported during the last couple of AGMs, the history of Big Basswood Lake continues to be a major focus for the lake association. To further this effort, last year's Sweet Sowerby Social topics were the history and story behind the move/rebuild of the Cordukes-Weber Twelve-Sided Barn in Sowerby and the story of tourism in the Eastern end of Basswood Lake.

We continue to engage with the Sowerby Hall and Heritage Society as they continue their efforts to document and promote the fascinating history of Algoma, Huron Shores and Big Basswood Lake. In fact, we have already agreed to partner with them on the next two Heritage evenings – one later in August and one in September – dates and times to be announced.

Our association historian, Nancy Bakemeier will have more of an update at the AGM but we encourage you to get her any information of interest that you may have on the history of our lake.

Message From Henk Van Delft - Captain and Fire Prevention Officer for Huron Shores Fire Services

Campfires for cooking or for heat do not need a fire permit. ANY other outdoor burning requires a "Burning Permit " which can be obtained at the Municipal office for \$5.

Also please mention that every house or cottage or camper need a working smoke alarm on every level. Most homes need a C.O detector on every level that has sleeping quarters. The fire Department is going to homes July 17 and August 21 from 6:30pm until 8:30pm (not all can be checked at that time). If you have any questions or would like a home inspection please call the office at (705)843-2033.





2019 Annual General Meeting

Once again, the BBLA board attended the FOCA spring meeting and annual general meeting. The meeting was held this year at the Boulevard Club in Toronto on March 3rd.

Main topics for discussion at this very informative meeting included:

- the FOCA Annual General Meeting of members (*NOTE: Official Notice of business to be conducted was emailed to the Executive representatives of all member Associations on January 30, 2019. If you believe you should have received Notice, but did not, please [contact the office.](#)*)
- presentation of the FOCA 2018 Year in Review, Strategic Plan update and 2019 priorities
- presentation of the [FOCA Achievement Award](#) to a member Association
- feature speaker Dave Meslin, “Connecting with your council – and why” about making plans for municipal engagement, and creative ways to do it (see more, below)
- Boating: Association “pinch-points” around noise, safety, wake and boating etiquette – with speakers from the OPP and Safe Quiet Lakes
- Cottage Succession: planning tips from estate lawyer Peter Lillico
- Association governance/organizational planning session

A reminder to all of our members that your membership fee for the Big Basswood Lake Association automatically includes a membership in FOCA. This enables discount on insurance and a host of other products as outlined on the website.

It also allows you access to all of the information found on the FOCA website at:

www.foca.on.ca



Thessalon First Nations Boundary Land Claim

As discussed at our 2018 AGM last year and documented in our last newsletter, the Thessalon First Nation has filed a boundary land claim with the federal and provincial governments. In this land claim, Thessalon First Nation asserts that there was a miscommunication in the drawing of the boundaries during the negotiation and signing of the Robinson Huron Treaty of 1850 and that the boundaries of the reserve should have been expressed in leagues (3 miles) instead of miles so that the total area covered in the treaty was one ninth of the area ie. The asserted area for the new boundaries encompasses Big Basswood Lake in its entirety. Note that just because this falls within the asserted area, the actual candidate lands for transfer to the First Nations will be determined during the negotiation.

The government has agreed to negotiate this claim. The negotiation is being led by Mark Richard of the Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR). Mark has continues to update status/progress with the Basswood Lake Association as we are important stakeholders.

We continue to be assured that no private properties or access to private properties will be impacted by the settlement.

We were in contact with Mark via email on June 19th and understand from him that the negotiations should still be characterized as in there early stages and that there is no further information to share at this time. Please look at the recent SooToday article reference below which talks about the recent Garden River ratification vote – after x years of negotiation.

We would draw your attention to these important documents for your review:

1. Fact Sheet #1 – Published by Ontario MIRR dated September, 2017
2. Pamphlet Published by Thessalon First Nations in November, 2017
3. Article Published in the Sentinel Newspaper June 30, 2017 Edition on Tom Isaacs presentation
4. Minutes of Huron Shores June 30, 2018 Council Meeting accessible from their web site
5. Soo Today article on Garden River negotiation: <https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/steps-taken-to-right-170-year-old-wrong-says-garden-river-chief-1552903>

Submitted by Larry Allcorn

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