

BBLA Newsletter

Spring 2020



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Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the Big Basswood Lake Association's Spring 2020 newsletter.

As we kick off the summer here on Basswood, this is shaping up to be a summer like no other. We sincerely hope that all of our members and their families are safe and well

The lake is certainly a quieter place at the start of this season. I know that our American friends are anxious for news on the reopening of the Canadian-US border and we Canadians are anxious for news on your ability to return. The latest milestone announced by the federal government for making a decision on the reopening is July 21st and we are certainly hearing mixed messages on what will be announced that day. We hope it will be positive.

In the meantime, the work of the lake association has been continuing virtually over the winter. We held a Zoom board meeting on June 22 in which we discussed a number of topics that will be important to our members as we proceed with some degree of normalcy in this pandemic year. Many of the topics will be covered in greater detail in the articles within this newsletter, but some highlights include:

We are still planning to have the AGM this year but have delayed it from the original date of July 19th to August 16th. The hope in delaying is that the borders may open back up by then and our American friends would be able to attend. We are planning to review status on the next milestone date of July 21st to determine if we will hold an outdoor AGM in August. If that's not possible, we will be setting up a virtual Zoom meeting and going ahead with an online gathering.

Related to this, we are working on alternatives to sign up members on line. Joanne Falk, our membership chairman, has outlined the alternatives in her article in this newsletter. Membership last year was actually down from the previous year which was a bit of a surprise to the board given all of the initiatives that we are involved in for the benefit of all of the residents on the lake. We strongly encourage you to sign up on line and talk to your neighbor to get them to sign up as well.

Because of the pandemic, the Ontario Trillium Fund grant that we secured last year has been extended to the end of this year. We were somewhat disappointed with the overall participation last year as this was a free service that greatly benefits the health of our lake. We are going to be letting everybody know about a second pass at this in late July and August so please consider booking an inspection if you haven't had it done already.

We continue to dialogue with the MNRF about the ongoing water levels and the tricky balance between retaining water levels in Basswood Lake and releasing sufficient water into Bright Lake to maintain its health. See the information contained in this newsletter about that ongoing process.

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Membership Matters

While the summer season is upon us, there's certainly a different feeling at the lake this year. We miss our lake association members who are unable to be here due to travel restrictions, and we look forward to the time when everyone can return.

Despite the circumstances surrounding the pandemic, we are determined to continue our work maintaining lake stewardship, collecting anecdotes on area history to add to our growing collection, and ensuring ongoing education, which, as you know, are significant benefits of membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association.

In order to fulfill these tasks, and keep everyone informed, we'd like to ask for your assistance through renewal of your membership for 2020 and beyond. Please encourage your neighbours to join as well. Last year, we had 113 members and we would love to grow that number to 130 or more. As a reminder, another of the benefits of membership is a savings on your cottage insurance through FOCA – the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

Please help as we work together to protect our lake environment and support the community that has continued to grow over many generations of cottagers.

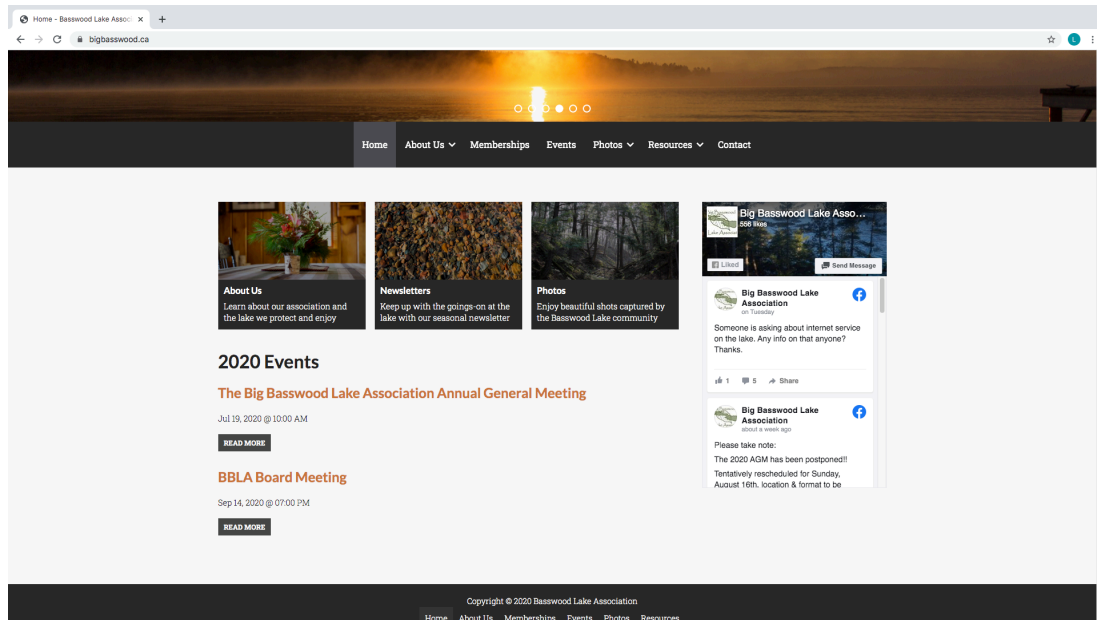
Membership is still only \$25 per year, and you can join for multiple years at one time. We have several methods of renewal to meet your varying needs:

- Use Paypal on our fabulous, newly re-designed website, bigbasswood.ca/memberships
- Send a cheque to Big Basswood Lake Association, P.O. Box 377
Thessalon, ON P0R 1L0
- E-transfer from a Canadian bank account to our treasurer, Cynthia Wood, at cince48@gmail.com
- Leave a cheque or cash in our drop box at the Round Barn farmers' market any Saturday from July 4 – September 5, 2020

We're grateful for your ongoing support, and look forward to seeing you soon. Stay safe.

- submitted by Joanne Falk

Revised Web Site



As we informed you in the winter edition of the newsletter, the Board of the Big Basswood Lake Association has taken steps to provide a new and improved upgrade to our website. As promised, we have launched our new website with an updated and new look, with hopes of attracting interest in our site, and increase membership interaction. Please take some time to navigate through the many informative and interesting areas of the site. Since our membership fees are a very important aspect of serving our members and other stakeholders in our beautiful lake, we hope that you will make use of the new and easy membership payment option. The Board also invites interested local businesses to advertise on our website. The only requirement for this service is payment of the Associate Membership fee of \$25.00. Note that this would be an additional fee for those who are members and have a business or service to advertise. Once the fee is paid, please send a request to Joanne Falk to have your business added to our website.

We would like to thank Radiant and in particular, Andrew VanderPloeg, for the excellent job on the BBLA website redesign.

Spencer Kellum has volunteered to take over as our webmaster, maintaining the ongoing content of the website. We are formalizing the ongoing process for maintaining the web site but if you have any suggested changes/additions, please submit them to the association email at:

cleanwater@bigbasswood.ca

Submitted by Phil Conley

Chairman's Letter ... continued from page 1

We also continue to dialogue with Huron Shores about the changes this year to the roads donation programs. Although private road maintenance is not specifically dealt with by the association, we have lent our voice to the efforts of the Huron Shores Private Roads association as we feel that this is an important issue for our members and we want to continue to be supportive.

And lastly we are very concerned about the vandalism that happened earlier this year. Please see the picture later in this newsletter of the graffiti that was painted earlier this spring on the rock face in the 40s. We've heard nothing but consternation from every member of our community about why someone would want to deface our beautiful lake in this way. If you know anything about this incident, please let us know right away. In the meantime, we are working with the MNR, Huron Shores and some members who have volunteered to try and remove the painting. We also remind all of our residents that unoccupied cottages are private property and their shorelines should not be used while owners are absent.

In the meantime, we will continue our work on your behalf this summer. If there is any further information you need or any help we can provide to those residents who cannot get to the lake in person, please let us know.

Stay safe Larry

Chairman

AGM and Sweet Sowerby Social Important Notice

The board met in June and discussed a number of items related to the Covid-19 pandemic emergency.

Most importantly, the date for the annual AGM has been deferred. The original date of July 19th has been postponed to alternative date of Aug 16th. Our plan is to reconvene as a board on or about July 21st which is the next milestone date for the provincial and federal governments to provide updated guidance on border re-opening and organized meeting guidelines. Based on our best information at that point, we will make a decision to proceed with a physical meeting on Aug 16th (probably outside) or to hold the AGM virtually via Zoom. We will send a note as soon as this decision has been made.

Normally we hold the Sweet Sowerby Social in August and have combined with the Sowerby Heritage Society over the last few years to hold some interesting and enjoyable events in August and early fall. Unfortunately, we are not expecting to be able to hold these events this year but will continue to monitor the situation in case this changes.

Mark These Dates for 2020

Spring Board Meeting	June 22nd, 2020
Annual General Meeting	Aug 16th, 2020 (note new date)
Sweet Sowerby Social	Postponed Indefinitely for 2020
Fall Board Meeting	September 14th, 2020

Septic Inspection Program

A Summary of What We Learned Last Summer FROM THE Big Basswood Lake Septic Report

Last summer many of you took advantage of the chance to review your property's septic system and surface water drainage. These assessments were done by Tulloch Engineering, with funding from an Ontario Trillium Grant and administrative assistance from the Municipality of Huron Shores. One hundred and eighteen residential lake properties were inspected last summer.

The majority of properties inspected were seasonal residences (104). Well over half of the properties had a septic tank and field bed. Some properties had multiple types of systems (e.g. privy, holding tank). Over 40% of the systems were 30+ years old.** Sixteen minor deficiencies were noted (e.g. not enough setback, parking on a field bed, never been pumped out). These were discussed with the property owner on site. No major deficiencies were noted.

The full report can be found on our website.

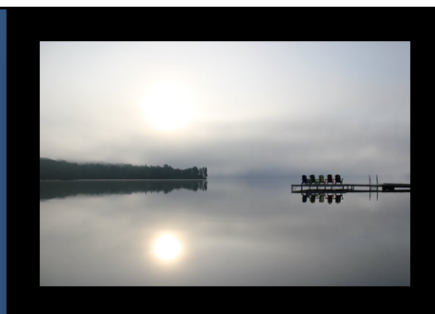
**Of note: Three quarters of major deficiencies were found in systems over 30 years old Regular pump-outs (3-5 years) can prevent system problems

(Source: Septic Re-Inspection Programs in Ontario-A Guide for Lake Associations, FOCA, 2019)

AND....We Can Learn More THIS Summer!!!

BBLA is pleased to announce, that beginning in mid-July, if you did not get an inspection done last summer the Grant has been extended through 2020!! An on-site assessment is an opportunity for property owners to ask questions and learn about the importance of sewage and surface water drainage in maintaining Big Basswood Lake's pristine water.

Call the Municipality at 705-843-2033 to arrange for an on-site visit. It's not too late!



Vandalism Incident on Big Basswood Lake

On May 27th, a disturbing act of vandalism was reported to me by Matt Aho. He had spotted graffiti that had been spray painted on a rock face in “the 40s” which is located on the South shoreline in the west arm of the lake.

This photograph does not do justice to the extent of the defacement but gives you some idea.

This incident was reported to the MNRF but there is no indication of who the perpetrators are so no follow up law enforcement is planned at this point. However, if any of our members see or hear anything that would help us discover the culprits, please let us know right away.

We originally contacted the MNRF, Tulloch Engineering and Huron Shores for advice on how to remove the paint. Huron Shores was able to find out about some non toxic cleaners that other jurisdictions have used.

We are pleased to be able to report that on the evening of July 5th, Matt and Ken Shaw were able to gain access to the spot with a power washer and have removed all signs to the graffiti without the need to use any detergents.

Many thanks to Matt Aho for diligent observation and reporting on this incident. And thanks to Ken Shaw and Matt for getting rid of the offensive material.

We would ask all lake residents to keep an eye out for any unusual activity.



Photo Contest 2019 - 2020

"Life at the Cottage"

This summer's pandemic is unfortunately responsible for the cancellation of the annual photo contest! But we are encouraging everyone to submit photos of Basswood adventures to the Big Basswood Lake Association at www.bigbasswood.ca and to the Face Book page at www.facebook.com/bigbasswood so that everyone can enjoy the view virtually.

2018
Winning
Entry



Ice On—Ice Out

This year, BBLA has enlisted the help of an ice observer. This is yet another way to monitor the lake. Thank you to Bobby Swain for volunteering to record this data.

ICE DATES:

Ice on: January 17, 2020

Ice Out: April 22, 2020



2020 Loon Survey

Citizen Scientists at Basswood Lake

The "Loon Team" has been collecting data on the Basswood Lake loon population for the past three summers. The lake has been divided into five



areas and team members have reported observations for the three summer months of June, July and August. The reports from those areas have been combined into one report for Basswood Lake submitted to Bird Studies Canada in September for analysis.

June data has typically reflected how many single loons and loon pairs have been seen.

So far this June we've received reports for one pair and one pair with 2 chicks. Chicks reported this early are not typical but may be a result of the warm weather this June.

Volunteers who would like to participate and report loons and loon activity on the lake are asked to report their sightings at least once for each summer month.

You can send your sightings to me, Leigh Olmstead,

dixie_olmstead@yahoo.com, and I will add that to the end of the summer report.

Also, check out www.birdscanada.org for specific information about loons, citizen science programs, and lots of other great information about birds in Canada.

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

Local Water Levels

As reported on our fall newsletter we received a copy of the dam operating plan from the MNRF for Basswood Lake last summer . This plan outlines the targeted operating levels for the lake that the MNRF normally works toward and how those levels were determined.

It outlines the following key considerations for determining the best target levels for the lake:

- A stablized lake level for Lake Trout fall spawning in October/November
- Adequate water being supplied to Bright Lake from the end of April to the first week of June to support Walleye spring time spawning
- Water levels stabilized for the summer by early June to support shore infrastructure for the seasonal and full time residents of Basswood Lake

Therefore, it has been determined that the following are optimum levels for the lake.

- Not more than 20 cm over wall – ideal is 5-10 cm over – March to June
- Water level with the top of the wing wall on July 1st with gates closed.
- Water dropping to 12 cm below the wing wall though natural evaporation by the end of the summer
- Water returning to 5 cm below the wing wall by first of December

Many residents will have noted that the water levels were far lower than this in late summer and early fall last year. MNRF informs that there were 2 reasons for this:

- (1) An unusually hot and dry summer with little rain
- (2) A temporary circumstance where the wing wall had a number of serious cracks in the concrete. The water levels were allowed to fall lower than normal so that the MNRF dam engineers had access to inspect the wing wall and then MNRF personnel were able to patch the cracks. MNRF emphasizes that this is a temporary fix only and that they are evaluating more permanant solution going forward.

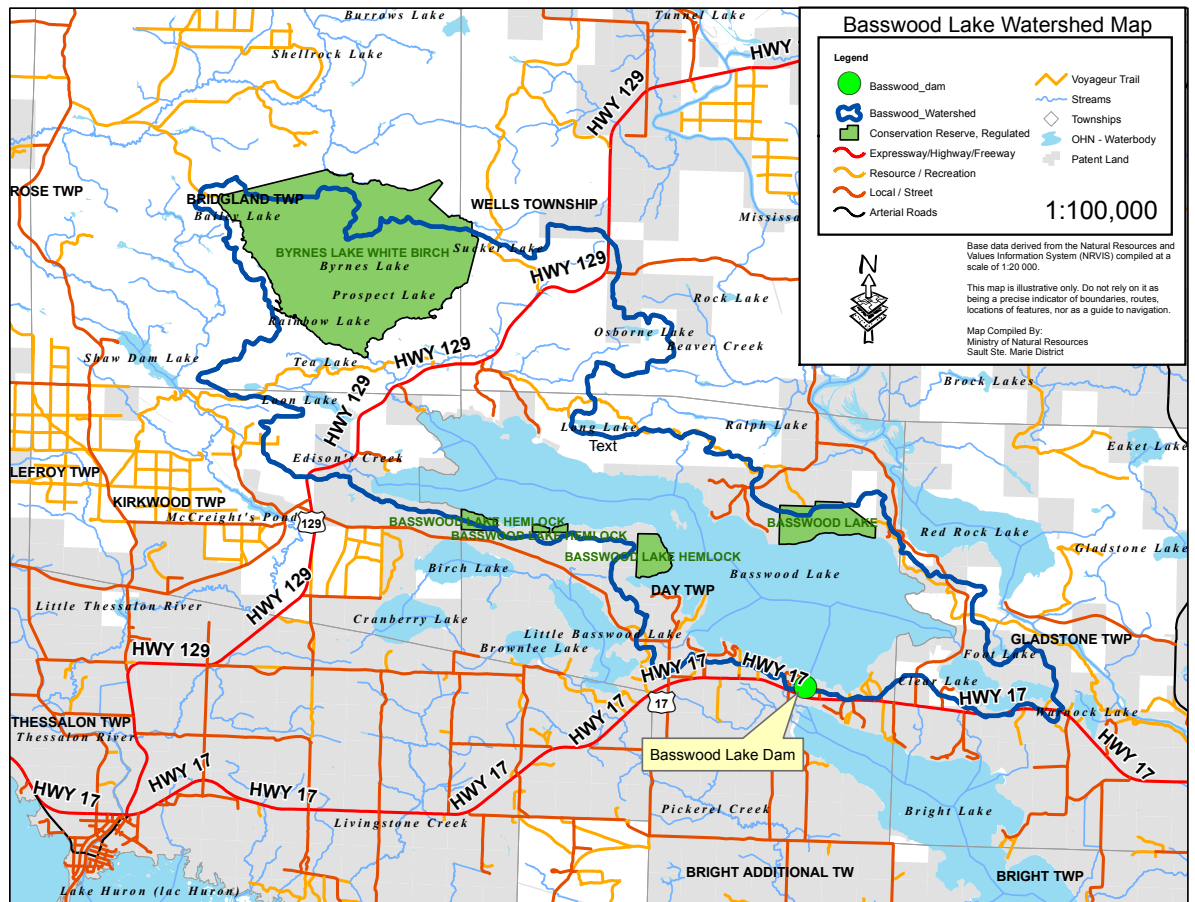


At the time of this writing (July, 2020), the water level is at or near the top of the wing wall which is approximately where it is prescribed to be by the dam operating plan. However, there was a lot of concern by Basswood property owners when the dam was left open for a long period in late April/early May allowing the Basswood levels to fall at a time when Bright was in flood – local roads in Dayton on the south side of the highway were under water at the time. Once the dam was closed down, the levels in Bright fell precipitously exposing the Walleye spawn and likely doing damage to the Bright Walleye stocks.

Although we seem to be at a good level now, the outlook is for another hot summer and therefore potentially lower levels again.

Local Water Levels (cont'd)

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Big Basswood Watershed Map

Mike Hunting Award for Lake Stewardship

As many of you know, in 2019 we announced the establishment of the Mike Hunting Award for Lake Stewardship. The board committed to developing the criteria and timing of the award and had planned to launch the program at this year's annual meeting.

With the current travel restrictions in place, and so many of our members unable to be at Basswood this summer, we are having to adapt some of our plans. We will be able to provide further information on the award at the AGM, but want to hold off launching the program until everyone can be here and participate in stewardship activities.

Changes to Huron Shores Road Donation Program

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For the past 18 years, volunteer road committees have partnered with the municipality to maintain and upgrade the many private roads that typically serve residential clusters on area lakes. By most any measure, the Roads Donation Program (RDP) has been a success. The RDP creates financial incentives for residents to voluntarily form committees, collect dues and agree on how best to improve the private roads that often started out as informal two-tracks.

Annual reporting insures accountability and the money spent benefits the local economy. The maintenance, safety and liability issues that inherently bedevil private roads are all addressed. Higher standards for private roads support property values which in turn generate tax revenue. Underlying it all are neighbors working with neighbors in partnership with the municipality, lightly knitting together community from diverse collections of individuals.

It is a win/win relationship, or so one would think. Unbeknownst to most of us, Huron Shores Council has been wrestling with the shifting sands of municipal finance and trimmed the RDP. Changes to the RDP approved by council in January 2020 retroactively limit the amount of money road committees can carry over from one year to the next and a flat starting rate was discontinued in favor of a flat minimum payment.

In reaction to these changes, four of us formed an ad hoc Huron Shores Private Roads Association (Bob Kellum- Clubhouse Road Association, Big Basswood Lake; David Ratz- Hopkins Bay Road Association, Clear Lake; Jim Falconer- Oak Ridge Trail Road Association, Big Basswood Lake, Larry Allcorn- Big Basswood Lake Association). We have polled the road committees that agreed to talk with us, researched council minutes and written two letters to council seeking a meeting to better understand the changes and the rationale behind them.

Meanwhile, the new regulations have gone into effect, resulting in road committees either having their 2020 funding reduced or denied altogether. However, at their May meeting Council did authorize the treasurer to make allowances for the cost of large projects and for liability insurance payments. To date we have not met with council, but they have finally agreed to meet with us. Cross your fingers and stay tuned.

Lake Partner Program



LAKE PARTNER SECCHI DATA				
Note: pencil works best on this waterproof paper				
BASSWOOD LAKE				
East basin, deep spot				
STN	246	Lake Max Depth (m) 73		Site Depth (m) 73
Watch the Secchi disk in the water. Is the colour:				
Green or Yellow <input type="checkbox"/>		CR <input type="checkbox"/>		Brown or Orange <input type="checkbox"/>
Date (dd-mm)	Time (24 hr)	Secchi Depth (m)	Secchi Disk Hits Bottom?	Comments (examples: water temperature, C, pollen, weather conditions)
01-June	18:40	9.5	NO	Clear + Calm
07-June	11:30	9.5		Clear + Calm
01-Aug	12:20	12.8		Clear + Calm
17-Aug	11:30	13.0		Clear + Calm
09-Sept	11:30	12.5		Partly cloudy, light chop
15-Oct	11:30	11.2		Calm, cloudy, heavy fog

Keep this sheet to record Secchi depths from May through October. Please mail this sheet to Dorset in November, using the provided postage paid envelope.
Email: lakepartner@ontario.ca

Every year, especially at the AGM, the water quality measurements from Big Basswood Lake are announced. The Lake Partner Program (LPP), established in 1996, has trained volunteers to submit water samples to measure water chemistry and take Secchi disk readings for water clarity. The program started in response to observed changes in water quality as lakes began to experience algal blooms. The LPP was started to develop a long term inland lake data set. The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations is a program partner. Information from this program has been useful for lake residents, lake associations, researchers and developing lakeshore capacity guidelines. The program relies on volunteer lake stewards and engages the lake community in promoting best stewardship practices.

Sampling is done on over 550 inland lakes, utilizing over 600 volunteers and involves 500 lake associations. BBLA volunteers began measuring Big Basswood's water clarity in 1999 and have done that every year since. In 2002 the LPP began phosphorus measurements. Water samples from Big Basswood for phosphorus have been submitted for almost every year. Calcium measurements began in 2008 and BBLA volunteers began submitting water samples for that in 2010.

This long term data will show lake changes over time. The effects of climate change, invasive species and impacts of land-use change can be measured, anticipated, mitigated and ideally prevented.

To find out more about the Lake Partner Program read the full report at:

https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/LPP-Long-Report_FINAL-REPORT.pdf

2019 Lake Partner Numbers

Lake Partner Program

Water Transparency:

11.4 meters

Phosphorous:

East basin- 3.4 TP1 (ug/L)

West basin- 3.6 TP1 (ug/L)
(late May reading)

Calcium:

East basin- 3.0

West basin-2.9

Note: The Lake Partner Program will not be accepting water samples due to COVID19 restrictions.

For more information and results go to: <https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program-sampling-assistance/>





A reminder to all of our members that a membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association includes a membership in the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association.

The association is currently some 500+ members strong representing over 50,000 waterfront land owners in the province. They provide us with a number of valuable services:

1. Ongoing participation in their lake partner program. We submit our lake test results for clarity and phosphorous levels to the lake partner data base every year. This continues to show Basswood as one of the clearest lakes in Ontario
2. I attended the fall meeting on Nov 16th in Toronto. The agenda included seminars on:
 - an update from FOCA on the current issue of electricity pricing and the proposal to eliminate the seasonal rate class
 - septic re-inspection programs: FOCA's new Report, and municipal case studies & best practices explained
 - status of the Lake Partner Program of water quality monitoring in an era of government funding cut-backs
 - short-term rentals: hear about municipal responses to the issue, including everything from licensing to by-law enforcement to education campaigns
 - rural road issues: highlights from the FOCA 2019 Roads Survey, including trends, concerns and success
3. The spring meeting was held on March 7th this year. Although representatives from BBLA were not able to attend this meeting, we have access to all of the video and collateral. Topics included:
 - a. FOCA AGM
 - b. Tale of Two Invasive Species
 - c. Celebrating Lake Partner Programs – comments by parliamentary assistant to Minister of Environment
 - d. Citizen Science and Lake Partner Program
 - e. Road salt impact on freshwater lakes
 - f. Associations in Action
4. Also, the FOCA web site contains a large amount of valuable information. Please visit the site at:

www.foca.on.ca

We encourage our members to take advantage of this powerful tool as there is a lot of excellent information and reference material found there.

Thessalon First Nations

Boundary Land Claim

Summary of the Boundary Land Claim negotiation basis as printed in previous newsletters ...

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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.

Status of the Negotiation ...

Our Ontario Ministry contact is Jane Thomas, taking over from the original negotiator Mark Richard. On September 26th, I met with Mark and his replacement, Jane Thomas in Toronto for introductions. This was followed up by a meeting with Jane, Mayor Georges Bilodeau and Clerk Debbie Tonelli in the Huron Shores municipal office on October 10th. Jane walked us through the various stages of any land claim negotiation and re-iterated that we were still in the very early stages of this negotiation. She also continued to assure us that no private properties or access to private properties will be impacted by the settlement.

In a June 19th email, Jane tells us that both parties have continued to negotiate virtually throughout the pandemic but that there is no further news to share publicly and no update on the timeline. She hopes to have an updated information circular published by the end of the summer.

Jane has offered to attend our AGM on August 16th to answer your questions.

Please see these important documents for your information:

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>

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Joanne Falk, Membership, 705-987-6225

Leigh Olmstead, Lake Stewardship, 651-271-6558

Nancy Bakemeier, History, 705-842-5385 (June - Sept)

