



# BBLA Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2018

## Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the Big Basswood Lake Association's winter newsletter.

We hope that you had a great summer on the lake. It was certainly one of the nicest summers in recent memory (we'll ignore the lousy fall for now) and we hope that you all were able to take maximum advantage of it.

The lake association enjoyed a very active summer season with a large number of interesting activities and initiatives. We have tried to document these activities thoroughly in this newsletter so we hope that you enjoy reading it and are pleased with our progress this year.

The board had several changes this year. Retiring from the board after long service were Mike Hunting, Ron Trivers and Dave Currie. Please join me in thanking them for their invaluable service to the lake association over the years. Replacing them at this year's annual general meeting were Phil Conley, Joanne Falk and Cynthia Wood. We welcome them to the board and thank them for volunteering their time. Cynthia has stepped up to replace Ron Trivers as the association treasurer and is already engaged with running our finances and keeping our books in excellent shape. 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.

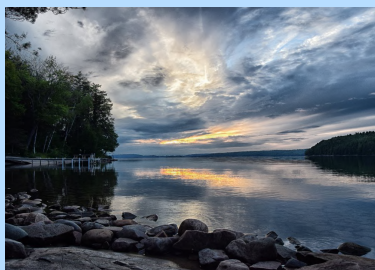
Our membership continues to grow and currently sits at 121 property owners, a new all time high. The board is very pleased with this progress, but as you will see in Cynthia Wood's article on page 2, we believe that we can still do better. As a result of your participation and encouragement, the association has taken on a lot of activities which all property owners on our lake benefit from. We would love to see a greater percentage of those property owners as members so that we have the leverage and resources to continue our efforts.

The biggest news that we have to share is the success of our application for a Trillium grant to fund septic inspections. As mentioned in the spring newsletter and announced at the July AGM, we had applied to the Ontario Trillium fund for a grant to help in the funding of the septic inspection program that had been mandated by our membership a number of years ago. For those of you not familiar with it, the Trillium Fund is an organization established by the Government of Ontario and funded by the proceeds from sales at the Ontario Lottery Corporation. **Much to our pleasure, we were informed in mid August that we had been awarded a grant of \$57,000 by the Trillium Fund!** Work is already under way to organize for a non invasive inspection program in the summer of 2019. Please see the article in this newsletter for further information on the program.

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# Membership Update:

## New Record Memberships for 2018

The old adage, success is achieved by work hard and perseverance, seems to have applied to this summer's membership drive. Your board of directors has worked diligently to increase our membership in hopes of surpassing the record 114 members reached in 2017. Efforts to recruit members included a booth manned by board members the Sowerby Farmers market each Saturday, an email drive initiated by Larry Allcorn, and the determination of Mike Hunting who relentlessly tracked down returning and new members. Congratulations, you did it! As a result of these efforts our membership has risen to a record high of 121! A special thanks goes out to all of you!

Although, on the surface this record number is impressive, when it is seen in the context of the actual percentage of cottagers on Basswood Lake, it still represents just slightly over 50% participation rate.

All of you who are members know the benefits of being part of the BBLA. So what if each one of us, the 50% or so who are members, reached out and brought just one friend or neighbour into the fold? We could possibly soon have close to 100% participation. So I leave you with an acronym as a reminder of why a membership in BBLA is so important.

**B**ecome involved with a great organization working to preserve and protect our lake.  
**A**lert yourself to the environmental, political, and social issues that affect life on Basswood.  
**S**ave 10% on your cottage insurance.  
**S**weet Sowerby Social events provide both the opportunity to socialize and educate.  
**W**ater and Wildlife need our care and protection  
**O**ptimize your summer making and renewing friendships.  
**O**nly \$25 – what a bargain!  
**D**efinitely the best thing you can do for yourself and your lake!

In a nutshell—Basswood needs us all! Thanks to everyone for your continued interest and support.

### Mark These Dates for 2019

Spring Board Meeting	June 24th, 2019
Annual General Meeting	July 21st, 2019
Sweet Sowerby Social	August 21st, 2019
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 (MNR) 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 MNR 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. We have contacted the MNR 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.



To those of us who fish on the lake and who at times return with no fish in the boat, we might have questions as to the actual impact of this method and the number of fish caught for testing. Consequently, we have invited the MNR to attend our Annual Big Basswood Lake Association meeting next summer (2019), to provide information about Broad Scale Fish Monitoring. We would like them to present information about the process and share the results of their research, and of course answer our questions.

In the Interim, to view netting results for individual lakes, please visit FISHONLINE at

[www.Ontario.ca/page/fishing](http://www.Ontario.ca/page/fishing)

and for contaminant sampling results, please visit:

[www.Ontario.ca/fishguide](http://www.Ontario.ca/fishguide)

Submitted by Phil Conley

## Chairman's Letter ... continued from page 1

There has been an increased interest in the history of our lake and the Huron Shores community, originally initiated when some descendants of the Canadian Camp Club contacted us in 2017. Please see Nancy Bakemeier's History write up on page 11 for an update a number of interesting history events that took place in late summer and early fall- the Sweet Sowerby Social and two history evenings put on by the Sowerby Hall and Heritage Society.

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. Also, please let your neighbours know and encourage them to join up as well. The board continues to work hard on the stewardship of our beautiful lake. We believe that this is an important time in the life of Big Basswood Lake and that we should all give our full attention to preserving its beauty for everyone's enjoyment. If you have any feedback or suggestions for us, please contact me or any member of the board directly - our contact information is included at the end of this newsletter.

Thank you for your support in 2018 and we look forward to seeing you in 2019.

Larry Allcorn - Chairman

# Septic Inspection Program

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The board has been mandated by the members of the BBLA to initiate a septic inspection program for properties on Big Basswood Lake. The lake association believes that this is an important initiative for the long term health/stewardship of our beautiful lake. In the fall of 2017 we notified Huron Shores council and Algoma Health of our intent to proceed in 2018.

As we announced at this year's AGM, with the support of Debbie Tonelli at Huron Shores, we prepared and submitted an application to the Ontario Trillium Fund for some \$50,000 of funding towards the cost of this project.

We are pleased to announce to the membership that our proposal for funding has been accepted and the Ontario Trillium Fund has awarded us a grant of \$57,000 to fund this project. The lake association will also be contributing some \$4,000 left over from the tennis club generous donation to this important project.

Work has already begun on the project. We will be engaging Tulloch Engineering to perform the inspections. Tulloch was selected after a review of 2 competing bids because of their experience and local knowledge. In addition, we have contracted with a local, experienced resource to work in the Huron Shores office to catalogue all properties on the lake and to record any information available on existing wastewater disposal systems on each property. This co-ordinator will work with Tulloch to begin scheduling appointments for each property's inspection in the spring of 2019. No property will be inspected without an appointment. The intent is to complete all inspections by late summer/early fall 2019. Tulloch will produce a report for us in the fall of 2019.

Ideally, an inspection will take place while the property/septic system is in use. For seasonal residences, this would imply that the inspection should take place during the busy summer months.

Each inspection will consist

of the Tulloch engineer reviewing the location, specifications and any other information that is known about the existing septic system including the last pump out date. In addition, a visual inspection would determine if any effluent is visible on the surface. No invasive inspections involving digging will take place in this initial round of inspection. If problems are suspected, the property owner and Algoma Health would be notified for follow up inspection and remediation.

If the property does not have a septic system, then the existing waste disposal system will be documented and a comment may be included in the report as to whether the disposal conforms with current best practices/codes.

Together with Huron Shores and Algoma Public Health, the intent is to institute ongoing, long term education of septic best practices.

We have one of the most beautiful lakes in Ontario. Let's all work together to keep it that way!

# Photo Contest 2018

## *Seasons at Big Basswood Lake*

Judging took place in June as the selected judges were given all of the pictures submitted to the contest in photo form. The panel consisted of Sheila Currie a well known artist and Big Basswood resident. Sheri Bayles Minardi a local photographer from St. Joseph Island. Adriano Di Cerbo, a photography teacher and artist at St. Mary's College in Sault Ste. Marie, as well as, Joanne Falk a recently relocated resident to our lake. The panel applied the criteria to the pictures submitted and brought their top ten pictures to a meeting held at the Carolyn Beach Restaurant in Thessalon.

We looked at how many of the pictures had been selected by all judges. The panel was asked to select their top five pictures and then to remove two. This was followed by a discussion on the strengths and focal points in each of the final pictures chosen by the panel. After the discussion judges were asked to rate the pictures first, second and third where a point system of 5 points for a

first picture was applied, 3 points for a second picture and 1 point for a third picture. A clear winner emerged with a second and third place also being firmly established.

The awards were presented at the Annual Big Basswood meeting in July. Kelly O'Riordan Cleary was our first place winner with a picture of the shores at Melwel on the eastern shore of Big Basswood. She could not attend the meeting so she had Sheila and Dave Currie read a poignant letter accepting the award on her behalf. She dedicated her win to the memory of her father Micheal O'Riordan who had supported her initial interest in photography. Thank you Dave Currie for framing her winning picture in time for the annual meeting and for ensuring she received the picture at a family dinner at a later date. Jim Cavanagh whose picture was a Misty Morning in Phillips Bay placed second. His photo proved to be equally picturesque right side up and upside down. He was able to

attend the awards ceremony and luckily correct the image of his picture as displayed in the group of calendar photos at the front of the room. Jim Falconer placed third with his End of Day photograph and he also provided a number of pictures which all qualified for this year's calendar. He was able to capture Big Basswood in all its seasons. The crowd were very appreciative of all of the pictures submitted and the quality of pictures to be utilized in this year's calendar. Many expressed interest in submitting their photographs to future contests. Congratulations to all those who managed to submit photos to the contest and broaden everyone's view of our enchanting lake!! You have inspired others to engage in this very worthwhile endeavour of sharing your gifts and talents to enrich everyone's lake experiences.

Thank you for your continued support of the artists and their photography craft. Calendars are available



# Photo Contest 2018

## *Winning Entries*

### **First Place :**



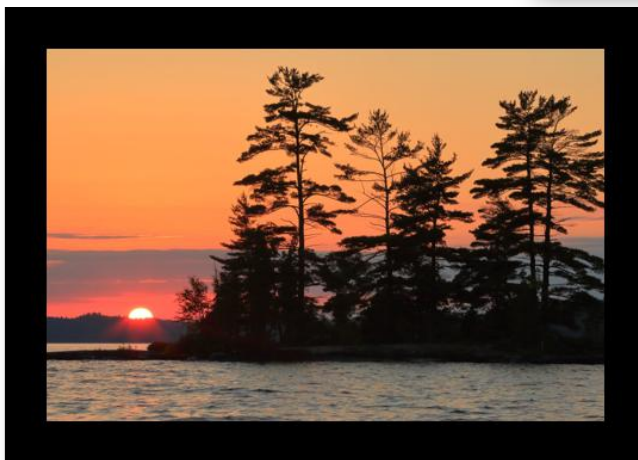
**Kelly O'Riordan Cleary**  
**The Shores of Melwel**

### **Second Place:**



**Jim Cavanagh**  
**Misty Morning Philips Bay**

### **Third Place**



**Jim Falconer**  
**End Of Day Big Island**

## Seasons on Big Basswood Lake 2019 Photo Calendar



Limited Quantity Still Available

\$15.00

Contact any Board Member or email:  
[cleanwater@bigbasswood.ca](mailto:cleanwater@bigbasswood.ca)

# Makes a Great Christmas Gift!

# 2018 Loon Survey Report

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Speaking of loons, 2018 marked the second year of BBLA participation in the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey. You might have noticed and discussed this at our table on Saturdays at the Sowerby farmers market.

Bird Studies Canada is particularly interested in nesting activity. One nest with two eggs was spotted on the lake. Two chicks were hatched of which one managed to survive. Bird Studies Canada questions somewhat the suitability of BBL for loons (especially reproduction) categorizing it as an oligotrophic lake (deep, cold, nutrient poor, clear water, sparse vegetation, preponderance of rock shoreline, etc).

By this time of the year most of Ontario's official birds, common loons, have taken their leave of the Algoma region and headed south to warmer waters along the Atlantic coast.

Never the less, the occasional loon can be found in the district during the winter months along the St Mary's River in the Sault. This information is but one small example of the treasure trove of bird sighting data that can be found on the website [www.ebird.org/canada](http://www.ebird.org/canada). Give it a look some cold winter day.

The Loon Survey is a program of Bird Studies Canada that has, for more than 30 years, collected data on more than 4,500 Canadian lakes. Big Basswood loon observations, the presence of loon nests, eggs in nests, and hatched chicks reported by Association volunteers were summarized for the months of May, June, July, and August and submitted to Bird Studies Canada.

With a similar level of effort by our volunteers, results for this year were about the same as 2017.

BBLA intends to continue with the survey in the coming year.

Thanks to all who contributed to this effort including Maeve Coccimiglio, Jill Glaser, Mike Hunting, Marilyn Kellum, Lynda Trivers, Nancy Bakemeier, and Dixie Olmstead.

For more information contact Dixie Olmstead



# Dam Operating Plan



Last summer 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 with the ideal level being to the top of the "wing wall" on the Harris Creek dam. 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 MNRF goal for dam operations is to keep levels within a set range for each season. Most MNRF dams were originally managed by logging companies. The MNRF goals for dam management are to protect the natural aquatic environment and to promote social uses and tourism on the lake. The

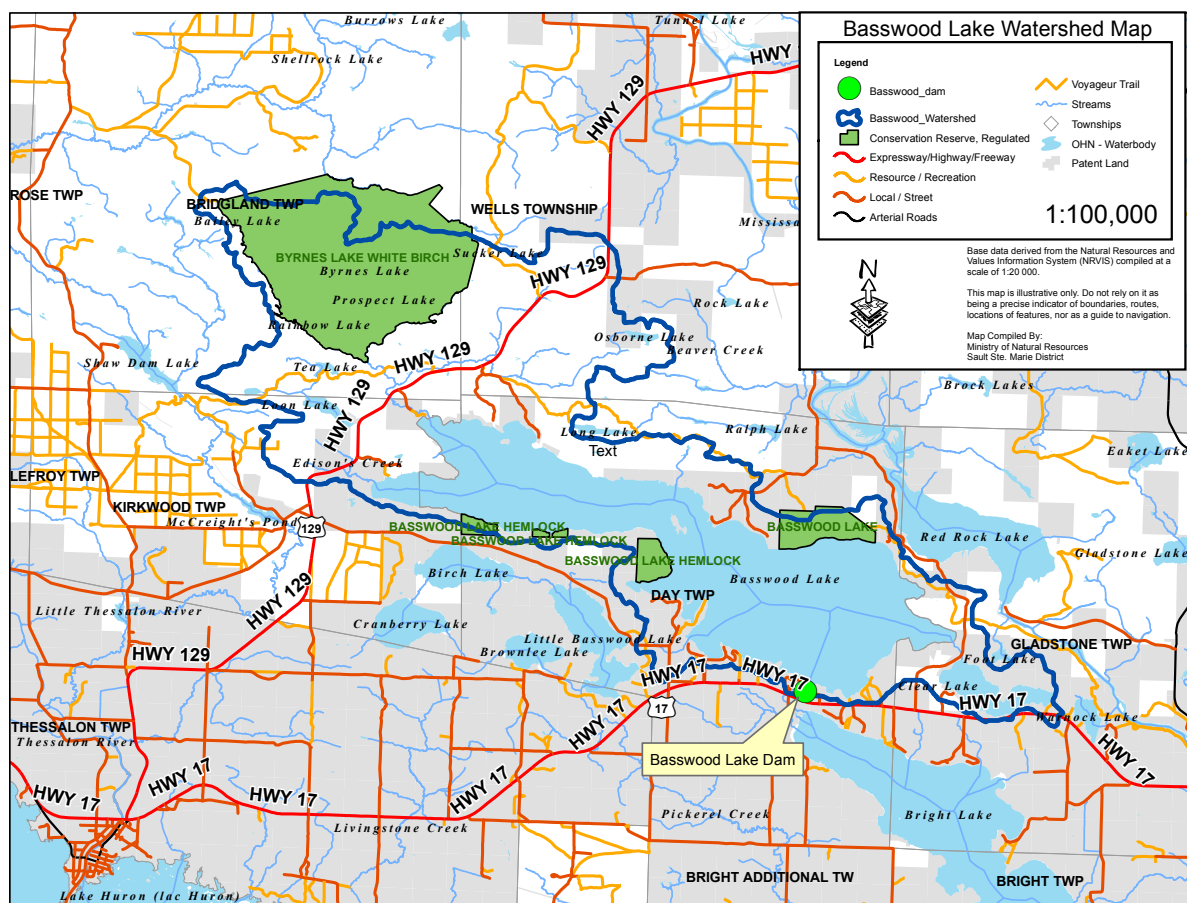
low level is set to protect fish spawning and aquatic habitat and the high level is set to protect shoreline habitat and existing shoreline structures. For more complete and detailed information about dam operations please see the article "Complete Dams 101" on our website.

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.

# 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

# 2018 Annual General Meeting

Our annual general meeting was held on Sunday morning, July 15th at the Sowerby Hall. As with other years, this meeting was focused on business matters including the election of 3 new board members. The agenda included:

- Introductions and Agenda Review
- Committee Reports (Minutes, Treasurer, Membership)
- Lake Stewardship
- History
- FOCA Update
- Septic Tabs/Report on Septic Inspection Program
- MNRF Activities (Water Level, Dam, Tent Canterpillars, Fish Monitoring)
- Update on Boundary Land Claim
- Loon Survey
- Photo Contest Wrap Up (Please see page 6 for a look at the winners)

## History



### Sweet Sowerby Social

2018 Sweet Sowerby Social was held in the Cordukes-Weber Twelve-Sided Barn in Sowerby. Will Samis talked about the history of round structures in general and how

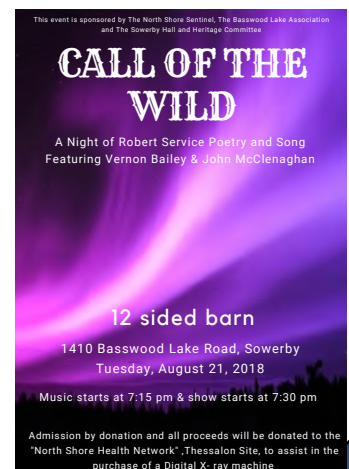
the Cordukes barn and the Round Barn on Brownlee Road are related. Will spoke about how the community was strengthened by working together to save this nationally important structure and turning it into a valued and well used gathering place for weddings, music, and community assemblies.

For the second half of the evening, Bob Kellum spoke about the history of tourism on Eastern Big Basswood Lake, encompassing the Canadian Camp Club (now the Kellum property), Indian Point (now the Brown family cottage), Indiana Beach (now the Van Hoof trailer park), and Melwel Lodge.

Throughout the summer, the BBLA history committee scanned old photos and collected several oral histories. The Association plans to assemble timelines, make old photos available in digital form, and continue to build on previous work to continue to collect and preserve these materials for future generations. Contact: Nancy Bakemeier, nbakemeier@gmail.com

### Huron Shores History Evenings

The Sowerby Hall and Heritage Society is organizing a series of history events for the community of Huron Shores. To date, 2 events have been held - "Call of the Wild" - a night of Robert Service Poetry by Vernon Bailey (that was attended by over 200 residents) and the Schooner Nancy from the War of 1812 presented by Ron Burgess - also very well attended. The BBLA is pleased to co-sponsor these events along with the North Shore Sentinel. Will Sanis and Dave Ratz are planning a number of further events - stay tuned for announcement of dates, times and speakers.



# Caterpillars and Flies

This past summer, the Algoma region has seen an infestation of Forest Tent Caterpillars and Fleishy (Friendly Files). The southern end of Big Basswood and areas around Bright Lake were particularly hard hit by this infestation which has actually been ongoing for several years now but seems to have peaked this spring and summer.

The Forest Tent Caterpillars were observed in the spring of 2018 (late May/June). They were seen in Oak and Maple bushes as well as on the side of buildings either falling off the branches or hanging by spider web like skeins. They fed on the leaf foliage and resulted in over 50% defoliation of any bush that they had infested. If you observed a distant stand of bush in early summer that looked brown - not green, as if all of the leaves had fallen in the late fall - that was the result of tent caterpillars.

These caterpillars had died off and went into their pupae (eggs) state towards the end of June.

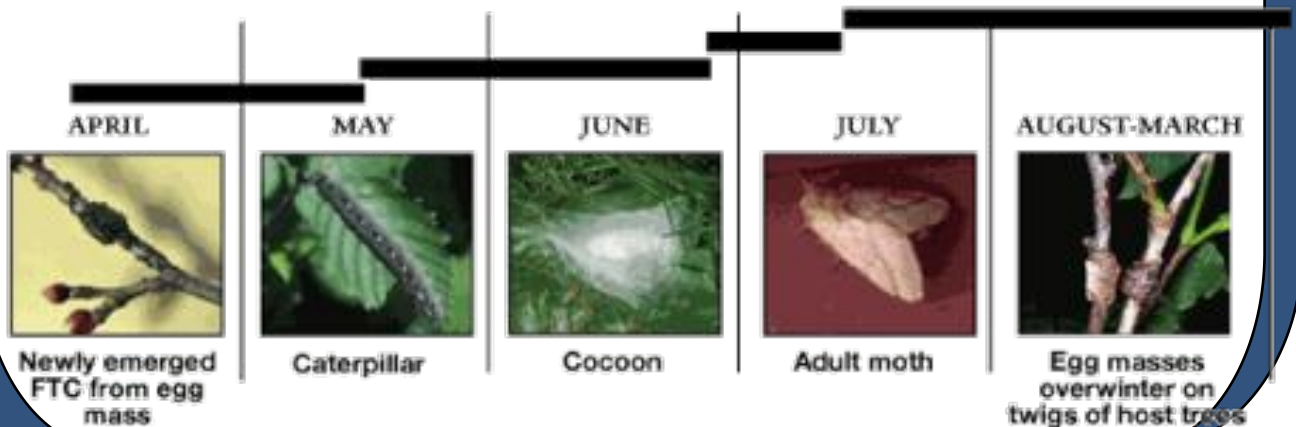
Most bushes "reflushed" during July meaning that their leaves had regrown - but only partially - the new leaves were not very robust and partially resulted in this year's disappointing fall colors display.

The caterpillars were replaced in June and July by their natural predator the fleishy fly, also known as friendly flies. These flies are so named because they are attracted to humans but do not bite. For anyone that tried to sit on their decks during June and July, you will be more than familiar with these pesky insects. The good news is that they are a natural predator of the Forest Tent Caterpillar and while they were bugging you, they were also feeding on eggs of the caterpillar.

As far as we can tell, it looks as if the caterpillar cycle has now been completed. Fall observations by a few of the local maple syrup producers (for whom this was a large issue) don't observe any more egg bundles in the bush. However, we're told that the fly's cycle follows the caterpillars cycle by about a year. The prediction, therefore, is no caterpillars in the spring of 2019 but flies again for 1 more summer.

Thanks to Peggy Wilson (Partner Specialist) and Mike Francis (Forest Health Technical Specialist) at the MNR who supplied us with information throughout the summer. Please visit this website for an excellent description of the caterpillar issue.:

<https://www.ontario.ca/document/forest-tent-caterpillar>







## 2018 Fall Seminar for Lake Associations

### COTTAGE COUNTRY: What's Coming & How to Prepare for it

On behalf of the membership, Larry Allcorn attended the FOCA fall meeting held in Toronto on Saturday, October 27th, 2018. FOCA hosts two meetings each year, the spring AGM and a fall meeting which always includes interesting speakers and a good opportunity for discussion with other FOCA members from across the province.

120 people attended this fall's seminar. Agenda items included:

**Welcome and FOCA Updates** - FOCA President, Marlin Horst

**Rain, wind & fire: Reducing risk and learning from experience in Ontario's cottage country** - Dan Sandink, Director of Research with the Canadian Institute of Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR).

**Emergency Preparedness & Tips for Resilient Waterfront Communities** - FOCA Vice President, Daryle Moffatt

**Lake Partner Program (LPP)** Emily Shapiera

**Septic Maintenance Programs**. Anne Egan, President of the Ontario Onsite Wastewater Association (OOWA)

**Supporting Lake Associations**. - FOCA

More information and the slide decks for each of these presentations can be found on the FOCA web site [www.foca.on.ca](http://www.foca.on.ca) or by emailing Larry for more information



A reminder that a membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association automatically includes a membership in FOCA with benefits including:

- . Access to "CottageFirst" Insurance
- . Discount on Cottage Life Magazine
- . Discount on Coleman Products
- . Discount on Dock in a Box Products
- . The FOCA Lake Stewards Newsletter
- . Access to all FOCA collateral on website

Please visit the FOCA website at:

[www.foca.on.ca](http://www.foca.on.ca)



## Thessalon First Nations Boundary Land Claim

As discussed at our 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 agreed to discuss status/progress with the Basswood Lake Association as we are important stakeholders. I met with Mark in person in Toronto on Tuesday, November 14th to discuss the negotiation.

Although the negotiations are still bound by a strict confidentiality agreement, Mark did his best to answer my questions. Following are some points noted from the conversation:

- (1) To date, the changes in the provincial government have not changed the process. The negotiation is proceeding as it was before the election.
- (2) The negotiation continues to be in it's very early stages. It sounded to me as if they are

still at the initial stage of establishing ground rules/scope for the negotiation.

- (3) At the appropriate time in the negotiation a consultation process will take place with the stakeholders in Huron Shores. This negotiation process is mandated and defined by law and will be designed so that all input from the stakeholders is understood and incorporated into the negotiation wherever possible.
- (4) Mark re-iterated that he understands how important hunting, fishing and recreation on the lake is to the property owners of Basswood and that would continue to be one of his main objectives along with protecting business interests in Huron Shores.

# Boundary Land Claim

.... cont'd from page 14

There have been 2 meetings that have taken place on the land claim over the summer.

On June 8th, Tom Isaacs spoke to a large group of local residents at the Odd Fellows Hall in Thessalon. This was attended by Larry Allcorn on behalf of the board. Mr Isaacs is an attorney who specializes in aboriginal law who consults with multiple governments and corporations who are involved in various land claims across the country. Although not familiar with the details of this specific negotiation (since it is being conducted under a strict confidentiality agreement), he was able to give us a good history of the changes in the law that have led to these type of negotiations. He had reviewed the details of fact sheet number 1 (see below) with Mark Richard and was able to reassure us that there was nothing unusual in that document. In particular he re-iterated

that there was never any expropriation of private lands and that access to private lands was always protected in these negotiations.

Mark Richard and colleagues addressed the Huron Shores council directly on the history and status of the negotiation. This council meeting had been re-located to the Iron Bridge arena because of great public interest. This meeting was attended by multiple BBLA board members on behalf of the association. Because the negotiation is in it's early stages and not in public consultation yet, the meeting was tightly controlled. Mark and his colleagues addressed their comments to the councilors and fielded both pre pared questions and ad hoc questions directly from the councilors only. The public was not able to pose questions during the council meeting, only observe. However, Mr. Richard was good

enough to stay for a considerable time after the meeting to answer the questions that he could from the public attendees.

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

1. FactSheet#1  
– Published by Ontario MIRR dated September, 2017 and published in our fall newsletter
2. Circular published by Thessalon First Nations in November, 2017
3. Article Published in the Sentinel Newspaper June 30, 2017 edition on Tom Isaacs presentation
4. Article published in the Sentinel on June 27, 2018 documenting the 20 pre-prepared questions that the councilors asked of Mr. Richard, Ontario Negotiator

Submitted by Larry Allcorn

## DIRECTORS OF BBLA

**Larry Allcorn, Chairman, 416-407-2158**

[lallcorn@bell.net](mailto:lallcorn@bell.net)

**Maeve Coccimiglio, Vice Chairman, 705-542-4367**

[mmcoccimiglio@gmail.com](mailto:mmcoccimiglio@gmail.com)

**Cynthia Wood, Treasurer, 705-946-0623**

[cince48@gmail.com](mailto:cince48@gmail.com)

**Marilyn Kellum, Secretary and Lake Stewardship, 734-717-1290**

[mkellum@umich.edu](mailto:mkellum@umich.edu)

**Joanne Falk, 705-987-6225**

[Joanne.Falk@gmail.com](mailto:Joanne.Falk@gmail.com)

**Dixie Olmstead, Lake Stewardship, 651-271-6558**

[dixie\\_olmstead@yahoo.com](mailto:dixie_olmstead@yahoo.com)

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

[nbakemeier@frontiernet.net](mailto:nbakemeier@frontiernet.net)

**Phil Conley, 519-670-4551**

[pcconley@rogers.com](mailto:pcconley@rogers.com)

