

# BBLA Newsletter

Winter 2019



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## Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the Big Basswood Lake Association's Winter 2019 newsletter.

We hope that you had a good summer and enjoyed the beautiful weather to the fullest.

The lake association had another active summer season. Every year it seems that there are more things going on around the lake. We have reviewed these activities for you thoroughly in this newsletter. We hope that you enjoy reading it and are pleased with our progress this year.

Our membership stayed about flat this year with just about half of the property owners represented. As we have talked about before, although we are happy with the loyal participation of our current members, we would still like to see significant growth. We believe that we are doing a good job of representing the interests of everybody who resides on the lake and would like to see a majority of those property owners participating. Please see the article that Joanne Falk, our Membership Chairman, has written in this newsletter. Please encourage your neighbors to sign up. It's not too late to sign up online for 2019 - you can join online at [bigbasswod.ca](http://bigbasswod.ca).

The most significant program that we ran this summer was our septic inspection program. As you'll recall, at this time last year we received a significant grant from the Ontario Trillium Fund. Tulloch Engineering was hired to perform these non invasive inspections and the Municipality of Huron Shores worked hard to prepare a data base to invite everyone with property on the lake to participate. With the cold weather and the snow flying, this program is now wrapped up for the year and we are working with Tulloch and Huron Shores to analyze the results and communicate them to our participants.

A major corollary benefit of the program was raising awareness of the importance of healthy septic systems for the long term health of our lake. We even were able to hold an event in which MPP Mike Mantha and the Trillium Foundation acknowledged the importance of these types of programs. Please see 2 articles in the newsletter, one updating on the status of the program and the other, a press release on our acknowledgement event.

We also were fortunate to continue our partnership with the Sowerby Heritage Society and the North Shore Sentinel to sponsor 3 Heritage Evening events over the course of the summer which were:

- Sweet Sowerby Social – Marine Transportation on Lake Huron in the 1889s
- Life on the Farm with Vernon Bailey and John McCleneghan
- Tom Thompson and His Formative Trip on the Mississagi River

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# Membership Matters

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As property owners at Basswood, and as members of the lake association, we are fortunate to belong to a shared community. We all have common goals of maintaining and preserving the lake's pristine quality for future generations.

Membership provides an opportunity for us to gather together, and to learn from each other and from experts in sustainability and sound stewardship practices.

Membership also allows us to seek government funding and support for important programs, such as the recent septic inspection initiative.

Membership truly matters in terms of strengthening our association, allowing an opportunity for property owners to voice concerns and share knowledge, and to provide suggestions for ongoing education in areas that support our goals.

As you read this, please be assured that your opinions and ideas are valuable and very much appreciated.

Did you know that, in 2012, the association was comprised of 35 members? Through the commitment of our board members and the residents of Basswood, that number has nearly quadrupled! Amazing support by all.

The strength and sustainability of our association does depend on members. Please encourage your friends and neighbours to join and enjoy the benefits of membership.

Thank you for your continued support

- submitted by Joanne Falk

## Mark These Dates for 2020

Spring Board Meeting	June 22nd, 2020
Annual General Meeting	July 19th, 2020
Sweet Sowerby Social	Date Being Determined
Fall Board Meeting	September 14th, 2020

# Broad Scale Fish Monitoring

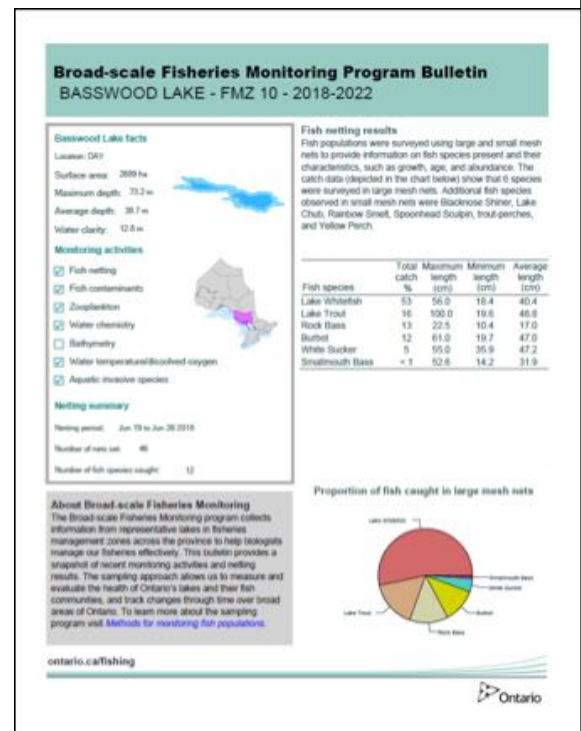
In the spring of 2018, there was a lot of activity undertaken by the MNRF for a 10 day period in June. These included extensive capture of fish species in both large and small scale nets. The fish were all disposed of after detail examination. There was a lot of concern at that time as to the volume of fish that were being removed from the lake and the short and long term impacts on the fish population.

As a result of these concerns, Peggy Wilson, our partner specialist with the MNRF arranged for a presentation by Dr. Preston Lennox at our 2019 Annual General Meeting. Dr. Lennox is a Fisheries Population Specialist with the Science and Research Branch of the MNRF based in Timmins.

He gave us a very comprehensive presentation on the Broad Scale Fish Monitoring program that the MNRF conducts on a three year cycle in many of the important fishing lakes in Ontario. He explained the reason for the program – why net sampling of the local fish population was important, why the number of fish taken for sampling does not affect the overall population (it is only a small percentage of the annual expected depletion of the fish population) and why the samples could not be distributed to local residents for consumption after sampling was completed (too long stagnant in the nets, too long out of the water, core sampling for contaminants harms the fish flesh).

He then went on to present the results of the 2018 sampling and assured us that the fish populations in Basswood Lake, although a bit skewed in growth cycles, were generally very healthy.

By the nature of the Q and A that followed, we believe that the residents of the lake were re-assured about the importance of the process. However, if there are further questions, we can relay to Preston for further clarification.



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

These not only resulted in 3 very interesting evenings for our lake residents and the whole North Shore community but also raised \$5900 for the North Shore Health Network. Please see the write up from the North Shore Sentinel on this donation.

In addition, we continue to engage on a number of other projects, which are each described in this newsletter:

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 our lake and that we should all give our full attention to preserving its beauty and 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 2019 and we look forward to seeing you in 2020.

Larry Allcorn  
Chairman

## Lake Partner/Water Quality

### 2019 NUMBERS---



Vol ID 1759 2019

**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 ID 1 Site Depth (m) 73

Watch the Secchi disk in the water. Is the colour:  
Green or Yellow ☐ OR Brown or Orange ☐

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
27-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 Sunny, light chop
15 Oct	11:30	11.2		Calm, Cloudy, low light

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

This is a the raw data submitted to the Lake Partner Program at the end of each season. Note the seasonal fluctuations, the most notable is caused by pollen. The number that will be reported out next spring is the average of these readings.

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

# Septic Inspection Program

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This summer was a busy one on Big Basswood. In addition to the normal seasonal things that go on, this was the time that many of you took advantage of the opportunity to learn about your septic and water drainage systems. The on-site assessments included an inspection, a chance to get your questions answered, and provided you with general information regarding septs and water run-off into the lake.

All of which serves “To preserve and protect the quality and natural beauty of Big Basswood Lake”.

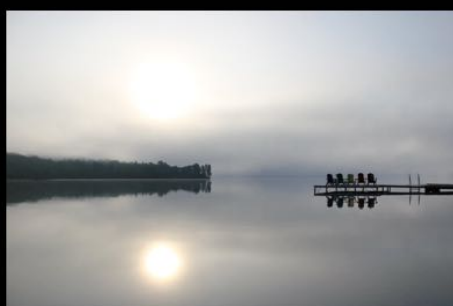
The inspection season is over. The Trillium Grant awarded in 2018 to BBLA was used to fund these inspections. There are approximately 204 occupied properties on the lake but not all of them have septic systems. The results of this project are now being summarized. Each participant will receive an individual report including specific information about their property systems as well as any findings or recommendations. The information collected from all properties will be tabulated and summarized in a general report. The Municipality will also receive a more detailed report. Any follow- up, if necessary, will be done through Algoma Public Health.

On-site assessments were done this season on 120 properties by Tulloch Engineering. It was recommended that the property owner be on-site for the inspection. Being present enabled the owner to ask specific questions and learn about septs and surface water drainage on their property. According to Brysin Shaw, the technician from Tulloch Engineering doing the inspections, many of you did have questions. Brysin also had a folder of information on septic and water drainage systems that each participant received. Education was, and will continue to be, an important part of this program. An understanding of your septic system (and regular maintenance) is needed to prevent a system failure.\*

\*A review of septic re-inspection programs in Ontario found that three quarters of major deficiencies were found in systems over 30 years old.

For more information re: septic re-inspection programs check out:

<https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/FOCA-Septic-Reinspection-Project- Report-FULL-DOCUMENT-2019.pdf>





# Ontario Trillium Fund

## Grant Recognition Event

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On Tuesday, September 10th, 2019, the lake association held an event to recognize the Ontario Trillium Fund for their generous grant obtained in 2019 in support of our lake wide septic inspection program.

In attendance at the event were Mike Mantha, MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin and Michelle Martin of the Trillium Fund.

Following is the media release for the event:

### **\$57,100 OTF Grant Contributes to the Long-Term Stewardship of Big Basswood Lake**

Huron Shores, ON - On Tuesday, during a Sowerby Heritage Evening presentation, the Big Basswood Lake Association took the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) for a \$57,100 OTF Seed grant received in June 2018 to support ongoing inspection and education of septic systems on Big Basswood Lake. Local MPP Michael Mantha and OTF representative Michelle Martin were on hand to congratulate the Big Basswood Lake Association and hear more about how this OTF grant is making a difference in the community.

"Life-Long Northerners truly understand how precious our water resources are to us," said Michael Mantha, MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin. "It is wonderful to see the strong support that the Big Basswood Lake Association (BBLA) is receiving from OTF. BBLA members know that education and community involvement is the key to protecting and conserving our precious environment and resources. I congratulate BBLA on this outstanding initiative, which will help local residents understand that they play a vital role to play in this endeavor. Regular inspection and maintenance of septic systems will help to ensure that our children and grandchildren can enjoy the same clean water that we have today."

Big Basswood Lake is one of the clearest, most pristine lakes in Ontario (source FOCA Lake Partner program). Its crystal clear waters are enjoyed by its residents' year-round and it is a major contributor to tourism and a major supporter of the local service industry in the township of Huron Shores. To ensure the continued health of the lake, the members of Big Basswood Lake Association asked the lake association to undertake a program of septic inspections and, in particular, to run an education program on how properly maintained septic systems sustained the ongoing well-being of the lake.

Basswood residents are justifiably proud of our lake and want to do everything possible to keep it in the pristine state that it exists in today. This grant from the OTF will be a major contributor to the ongoing education of our residents on the stewardship of our lake.

The [Big Basswood Lake Association](#) (BBLA) has for mission to preserve and protect the quality and natural beauty of Big Basswood Lake and its watershed: leading the lake community in making sound choices towards sustainable solutions.

Big Basswood is a conservation lake - one of the few lakes in Ontario where Lake Trout have been and are still naturally breeding. Through education of its residents and the visitors to the lake, hoping to preserve this pristine water. To this end, BBLA has sponsors a number of programs that contribute to the stewardship of the lake: e.g. septic tab distribution, ongoing lake water sampling, invasive species education, waste management.

The [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#) (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's leading granting foundations. OTF awarded \$108 million to 629 projects last year to build healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario.



# Photo Contest 2019 - 2020

## "Life at the Cottage"

Returning this year by popular demand is the 2019-2020 Photo Contest. Your mission lake residents 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](http://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

## Citizen Scientists at Basswood Lake

The Basswood lake loon survey was submitted to Bird Studies Canada in early September. Collected results from loon observers around the lake indicated that the loon population and activity on the lake was about the same as the 2018 survey. Both



years' results indicated one nesting pair with surviving chicks. In 2018, one chick survived of two hatchlings and, this year's survey showed two survivors of the two hatchlings in the northwestern part of the lake, the same area of the lake with the nesting pair from 2018.

Results of loon observation were submitted from various parts of the lake from citizen volunteers. Many observed solitary and small groups of loons but the only nest and juveniles observed and

reported were in the northwest area. In late September and October there were reports from observers in the SE area of the lake of large gatherings of juveniles from many lakes in the region getting ready to head to winter homes on the Atlantic Coast or in the south of the United States and Mexico.

The survey will continue next spring and summer and more volunteers are needed. There have also been discussions about expanding Citizen Science endeavors with reporting of yearly changes in observations of plants, wildflowers, insects, mammals, etc.

You can find more information about the loon survey at this site:

<https://www.birdscanada.org/volunteer/cils/resources/CLLSsummary.pdf>

If you are interested in taking part in the loon survey for 2020, please contact me at [dixie\\_olmstead@yahoo.com](mailto:dixie_olmstead@yahoo.com)



# Dam Operating Plan

After a number of attempts to obtain it, we received a copy of the dam operating plan from the MNRF for Basswood Lake over the 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 stabilized lake level for Lake Trout fall spawning in October/November
- Adequate water being supplied to gravel beds at the bottom of Harris Creek 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 1<sup>st</sup> with gates closed.
- Water dropping to 12 cm below the wing wall through 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 (judging by the phone calls and email that I received) that the water levels were far lower than this in late summer and early fall. MNRF informs that there were 2 reasons for this:

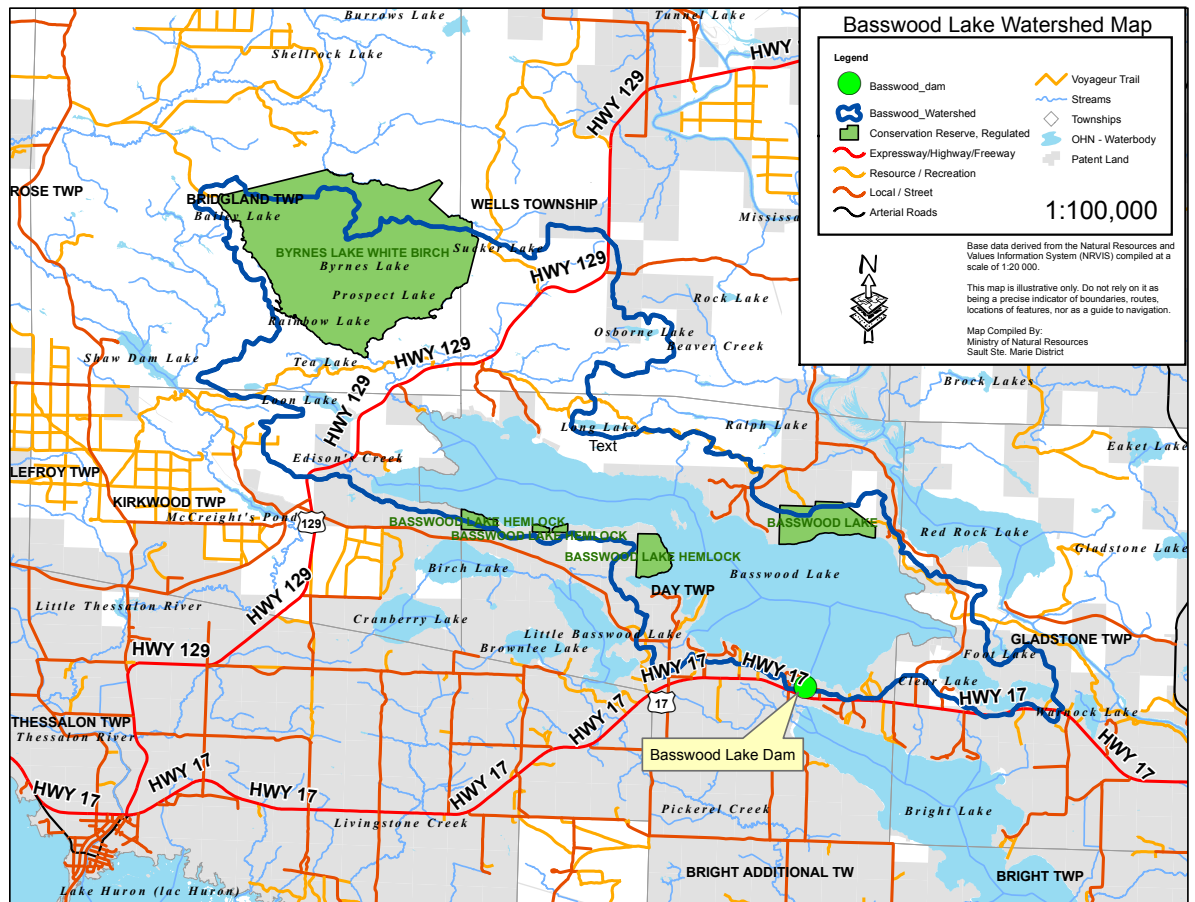
- (1) An unusually hot and dry summer with little rain
- (2) A temporary circumstance where the wing wall had a number of serious cracks in the concrete. The water levels were allowed to fall lower than normal so that the MNRF dam engineers had access to inspect the wing wall and then MNRF personnel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



If you have questions on lake levels and the operating plans, please contact me and we will get the response from the MNRF. We encourage lake residents to contact the lake association first if they have questions – we may already know the answer or can get it quickly from the MNRF.

# Dam Operating Plan (cont'd))

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Big Basswood Watershed Map



## Mark Your Calendars

# 2020 Annual General Meeting

**July 19th, 2020**

**Sowerby Hall**

**10AM - 12PM**

## Sweet Sowerby Social

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

This year we will be partnering with the **Sowerby Hall and Heritage Board** to hold several historical speakers nights. Please stay tuned for exact dates.

## History Update

27-28 July: 100th Anniversary of the Cordukes-Weber Twelve-Sided Barn. This event was so popular that it was extended to a second day.

Events included a charity auction with Vernon Bailey, a chicken dinner prepared by Fred Falls, and music by local classical guitarist (and one of Canada's 30 classical musicians under 30) Abshir Miller. The highlight of the anniversary was a comedy and music performance by Dan Needles and Ian Bell. Dan Needles is a playwright of the Wingfield Farm series of plays, and has written books including True Confessions of the Ninth Concession and Wingfield's World. Ian Bell is a musician, museum curator, and well-respected songwriter. The two have crafted an entertaining performance illustrating the trials and highlights of modern farm life.

Will Samis and David Ratz worked to finish installing Will's collection of early farm implements in the lower floor of the barn. The collection shows how early settlers survived and then thrived in north Ontario. The comprehensive collection includes a horse-drawn sled and harness; machines for processing turnips and potatoes; and blacksmith, butchery and grinding equipment.

- Nancy Bakemeier is still soliciting and collecting oral histories and photographs from local cottagers.

## Website Redesign

As we informed you in our last edition of the newsletter, the Board has taken steps to give a new and improved upgrade to our Lake Association Website. Much of the same important and relevant information will be available, but hopefully displayed in a more attractive and user friendly format. We hope to have it up and running on the Web by April of 2020. This means of course that there will be some time frame of maintenance during the winter months when the site will be under revision and unavailable for use. We are excited to launch this new site in the spring and hope you will find it more engaging and easier to access the important information we are hoping to deliver to our important members and other interested parties. Please email any suggestions or follow up items and I will do my best to get back to you.

Submitted by Phil Conley

# Sowerby Heritage Evenings

Again this summer, the BBLA partnered with the Sowerby Heritage Society and the North Shore Sentinel to sponsor 3 evening events in the 12 sided barn. We believe that joining the resources of these 3 groups and holding combined events is very beneficial for everybody and promotes a strong sense of community between the seasonal residents of Big Basswood and the residents of Huron Shores. All of these events were very well attended and we received much positive feedback on the topics and the presenters:

21 August: Sweet Sowerby Social: Eric McIntyre of Parry Sound talked about early marine transportation on Lake Huron and the 19th century shipwrecks of the Asia and Waubuno.

10 September: Life on the Farm: a night of songs and poetry with Vernon Bailey and John McCleneghan featuring the poetry of Charley Smith. A very enjoyable show that Vernon has performed on a number of occasions on the North Shore.

That evening, we also took the opportunity to welcome Mike Mantha, MPP for Algoma Manitoulin who helped us recognize the Trillium Fund for the grant they awarded the BBLA for septic inspections this summer – please see the separate media release in this newsletter

18 September: Tom Thompson. Art historian Michael Burtch gave an in-depth talk about Tom Thompson, who was the inspiration for Canada's Group of Seven, from his early works to his mysterious death in Algonquin Park. In this fascinating talk, illustrated with slides and posters, Michael Burtch showed how he, along with Joane and Gary McGuffin, identified the sites of several Thompson paintings. The team identified one previously unknown site as a view of Bruce Mines.

All of these evenings were no charge events with a "pass the hat" donation for the North Shore Health Network. Please see the reprint of the article from the North Shore Sentinel highlighting the donation of \$5913.00 to the North Shore Health Network resulting from these events.

We believe that this is a successful format for these evenings and plan to continue our partnership next year.

## Sowerby Heritage Series contributes to local NSHN Auxiliary



**SOWERBY** - Last week, members of the North Shore Health Network Auxiliary-Thessalon Site gathered the Historic 12-Sided Barn in Sowerby for a presentation of the proceeds from several events co-hosted by the Big Basswood Lake Association, the Sowerby Hall and Heritage Committee, and *The North Shore Sentinel*.

The freewill admission donations contributed by those attending events, including some of the Sowerby Heritage Series, were directed to the Auxiliary and the Algoma Residential Community Hospice (ARCH).

Last week's presentation represented the funds raised that were to be directed to the NSHNA-Thessalon Site, and totaled \$5,913.19. A representative for the event sponsors acknowledged the many hours of time donated by special guest speakers and presenters, in particular Vernon Bailey and John McCleneghan.

Mr. Bailey and Mr. McCleneghan have performed at several similar events across the North Shore, including their "Life on the Farm" events, which also include the Massey Poet Charlie Smith.

As well, the Sowerby Heritage Series has included Ron

Burgess, Michael Burtch, and Eric McIntyre, who have presented on historical topics relevant to the North Shore and Georgian Bay areas.

Heritage Series organizers look forward to continuing the events in 2020 and encourage area residents to provide input for future speakers and presentations, which





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 spring AGM on March 3<sup>rd</sup> in Toronto on behalf of the membership. This excellent meeting was written up in our spring newsletter.
3. I also attended the fall meeting on Nov 16<sup>th</sup> in Toronto. The agenda includes 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
4. Also, the FOCA web site contains a large amount of valuable information. Please visit the site at:

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

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. This means that the asserted area for the new boundaries includes Big Basswood Lake in its entirety. Note that just because it 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 continued to update the BBLA with the status/progress of the negotiations as we are important stakeholders.

## Status of the Negotiation ...

Our Ontario Ministry contact to date has been Mark Richard. In mid summer, Mark reached out to the lake association to let us know that he is taking leave from the ministry and wanted to introduce us to his replacement. On September 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 10<sup>th</sup>.

Jane is as committed as Mark was to communications with the key stakeholders which includes the BBLA. She walked us through the various stages of any land claim negotiation and reiterated 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.

At this point, Jane has committed to attend our AGM next year on July 17<sup>th</sup> to answer your questions in person.

We would continue to 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>

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