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BBLA Newsletter Fall 2023/Winter 2024

Chairman's Letter

I hope all our lake residents had an enjoyable summer and fall at Big Basswood Lake. Our time spent here seems too short and the seasons seem to fly by, especially summer.

This year, for the first time, we hosted our AGM with a BBQ and social time afterwards. The meeting took place at Melwel Lodge. Attendance at the meeting was up from previous years and we received good reviews from members who attended. This is something we'd like to continue, going forward.

As well, Melwel Lodge hosted a fish fry and evening of music that was sold out. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by those attending. We are hopeful that Melwel Lodge will continue this next summer.

One of our Board members, Marilyn Kellum, was instrumental in the planning and staging of a concert at the Corduke's twelve sided barn in Sowerby this past August. The event was very well attended and received rave reviews from those there. Special mention to Will Samis and the other members of the Sowerby Hall Heritage committee for their efforts in organizing the event. We look forward to continuing to work with them and the North Shore Sentinel to sponsor new events in 2024.

The BBLA continues to work on behalf of lake residents in regard to environmental issues, advocacy with the Municipality on lake issues, liaising with FOCA on cottager issues province-wide, etc. Board member Larry Allcorn was selected to sit on the Municipality's Environmental Advisory Committee, to help ensure our lake voice is heard.

Looking ahead to 2024, we plan to engage with the Municipality on working to re-instate the private road grants for the maintenance of the roads that most of use to access our residences here at Big Basswood Lake.

If any of our members have ideas or suggestions of issues that you would like us to address, please contact any BBLA board member for assistance.

On behalf of the Board, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Membership

In many ways, the summer of 2023 was a real return to normalcy on Big Basswood Lake. Our July 21 Annual General Meeting was held on a Friday afternoon—rather than our usual Sunday morning—and preceded an BBQ social event sponsored by BBLA, which provided an opportunity for members to socialize and enjoy their neighbors' company. While our current paid memberships represent a significant rebound from pandemic-era lows, the board will continue heavily promoting the many benefits of BBLA membership.

Summer 2023 also featured a record number of community events, such as the August 2 concert "Both Sides Now: A Tribute to Canadian Songwriters," featuring musicians from Michigan and Ontario who came together to showcase the diversity and depth of Canadian songwriters. On August 4, Melwel Lodge hosted a Fish Fry and memorable evening of live music. Finally, on August 19, Hutton Brothers bag-pipers returned for another special afternoon of bag pipes and camaraderie on the Hunting's Dock.

So why is membership in your lake association important? There are many reasons to support BBLA, but chief among them is to engage with the lake community and join us in supporting the stewardship of our shared natural resource. The BBLA board works tirelessly year-round to address critical issues, such as lake water quality and levels; municipal matters, such as road maintenance and code adherence; and provincial matters, such as property taxes and engagement with provincial ministries. BBLA membership gives you a voice in important matters locally and beyond.

In addition, your annual membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association provides several tangible benefits:

- Annual events focused on watershed stewardship, area History, ongoing education.
- Automatic membership in FOCA (The Federation of Ontario Cottages Association) and access to the many informative publications they provide concerning issues faced by cottagers.
- Participation at the Annual General Meeting which offers the opportunity for you to provide your input on the issues that affect property owners and the preservation of the Big Basswood watershed
- Savings on Cottage Insurance through FOCA

Please further support our efforts by talking to your neighbors about the benefits of BBLA membership. We have worked to avoid dues increases and the annual membership fee is stilly only \$25 per year.

Non-voting Associate memberships are also available to local Businesses and friends and family who visit the lake frequently.

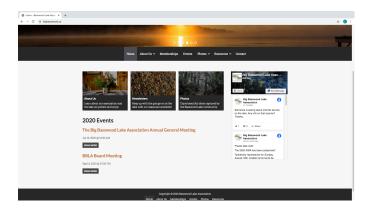
Payment Options

- > USE PAYPAL for online payment from our web site
- > E-TRANSFER from a Canadian Bank account to our treasurer cince48@gmail.com
- > SEND A CHEQUE to: Big Basswood Lake Association

P.O. Box 337 Thessalon, ON P0R 1L0

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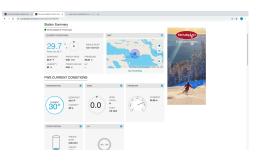
Lake Association Web Site



We hope you enjoyed another fantastic summer on Big Basswood Lake.

As discussed at this year's Annual General Meeting, we are planning significant changes to our website, membership management systems, and

social media activities. Whereas our recent past efforts have included some basic improvements to the website, such as a new and improved news and alerts section on the home page, new photographs throughout the site, and online versions of select BBLA newsletter articles, the BBLA board recognizes the need for additional upgrades.



Over the next year, we plan to explore

ways to overhaul the website so that becoming a member and paying or renewing membership dues is faster and easier—and can all be handled online. We are also looking at ways to better integrate our web presence with our membership database and email platform, so that our communications are more seamless, and up-to-date. You will receive updates as these efforts evolve and invitations to review future changes.

Finally, BBLA aspires to up our game on social media by linking our website and Facebook accounts, as well as launching a new Instagram presence. We strongly encourage members with social media experience to volunteer to assist us with these efforts!

As always, we encourage everyone to support our online activities. You can help by providing your own pictures of life on Big Basswood Lake. Please email photo submission to BBLA board member Matthew Aho (mda.apps@icloud.com) for inclusion on the website.

Thank you for your support! We wish you all a great winter and look forward to seeing you back on the lake next summer.

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2023 Annual General Meeting



The 2023 Annual General Meeting was held on Friday, July 21st, 2023. However, this year the BBLA board tried out a new approach to the event ...

You'll recall that, for the last few years, we have held the AGM at Melwel Lodge in the traditional Sunday morning time slot. We think that, when it is available, Melwel Lodge is an ideal venue to hold the AGM since we can enjoy the view out over our beautiful lake at the same time as we discuss, as a group, the important items and issues that affect the lake. We appreciate the generosity of owners Frank and Christian Provenzano in allowing us to use their facilities for the last few years.

However, as we were planning this year's AGM, we determined that the Sunday morning slot would no longer work since this coincided with the arrival of new guests at the lodge. We realized, after speaking to the Provenzanos, that Friday evening was a far better logistical choice.

We saw this as an opportunity to change the format of the AGM a bit and turn it into a social event as well as the annual meeting. As a result, we held our usual meeting starting on July 21st at 4PM which covered, as usual, many interesting and informative topics and included some excellent discussions and feedback from the membership. At the end of the meeting, all attendees were invited to stay for a BBQ dinner that was wonderfully catered by Monique Brock and funded by the lake association along with some generous donations from AGM attendees.

The meeting, which turned out to be an unqualified success, was attended by a record 70 (approximately) attendees and feedback was that it was enjoyed by all. We felt that the combination of the meeting coupled with a social event afterwards was a success and will be considered again for future meetings.

Thanks to all for attending and we hope that you found it interesting and enjoyable!

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Cottage Succession Planning Webinar

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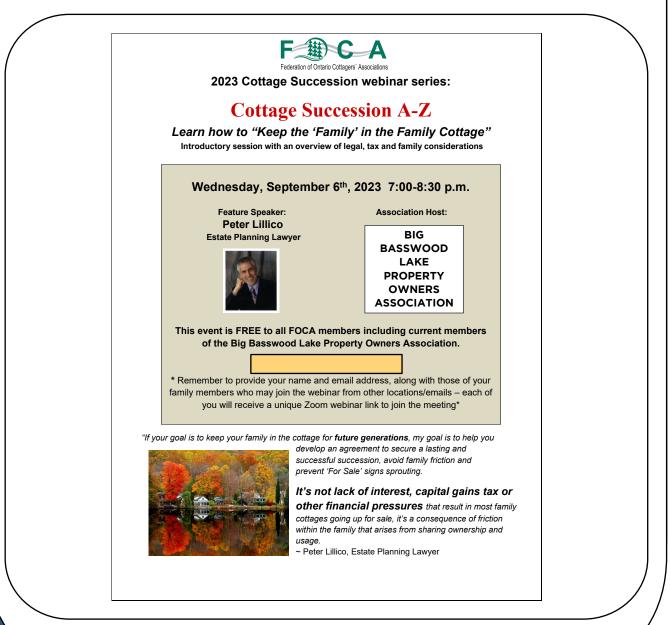
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On Wednesday, Septermber 8th the BBLA sponsored a webinar on Cottage Succession Planning. This webinar was arranged for our membership by FOCA as part of the service that they offer to our membership.

This very interesting webinar covered a wide range of topics that pertained to points to be considered when considering strategies on how to keep the cottage within the family for subsequent generations.

The webinar was very professionaly organized by FOCA. We estimate final attendance to be about 65 participants and will consider follow up sessions for next year.

Thanks to FOCA and, in particular, Maeve Coccimiglio for organizing this excellent session



Lake Partner Program

Big Basswood Lake Association Mission Statement To preserve and protect the quality and natural beauty of Big Basswood Lake and it's watershed: leading the lake community in making sound choices and sustainable solutions.



Below are the data sheets that will be submitted to the Lake Partner Program. Water clarity is measured approximately once a month late spring through early fall. As you can see, there is some variation in clarity throughout the summer. The early readings can be affected by the pollen in the water. The late summer readings tend to be the clearest. Readings are also taken from each end of the lake at the deepest point. The Lake Partner Program reports out the average of the readings taken each season

https://foca.on.ca/lake-partner-program/

Thank you Bobby Swain and Laura Foley for getting out there and taking these readings every month throughout the summer season.**

*The latest data on the FOCA site **They also take water samples in the spring that is posted is from 2021 are tested for Phosphorus, Calcium & Chloride

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Highway 17 Construction Planned for 2024

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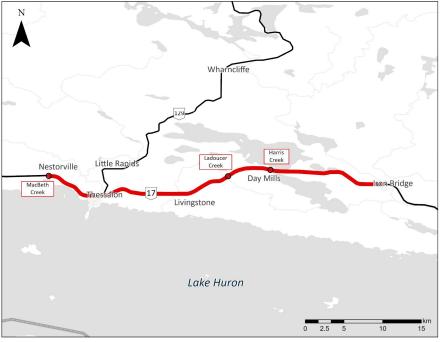
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The BBLA board has received an initial communication from LEA consulting who has been engaged to do an environmental assessment on planned highway 17 rehabilitation for the summer of 2024. At this point, they are soliciting feedback on environmental concerns associated with the planned roadwork.

At this stage, the BBLA is communicating with the Huron Shores environmental services committee and with the MNRF to understand the scope and timing of any work and environmental impacts. On initial review, it appears that the only impacts to our membership could be variations to normal water levels as the Harris Creek culverts are put under construction and potential for traffic flow disruptions as work proceeds.

Please see the map below which outlines the intended scope of work.

The BBLA will continue to monitor the progress of the planned project and keep our membership informed as more information is obtained



Project Key Map

Mike Hunting Memorial Stewardship Award

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The BBLA board has discussed the award and we believe that this is still a worthwhile cause and that recognizing stewardship achievement on our lake continues to be very important. Therefore, we have decided to suspend the award for this year and to recalibrate and consider relaunching going forward.

The criteria will be re-examined over the winter with an eye toward involving young people and youth who are the future of Big Basswood Lake.

Any ideas or suggestions from the membership would be greatly appreciated and welcomed.



MNRF Town Hall on Big Basswood Water Levels

The BBLA hosted a public meeting with the MNRF in September, regarding water levels on Big Basswood Lake. A number of individuals had expressed ongoing concerns with fluctuating water levels, particularly in late summer and early fall.



The meeting was poorly attended, both in-person and via Zoom. Perhaps this was due to it being held on a Friday in September, however it was scheduled to accomodate the MNRR technicians availability.

The main takeaway from the meeting was that we have essentially been in a drought situation for quite some time.

Additionally, the control of lake water levels is not an exact science and the MNRF endeavors to do the best they can to maintain an adequate water level on the lake. They also stated that they have made some misjudgments but are committed to fixing this. To that end, they agreed to partner with the BBLA to allow for observers from Big Basswood Lake and Bright Lake to attend with them whenever adjustments are being made to the level of the Harris Creek Dam.

The MNRF has agreed to meet with Huron Shores in the new year to discuss in more detail the dam operating plan, the impacts of dam operations on both Big Basswood and Bright Lake and better communications with stakeholders moving forward and the BBLA will be attending this meeting.

This is an issue that the BBLA will continue to monitor closely.

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INaturalist

In the summer of 2021 the Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project on iNaturalist went on-line and was introduced to the membership. You can sign-up on the page which will allow you to share your observations, identify species and communicate with others about what you see. Or, you can just peruse the Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project page to find all sorts of information about the flora and fauna that inhabit the lake environment.Start here:

https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/big- basswood-lake-watershed

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Overview	573 OBSERVATIONS	292 SPECIES	316 IDENTIFIERS	70 OBSERVERS	• Stats
Recent C	bservations				

From this page you can access all sorts of information. The Overview shows recent observations, who has made the most observations and who has documented the most species. It also shows the Most Observed Species which is the Eastern Red- Backed Salamander. Click on its picture and you will find out where it was spotted, and that it is a woodland salamander that lives in moist wooded areas under logs, moist debris or rocks. It is one of the most common salamanders in its range. You click on any picture of an observation to get all sorts of information about an observed species.

There is a map that shows the distribution of observations throughout the watershed:



Click on one of the spots on the map and it will show you what was spotted there. Finally under Stats you get a visual overview of the number of Observations, the number and type of Species and the Identifications.



We all notice many special things around Big Basswood Lake. Ladies Slippers, bears, loons and birds, just to name a few. iNaturalist allows us to figure out what we are seeing and communicate with others about things. Using iNaturalist will build community knowledge and create the data to understand, document and protect nature. And it's something we all can be a part of!!

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Municipal Affairs

The Board of the BBLA has continued an active dialogue with the Municipality of Huron Shores and the council throughout the summer on a number of major issues that relate to the preservation of the quality of the Big Basswood Lake experience on behalf of cottage owners.

As with any governmental authority, federal, provincial, or municipal, progress on discussions must move through a protracted process including the seeking of legal advice and consultation with the appropriate provincial authorities to ensure that any action taken passes the thresholds required.

As examples of our level of engagement with the Huron Shores council, the BBLA was asked to present an overview of the septic inspection program that we conducted to the environmental services committee of council in April of this year. This participation has evolved to the point where one of our board members, Larry Allcorn, has been selected to sit as a full time member of this committee. He is attending and participating in all monthly meetings as well as sitting in on the monthly council meetings whenever possible.

We will contiue to monitor and advocate on issues that are of concern to the community of Huron Shores and Big Basswood lake residents specifically.

You should have received this postcard in the mail from Huron Shores outlining a number of imporatant public information sessions that are taking place in the next few months. Note that Zoom links are available for all of these sessions on the Huron Shores website (if you didn't receive this mailing, be sure to be in touch with the municipal office to get your name added to the mailing list)

SHAPING YOUR FUTURE MUNICIPALITY





Official Plan Open House - VIRTUAL Nov. 1, 2023 7-9PM (Register in advance) Zoom Link at **www.huronshores.ca/stayinformed**

Official Plan Open House - IN PERSON Nov. 14, 2023 7-9PM Location: Sowerby Hall, 1410 Basswood Lake Rd.

NEW Proposed Trailer License By-law PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION - Nov. 15, 2023 6-8PM Location: Sowerby Hall / Zoom

Long Term Waste Management Plan PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION - Dec. 6, 2023 4-7PM Location: Sowerby Hall / Zoom

Flood Mapping - Phase 2 - Coming Soon PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION - (Date TBD)

Zoom Links can be found @huronshores.ca/stayinformed Visit our website or call for full details and information. 705-843-2033 and www.huronshores.ca/stayinformed



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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.

FOCA 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 data base continues to show Basswood as one of the clearest lakes in Ontario
- 2. FOCA holds a spring and a fall meeting every year, both of which usually feature valuable information. The fall event was held virtually on Saturday, Nov 4th. Online sessions included:
 - A review of the recent a Ontario Climate Change Assessment Technical Report by the President of the Climate Risk Institute
 - updates on invasive aquatic plants from the Invasive Species Centre updates on recent sightings of Grass Carp in Ontario by Fisheries and Oceans Canada
 - FOCA updates including a preview of the 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, and update on the Lake Partner Program
 - and a presentation from Bird Studies Canada about loons as an indicator species of your waterfront's health
- Also, he FOCA web site contains a large amount of valuable information on lake stewardship and the ongoing initiatives that FOCA is working on. Please visit the website at <u>http://www.foca.on.ca/</u> for more information. We encourage our members to take advantage of this powerful tool as there is a lot of excellent information and reference material to be found there.
- FOCA also organizes Online Seminars for individual lake associations. We took advantage of this service this fall with the successful sponsorship on Cottage Succession Planning – see the separate write up in this newsletter for more information,
- 5. A valuable lobbying resource that can speak effectively on behalf of the 500 member associations.
- 6. FOCA also offers ongoing discounts on a number of products and services. These are also listed in the website above.

Update on New Leepfrog Service

Some of you may have noticed that there was a new tower being installed on Melwel Road just North of Highway 17 over the last month. BBLA followed up on this tower with Leepfrog, an internet service provider that has had a tower in Iron Bridge for the last year or so. At this point Leepfrog is predicting that their service will be available over most of the lake.

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We were provided with the information by Leepfrog in response to our queries. Please note that this is not meant as an endorsement of Leepfrog as we have not yet had a chance to test out the service. This is provided for the information of our membership. We recommend that you get in touch with Leepfrog directly using the contacts provided if you have more questions on availability and service levels.



Connected no matter where you live in the pond

History Corner

Following is a transcribed article from the July 17, 1921 edition of the Pueblo (Colorado) Chieftan newspaper. The article from a special section of the Sunday paper espouses the charms of the Mississauga River canoe adventure which culminated at the Slate Falls portage up to the north-east shore of Big Basswood Lake. This article from a Colorado paper demonstrates the breadth of the notoriety of this outdoor pursuit arriving at our charming lake, and indicates that the popularity of the trip was still going strong almost twenty years after the Clubhouse was first conceived by an influential group of New Yorkers.

The two hundred and seventy miles of canoeing down the Mississauga River between walls of dense forest, slipping into one exquisite lake after another and making 35 portages, is accounted the acme of out-door pleasure by those who have been so fortunate as to have travelled this Ontario water trail.

The start is usually made from Biscotasing, 80 miles north-west of Sudbury where outfits and guides can be obtained. This route passes through Bisco



and Spanish Lakes, then into Spanish River where one is likely to see a dozen moose in the course of a day's journeying. Spanish and Canoe Lakes and several lakelets intervene ere Mississauga Lake, the source of Mississauga River is reached. From here the travel is all downstream through wildly beautiful scenery.

Tall spires of pine reach heaven-ward above the solid wall of forest that lines either bank. Moose, deer, and other wild animals often emerge from the dense woods to gaze at the passing strangers. They are seldom molested and are quite fearless and present splendid targets for the camera. Excellent fishing is at hand the whole distance – speckled trout, lake trout, bass, pike and muskies are so plentiful that one seldom casts without getting a bite. Pretty little streams come stealing through the forests to pour their silver offerings into the Mississauga and to coax travelers to leave the big river and seek the hidden charms of the hinterland. The side trips lead to waters over which white men have never fished.

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History Corner(continued)

The majority of the portages are just long enough to give you a chance to get the kinks out of your calves and are a pleasure rather than a hardship. The portage at Aubrey Gorge affords a wonderful sight, that of a river surging and swirling through a quarter-mile gorge and then making a 107-foot leap over a cliff. It takes one and a half hours to shoot the Forty-mile Rapids, which is done with no more effort than reclining in the canoe and using the paddle now and then to keep it in the channel. The portage around the Mississauga Tunnel is made by team over a good road that parallels the narrow cut in the solid rock through which the river churns its way for three miles.

The route really ends at the Candian Camp Clubhouse (on the north-east shore of Big Basswood Lake), one half hour above Sowerby. From the latter it is a 45-minute motor run to the railway at Thessalon.

Thanks to Bobby Swain for once again transcribing an extremely interesting essay on the history of Basswood Lake. We encourage all of our members to spend some time browsing his blog on the Basswood Outfitters website at:

https://www.basswoodlake.ca/

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DIRECTORS OF BBLA

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