

# BBLA Newsletter

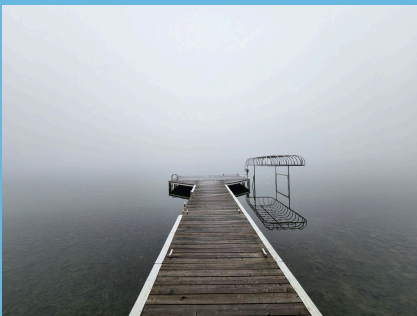
Spring/Summer 2024

## Chairman's Letter



### **In This Newsletter:**

- > Chairmans Letter
- > Technology Update
- > AGM Date
- > Water Rangers
- > Lake Trout Lakes
- > iNaturalist
- > Municipal Affairs
- > Ward 2 Transfer Station
- > FOCA
- > History Corner



In the first Chairman's Letter since I accepted the Big Basswood Lake Association board of director's invitation to chair our cherished community-led organization, I want to warmly welcome back Big Basswood's residents and friends for another unforgettable summer on the lake. I also want to ask you to join me in thanking your board members for their commitment to our community and their efforts on our behalf.

Over the winter and spring seasons, your all-volunteer board has worked tirelessly to stay on top of the many relevant issues that affect our quality of life on Big Basswood Lake. Through participation in municipal efforts to address environmental concerns and efforts to educate our community about Harris Dam lake water level maintenance, as well as free webinars on important matters, such as family cottage succession plans, your board is committed to preserving our lake community's long-term quality of life.

I am pleased to announce that this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Friday, July 26, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. at Melwel Lodge and will once again be followed by a BBQ social event so you can meet new neighbors and reconnect with old friends. More details on the AGM and other summer events will be provided soon.

We strongly encourage all new and renewing BBLA members to attend the AGM so you can learn about your association's activities and offer your opinions on what our priorities should be over the next year. While our membership numbers have rebounded, we have yet to fully reach our pre-COVID pandemic totals. Our efforts to tackle issues that threaten the quality of life on our lake are more effective when backed by robust membership numbers.

continued on page 2 ...

... continued from page 1

## Chairman's Letter (cont'd)

Your annual membership in the Big Basswood Lake Association also provides several tangible benefits:

- Annual events focused on Lake 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.
- Savings on Cottage Insurance through FOCA Membership

The annual membership fee remains \$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
- E-TRANSFER from a Canadian Bank account to our treasurer Cynthia Wood [cince48@gmail.com](mailto:cince48@gmail.com)
- SEND A CHEQUE to Big Basswood Lake Association, P.O. Box 337, Thessalon, ON P0R 1L0 .

Your payment can also be made at the Sowerby Market on Saturday mornings until Labour Day. Simply complete the information form and place it the provided envelope and place in the red box. Please remember to take your receipt with you!

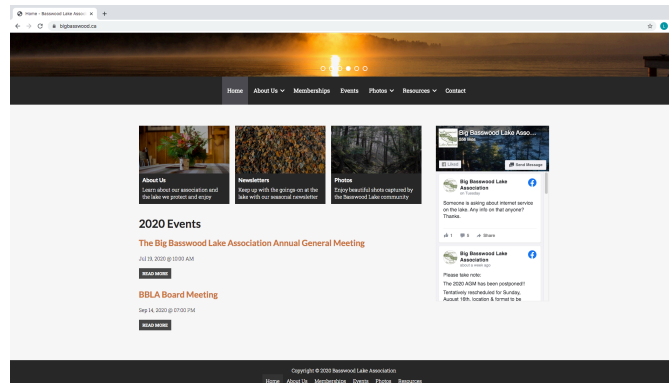
**Matt Aho**

## Update on New Leepfrog Service

In our fall newsletter, we published information supplied to us by Leepfrog regarding the new tower that was erected on Melwel Road, just North of Highway 17. As noted in the fall, the BBLA does not necessarily endorse this service as we have not had the opportunity to try it out - we're supplying the information for the benefit of our members and encourage them to reach out to Leepfrog directly for information on the service.

We are informed by the service provider that the service is now slated to come online in mid to late July. We'll let the membership know as we receive more information from the provider.

# Lake Association Web Site



We look forward to seeing you back on the lake for another fantastic summer Big Basswood.

As discussed at this year's Annual General Meeting, we are working on a significant overhaul of the bigbasswood.ca website, membership management systems, and our social media platforms. Whereas our past efforts have included basic website improvements, such as a new and improved news and alerts section on the home page, updated photographs, and online versions of select BBLA newsletter articles, the BBLA board continues to recognize the need for more substantial changes.

Over the past several months, we have explored 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 working to integrate our web presence with our membership database and email platform, so that our communications are more seamless, and up-to-date.

The central challenge to a fuller website overhaul relates to limitations involving the software system we currently use to manage website content and make edits. To address this challenge, the BBLA has begun exploring alternative website management systems that offer updated layouts and tools. We look forward to briefing our members at the upcoming AGM on our immediate plans to upgrade and overhaul our online 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 summer and look forward to seeing you on the lake.

Matt Aho

# 2024 Annual General Meeting



BBLA  
Spring/  
Summer  
2024  
Newsletter  
Page 4

## Big Basswood Lake Association 2024 Annual General Meeting

Friday, July 26, 2024  
Melwel Lodge

AGM will begin promptly at 4PM followed by a social event/BBQ

Cash Bar

The BBQ will be subsidized by the BBLA but we expect to be requesting a contribution at the door to offset costs for those wishing to stay for the BBQ. Costs are just being finalized.

**We look forward to seeing you there!**





# Water Rangers/ Lake Partner Program

Big Basswood Lake now has two water testing locations on the lake with the Water Rangers program - one started last year and the other in May of this year. Test kits are provided by the Kensington Conservancy ( [Water Quality Monitoring - The Kensington Conservancy](#) ) . The testing in the West Basin is conducted in Jamie Bay on the north-west shore accessed off McCallum Road, and the new location in the East Basin is in Minnie's Bay on the south-east shore.



The BBLA would like to thank the Kensington Conservancy for sponsoring the Water Rangers testing program and the two Big Basswood Lake properties who are conducting the sampling and testing. The results are posted on an easily accessible and easy to read site at [Water Rangers](#) . The testing program on Big Basswood Lake is new, so it will take a few years to develop and track trends in water quality over the coming years. We believe that improvement will be shown after the BBLA's Septic System inspection program conducted a couple of years ago, served to raise awareness

on the importance of a properly operating liquid waste disposal system

The Water Rangers testing program is in addition to our Lake's participation in the Lake Partners Program which has been in place for many years. Please take a minute to refer to the links and update yourself on this important new initiative.

Following is a link back to the historical data that has been collected from our participation in the lake partner program:

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

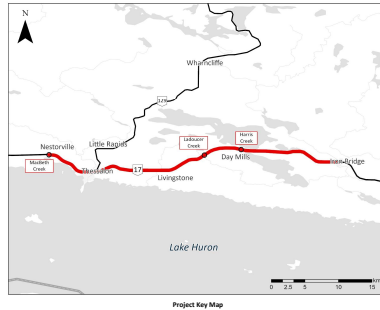
FOCA has published an excellent document which describes the Lake Partner Program and analyses long term trends. Please click on the following link to view an online copy of the report:

[https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/LPP-Long-Report\\_FINAL-REPORT.pdf](https://foca.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/LPP-Long-Report_FINAL-REPORT.pdf)

*Marilyn Kellum/Bobby Swain*

# Highway 17 and 129

## Construction



There are road construction projects planned for Highway 17 and Highway 129 in the Huron Shores area. These projects are expected to take a couple of years to complete and will consist of grading and resurfacing of Highway 17 between Iron Bridge and Nestorville, and Highway 129 North from Thessalon to Highway 554. This will include replacement of culverts and maintenance to ditches and road shoulders. The Municipality of Huron Shores has announced these upcoming road projects and indicated that there will be crews working on

various roads throughout the area, aiming to improve road quality and safety.

For the most current and detailed information, it would be best to stay tuned to the Municipality of Huron Shores official communications or contact them directly. [They will provide updates on the construction activities, including any changes to traffic patterns and alternate routes during the construction period.](#)

It's always a good idea to check these sources regularly for the latest information on road construction projects, especially if you're planning travel through the area. The Ontario 511 Traveller Information website is also a useful resource for up-to-date status of road closures and delays you may encounter.

Here is the current Ontario 511 information that is in effect and updated as of June 28, 2024

Highway 17 – Anticipated project duration: May 20, 2024 to October 31, 2025

Expect delays up to 10 minutes.

Highway 17 from McFadden Line (Nestorville), easterly for 33.3 kilometres to Highway 546 Iron Bridge

Flagging for single lane closures for construction operations from Monday to Friday. Potential speed reduction from 90 kilometres per hour to 70 kilometres per hour in construction limits. Effective lane width is 3.75 metres. No construction changes to existing height restrictions or bridges.

Highway 129 – Anticipated project duration: June 5, 2023 to September 6, 2024

Update as of June 28, 2024.

Expect delays up to 10 minutes.

Structural Culvert Site #1, 2.25 kilometres south of the junction with Highway 556.

Structural Culvert Site #2, 8.5 kilometres north of the junction with Highway 556. Total project length, 4.1 kilometres.

Single lane closure controlled by traffic lights. Reduced speed limit to 60 kilometres per

THE NORTH SHORE SENTINEL, BIG BASSWOOD LAKE ASSOCIATION  
, SOWERBY HALL & HERITAGE COMMITTEE PRESENTS

# BOTH SIDES NOW

## Concert

tribute to Michigan & Ontario songwriters

W E D N E S D A Y

# 17th of July 2024

AT THE 12 SIDED BARN - 1410 BASSWOOD LAKE ROAD - SOWERBY, ON  
Doors open at 7pm - show at 7:30pm

### FEATURING MUSICIANS FROM

MICHIGAN	ONTARIO
THE GOOSE & THE GANDER	JOHN MC CLENAGHAN
CREOLE DU NORD	MARK TARANTINI
	AND THE BUSH PIRATES TOURING BAND

ADMISSION BY DONATION  
ALL PROCEEDS TO THE NORTH SHORE HEALTH NETWORK - THE SALON SITE AUXILIARY



# Big Basswood Water Levels

As reported in last fall's newsletter, the BBLA hosted a public meeting with the MNRF in September/2023, 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.



Unfortunately, that meeting was poorly attended, both in-person and via Zoom. Problems with the technology prevented an effective presentation via live stream

As reported in the last newsletter, 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.

Subsequent to the BBLA meeting, the MNRF has met twice with the Huron Shores municipal environmental services committee. In late fall, Shannon Hobbs gave the same presentation that he had prepared for the BBLA. The committee (of which Larry Allcorn is a member) then met and reviewed the material and consolidated questions that resulted from the two presentations. On Tuesday, Feb 3, 2024 the MNRF and Huron Shores held a lengthy workshop to review our questions and have further discussion.

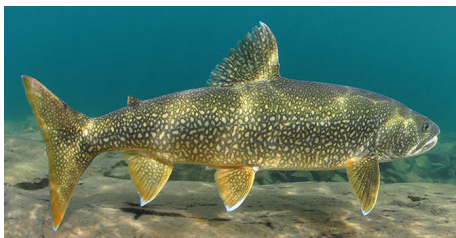
Key takeaways from this meeting was the need for ongoing communication with the MNRF throughout the summer months as water levels change. We agreed that this communication would happen through both the municipal office for issues that might affect municipal infrastructure and also through a few observers that are situated close to Harris Creek and the dam.

As noted earlier, control of lake levels is an inexact science. As if to prove this, we had a very unusual spring freshet. With almost no snow melt, Basswood Lake water level was lower than normal in the spring. However, heavy rain since has forced the water levels up higher than usual for this time of the year. As of this writing, we believe that the dam is open the right amount to balance water levels in both Basswood and Bright lakes.

We continue to dialogue with the MNRF and will continue to monitor as the summer unfolds. In the meantime, if you have any concerns or questions, we encourage you to communicate them to Larry Allcorn ([lallcorn@bell.net](mailto:lallcorn@bell.net)) who will follow them up with Huron Shores and the MNRF.

**Larry Allcorn**

# Lake Trout Lakes



Over the years, we have heard that Big Basswood Lake was a designated "Lake Trout Lake". However, over that time, we did not have a lot of information on the meaning of this designation.

During the workshop that Huron Shores had with the MNRF (see previous article on MNRF Town Hall), we asked them to clarify this designation. Following is the information that Robyn Jones of the MNRF supplied us with in response...

*Dear Larry Allcorn,*

*Thank you for your previous email.*

*Firstly, yes, Basswood Lake (Waterbody Identifier 17-3164-51328), has a naturally occurring population of lake trout and is designated as a lake trout lake. A published list of designated lake trout lakes can be found [here](#). It is a pretty extensive list, however, it is recommended to reach out to the local Ministry office to confirm a designation.*

*Lake Trout lakes are relatively rare. Only about one percent of Ontario's lakes contain Lake Trout, but this makes up about 25% of lake trout lakes worldwide. From a fisheries management perspective, the Ministry designates and manages lakes with lake trout populations as either "naturally reproducing" or "put-grow-take". Naturally reproducing lake trout lakes are either lakes with a naturally occurring population of Lake Trout or lakes with extirpated populations that have been identified as candidates for rehabilitation. Put-grow-take lake trout lakes are stocked lakes that are managed by the ministry to provide recreational fishing opportunities to re-direct angler efforts away from vulnerable self-sustaining populations.*

*MNRF has specific policies regarding designated Lake Trout lakes. This includes the principal that the Ministry will not dispose of vacant, undeveloped Crown land, where the disposition could result in impacts to habitat or lakeshore carry capacity for lake trout.*

*Additionally, the Lakeshore Capacity Assessment Handbook has been developed by the province to provide guidance to municipalities and other stakeholders responsible for the management of development along the shorelines of Ontario's inland lakes within the Precambrian Shield. This is intended as a tool to help municipalities meet their obligation under the Planning Act to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. The province recommends that generally there will be no new municipal land use planning approvals for new or more intense residential, commercial, or industrial development within 300m of a lake trout lake identified as "at capacity" based on water quality modelling. More information on assessing lakeshore capacity can be found [here](#).*

*It may also be of interest to review the [Fisheries Management Zone Plan 10: Lake Trout Operational Objectives and Management Strategies](#) which outlines some fisheries management objectives related specifically to lake trout lakes in the FMZ10*

**Larry Allcorn/MNRF**



# iNaturalist

BBLA  
Spring/  
Summer  
2024  
Newsletter

Page 10

The 2021 summer AGM demonstrated a strong interest in being able to observe and track the nature we are so fortunately surrounded with at Big Basswood Lake. An initiative was developed with the assistance of Carter Dorscht, Executive Director of [The Kensington Conservancy](#), to encourage usage of iNaturalist.com.

iNaturalist describes itself as ...an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature.

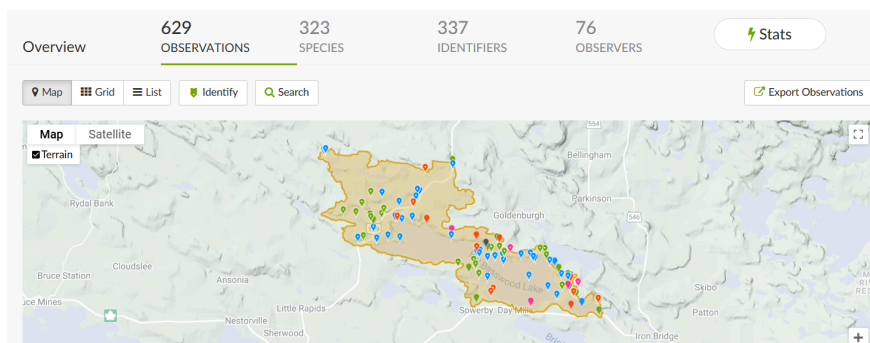
Considered one of the most popular nature apps, iNaturalist helps you instantly identify flora and fauna that you have spotted in your travels. You can record your observations with a mobile phone or a dedicated camera.

My workflow is heavily centered on taking pictures with a camera and telephoto lenses. When I feel inclined, I log onto iNaturalist and upload the observations recorded on my camera, using a laptop. I find the web-based version of iNaturalist easier to work with, but occasionally I will use the app on my phone to upload an observation immediately. Although using the phone app seems less versatile to me, it can provide immediate suggestions as to the identity of a plant, animal, bird, or insect that I come across and am interested in learning about.

iNaturalist is packed full of features and one of them is a tool that they have named “Projects”. The Kensington Conservancy assisted us in setting up our own Project, called “Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project”.

Our iNaturalist Project is essentially a geo-fence surrounding the Big Basswood Lake Watershed. Anyone who submits an observation on iNaturalist within this geographical area, is automatically flagged in the Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project.

Check out the most current stats available at [Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project](#)



continued page 11 ...

... continued from page 10

# iNaturalist

Want to start using iNaturalist? Here are some links that will get you up and running:

[Getting Started](#)

[Create an account](#)

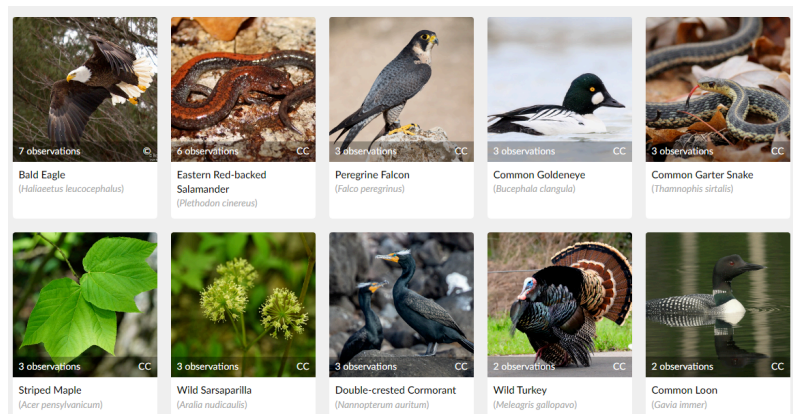
[Help and About iNaturalist](#)

Once you have an account with iNaturalist, go to the [Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project](#) and hit the “Join” button to become a member of the Project.

Like many of you, I have been taking pictures of nature and wildlife for many years and ended up with a sizeable pile of digital photos stored on my laptop and phone, printed photos stashed in an old box somewhere and I may even have a selection of 35 mm slides.

I not only enjoy taking current photos of nature that I observe, but I found an enjoyable interest in reviewing all the old nature photos I had, and adding them to iNaturalist after the fact. Why not give it a try?

Here is a selection of the 10 most frequently posted observations to the Big Basswood Lake Project for 2023:



If you would like a hand using iNaturalist, please get in touch through the [BBLA contact web page](#), or come over and chat at the summer AGM meeting

**Jim Falconer**

# Municipal Affairs

The Board of the BBLA has continued to monitor activities within the Municipality of Huron Shores and the council throughout the winter 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.

In addition, as announced in the fall newsletter, Larry Allcorn now sits as a full time member of the Environmental Services Committee of Huron Shores council. In this role he participates in discussions that affects all environmental concerns around all areas in our municipality.

Some of the topics currently being discussed by this committee include:

- a presentation to the committee on the approach and outcome of the septic inspection program undertaken by the BBLA
- ongoing dialogue with the MECP (Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks – formerly the MOE) on status of ECAs (Environmental Compliance Authorization) for all trailer parks in the area
- impact of trailer park zoning in the new official plan
- new trailer licensing bylaw
- interaction with the MNRF on water level/dam operating plans in the municipality (see separate article)
- boat wash stations

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.

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

**Larry Allcorn**

# Ward 2 Transfer Station Pilot Project

Effective May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, Ward 2 Landfill Site (473 Cullis Road) transitioned from a traditional landfill to a transfer station as part of a 3-month Pilot Program.

During the pilot program, the Ward 2 landfill site is only accepting bagged household garbage and recycling. This means that other types of waste, such as construction debris and yard waste, will not be accepted at this location during the pilot period. The Municipality encourages all ratepayers to utilize the other waste sites for disposal of materials not accepted at the Ward 2 Landfill Site during this pilot program:

- Ward 1 – 200 Highway 129
- Ward 3 – 41 Red Rock Road
- Ward 4 – 1035 Dean Lake Road

Throughout the duration of the pilot program, the Municipality welcomes your feedback and suggestions regarding the operational changes by emailing [email@huronshores.ca](mailto:email@huronshores.ca).

Your input will help the Municipality assess the impact of these changes on our community and make informed decisions on future waste management strategies in our Municipality.



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 spring event was held virtually and in person in Toronto on Saturday, March 2cd. All of our members are welcome to attend these interesting meetings as you are all member of FOCA.
3. Also, the 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 <http://www.foca.on.ca/> 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.
4. 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.

*Larry Allcorn and Marilyn Kellum*



# History Corner

Many thanks to Bobby Swain and Laura Foley of Basswood Lake Outfitters for continuing to research and write up interesting history stories of Big Basswood Lake and the North Shore.

They have posted a story which will utilize an archive of photos and anecdotes to draw a thread through some of the history covering early settlement of the Big Basswood Lake area to more recent times. As well, it visits some visual highlights of the journey to Big Basswood Lake from the east - and the communities around the lake, to stir the memories of those who might remember the "good old days".

The album has relied on information from personal anecdotes, J.B. Dobie's early diaries, the excellent books and articles on local history by Edith Cameron and J.E. MacDonald, and the several Algoma history sites on the internet to help illustrate the history.

The story will journal the annual trip to Big Basswood Lake and for the purposes of this album, Portage Street and the Day Mills settlement as the central Big Basswood Lake has been used as the destination which will be arrived at from east or west.

Please take the time to have a look at this album which is the first of two parts (the second part covering the journey and landmarks west of Portage Street coming later in the summer).

<https://www.basswoodlake.ca/s/stories/story-a-pictorial-album-of-the-earlier-days-of-big-basswood-lake-and-the-vintage-journeys-to-its-2>

The Big Basswood Lake Association will be happy to receive additional information and photos on the history of the Lake and the journey to the cottage so please do not hesitate to assist in journaling the local history.

***Bobby Swain and Laura Foley***

## DIRECTORS OF BBLA

**Matt Aho, Chairman**, 917-849-9229

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

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

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

**George Craigie**, 514-941-3500

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



Big Basswood  
  
Lake Association