

BBLA Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2023

Chairman's Letter

Welcome to the Big Basswood Lake Association's Spring/Summer 2023 newsletter.

It's great to see that the summer is already well under way. It's wonderful to see everyone back taking full advantage of our beautiful lake.

Your board has continued to be active over the winter. In fact, we had so many projects on the go that we held an unprecedented winter workshop in January as we didn't feel that we could afford to wait to spring to begin our work. We also held our regular spring board meeting on June 19, 2023 to review progress on all of these files. Our board members continue to work very hard on your behalf and this newsletter will give you an update on some of the activities that we are currently working on.

It's worth noting that, over the winter, we had numerous conversations with the newly elected council and our new mayor, Matt Seabrook. In fact, I was invited to do a presentation on our septic inspection program to the council Environmental subcommittee which I did in April. We appreciate the new councils interest and engagement with the BBLA.

As always, we are still looking for new board members so if you are interested in joining the board, please let us know as there is a lot still to be done.

Hopefully, you have seen the announcement of our AGM to be held at Melwel Lodge on July 21st. Christian and Frank Provenzano have been generous again in offering us the use of Melwel for our meeting. We quickly took them up on this offer as we believe that Melwel is an ideal location for the meeting. What better place to discuss the issues that are so important to us while enjoying the view over Melwel Bay. I think that somehow it makes the discussions more "real".

However, in a major change, we are going to hold the meeting on a Friday afternoon/evening. This better accommodates Melwel's guest checkin/checkout schedule and has the added benefit of allowing us to turn the event into a bit of a social get together. So the plan is for us to hold our regular meeting starting at 4PM that day and then to have a hamburger and hotdog BBQ afterwards thanks to Monique Brock's organization

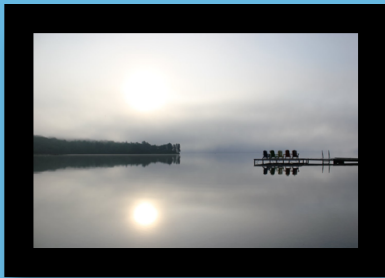
Also, this summer, we are partnering again with the Sowerby Heritage Society and the North Shore Sentinel for a social evening and performance at the twelve sided barn. This year, the event on August 2nd will feature a celebration of Canadian music performed by musicians from both sides of the border. Please see more information on the event in this newsletter.

Continued Page 4 ...



In This Newsletter:

- ¥ Chairman's Letter
- ¥ Membership
- ¥ Web Site
- ¥ 2023 Annual General Meeting
- ¥ Succession Planning Seminar
- ¥ Lake Partner Program
- ¥ Update on Canada Water Agency
- ¥ Mike Hunting Stewardship Award
- ¥ Water Levels
- ¥ TFN Boundary Land Claim
- ¥ INaturalist
- ¥ Members Survey
- ¥ Municipal Affairs
- ¥ Aug 2nd Concert
- ¥ FOCA
- ¥ History Corner



Membership

At long last, the summer of 2023 really feels like a return to more normal times, following the challenges of recent years. However, this year also brought unprecedented fires to Ontario and Canada at-large and Big Basswood Lake experience several extremely smoky days this summer.

This year's tragic fires are a reminder of why the stewardship of our shared natural resources is so important. BBLA works hard to preserve and protect Big Basswood Lake and its watershed.

While our membership numbers have rebounded slightly, we still have only about three quarters of the number of memberships we had prior to the pandemic and relatively few of the 220 properties on the lake.

So why is membership in your lake association important? The association aims to grow and care for our lake. Currently there are a number of issues that threaten to affect the quality of our lake and our cherished Basswood lifestyle if left unchecked. Our efforts in addressing these issues are more effective when backed by robust membership numbers.

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.
- 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 Basswood Lake environment
- Savings on Cottage Insurance through FOCA

Membership

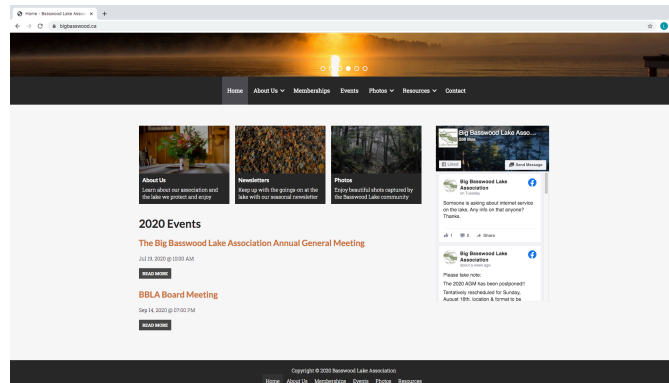
Thank you for renewing your membership. If you have a new neighbor or a neighbor that is not yet a member, please reach out to let them know about the benefits of joining the BBLA. The annual membership fee remains at \$25 per year. Non-voting Associate memberships are also available to local Businesses 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
- 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 in the provided envelope and place in the red box. Remember to take your receipt with you

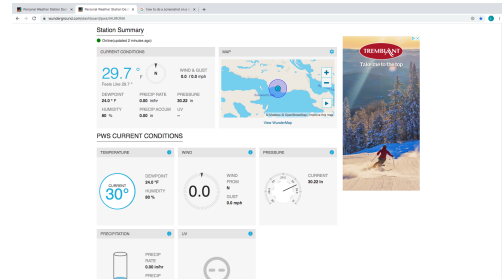
Please join us in caring for our lake.
Your voice and opinions are welcome and very much needed!

Lake Association Web Site



Welcome back to Big Basswood Lake! During the past year, we have made some important changes to the Big Basswood Lake Association website. Our new and improved news and alerts section provides quick access to important developments affecting the lake community. Stories we covered during the fall and winter included updates on the October 2022 Huron Shores municipal elections. Congrats to our new mayor Matt Seabrook and all the council members!

Other changes include new photographs throughout the site, as well as an online version of select BBLA newsletter articles. Be sure to check out the community history articles, transcribed with commentary by BBLA board member Bobby Swain.



- Home page links which allow users to more easily access information
- Additional photos
- Updated historical section
- Archived news items and newsletters
- Upcoming dates for meetings and socials
- a link to real time weather (coming soon).
- a link where membership fees can be paid – PayPal option is available.

We encourage everyone to participate in BBLA membership. To make your membership renewal easier, the board is working to revamp our membership database using technology tools to help us track members, the status of their annual renewals, and institute an opt-in auto-renewal feature. Stay tuned for more on this at this year's AGM.



Chairman's Letter

(continued from page 1)

In closing, this will be the last chairman's letter that I will be authoring. Many of you heard at the last AGM of my intent to retire as chairman after 8 years "at the helm". I did agree to stay on over the winter but it is now time to turn the chairmanship over to Dave Baskcomb who has generously agreed to take over. I know that many of you already know Dave and, if not, it will not take long for him to meet most of you. I am very confident that Dave will do a great job in the role – he has already begun to take over responsibility for many of the files. I plan to stay on as a board member and intend to give Dave my total support during the transition.

I want to thank all of you for your support over these last few years. I believe that we have accomplished much as a group and I am anxious to see that continue. I know that we have the right team to keep our momentum and look forward to supporting them going forward.

Larry Allcorn

Chairman

2023 Annual General Meeting



AGM Invitation

Annual General Meeting - Friday, July 21, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Location: Melwel Lodge

BBLA Summer BBQ (Immediately Following AGM Meeting)

The Big Basswood Lake Association annual general meeting will be held on Friday, July 21st at 4 p.m. at Melwel Lodge.

As with the two previous years, Melwel Lodge has again generously offered BBLA members the use of their facility at the main dining room.

In order to accommodate the check-in and check-out timing of their guests, we have together determined that Friday afternoon is the only available time to host the meeting at the Melwel Lodge venue.

This is a change from our normal Sunday morning meeting time. However we see this as an opportunity to incorporate a social event with the AGM. Monique at Melwel Lodge will be catering a BBQ with hot dogs and hamburgers immediately following the AGM. All attendees are invited to join us at the BBQ which will be funded by the Big Basswood Lake Association (suggested donations will be happily accepted at the event). The BBQ will be "BYOB" so please consume responsibly.

To attend the BBQ, we kindly ask you to RSVP

<https://forms.gle/BZuxtuw5DhBRDfJ1ASummer BBQ>

As always, we strongly encourage you to renew your BBLA membership, if you have not done so already.

We look forward to seeing you at this summer's events!



2023 Cottage Succession webinar series:

Cottage Succession A-Z

Learn how to “Keep the ‘Family’ in the Family Cottage”

Introductory session with an overview of legal, tax and family considerations

Wednesday, September 6th, 2023 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Feature Speaker:

Peter Lillico

Estate Planning Lawyer



Association Host:

**BIG
BASSWOOD
LAKE
PROPERTY
OWNERS
ASSOCIATION**

This event is FREE to all FOCA members including current members of the Big Basswood Lake Property Owners Association.

[Register here](#)

* Remember to provide your name and email address, along with those of your family members who may join the webinar from other locations/emails – each of you will receive a unique Zoom webinar link to join the meeting*

*“If your goal is to keep your family in the cottage for **future generations**, my goal is to help you develop an agreement to secure a lasting and successful succession, avoid family friction and prevent ‘For Sale’ signs sprouting.*



It’s not lack of interest, capital gains tax or other financial pressures that result in most family cottages going up for sale, it’s a consequence of friction within the family that arises from sharing ownership and usage.

~ Peter Lillico, Estate Planning Lawyer

[Register Here:](#)

[Register for Succession Planning Seminar](#)

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.

The Big Basswood Lake Association has centered many of their activities around stewardship. Over the years BBLA has provided information and opportunities to participate in activities that have benefited the lake. Septic inspections, mindful shoreline activities, speakers and links to promoting healthy lake practices are a few ways BBLA has promoted lake health.



Through dedicated volunteers the Big Basswood Lake Association has participated in several long-term stewardship studies e.g the Lake Partner Program through FOCA (measures water clarity, phosphorus, calcium and pH), the Loon Survey through Birds Canada, and the INaturalist Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project is in its second year. Also this summer Big Basswood Lake will be sampled for invasive species. FOCA has initiated a new study, ISampleON, to track the spread of aquatic invasive species through Ontario waterways. It is a DNA test for Water Soldier and European Water Chestnut. Big Basswood Lake is on the northern edge of its presence.

This year BBLA is looking for volunteers to coordinate and participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program. Information and materials will be presented at this year's AGM.

Finally, after organizing the Loon Survey for many years, Leigh Olmstead is stepping down. She has developed the program and the network. Her efforts have been much appreciated. BBLA hopes another volunteer will step forward to coordinate this important effort. Leigh will be available at the AGM to answer questions and has the program information from Birds' Canada.

In summary, the Big Basswood Lake Association has been true to its mission statement adopted 10 years ago. It is a reflection of how much each of us values and cares for Big Basswood Lake. It is a truly special lake.

2023 Secchi Disc Readings

June - West Basin 10.5; East Basin 10.5

July - West Basin 11.0; East Basin 11.0

Update on Canada Water Agency

In past newsletters we have provided a summary of the Federal Government's initiative to establish a new Canada Water Agency intended to coordinate the oversight of freshwater management across the country. These management matters would include authorization of water use and distribution, inland fisheries, habitat, drinking water quality and wastewater systems.

The stated intent of the Feds, was to de-centralize this agency from Ottawa to a location elsewhere in Canada. The City of Sault Ste. Marie had formally developed a bid task force to work to convince the Government to select their city to locate the new agency. The bid group includes political, business, educational and First Nations appointees

The lake association continued to provide active support to this initiative as we saw it beneficial to everyone who was concerned with the stewardship of our fresh water resources.

Unfortunately, we note that the bid to bring the Canada Water Agency to the Soo has proven unsuccessful. The federal government announced in the spring of this year that the CWA would now be headquartered in Winnipeg. Although disappointed at the outcome, we congratulate the Soo for taking the initiative to submit this proposal.

Important Dates for 2023

Spring Board Meeting - 6/19/2023

Annual General Meeting - 7/21/2023

Fall Board Meeting - 9/11/2023

Mike Hunting Memorial Stewardship Award

As of now, we have not received any nominations for the Mike Hunting Memorial Stewardship Award.

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.

To ensure we are recognizing the right individuals and achievements, we have decided to suspend the award for this year to re-calibrate and consider relaunching going forward. The criteria will be re-examined 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.

Big Basswood Water Levels

Currently Basswood Lake water level is normal for the time of year. We know that last fall the level was exceptionally low as reported in our fall newsletter. However, this situation was reversed quickly in April when the snow melted rapidly and water levels rapidly rose. Outflow from



Basswood through Harris Creek was exceptionally high in April as a result of the rapid rise from snow melt. Based on observations at Dayton Road the water flow was higher than normal which contributed to flooding around Bright Lake and some infrastructure damage to municipal roads. There are still unanswered questions about the water

level management at the dam, which may have contributed to the high outflow. However, the Red Rock outflow was also higher than normal through the dam due to rapid snow melt which created flooding in Iron Bridge.

We have mentioned the Harris Creek Dam replacement and the Operating Plan from MNRF for Basswood Lake water levels in past newsletters. To date, we have been unable to re-establish a direct contact with MNRF. We look forward to being able to share an update on that front.

We also continue to dialogue with the municipal council on water levels as they affect both Basswood and Bright Lakes and municipal infrastructure.

Thessalon First Nations Boundary Land Claim

In previous newsletters and at last year's AGM, we informed the membership that the negotiation around the Thessalon First Nations boundary claim had been paused and that the matter had returned to the courts.

You will recall that boundary claim centers around the interpretation of the boundary of the TFN reserve lands as defined in the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850. Specifically, the issue has to do with the definition of the actual boundaries due to confusion in the units of measure. The First Nation understood leagues as the boundary unit of measure while the treaty used miles – a factor of 3 difference.

We were informed last year that the issue that is being reviewed in the courts is that the First Nations is seeking a "Declaration of Aboriginal Title" from the courts to provide some clarity in further negotiations. Whether or not this will be ultimately ruled on is unknown at this time.

The Canadian Encyclopedia defines aboriginal title as:

"Aboriginal title is an inherent right, recognized in common law, that originates in Indigenous peoples' occupation, use and control of ancestral lands prior to colonization. Aboriginal title is not a right granted by the government; rather, it is a property right that the Crown first recognized in the Royal Proclamation of 1763. It has been subsequently recognized and defined by several Supreme Court of Canada decisions."

Last year, we asked Jane Thomas, Sr negotiator with the Ontario government to reconfirm would not be affected in this negotiation and she provided the following guidance:

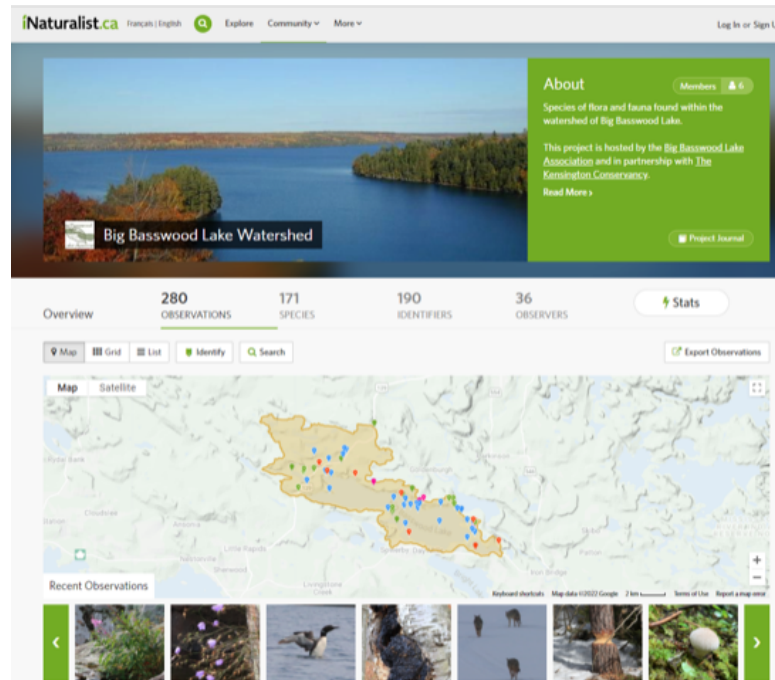
Ontario does not expropriate private lands in settling a land claim. Private property could be included in a land claim settlement if an owner is willing to sell the land and Ontario chooses to purchase it. (See [The land claim negotiation process | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/en/land-claim-negotiation-process))

Recently (June/23) there was major announcement of a \$10B settlement between the treaty parties of the Robinson Huron treaty and the Ontario and Federal governments. Initial reaction was that this settlement resolved the issue of the Thessalon Land Claim. However, further investigation revealed that this settlement appeared only to address past resource royalty payments and did not address the land claim. In an email to Larry Allcorn on Friday, July 10th, Jane confirms this understanding and that the land claim still is before the courts. She is attempting to gain agreement between the negotiating parties on what can be communicated to our group.

Here is a link to the announcement of the resource royalty settlement:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/crown-indigenous-relations-northern-affairs/news/2023/06/robinson-huron-treaty-leadership-ontario-and-canada-announce-proposed-settlement-and-next-steps-in-treaty-annuities-court-case.html>

iNaturalist



CHECK IT OUT!!

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

Check out the Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project on iNaturalist. The iNaturalist platform allows users to post observations, submit photos of flora and fauna for identification, communicate with others with questions and observations and, as you can see on the opening page, provides an overview and data on what has been noted in the area.

The home page has a lot of information—photos and stats. This page provides you with an overview of what has been seen, where it was spotted, photographed and recorded in the Big Basswood Lake Project.

It is easy to sign up. Just go to [inaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org) and sign up. After you sign up you can click on Community then choose Projects from the drop down menu and join the Big Basswood Lake Watershed Project.

Then explore and add some photos. See what other people have observed. You can compare notes with other users.

Be sure to come to the 2023 AGM for a presentation on how to use iNaturalist

Survey of Members

Your Lake Your Views

We have prepared an initial Survey which we will be circulating to the Membership. This Survey will attempt to establish some preliminary demographics of our Members as well as provide a mandate for the BBLA Board to focus on specific issues agreed to by the Survey respondents.

We ask that you please complete the short Survey and also forward the link to any adult or child in your extended cottage ownership or cottage use group - the more data we receive the more we can focus on

Municipal Affairs

The Board of the BBLA has continued an active dialogue with the Municipality of Huron Shores and the new council throughout the winter and this spring 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 new council, the BBLA was asked to present an overview of the septic inspection program that we conducted to the environmental committee of council in April. We have been invited to attend their August meeting to discuss some of the specific issues that we are concerned with. In addition, one of our board members sits on the economic development subcommittee.

The Board has no updated news on specific issues that have been raised by our constituents in the past, however, we continue to communicate with the Mayor, Council, and Staff regularly to move these files forward to the benefit of our Members.

We will provide any concrete news via email to Members as soon as we receive any updates that are material to the resolutions we are seeking.

Concert

"Both Sides Now"

BOTH SIDES NOW
— A TRIBUTE TO CANADIAN SONGWRITERS —
🍁 **WEDS. AUG. 2nd - 7:30PM** 🍁

FROM MICHIGAN:

THE GOOSE AND THE GANDER

ANNA JEREMY EMILY BILLY

admission by donation - all proceeds to the
"North Shore Health Network" Thessalon Site

also featuring:

FROM NORTHERN ONTARIO:

MARK TARANTINI & DONALD JACQUES
🍁 🍁 🍁 🍁 **JOSH MOREHOUSE**

AT THE 12-SIDED BARN
SOWERBY, ONTARIO

Sponsored by The North Shore Sentinel, Big Basswood Lake Association and the Sowerby Hall and Heritage Committee



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 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 Nov 17th. Online sessions included a FOCA update on programs, a report on the economic impact of waterfront property owners, a report on the recent survey completed by FOCA, launch of revised website and tips for engaging with incoming municipal councils. The spring meeting was also attended virtually by members of the BBLA board and included a number of interesting presentations:
 - o Land Use Planning in Bill 23, what it will mean for cottage country
 - o Climate ready property tips and resources
 - o Firesmart Principles for your Waterfront Community
 - o Tick Talk – Tracking the spread of ticks that carry Lyme disease in Ontario
 - o Biodiversity and resiliency – a Call to Action for Nature

Replays to all of these presentations are available

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. A valuable lobbying resource that can speak effectively on behalf of the 500 member associations.
5. FOCA also offers ongoing discounts on a number of products and services. These are also listed in the website above.

History Corner

Board member Bobby Swain has once again authored 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 (linked below) or a selection of his submissions on the lake association website.

(since there is a lot of content in this essay, we have included the preface in the newsletter along with a link to the entire article)



1902 – New York City meets Big Basswood Lake | Basswood Lake Outfitters

In 1902 a group of New York City's most prominent citizens constructed a "Clubhouse" on Big Basswood Lake - this is the story.

1902 – New York City meets Big Basswood Lake

Preface:

In this story, I will describe the diverse and complex intersection of trends and circumstances which led to the establishment of the Canadian Camp Clubhouse on the northeast shore of Big Basswood Lake at the turn of the 1900s. Few people today could understand how central Big Basswood Lake (Lake Waquekobing) was to the phenomenon which was *the Mississauga River Canoe Adventure* from 1900 on into the 1930s.

Big Basswood Lake started as simply an overnight stop at the south terminus of the route however, based on the beauty and bountiful charms of the deep clear lake, it became the prime tourist destination in its own right. Often the accommodation at the Clubhouse was overwhelmed and visitors had to overflow to the Dunn Farm, more centrally located on the north shore of Big Basswood Lake, or alternatively the opulent for the day, twenty-four-room William Harris residence at Day Mills a short hike down Harris Creek on the south shore.

I will discuss the various tangents which ended up intersecting in 1902 and describe how these together influenced the evolution of the Canadian Camp Club efforts in Northern Ontario. The relevant trends or occurrences which brought the idea together were many and given that adventure pursuits in natural settings had become the "zeitgeist" of the era, it was no accident that this focus ended up centering on Big Basswood Lake.

continued next page

History Corner(continued)

The intersecting initiatives can be described generally as follows:

- The infiltration of the fur trade by the Hudson's Bay Company (and later North West Company) into Algoma in the period 1700 to 1885 (try to imagine the extent that almost 200 years of history would entrench into the daily livelihood of both European traders and Indigenous trappers in this area).
- The long-standing Indigenous portage developed during the fur trade, from Lake Huron on to Bright Lake, up to Big Basswood Lake and then the route north to the watershed divide along the Mississauga River drainage passing through the Hudson Bay Trading Post on Green Lake just north of Aubrey Falls
- The completion of the CPR "mainline" along the watershed divide through Northern Ontario north of Lake Huron in 1885 – the route bisected the canoe routes to James Bay from Lake Huron.
- The completion of the Sault branch of the C.P.R. from Sudbury Junction to Sault Ste. Marie in 1887 (the "Soo Line") and the resulting emergence of cross-border luxury train travel to Dayton Station just south of Big Basswood Lake in the very late 1890's.
- The promotion by CPR Tourism Agent L.O. Armstrong of the Hiawatha dance performance at Kensington Point near Desbarats and other tourism initiatives along the Soo line.
- The closing of the copper mines at Bruce Mines in 1976 and the migration of Cornish mining expertise to the Big Basswood Lake area resulting in the Harris Creek development on the south shore named Day Mills.
- The societal trend during the "Progressive Age" advancing outdoorsmanship or sportsmanship and the promotion of conservation of areas in Canada and the US which catered to wilderness sportsmanship.

The emergence of the recreational sport of canoeing in Canada and the U.S. post-1890, and the resultant "canoeing craze" as it was named at that time

Link to the entire essay:

[1902 - New York City meets Big Basswood Lake Basswood Outfitters](#)

DIRECTORS OF BBLA

Dave Baskcomb, Chairman, 705-542-4041

Cynthia Wood, Treasurer, 705-946-0623

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

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

Bobby Swain, History, 778-229-0782

George Craigie, 705- 840-8454

Matt Aho, 917-849-9229

Larry Allcorn, 416-407-2158

