



Newsletter
Volume 35, No 1, January 31, 2016

President's Message:

We are currently experiencing our first taste of winter and if you are like me, some of our thoughts move to thinking about the cottage.

What is going on at Big Gull?
 Do we have ice on the lake?
 How low is the water?
 Do we have a snow cover?

Our green 2015 Xmas certainly reinforced the message of global warming and its accompanying effects: general warming of the lake, consequent climate change for our fish species; a decline in optimum environment for cold water fish like pike and pickerel, an enhancement in the environment for warm water fish species like small mouth bass and crappie; increased potential for aquatic invasive species; low snow cover for amphibians winter survival; through to the very white snow shoe rabbit running around in a green setting looking decidedly out of place.

Looking back at 2015, some of the more influential happenings for seasonal residents related to energy. Ontario Hydro has already increased the rates significantly for low users and the 10-year forecast is for more to come. Our local municipality (with a strong lobby from local Lake Associations) stood up to a Wind Farm proposal from a firm that has little respect for cottage country. Currently, our council is favourably inclined to supporting solar farms.

On our lake, we welcomed the return of the Kid's Fishing Derby and many thanks go the Jeff Burzynski and Jennifer Bell and volunteers. They look forward to your continued support next year. We also ran a very successful BGLEECA Golf tournament organized by the husband and wife team of Jim and Joyce Kuhr, a triathlon run by the Commerfords' and Nancy Gibson, and the Annual Sail Boat Regatta with Norma and Bill Hindson coordinating. Water sampling was carried out by Bev Williams and Virginia Grant, and our Lake Steward, Lynda Corkum, was instrumental in organizing a Loon Survey on the lake (see report below).

For 2016, we welcome the addition of a new director at large, Keith Rowe, otherwise known as a keen fisher. He will be coordinating all things linked to "Communication" and has produced a Kids' Newsletter ***LISTEN, LOOK AND LEARN*** to encourage the interest and involvement of our younger cottagers (see attachment to this newsletter).

Looking ahead, I see continued financial challenges for Ministries and other organizations that are of interest and benefit to cottagers: the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Environment, and Conservation Authorities such as the Mississippi Valley Conservation

Authority. Their ongoing cutbacks will impact flood control, water quality monitoring, invasive species monitoring, shoreline management, water level management etc..

Dark Sky Proposal and North Frontenac Wind Farm

A CBC Report published in June, 2015 noted that the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada designation of a Dark Sky Preserve in North Frontenac has no protected status. This project may be hugely impacted by the proposal to install approximately 200 industrial wind turbines, whose strobe lights (necessary for aircraft safety) would cause so much light pollution that the dark sky area designation would be rendered pointless. North Frontenac's Dark Sky Reserve is one of only 13 such-identified sites across the country, and one of the closest to major urban areas. This is an important place for Canadians to see the night sky as it was meant to be seen.

Aside from the negative impact to the Dark Sky Reserve, the wind farm proposal remains a sore point. The North Frontenac Township voted 7-0 against a wind farm in the area, but the municipality's vote can be overruled by the provincial government.

FOCA News:



What is FOCA and why we are members?

Lynda Corkum and Ken Grant

FOCA is the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association. Big Gull Lake East End Cottage Association (BGLEECA) is one of 510 associations and 50,000 families that are represented by FOCA. Lynda Corkum, who is the BGLEECA Lake Steward, serves as one of ten volunteer Directors of FOCA. Ken Grant, President of BGLEECA, is also President of FOCA.

The mission of FOCA is to *protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario*. Nice mission statement, but what does it mean for us? The answer is that FOCA can influence decision-makers when individuals cannot. FOCA helps cottagers throughout the province to enhance **water quality, boating safety, fair taxation and sustainable waterfronts**.

Here are some highlights of FOCA activities:

- The advocacy group of FOCA has worked with the Ontario Energy Board to negotiate reductions in electrical bills for seasonal residents (cottage owners). Yes, electrical bills will increase soon, but the increase will be significantly less than it might have been, thanks to the efforts of FOCA.
- FOCA has responded to Environment Canada and the US Environmental Protection Agency to argue for increased monitoring of rivers to track nutrients that run off from the land into the Great Lakes.

- FOCA collaborates with conservation authorities, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC), the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and others, to help monitor our lakes for invasive species and nutrients, alerting us to problems that can be addressed. FOCA is doing such a stellar job in the area of enhanced water quality and management of Ontario lakes that in November 2015, the international organization *North America Lake Management Society* gave FOCA the “Leadership and Service – Education and Outreach Award.”
- In October 2015, FOCA along with the Ontario Onsite Water Association took MOECC to task for allowing a resort to release septic effluent directly into Muskoka Lake. FOCA is demanding action to resolve this issue.
- Visit the FOCA website (www.FOCA.on.ca) to see all sorts of helpful information available to members, including a Shoreline Owners Guide to Healthy Waterfronts, fact sheets and videos on invasive species, noise, pollution prevention, docks, safety tips on wood stoves, our night skies, and more. Members also have had access to a webinar on cottage ownership transfers.
- Because our lake association is a FOCA member, we are eligible to receive a bi monthly electronic newsletter called “ELERT”. To set up your account, go to (www.FOCA.on.ca) and register now.
- Reduced group rates for cottage, auto, and boat insurance are available through FOCA. These reduced rates are not available to individual applicants. Membership also entitles us to a discount for Cottage Life magazine.
- FOCA Executive Director, Terry Rees, and staff, Michelle Lewin and Deanna Panitz, work tirelessly. Ken and Lynda have visited the small FOCA office in Peterborough. We can’t envision a more productive, efficient and helpful team, working on our behalf.

We pay \$30 for our Big Gull Lake East End Cottage Association fees. Of this, \$3.25 goes toward FOCA. What a deal!

Our Website

We are continually reviewing material to be posted on the BGLEECA Website and encourage all members to visit their site regularly (www.bgleeca.ca). We have had successful sales of cottage items, cottage rentals, and will continue to post links to other sites that are of interest to cottagers. Check out what’s new and timely at <http://www.bgleeca.ca/>. And remember, if you have ideas to share, let us know.

Let's Support Local Businesses

BGLEECA Members are encouraged to let us know the names and contact information of local craftspeople, tradespeople and other businesses that they have used. We'll contact them and ask

them if they would like to advertise in our annual calendar. A little fund-raiser for us; some good coverage for them! Contact Donna Commerford at donnacommerford@sympatico.ca.

2015 Financial Report

Fund Activity Summary, September 1, 2014 to July 31, 2015

	General Fund	Calendar Fund	Environ. Fund	Totals	North Shore Road Fund
Beginning Balance	12,174	417	17,858	30,449	8,219
Total Revenues	8,758	2,000	-	10,758	10,700
Total Expenses	8,011	946	-	8,957	18,200
Current Balance	12,921	1,471	17,858	32,250	719

Prepared by
Debbie Bird

Financial Review completed by Robert Jelking, on August 16th, 2015

North Shore Road Report

Last year a lot of time was spent to grade our road system. With the addition of a Tractor with a grader blade on the rear three point hitch, roads were kept in good condition. Also Spencer Robinson of Robinson Excavating delivered one of his road graders to me and I had the use of it most of the summer. Any bad spots could be repaired easily. Some new gravel was applied to the end of Marshview Drive, a section that had not received white gravel in the past. As of now, all roads that are maintained by the North Shore Road manager have had at least 1 application of white gravel. Clearing the sides of #10, both Belchams and part of Mosquito Lake Parkway has improved the looks of these roads. Clearing will continue in 2016 until funds run out. Beavers started to show their skills at the start of the 2015 season, but I was able to control the problem. The culvert screen at the end of Mosquito Lake was plugged up with leaves, not beaver-related. I cleaned the culvert screen on Dec 13, 2015.

I believe we have some of the best maintained cottage roads in our area, and with continuing maintenance and controlled speed, our North Shore Roads will be something we can be proud of for many years into the future.

David G. Cox
North Shore Road Manager

The 2015 Annual General Meeting

Our latest Annual General Meeting took place on Saturday, August 22, which was a departure from the usual Labour Day weekend date. This change of weekend didn't seem to have a negative impact as attendance was good. And as usual there was a lot of great food to share at the pot-luck portion of the event. A sincere thank you goes out to all the organizers and volunteers who helped with the AGM! And a special thanks to Shean and Angela for hosting both the Kids' Fishing Derby and the AGM on their property.

Paul Lehman, the General Manager of the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) was at the meeting to talk to us about water levels, climate change, the lake report for Big Gull Lake, and dock building and repairs. A lively discussion with the members ensued about the low water levels that persisted throughout the summer on the lake. A member asked if the MVCA could leave one more log than usual in the dam this spring, and although Paul said that it is a possibility he also reminded everyone that this could cause repercussions downstream. He asked that lake residents provide feedback to him about any possible repercussions. Please to go to the MVCA website <http://mvc.on.ca/> for the latest updates and details about the lakes and rivers in the Mississippi valley watershed area, and for Paul's contact information.

On behalf of the membership, Ken welcomed many new cottagers to our end of the lake as well as to the Big Gull Lake East End Cottage Association. Please be sure to invite and encourage these new neighbours to participate in our various BGLEECA activities. Ken also extended thanks to everyone who volunteers at events, both publicly and behind the scenes, and to those who provide prizes. The activities and events include the fishing derby, the golf tournament, creating our wall calendar, procuring ads for the calendar, managing the shoal marker, the sailing regatta, the triathlon, auditing our finances, lake monitoring activities, loon counting, the creel survey, participating as Area Reps and more.

The Treasurer's report, the Lake Steward report, and road reports were each presented to the members and no problems were identified through any of the reports. Elections were also held at the meeting. Current members of the executive will retain their positions, and Keith Rowe was elected as our new Director at Large so congratulations, and welcome, Keith. We're all looking forward to a great 2016 season on Big Gull Lake.

Janet Sidey, Secretary

**Big Gull Lake East End Cottage Association 2015
Loon Survey**



Photograph by Annemarie Claremont



Photograph by Debbie Bird

This year, volunteers on Big Gull Lake participated in the Canadian Lakes Loon Survey (Table 1). The survey on our lake is one of many conducted across the country to determine the reproductive success of loons. Surveys are coordinated by Bird Studies Canada. Volunteers surveyed loons in early June (when loons establish territories), in mid-late July (when chicks hatch) and in late August (when young have reached more than half the size of an adult). Some volunteers reported observations at other times as well. The survey will determine how many young will survive to migrate south.

The Common Loon feeds on fish and because the loon is high in the food chain, the bird is a good indicator of lake health. Results of loon surveys across Canada have shown that loon reproductive success increases with lake size. However, acid participation (not a problem on Big Gull Lake) results in a decline in fish on which loons depend. Acid conditions also increase the availability of methyl mercury. High levels of human activity and development may negatively affect loon nests. Adults are long-lived (up to 20 years) and often return to the same breeding territory each year.

With sincere thanks to all of the volunteers,
Lynda Corkum

Table 1. The 2015 Big Gull Lake East End Common Loon Survey Results
(YOY, young of the year)

Area	June 6		July 17			August 22				Surveyors
	# singles	# pairs	# chicks	# singles	# pairs	# chicks	# singles	# pairs	YOY	
1	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	Nancy Kingston
2	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	Julie Carty, Prior & Keefer families
3	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	Virginia Grant
4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	Karen Saer
5	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	Jim Kuhr
6	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	Dave & Pam Cox
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Dave & Pam Cox
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Donna Commerford
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Donna Commerford
10	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	Donna Commerford, Lynda Corkum
11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Kathryn Erickson and family
12	2	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	Debbi Burnie, Annemarie Clermont, Dan Hindson
13	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	Lynda Corkum, Sheena Ciborowski
SUM	6	4	5	4	6	3	9	4	1	

2015 Directors			
Position	Name	Address	Phone
President	Ken Grant	1054A East Belcham	479-0064
Vice President	Donna Commerford	1178B Helen Lane	479-2901
Treasurer	Debbie Bird	1302 Marshview Dr	479-8071
Secretary	Janet Sidey	1087 Jones Lane	479-0287
Environment	Lynda Corkum	1029 Gnage Lane	479-2743
North Shore Rd	David Cox	1050 Oak Ridge Point	479-9944
Director at Large	Keith Rowe	1122 Helen Lane	479-2238

Thanks to our Newsletter Editor Leslie Maitland for her contributions in the production of this newsletter.

New! Remit your membership and north shore road fees with E-Transfer through on-line banking

You can now send money electronically to pay your membership as well as north shore road fees using a Canadian bank account with Online Banking. Participating financial institutions include CIBC, BMO Bank of Montreal, Desjardins, HSBC Bank Canada, Laurentian Bank, National Bank, President's Choice Financial, RBC Royal Bank of Canada, Scotiabank, Tangerine Bank, TD Canada Trust, and many more. Send your e-transfer to Debbie Bird at bgleeca@icloud.com. Send a separate email with your security question and answer.

Please include any changes to your address and contact information so we may keep our membership list up to date.

See form, below, if you prefer snail mail.

BIG GULL LAKE EAST END COTTAGE ASSOCIATION

Dues and Fees 2016

1	Full Membership: Annual Dues and Insurance: \$30	
2	North Shore Road Maintenance Fees for cottages in areas 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 who use the North Shore Road: \$200	
3	Associate Membership (Non-cottage owners): \$10	
	Total (Canadian Funds only)	

Name: _____

Cottage Address: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cottage Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please make cheque payable to: **Big Gull Lake East End Cottage Association**

Mail to treasurer: Debbie Bird, 5766 Queenscourt Cres. Manotick, ON K4M 1K3

Pay by email transfer through online banking to Debbie Bird – bgleeca@icloud.com

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