



Message from the President

Welcome to the 2022 cottage season. While there may be snow on the ground and the winter winds are cold and blowing, I know that like many of you, I am thinking about the upcoming cottage season. We spent 5 days at our “3 season” cottage over the holidays, and while the weather didn’t necessarily co-operate with freezing rain and a bit of snow, the winter beauty of the lake is amazing.

This past year was a busy one with most of our meetings being held virtually. Our AGM was held in person, and I would like to thank all the cottagers who took the time to attend. Thank you to all board members for agreeing to continue to be part of the executive of BGLEECA.

We are still awaiting the results of the consultation process and decision regarding Whiteduck Provincial Park. I recently contacted Doug Carr to enquire about the status of the decision. He basically said that there is no news at this time as the treaty action is “elsewhere”. He stated that he felt confident that “things were evolving in the right direction but still didn’t have the “formal buy-ins” needed to take the next steps. I will continue to contact Mr. Carr to keep this issue front and centre. Hopefully a decision will come soon.

There was a discussion about marking the of shoals in the lake. Placement of these markers requires many volunteer hours, due diligence to ensure that all markers are

maintained, and all shoals have been properly marked. It was decided that, given the time and responsibility associated with this project, that the Board would encourage all cottagers to mark shoals adjacent to their own property.

FOCA, Federation of Cottage Associations, has lots of great information. Please check out their website at <https://foca.on.ca> for information on what is happening in Ontario in cottage country. Some items that might interest you are:

- [Cottage First Insurance program](#)
- [Cottage Succession Planning](#)
- [Lake Partner Program](#)

The Ontario Energy Board has approved Hydro One’s plan to eliminate the Seasonal Rate Class. This doubling of our electricity rates will be phased in over the next 10 years. A few of our year-round cottagers may qualify for the Rural and Remote Electricity Protection Rates available to Hydro One’s rural year-round residential customers. A year-round residential customer requires eight months of continuous occupation of a dwelling over the year.

[Learn more here.](#)

Donna Commerford, President

Status on Short Term Commercial Rentals in North Frontenac

This topic has become an interesting one for many Frontenac municipalities as well as provincial cottage associations. Below is a summary of the progress thus far and the next steps that will take place this year. Bruce Moore, President of the North Frontenac Lake Association Alliance, provided this summary.

- Following discussion and agreement within the NFLAA, a discussion paper was presented to the Mayor and Councillors Inglis and Martin. This discussion was attended by Henry Hogg, the Reeve of Addington Highlands, with interest then and now being shown by the Mayors of Central and South Frontenac.
- The discussion paper is found on the website at nflaa.ca under current initiatives.
- This initial meeting resulted in an agreement to form a Working Group to explore the topic and possible ways to proceed. This working group is being co-chaired by Mayor Higgins and Bruce Moore, President of NFLAA.

- NFLAA prepared draft Terms of Reference for the working group, which is expected to meet before the end of January.
- Further to this initiative, the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) has a working committee looking more fully into this topic due to the growing number of concerns being brought to the organization's attention.
- Additionally short-term rentals are a subtopic in discussions at the Frontenac County which is striving to establish a "Destination Development Plan" to stimulate more visitors to the County. Bruce, as President of NFLAA, is on this committee.

Stay safe and healthy. Hopefully this new variant of COVID will be under control quickly so we can all enjoy the upcoming 2022 season.

Donna Commerford, President

Association Business in a Pandemic

The past two years have brought big changes in so many aspects of our lives. The terms "remote", "virtual", "Zoom" and "FaceTime" have become commonplace in describing so many of our day-to-day activities. This includes everything from family visits to business meetings. For those of us conducting the business of the Big Gull Lake East End Cottage Association, this is certainly true.

Association business during this time has relied heavily on remote connections through electronic media. The Executive meets regularly via Zoom. Last year, during our participation in consultation concerning the Whiteduck Provincial Park, this included almost weekly meetings with Association

members and other Big Gull Lake residents. People were able to be part of these discussions from around the province and right across the country. The annual meeting of Area Representatives was also able to proceed through virtual media in 2021 with almost full attendance. Thank you, Area Reps for your patience and perseverance. We were fortunate that by the end of summer in 2021, we were able to conduct an in-person Annual General Meeting. However over the fall and winter, things seem to have moved back to more remote contact. Hopefully by cottage season in 2022, we will have the option of more face-to-face (as opposed to screen-to-screen) interaction. In the meantime, it has been a learning experience for all of us.

Greg Best, Vice President

Shore Road Allowances on Big Gull Lake.

If you own property in North Frontenac Township on Big Gull Lake, you may be familiar with the term “Shore Road Allowance”. If not, there are some things you should know.

The Shore Road Allowance is a 20 metre (66 foot) wide strip of land separating lake-front properties on Big Gull Lake from the lake. It was originally created in the 19th century on Crown Lands to allow for things such as logging and transportation of goods. When Crown Lands were transferred to the Township, the Shore Road Allowance remained in place and is now owned by the Township. Municipalities are permitted to sell Shore Road Allowances to abutting landowners.

Unless you or a previous owner have purchased the Shore Road Allowance between your property and the lake, it remains township property. This means that you would not be able to obtain a building permit for any work

you were planning within the Shore Road Allowance. There may also be older buildings which have been constructed within the Shore Road Allowance. In this case, the Township suggests it may be beneficial to purchase your Shore Road Allowance in consideration of any future sale or financing of the property.

Purchasing a Shore Road Allowance involves a fairly lengthy process of application and approvals. The Township estimates eight to twelve months, but it can be longer. Costs associated with the purchase include actual cost of the property (currently 15 cents per square foot), an administration fee of \$1000 payable to the Township, your legal fees, and fees for any survey of the property should that be required.

For more information including the steps in the process of purchase, you can visit the North Frontenac Township website www.northfrontenac.com or call the Township office at **613 479 2231**
Greg Best, Vice President

Results of the 2021 Safe Quiet Lakes Survey

Thank you to the 63 people who took time to respond to the survey last summer, “Your Lake, Your View”. The summary for our lake can be found here: [Survey Results for Big Gull Lake](#). The report highlights two fundamental observations, our belief that preserving the natural state of the lakes is our responsibility, and that most power boaters have a large responsibility for the safe coexistence of activities on the lakes. At the end of the report is a link to the Safe Quiet Lakes study with the almost 6,000 responses from across Ontario, which were very similar to ours.

Keith Rowe, Communications

Ever wondered what to do with the ash from your fireplace?

Years of acid rain have left some lakes in central Ontario with “ecological osteoporosis”, a term scientists use to paint a picture of what happens to the environment when not enough calcium is present. Aquatic species, including crayfish, clams, and tiny *Daphnia* (water fleas) disappear when they lack calcium to build their shells. In the bush, calcium-deprived maples are more likely to snap in windstorms. Our Canadian Shield’s thin acidic soils have very low calcium to start with. **We can help by thinly spreading fireplace ash around our trees (not directly into the water).** Wood ash is rich in calcium, magnesium, potassium and phosphorus. The minerals will make their way through the soil, into the trees and eventually leach into our lake.

Debbie Bird

Lake Steward Report – Ken Grant

Environmental topics related to global warming continue to dominate our lives including those of us who live on the shores of Big Gull Lake. This last year has been considerably warmer, and our mean water temperature is rising. This affects fish species and provides a more hospitable climate for invasive plant species.

Conservation Authorities:

The Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority has been under budget restrictions causing a reduction in environmental programs such as lake water monitoring, shoreline enhancement programs and protecting important water/marsh land from development. Also at risk was their authority to identify and manage flood plain development. The good news is that the current Provincial Government has created a working body of Conservation Authority representatives to help it manage priorities and funding for Conservation Authorities so that they can continue their valuable work.

Invasive Plant Species:

Eurasian Water Milfoil continues to be a challenge for many freshwater lakes including parts of the shoreline on Big Gull Lake. Swimming, boating and fishing are all affected. An interesting study has been published looking at attempts to manage Eurasian Milfoil over a 25-year period. (See [*Challenges and Successes Managing Eurasian Watermilfoil in Lake Luzerne: A 25 Year Citizen-Government Partnership. The Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies, Vol 24, 2019*](#)). This article has also been posted on our BGLEECA website: bgleeca.ca. The lessons learned include reporting on the effectiveness of chemical controls, water mats and manual harvesting techniques. While eradication is not achievable, maintaining some control appears to be attainable.

Septic Re-inspection:

I contacted the Municipal Office to enquire about their plans to run the septic re-inspection program during the 2022 season. The Public Works Manager informed me that he would be presenting a plan for the upcoming season and would let me know what Council approves. We will share this information with you once it becomes available.

Gypsy Moth (renamed Lymantria-Dispar-Dispar or Idd moth):

Everyone recalls last season when the Idd moth ravaged many of our Red Oak, Maple, Poplar and Birch trees. Fortunately, the life cycle for the current invasion appears to be on the decline and we should not see the same level of devastation in 2022. Late summer and fall of 2021 also saw a large die off of the larvae due to natural fungus and virus attacks. The Ministry of Natural Resources has an excellent overview article describing the Idd moth, it's characteristics, it's life cycle, natural controls, etc. (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/lymantria-dispar-dispar-idd-moth>)

The cottage association has a number of moth kits available on a first come, first serve basis. Please contact Ken or Virginia Grant at 613-479-0064 once cottage season opens.

The cottage association is aware that some cottage groups are planning to organize aerial BTK spraying for the upcoming season.

Two Species of Eagles Return to Big Gull Lake

A beautiful summer day in early August and a great excuse for a quick boat ride down the lake to show my brother a couple of lake landmarks, including a little swimming bay very popular with cottagers at the West end of the lake known as 'The Bathtub'. It was on this little excursion, having enjoyed the beauties of Big Gull Lake for more than 50 years, that I experienced a big first. I spotted a big bald eagle flying overhead, near shore in the northeast corner of the big part of the lake. The distinctive markings, the white head and dark brown body and wings, are hard to miss. The eagles are known to have a nest in that area and have been spotted in pairs sitting atop trees.

So, the big news is that eagles are back after being nearly wiped out in this part of Canada beginning in the 1950's because of DDT and 35 years of being on the endangered species list. Bald Eagles are making a slow recovery and they are once again Lake residents. What is even more surprising is the return of the endangered species of Golden Eagles.

The Golden Eagle population in eastern North America is currently estimated at only a few hundred pairs. But retired Biologist and west-end cottager, Jim Ogilvie, has had the unique pleasure of spotting the birds in the far west end of BGL. "I have personally spotted a pair of Golden Eagles that nested in the east area of Earls Bay" (west end of Big Gull Lake). Jim says his observation is independently supported by the [Ontario government map \(MNR data\)](#) that clearly documents nesting sites in the west end area of Big Gull Lake plus a second location slightly north and east.

The large birds are dark brown with slightly paler flight feathers and a golden nape that can be seen from certain angles.

As for the Bald Eagles there is a dark side to their return. There are reportedly increased findings of Loon chick remains and a lower incidence of loons overall on the lake. The Eagles are, of course, a predatory bird high on the food chain. However you should expect nature to regain it's balance in the long run. Loons are powerful birds who are quite capable of defending themselves. In fact, a recent story appearing in National Geographic described the case of a mysterious eagle murder in New England. In July of 2019, an eagle had been found stabbed through the heart. The forensic examination revealed it was not a human stabbing as feared, but rather the pointed beak of a loon that had pierced the Eagle's chest; retribution it appears for stealing and killing a chick from the loon's nest. The remains were nearby. National Geographic - [Why did a loon stab a bald eagle through the heart?](#)

So, for the avid bird watchers out there and we know there are many, two species to keep an eye out for on Big Gull Lake this summer.

Here's a list of websites provided by Jim Ogilvie for further reading

[About Bald Eagles](#)

[About Golden Eagles](#)

[Identifying Eagles at different ages](#)

Richard McIlveen