

2021 Newsletter

FEATURES

2020 Photo Contest

QCA Strategic Planning Initiative

MLFI Forestry Update

A Year of Living Remotely

Swim Around Skoot

Socially Undistanced

Cottage Fire Safety

Windstorm on the Narrows

Shoreline Camping

The Rising Price of Cottages

Skootamatta District Ratepayers Association

Photo credit: Jennifer Robertson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

So, 2020... It was a year for the history books and one that we won't ever forget. At the time of publishing the newsletter, we are seeing many people getting their vaccines and I truly hope this means we can all feel more comfortable rejoining our lake community.

While we had to make a lot of changes to our 2020 events, and had to cancel some of our favourites, we hope you were able to keep engaged with the community, either through the modified events or through social media. We saw some great dock decorations for our Canada Day celebration, in lieu of the boat parade. We ran our AGM online for the first time, and we think it went well. While we missed seeing everyone



in person and talking, we were glad to see some first time members at the virtual meeting. After discussions with Public Health, we were able to hold our annual end-of-summer fireworks show. It was great to be able to hold at least one event like we have in the past. We also held our end-of-year photo contest and I was blown away by the talent of our members. We had 95 entries, which is more than double the previous year! Check out the winning entries and a collage of all entries in this newsletter.

Now, it's 2021 and we're looking forward to a new cottage season, which kicked off with the annual Great Canadian Skootamatta Ice Contest. Be sure to read about who nailed the right date!

The Board saw a few changes this year: Anders Holder has left the Board, which leaves the Lake Steward role vacant. Be sure to see the position information on the website, if you are interested in taking on this role. Also, Christie Arthurs has stepped down from the Secretary role, and Carla Baetz has taken up the reigns. Christie has remained on the Board as a director and has, again, been a great lead on this wonderful newsletter. Jim Chinnick has joined the Board as well and has been busy with the latest Forest Management Plan. Be sure to read Jim's piece on how that is going. As always, we are looking for new people to join the Board. A sense of humour is always a great asset!



I'm optimistic that this year will be better than last year and, pending public health restrictions, I am hopeful that we will be able to hold more physically distanced events. So, with that, welcome to the 2021 cottage season!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "G. Arthurs".

SDRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: JULY 3, 2021



Please join us for the SDRA 2021 Annual General Meeting on Saturday July 3rd, 2021. Once again, the AGM will be held virtually. Last year was our first AGM via Zoom, and we had some very positive feedback about the format. While we were hoping to be able to have a face-to-face meeting that was also streamed online, due to the ongoing pandemic, the meeting will be online only. In future years, we will see if we can arrange to do both!

Although we will not have "AGM Booths" as we have in the past, community representatives will be presenting during the meeting and be available to answer your questions.

Find out more about volunteering or about joining the Board during the AGM! We hope to 'see' you there!

All SDRA Members are invited to join us!

When: Saturday, July 3, 2021

Where: Online! The Zoom link will be provided closer to the date.

9:45 - 10:00: Signing in, "meet and greet" (as much as is practical on Zoom)

10:00-12:00: Formal Meeting

CURRENT SDRA BOARD SLATE

President: Joel Arthurs

Vice President: Marianne Plumb

Treasurer: Bill Blake

Secretary: Carla Baetz

Lake Steward: *Vacant*

Webmaster: Jackie Bleecker

Director: Christie Arthurs

Director: Jim Chinnick

Directors: *Vacant*

Have you ever wanted to know more about joining the Board? Please let us know and we'd be happy to answer your questions. There are lots of opportunities to get involved!

Ready to join the Board? You can do this in two ways;

1. Email info@skootamatta.ca and let us know
2. Volunteer to join the Board during the AGM



Charlene & Kevin Van Dusen
Store Owners and Friendly Neighbours

fld6740northbrook@sobeys.com

Highway 41
Northbrook, ON
K0H 2G0
(T) 613 336 2647
(F) 613 336 9492

SDRA BOARD VOLUNTEER ROLES:

President

- Represent SDRA to external stakeholders and governments
- Chair the AGM
- Keep apprised of topics and issues of interest to members

Vice-President

- Assist the President with external stakeholders and governments
- Serve as key liaison with FOCA
- Collect articles and data in preparation for the newsletter

Treasurer

- Prepare financial reports, including an annual report for members
- Prepare annual tax filings on behalf of the SDRA
- Ensure SDRA insurance information is current and valid
- Maintain financial records, bank accounts, and GIC investments

Lake Steward

- Coordinate and complete various water testing responsibilities,
- Update the Lake Management Plan and lead on actionable strategies
- Keep apprised of MLFI operations and participate in consultation opportunities

Secretary

- Schedule regular Board meetings and develop agendas
- Take Board meeting minutes, assigning action items .
- Maintain an electronic SDRA asset log and ensure it is up-to-date

Webmaster

- Post content and respond to comments on SDRA website
- Manage the photo contest, including voting and tabulation
- Maintain domain and hosting registrations

Communications Director

- Maintain mailing list and email POPs to SDRA members
- Put up and take down all kiosk signs, as needed
- Organize and administer contests such as the "Great Canadian Skootamatta Ice Contest" and "Canada Day Dock Decorating Contest"

Directors-at-Large

- Take an active role in Board activities and volunteer where possible
- Lead initiatives and special interest projects that advance the goals of the SDRA
- Identify potential new members and promote SDRA activities

2020 PHOTO CONTEST RESULTS



1st Place:

"Burning Shores of
Skootamatta"

by Wendy Meikle



2nd Place:

"Reflection"

by Sandra Meeks



3rd Place:

"Skootamatta Sunrise"

by Tricia Sinclair

We had a phenomenal number of entries to our photo contest in 2020!

Check out the collage on the next two pages to see them all.

Keep taking those pictures all year-round this year, and save them for the 2021 Photo Contest. The announcement of the contest will be coming in the fall.

2020-2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Skootamatta District Ratepayers Association

Annual Report - March 31, 2021

Prepared by Bill Blake, Treasurer

	Notes	2020-21 Year End	2019-20 Year End
Revenue:			
Membership Revenue	1)	7960	8320
Newsletter Advertising	2)	1680	2110
Boat Launch Intake	3)	1085	803
Other		126	140
Total Revenue:		10,851	11,373
Expenses:			
Communication	4)	2692	3119
Member Events	5)	196	2244
Stewardship	6)	2319	850
Community Relations	7)	500	693
Lot and Launch Maintenance	8)	941	1348
Administration	9)	2818	2314
Total Expenses:		9,466	10,568
Surplus or Deficit:		1,385	805
Opening cash position (excluding fireworks)		20,875	
Closing cash position (excluding fireworks)		22,260	
Opening Fireworks Fund		530	
Changes in Fireworks Fund		-250	
Closing Fireworks Fund	10)	280	
Closing Cash with Fireworks fund		22,540	

Notes to Accompany Year End Financial Statements: March 31st, 2021

1. Revenue of \$7960 includes two voluntary double payments, for a total of \$80 beyond expected revenue of \$7880 for 197 memberships
2. Offsets the cost of publishing the Annual Newsletter
3. Collected on a voluntary basis from boaters who launch at Trails End
4. Newsletter and web-site hosting
5. Costs of hosting a virtual AGM and Photo Competition prizes
6. Water testing and FOCA Membership
7. Community Services donation (\$500)
8. Grass cutting and repairs to signage at Trail's End
9. Liability insurance and administrative expenses
10. Surplus is the result of events such as the Lake Festival and the Pot Luck not being held
11. Closing cash includes a GIC with a face value of \$7000

COMMUNITY DONATION

Each year, the SDRA makes a donation to a community organization. For the past several years, the donation has gone to the Land O'Lakes Community Services in Northbrook. LOLCS is a community-based, non-profit, multi-service organization, whose mission is "Providing health and social services to enhance quality of life." These services include a Women's Program, a Community Support program, and an Adult Protective Services Program. Each of these programs provides a wide range of support, activities, and needed services to the residents of the area. For more information about Land O'Lakes Community Services, please go to their website, www.lolcs.com or visit them on Facebook.

DRIVING HOME FROM THE COTTAGE

By Paul Lindsay

What a wonderful weekend we just spent at the cottage. I am so relaxed. The weather was perfect. Sunny and warm with a light breeze all weekend. I don't know if I have ever felt this calm. But it's Sunday and time to head home to the city. The car is packed and now it's time to head down the dirt road toward home. The smells of the wilderness are wafting through the car. I love this place and the way it makes me feel. There is no better place in the world to come and let the tensions of the city just melt away.

As I turn onto the highway I bring the car up to 80 kph. I'm in no hurry. It's a beautiful day. But a car comes up behind me and then passes in a hurry. What's your rush? Enjoy this gorgeous day. Then another car comes up behind me so I speed up to 90 kph. He passes in a rush too. Why do people drive so aggressively? There really isn't any need. Just relax! Soon two more cars pass quickly so I decide to speed up to 100 kph. At that I'm not even keeping up with them. The hairs on my neck are starting to bristle. This isn't a competition, it's just a

drive home. Why are they driving like that? Up ahead a car pulls onto the highway. As I come up behind him I realize he's only doing 80 kph. What an idiot! Doesn't he know we are all trying to get home? I pass him and give him a dirty look as I pass. Then I catch up to another car that is only doing 90 kph. Come on!! After several tries, I pass him too. What else is going to slow me down on this stupid drive? Oh, I can't wait to get to the 401 and make some good time.

At last, the 401. But why is everyone driving in the passing lane? Don't they know it's for faster traffic? Good, they pulled over. But now I have two big trucks passing each other. I can't even tell which one is going faster than the other! This is so frustrating! Will I ever get home? Good, he finally pulled in. We have reached the three lanes and traffic isn't much better. AAAAhhhhhhh!

As I pull into my driveway my hands are clenched on the steering wheel, my palms are sweating and my heart is pounding. Man, I could use a weekend at the cottage!



Photo credit: Tricia Sinclair

LAND O'LAKES GARDEN CLUB

Hello Skootamatta,

A new season begins! The Garden Club is very hopeful that we will be able to resume our monthly meetings sometime soon and hopefully have our much anticipated annual Spring Plant Sale.

We look forward to beautifying the two Township gardens at Barrie and Harlowe Halls, Pine Meadow Nursing Home gardens, Cloyne Pioneer Cemetery and of course the community planter boxes.

If you are interested in joining the club or have any questions you can contact us at: lolgardenclubn7@gmail.com.



Also, be sure to visit our website at: landolakesgardenclub.com

Look forward to seeing you,

Mary Kelly & Janis St John, Co-Chairs



BASEBALL TEAM UPDATE

We are hopeful that senior and family baseball can happen this summer!

Tuesday evenings 6:30 pm and Friday mornings 9:30 am

Starting: Friday May 28th. and Tuesday May 31st.....pending COVID restrictions

If anyone is interested, call 613-661-2449

or email: shanebeth2@gmail.com

LAKE HEALTH REPORT

In 2020 the SDRA completed a comprehensive water testing of ten different sites around Skootamatta. Below is a summary of the results.

		1974	2013 Average	2015 Average	2017 Average	2020 Average
Analysis	Units					
Temperature Upon Receipt	°C				20.000	18.000
Alkalinity	mg/L as CaCO ₃	13.000			10.600	10.500
pH	units	7.000			7.262	7.123
Conductivity	µS/cm	53.000			37.100	35.100
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen	as N mg/L	0.350	0.301	0.510	0.500	0.656
Ammonia+Ammonium (N)	as N mg/L	0.010	0.026	0.010	0.100	0.200
Chloride	mg/L	0.600			1.000	<1
Hardness	mg/L as CaCO ₃	20.000		17.000	16.050	15.560
Calcium (total)	mg/L		5.468	5.152	4.943	4.922
Iron (total)	mg/L	0.300			0.078	0.021
Potassium (total)	mg/L	1.100			0.612	0.716
Sodium (total)	mg/L	1.100			0.965	1.173
Phosphorus (total)	mg/L	0.020	0.024	0.018	0.012	0.003
E. Coli	cfu/100mL		0.500	0.300	2.000	3.556
Glyphosate	mg/L					<.001

What we have seen between 2017 and 2020, with the expanded testing, is a concerning increase in concentrations of E. Coli, nitrogen, ammonia, and sodium. One reason for this could be the time of year that testing was completed. While 2017 was completed in early July, the 2020 tests were completed in late August. This seasonal difference could impact the results. Another possibility is an increase in septic system seepage into the lake. It is important to ensure your septic systems are working properly and that any damage is repaired.

The good news about these results is that calcium levels are still well below the requirements for Zebra Mussel growth. Phosphorus, in excess, can be a contributor to algae blooms and reduced oxygen levels. Since 2013, phosphorus has been declining and has dropped to near undetectable levels. Finally, the one time test of glyphosate was to determine if pesticides were evident in lake water. The result did not show any detectable level of the chemical.



Photo credit: Laurie Carson

In order to increase our knowledge of lake health, the SDRA will be taking part in the Water Rangers Program. This will allow us to complete seasonal (spring, summer, fall) testing at the same ten sites as the bi-annual testing and track the following; pH, alkalinity, hardness, conductivity, water temperature, and dissolved oxygen. This annual detailed testing will allow us to better understand how the lake changes as the seasons progress.

QUINTE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE

In February 2021, the SDRA was invited to participate in a series of Strategic Planning sessions being undertaken by the Quinte Conservation Authority (QCA). Facilitated by a consulting firm, Pickard & Laws Consulting Group Inc., and members of management and staff of the QCA, several planning and brainstorming sessions have been held with participants drawn from a wide range of stakeholders, including lake associations, school boards, business people, etc.

First, some background on Conservation Authorities. There are 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario, which are local watershed management agencies delivering services and programs to protect and manage impacts on water and other natural resources in partnership with all levels of government, landowners and many other organizations. In addition, Conservation Authorities acquire land for recreation and conservation purposes.



Photo credit: Yvonne Sodtka

The core mandate of Conservation Authorities is to undertake watershed-based programs to protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards, and to conserve

natural resources for economic, social and environmental benefits.

Funding for Conservation Authorities comes from four main sources: Municipal levies, Self-generated revenue, Provincial grants and special projects, and federal grants or contracts.

The Quinte Conservation Authority is responsible for the watershed that includes the area of interest to SDRA members, specifically Skootamatta, Sheldrake and Pringle Lakes, and the wetlands that drain into these lakes. The SDRA has a long history of working with the QCA, but members might be most aware of their management activities including managing the lake water levels, assessing developments that might impact the water or riparian zone quality, and support programs such as providing shrubbery intended to be planted along the shore to protect against erosion.

Over the past couple of years there have been several important changes in the operating environment for the QCA. These include regulatory changes (proposed and enacted), financial limitations, and large increases in volumes of users of their Conservation Areas (largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic), and climate changes causing increases in flooding and risks to basic water sources.

As a result of these challenges, the QCA decided to undertake a Strategic Planning process to determine the best uses of their resources to meet these challenges over the period 2021 – 2030.

As examples of the regulatory challenges, we

can consider Bills 197 and 229, which expand Ministerial authority to override local CA authorities regulations to permit development in areas that would have previously been seen as environmentally sensitive and thus protected. Under this act, the Minister is further empowered to issue Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZOs), requiring for example that CAs issue permits for projects that otherwise would not qualify.

You can see the SDRA response to Bill 229 here: <https://www.skootamatta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SDRA-Comments-on-Bill-229.pdf>

These bills also exempt forestry from the environmental assessment process, removing the few legal mechanisms that prioritize conservation and protect natural areas, in contrast to the goals of the Conservation Authorities.

It is noted here that a recent use of such an MZO can serve as an example of the threat and the potential for positive action to rebuff “misuse”. Earlier this year an MZO was issued requiring the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to issue a permit for a developer to eradicate a wetland area in Pickering (part of the Green Belt) for the purpose of building a very large warehouse and distribution centre. This development had previously been denied, and it had been noted that there was properly zoned land in the neighbouring community of Ajax. The TRCA thus was required to issue the development permit. On the positive side, two students learned of this plan, and initiated an action plan to reverse this decision. This action plan grew to a significant protest, and while the government was not willing to rescind their decision, the end customer for the development realized this was not a good business decision (Perhaps “Open for Business” is not always “Good for Business”?)

Clearly these Provincial Government initiatives

severely impact the ability of CAs to carry out their mandate, essentially watering down their regulatory role.

The increase in use of the conservation areas is a good thing, and a challenge. Large influxes of people interested in benefiting from time in nature is a positive attribute, but dealing with rapid changes in usage creates resource and financial challenges.

The Strategic Planning process was broken up into four vision guideposts:

- Accelerating Advocacy
- Strengthening Brand Recognition
- Boosting Well-Being
- Advancing Environmental Science

The participants in the Strategic Planning process were put into breakout groups to consider these categories and what 4-5 priority goals could be set as part of a forward looking strategic planning process.

There were many positive outcomes from the “brainstorming” in each of these groups, and the current work is being driven by Pickard & Laws Consulting Group Inc. and QCA management to consolidate a Vision Statement and actionable plans to achieve the related goals during the Strategic Plan timeline.

Be sure to visit the updated Quinte Conservation website to better understand their goals and function:

<https://www.quinteconservation.ca>



Photo credit: Joanne Volpe

2021 EVENTS

Please note these are the *planned events*, however, they are subject to change due to the uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic.

Canada Day Festivities

Boat Parade and Dock Decorating Contest

Thursday July 1st @ 11:00 am

Starting in Jacques Bay

Decorate your boat and docks in Canadian colours!



Annual General Meeting

Saturday July 3rd @ 9:45 am

Online via Zoom

(the Zoom link will be emailed to members)

Join us for SDRA updates, meet the board, and ask questions.



Ron and Esther's Potluck



Early August
Tentative

Stay tuned for further updates. Information will be emailed to members via the "Pops" when available.

Fireworks

Saturday
September 4th
@ 8:30 pm
Causeway

A farewell to
summer



Annual Food Drives

September 5-6th
and October 9-11th

Hwy 41 and
Skootamatta Lake Rd

The SDRA will be
collecting for the Cloyne
Food Bank



Due to the uncertainty of the ongoing pandemic, our Lake Festival has been cancelled for 2021.

*For those events taking place, **please comply with all public health measures for the safety of our lake community.***

THE GREAT CANADIAN SKOOTAMATTA ICE CONTEST

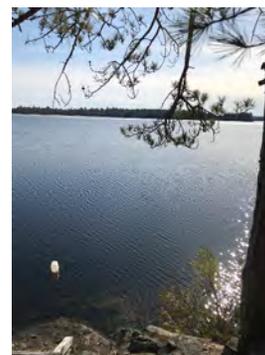
We certainly had an eager group of members this year who wanted to get on with Cottage Season. Covid isolation has made Cottage Season all the more appealing. This year we had 123 entries in the contest, with guesses from April 2 – April 27. Most were in the early half of the month. And Mother Nature didn't disappoint. The ice went out early on April 5. Our winners this year are **Glenn Bible, Nancy Gilmore and Beth Buck**. The ultimate winner of the three will be decided at the AGM in July. Congratulations winners!



March 31



April 2



April 5

PINE MEADOW SPECIAL NEEDS FUND

**Pine Meadow Special
Needs Fund is looking
for your support!**

Each donation of \$25 will receive a Proud Supporter of Pine Meadow Sticker seen below, along with a chance to win this beautiful handmade quilt displayed in the photo! Quilt was donated by "Land O'Lakes Quilters & Crafters and was appraised at \$1000!

All donations received on or before June 30th will receive an extra chance to win the quilt as an "early bird" reward!



Draw will be held
Thursday, October 7th!

Your sponsorship and donation will help fund a patio & walkways in a new courtyard, additional ceiling lifts, BBQ, computer & entertainment upgrades and other needs that improve the quality of life, comfort and well-being of both residents and staff.



Thank you from
Pine Meadow
Special Needs
Committee!

Please forward
donations to:

Ms. Margaret Palimaka
Pine Meadow Nursing Home
124 Lloyd St. Northbrook,
ON K0H 2G0

Or drop off to:
Ms. Eleanor Nowell
Nowell Motors
14165 Hwy 41
Cloyne Ontario

For more information please
contact
Sarah Thompson
Resident Program Manager
613-336-9120 ext.226

The Pine Meadow Special Needs Fund was established to help close some of the gaps that are not filled by basic public health care funding. Fundraising is always challenging, never more so than during this pandemic, but remains an essential element for providing the best care to those members of our families, relatives and community most in need.

Due to COVID rules we are unable to hold what would have been our **19th Annual Golf Charity event** in support of Pine Meadow Nursing Home. Instead, we ask for your support and a minimum donation of \$25. Note the "early bird" reward date of **June 30th**, but donations are welcome up until the draw on October 7th.

Our fundraising goal this year is \$10,000.

We appreciate and look forward to your support.

Cheques should be made out to Pine Meadow Nursing Home with a notation on the memo line of "Special Needs Fund". Receipts will be provided. For more information about the Pine Meadow Special Needs Fund please call Laury Hitchcock (613-336-2394) or Esther Demczak (613-336-2751).

THE YEAR OF LIVING

REMOTELY By Jeff McBee

What a long, strange year it's been...

As a long-time cottager, what has become evident to me over the years is how much ritual is ingrained in the cottaging experience. One of the things that makes spending time at the lake so enjoyable is the reliability of the experience: we take the same route every year and stop at the same locations along the way - for me, the highlight of my trip is always a stop at Maple Dale Cheese on Highway 37 north of Belleville.

Once I get to the cottage, the rituals continue. Unloading the car, turning on the power, refrigerating the food, checking the water supply, and placing fresh linens on the beds are performed in the same manner, the same sequence, year after year. Only when those tasks are completed does the relaxation phase of my cottage visit begin.

But what happens when a deadly pandemic upsets those rituals, carefully crafted over more than sixty years of cottage life? In my case, as an American living south of the border, it means that access to my favourite place on earth, where I've acquired more knowledge about life than any level of schooling has taught me, has been denied.

It has been a bitter pill to swallow. I was born in Niagara Falls, New York, and because my mother was born in Thorold, Ontario and raised on a farm alongside the Welland Canal in Allanburg, I've had the extreme privilege of being able to spend at least a month of every year since my birth in Canada. Although born an American, I spent every weekend of my youth, every holiday, in Ontario, at the family farm. Since 1958, I've spent a portion of every summer at the family cottage in Sheldrake Bay, where five generations of my family have now been immersed in the rituals of cottaging.

Until 2020. The past year has been difficult for many reasons, but not being able to sit on my front deck and inhale the freshest, pine-scented air on the planet while watching the loons feed in the bay and listening to the sounds of children reveling in the joys of life by the lake has been painful in a way only fellow cottagers can imagine. The biggest ritual of all, my annual visit to the cottage, was interrupted by forces beyond my control, leaving me in a funk that's been difficult to shake.

Thankfully, friends and neighbours at the lake, through social media, have shared dozens of Skootamatta photos and stories which have kept me connected to the lake, buoying my spirits, giving me hope for the future. Zoom sessions and phone calls have further eased the pain of my enforced absence. I'm optimistic that a visit in 2021 will be possible now that several promising vaccines have been approved to fight this terrible virus.

One of the most important lessons I've learned from this pandemic has been never to take anything for granted again. The simple act of crossing the border, something I've been able to do with relative ease my entire life, has been taken away. Once it's been restored, I'll savour the experience, the return of ritual, like never before.

Tell the loons I'll be back, more appreciative than ever.



Photo credit: Jan Marconi

CANADA DAY DOCK DECORATING CONTEST

The Pandemic may have cancelled our traditional Boat Parade, but it couldn't dampen our Patriotic Spirit. When the SDRRA announced a Canada Day Dock Decorating Contest, our members really brought out their creativity! Congratulations to our winners.

The Winner -
Dzelme Family Dock



Second Place -
Shortt Dock



Third Place -
Longo Dock



SWIM AROUND SKOOT

by Susan Birnie-Wortley

Skootamatta Lake has been my parents' paradise since the mid-90s. Since the arrival of my sons, Skoot has been my summer home, too. For many years, we've spent much of July and August at the cottage and, in recent years, my oldest has taken swimming lessons at Bon Echo Provincial Park with the Mazinaw Lake Swim Program. Tom, a lover of water, completed his Bronze Medallion on Mazinaw one summer and Bronze Cross the next. During his Medallion summer, Tom volunteered as a beach assistant and enjoyed it so much that, during his Cross summer, he returned as a paid employee. As summer 2020 loomed, Tom was employed again by the MLSP but, due to COVID-19, we knew physical swimming lessons would be a bust. So would the program's annual swim-a-thon, a real kicker to a charitable organization that relies on donations to keep lessons affordable for local children. Tom, then a 14-year-old competitive swimmer at home in Kingston, had been out of the pool since March. He needed to swim and the MLSP needed a fundraiser.



An idea was born: why not swim the perimeter of Skootamatta Lake?

At first glance, Skoot doesn't seem too big. Especially when you live near Lake Ontario. So we googled it and learned that the shoreline of Skoot is approximately 50 kilometres. Tom, however, wasn't crazy about swimming into every boggy cove and rocky bay and we realized that he could only swim where a boat could stay close. In the end, we mapped out a 30 kilometre route and, in late June, he jumped off the dock on Henniger Road and swam for fifteen minutes to the Narrows. When we hauled him back into the tinnie, his fingers were blue. Skoot, as we all know, takes time to warm in the summer, and Skoot was not warm.

The water is calmest at dawn and dusk, and for several days, Tom swam after breakfast and dinner—down the Narrows, through Jacques Bay and to the flagpole at the end of the upper lake. His ragtag safety crew motored in his wake; Grandpa steering the outboard and me, hanging over the bow, watching for boats and jet skis and keeping Tom straight by pointing the way with our longest pool noodle. Tom got cold, we got soaked in the rain, and one night near the boat launch at the end of Hughes Landing, Tom almost got snagged in fishing line. Yet, he was having fun. The lake grew warmer. By the time he steamed into Sheldrake Bay, his tan was decidedly lopsided and I was chronicling his journey on Twitter. The pandemic had forced the cottage into the 21st century. With my husband working remotely from the back bedroom and Tom helping to build the MLSP



website from his hammock, my mother agreed to install the internet. Suddenly, the cottage—our summer refuge without a stove but with squirrels in the walls—had WiFi. The good people at the MLSP started a GoFundMe. Tom kept churning out the kilometres.

By July 10th, Tom had swum through Sheldrake Bay, past the causeway, around Osborne Point, through the bay where we've seen otters, past Trail's End and along North Shore Road. He was greeted with cheers and waves and boats horns and general incredulity by the many fine folks who waited on their docks to say hello. He regularly dove for trash at the lake bottom and we accumulated a collection of funky cans and mossy golf balls. Once, he surfaced with a straw hat. As he approached the finish line, we celebrated by shaking bear bells and then stuffed the boy with ice cream. Tom had barely finished his cone before declaring: he wanted to swim the 30km loop again. This time, in five days.

So he did. He took two days off to roast marshmallows and then swam six kilometres a day. Tom's fundraising goal was \$500 and he figured he could raise more by doing more. Typically, he swam two hours a day. It was very hot. He was dripping in sunscreen. We brought water bottles and granola bars and protected him from traffic. Some days the lake was flat and some days it rolled. Tom worked hard and, for his effort, not only raised \$1000 but got to see Skoot in a way that most of us never will. Imagine swimming through the Narrows and around Bible Island. Do you ever wonder what's under the water? Tom has seen it. He has stood on rocks and forded weed beds and drifted with loons far from shore. Summer at the cottage is always a blessing, but summer 2020 was a minor miracle. Between the company of grandparents, meeting new neighbours, and swimming safely through glorious waters so that other children can learn to do the same, Tom thrived. Which, in the end, was precisely the point.

If you are interested in travelling back to summer 2020 and seeing Tom's journey, please visit his Skoot4Maz Twitter page at www.twitter.com/Skoot4M. The link to his charity GoFundMe can be found there.



MAZINAW LAKE SWIM PROGRAM



The Mazinaw Lake Swim Program began in 1972 after the drowning of two local children. Mothers from the community decided to prevent this tragedy from occurring again by raising money to provide swimming lessons in the summer.

Initially, swimming lessons took place at Marble Lake but eventually moved to Bon Echo Provincial Park, where children now learn to swim in Mazinaw Lake. Red Cross swimming lessons take place in July and are available for locals and cottagers alike. They are fully staffed with qualified swim instructors and have a lifeguard present. Children are bused to and from Bon Echo five days a week from Kaladar, Flinton, Northbrook, Cloyne, and Denbigh.

It is a unique program, offering vital life saving water skills to youth in the shadow of Mazinaw

rock—easily the most picturesque swimming lessons available in Ontario! It's a true community effort. Many local teens are employed as instructors and lifeguards and many volunteers donate endless hours organizing, fundraising, and ensuring the safety of participants.

In an area as blessed with water as the Land O'Lakes region, swimming lessons are not just recreational fun: they save lives. For many children, the Mazinaw Lake Swim Program is their only opportunity to learn. No child is ever turned away due to cost. The support of local businesses, community members and cottagers is crucial to keeping the program afloat.

Learn more about the Mazinaw Lake Swim Program and how to support it at

www.mazinawswim.com and

www.lolcs.com/community-funded-programs.html.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The website is an important platform for communicating with both members and the community. We clocked over 16,000 visits to the website in 2020, posted 90 blog posts, and had over 6,000 unique visitors! We use the website to post a lot of updates, manage membership renewals, and collect advertisers. As with any website, our webmaster Jackie Bleecker has had to deal with an influx of spam messages, both in the post comments and the Marketplace. We spent a lot of time troubleshooting this problem and think we finally have a solution in place. We also made changes to the way we display our advertisements, in the hopes that it is a bit easier to manage.

We also added a new membership payment option. You can now use Interac e-transfers to pay for memberships and advertisements. While PayPal has worked for us in the past, it does cost us a small percentage to use. Finally, we renewed the Skootamatta.com website address and set it up to redirect to the main Skootamatta.ca home page. Many of these changes you won't notice, but they all make the site easier to manage so we can spend more time communicating with you!

Along with the website, we've also seen our Facebook and Instagram pages getting a lot more attention too. Instagram is a great way to share photos, so be sure to mention @skootamatta_district when posting from around the lake. Facebook continues to get a lot of traffic and you can sometimes find community communications being shared, as well as some fun content.

MAZINAW LANARK FORESTRY PLAN UPDATE

While for most of our members the lake shore is at the forefront of our enjoyment of the lake experience, framing this experience are the surrounding forests. These forests provide many visual and practical benefits to our sense of wellbeing, and the wellbeing of the plants and animals that live in these forests.

Much of the forest land in the SDRA area of interest is crown land, and managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (MNRF). Of course, these forests represent a commercial asset, and are licensed to Sustainable Forest Licencees (SFL) to manage the harvesting of these forests. The Mazinaw-Lanark Forest Inc. (MLFI) is the SFL holder for our area, and is based out of Cloyne. MLFI is currently developing a 10 year Forest Management Plan, for the years 2021 – 2031. The SDRA has considered the current version of the plan, and identified several concerns, which have been formally submitted to MLFI and MNRF. Three virtual meetings have been held with representatives of the MNRF and MLFI, and while these meetings have been cordial and informative, no real progress has been seen regarding our concerns, and no official response has been received to date.

Other Lake Associations have similar concerns, and SDRA Board members have shared concerns and also had virtual discussions with several such Lake Associations.

The main areas of concern addressed in our comments involved harvesting activities up to the boundary of private property (primarily impacting property owners at the bottom of Jacques Bay), harvesting in the extensive wetlands around all three lakes of interest, with a minimal proposed buffer of 3 meters, and lack of adequate protection of the viewscape - the tree line as seen from the lakes.

MLFI develops their management plans using

guidelines developed by the MNRF. Unfortunately, these guidelines are out-of-date, and do not reflect the current science related to best practice forest and water quality management. This was generally agreed by MNRF in the 2014-2016 year period, and plans were in place to update the guidelines. With the change in government in Ontario these plans were put on hold, and unfortunately legislation has been put in place that will further negatively impact our enjoyment of the forests. We made a series of recommendations regarding sightlines, wetlands, forest operations near private property, and buffer zones around roads:

- There should be no logging activity within 150m of a lakeshore, or that would affect the viewscape as seen from the lake, whichever results in the largest preserve distance.
- A methodology for establishing a boundary for wetlands should be agreed upon.
- Using this methodology a “reasonable” boundary for all wetland areas should be established, with an agreed error tolerance.
- To minimize the time and cost of being over-precise, a general rule of leaving an unharvested buffer zone of 150m from the thus determined wetland boundary should be the standard.
- Since the streams that are impacted are largely an extension of extensive adjacent wetlands, the recommendations above should also apply.
- No harvesting activities should take place within 500m of a private property line.
- Logging currently planned in the Jacques Bay area should be reviewed and further justified, and preferably be removed from the plan.
- Along all access roads, both public and private, there should be a buffer zone of 100m on either side of the road.



SOCIALLY UNDISTANCED

WHILE MAINTAINING PHYSICAL DISTANCING

By Paul Lindsay

COVID-19 has presented many challenges over the past year. Along with health concerns, we have had to deal with social isolation. We are usually a very social group along my point, with neighbours regularly getting together for cards, happy hours, or to celebrate someone's birthday. All that came to a screeching halt with the first lockdown. The first wave and lockdown had us afraid to even look at each other. But there had to be a way to safely keep some social contact.

Over the next year we came up with three activities.

2:33 Circle - In late March 2020 it was still chilly out. But we couldn't meet inside. So I suggested a get together in my parking lot with 5 chairs spread ten feet apart. We discussed this and almost didn't do it. But we felt we

could safely do this if we followed all the protocols at the time. I suggested 2:30 pm since that would be the warmest time of the day. Lynn Osborne said she would be here at 2:33 (2:30 - 3:00) pm. We thought that was being awfully precise. As a result we ended up calling it 2:33 Circle. In our first Circle the conversation was all about COVID. As time went on we got around to more of the usual topics. Snow, muddy roads, ice conditions, family etc. We spent two and a half hours the first time. Each one after that was anywhere from two hours to two and a half hours. We, obviously, needed our social time. Our 2:33 Circle even made it through black fly season with all of us in the Circle wearing black fly nets. However, it didn't survive mosquito season. Those pesky things could bite through the black fly nets and our clothing AND they were thick. As temperatures warmed up we all got busy with spring clean up. I ended up cleaning my forest and ultimately took





nine dump truck loads of brush away. The Lindsay Mountain is well known on the point. This is something that wouldn't have happened if not for COVID and the down time I had from work.

KaYAKing - 2:33 Circle gave way to more summer activities. The one that took over more than any was KaYAKing. We call it KaYAKing because we do more YAKing than we do paddling. A trip around the bay that should take 15 - 20 minutes takes us 2 hours. Social distancing was a natural in kayaks. You simply couldn't get within 2 metres of each other. We put the kayaks in the water as soon as we wouldn't succumb to hypothermia and took them out around Thanksgiving weekend. Wind and rain were the only deterrents to KaYAKing. We managed to stay in sheltered areas or go around the point to avoid the wind. My friend, Judy, bought a new sit-on kayak. It was her first kayak and the first one she felt comfortable using. It was fun to watch her enjoy kayaking as much as she did. This was an activity that we all felt safe doing while in the middle of a pandemic.

Curling - Our third activity was curling. I made a curling rink out on the lake. I scratched circles in the ice with a stick and some screws. Then coloured the circles with food colouring. Rocks were 16 bleach bottles half filled with sand. The rink wasn't regulation by any means but it worked perfectly for us. This would turn out to be the highlight of our winter. I fully expected everyone to curl for a week or two and then tire

of it. But no! They came out every day that they were available to come. That went on from January 2 to March 20. We only missed a handful of days. We curled in wind (which pushed the rocks in strange directions) and snow (which required significant sweeping). Mother Nature was generally very kind to us while throwing a few curves at us. Surface water stopped us a couple of times but then totally flooded the rink giving us a brand new surface. Early on, the strategy was quite simple. Just aim for the button. As we became more proficient, the strategy discussions became very animated. We were trying takeouts, promotions, taps and wicks and all kinds of shots. I think they were watching too much Scotties curling on TV. Captain Chaos, our most innovative curler, liked the hard take out shots. Many times resulting in the other team scoring. We called those a "Gary." This was the perfect storm of weather conditions cooperating and COVID bringing us all together for an extended length of time. A silver lining - we actually have COVID to thank for that. We even made the front page of the Frontenac News with a picture of us curling in the snow.

We were able to maintain some degree of social activity while following all the COVID protocols. At this point, some of us have had our vaccine and we are hoping for a return to a more normal time. However, I don't think curling will ever be as good as it was while we all had the time to enjoy it. As difficult as the pandemic has been there were some real positives too.

FIRE SAFETY AT THE COTTAGE

The SDRA Water Pumps have been retired

In years past, our members may recall that the SDRA had water pumps located in two spots on the lake. **Please note that the SDRA no longer maintains these water pumps.** A lot has changed over the years and we now have extensive local fire department support. Should you experience a fire, call 911 and leave it to the experts.

Don't take things into your own hands - always call the experts!



THE KALADAR-BARRIE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Information provided by Fire Chief Casey Cuddy

Your Local Fire Department - Working for You!

Did you know:

- When you call 911, main dispatch automatically routes a call to your local fire department and alerts the 30 volunteer firefighters who carry cell phones or pagers.
- We are serviced by two local fire stations which have an impressive fleet of fire fighting equipment to service our needs.

Northbrook Station (Hwy 41 south of Northbrook):

The Northbrook Station has the main offices, training facilities and houses the following equipment: a front line Pumper that carries 1,000 gallons of water and can pump 1,250 gallons per minute, a 3,000 gallon tanker, a heavy Rescue Unit which carries the jaws of life, medical supplies for Emergency First Response and support equipment for all other types of calls.



Cloyne Station (Hwy 41 North of Cloyne):

The Cloyne Station houses a 1,500 gallon Tanker, a wild land truck which carries wild fire gear and medical supplies, a UTV (off road vehicle), a boat, and this spring will see a new mini pumper capable of pumping 1,050 gallons per minute.

COTTAGE FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Fire Safety starts with YOU:

Install smoke alarms on every storey and outside all sleeping areas. It's the law for all Ontario homes, cottages, cabins and seasonal homes to have working smoke alarms on every storey and outside all sleeping areas.

- **Test smoke alarms** at least monthly or each time you return to the cottage. Pack a new smoke alarm and extra smoke alarm batteries in case they need replacement.
- Install and ensure a working **carbon monoxide alarm** is in your cottage if it has a fuel-burning appliance.
- Develop and practice a **home fire escape plan** to ensure everyone knows what to do if the smoke alarm sounds.
- Know your cottage's (civic address) **emergency sign number** and post it by the phone for guests.
- Clean barbecues before using them. **Keep an eye on lit barbecues** and ensure all combustibles, as well as children and pets, are kept well away from them. Fires can happen when barbecues are left unattended.
- Keep barbecue lighters and **matches out of sight** and reach of children.
- Remember to bring a flashlight with extra batteries.
- Check **heating appliances and chimneys** before using them.
- If using **heaters** to warm up, remember to give them space, keep combustible items away from them and never leave the room with them on.
- Make sure your **lane way is accessible**. Cut brush, over hanging limbs etc. back to ensure a 12 foot wide by 12 feet high clear way for trucks as well as sufficient turn around areas. Remove sharp rocks along the edge and ensure a solid road surface.
- Check to determine if **Camp Fires** are permitted before starting one. The fire department will put on a **Fire Ban** if climatic conditions and fire danger risk is extreme. Fires should be built on bare soil or on exposed rock. Remove leaves and twigs within 2 meters from around the fire to keep it from spreading. Always keep a bucket of water, sand, and a shovel close by and supervise the fire at all times. **Never leave a camp fire unattended.**
- Check to determine whether open air burning is permitted before burning leaves, brush etc.. If open burning is allowed, aside from campfires, no burning is permitted between 7 am and 7 pm from April 1 to Oct 31 annually.
- **Fire Ban information** is available on the townships web sites www.addingtonhighlands.ca, or <https://www.northfrontenac.com> or by calling 613-336-1851
- If you must smoke, do so outside. Keep a large can with water nearby so cigarette butts can be safely discarded. If you drink, do so responsibly. **Smoking and alcohol consumption** are contributing factors in many fatal fires.
- Burn candles in sturdy **candle holders that will not tip** and are covered with a glass shade. When you go out, blow out!

SHORELINE CAMPING

Last year, the Board heard a lot about shoreline camping that was happening on Crown land and municipal shoreline road allowances. With the increased concern from members, as well as the OPP visiting campers a couple of times, the Board approached the Township in an effort to mitigate the situation. Vice-President Marianne Plumb presented to the Council to make them aware of our concerns. The Township created a working group, on which Joel Arthurs serves as the sole representative of the local property owner associations. At the time of the newsletter writing, there have been three working group meetings; you can see the agendas on the Township website.

The discussions have included staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), and several important points have arisen.

1. Camping at boat launches is not permitted, as per provincial law. If you see people camping at any of the boat launches, the OPP non-emergency line can be called. For example, last summer we heard of campers using bright spot lights and loud music at the Upper Lake boat launch.
2. Another upper lake site had campers cutting in from the road to the nearby waterfront and parking at the shoreline. This site has been brought to the attention of the MNRF, as it is Crown land. It has been requested that a barrier be put in place to limit access to watercraft only. Forced access such as this, is not allowed without a permit from the MNRF.
3. Concerns about enforcement by the MNRF have also been raised. In 2020, the MNRF Bancroft office was understaffed in Conservation Officers, but the intent is to have these positions filled for 2021. The MNRF will also be initiating education on social media about camping on Crown land. Additional signage is being looked at, but there are concerns about theft and vandalism. The TIPS line (1-877-847-7667) is still the most direct way to report violations with the MNRF.
4. Township staff are drafting a by-law to lay out what is and isn't allowed on municipal property, including shoreline road allowances. Much of Skootamatta, Sheldrake, and Pringle Lake shorelines include municipal shoreline road allowances that are under Township jurisdiction.

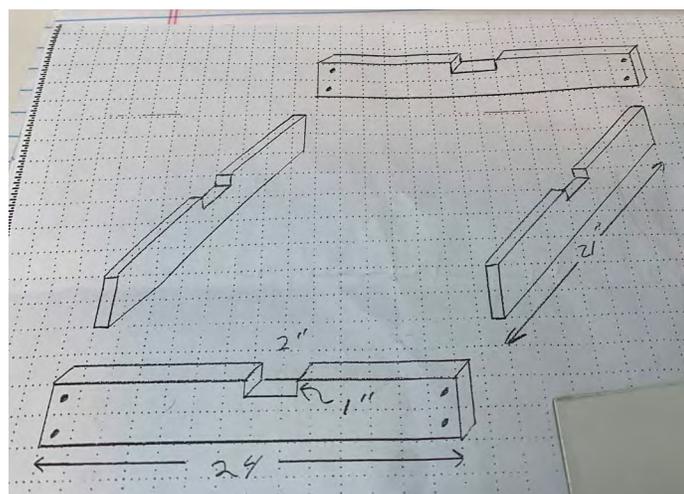
These meetings have been a good start to the conversation. The Township has been very supportive of the associations' position on the matter and we hope to continue these discussions as camping season begins.

TURTLE NESTING BOX

Time to crawl out of your shells and help save our turtles... due to human-related threats ALL turtles in Ontario are Species at Risk. But now you can do something to help ensure that hatchlings make it through their most vulnerable moments.

As we speed past them in our vehicles, we see female turtles digging holes and depositing their eggs on busy roadways. We also may have noticed the sad reality of decimated egg shells strewn at the side of the road, the aftermath of turtle eggs devoured by raccoons or foxes on their nightly prowls. Only a very small percent of hatchlings ever make it into the population. Turtles need all the help they can get to offset their decline.

For those looking for a family activity during COVID summer #2, building a turtle nest box will provide a great environmental project! Once built, family members can be on the watch for an egg-laying turtle whose eggs require protection as they develop into hatchlings underground. It is best to be prepared... even if you have to wait until next summer to put your box into action, you will be ready to help save this vital part of our ecosystem.



Materials:

- 8 - 3" wood screws
- 1 - 2" x 4" x 8" board
- 1 - 24" x 24" wire screen with 1/2" holes - The mesh is important because the temperature of the nest should not be interfered with. Materials that shade the nest will interfere with the development of the hatchlings.
- 4 - 12" spikes with washers - Stake the device to prevent movement of the nest cage by a predator. Make sure the stakes do not disturb the nest itself.

Building Instructions:

Each notch should be 2" wide by 1" deep, about centre on each side - IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THERE ARE ESCAPE ROUTES CUT OUT OF THE FRAME - you may not be there when they hatch, and they can die very quickly without an escape route.

Staple wire mesh to top of protector with notches down.

A wooden frame is made and covered with wire mesh. Notches are made and then stakes are driven through the mesh into the ground at each of the four corners, being careful not to disturb the nest itself.

For photos and more tips go to:
https://cwf-fcf.org/en/explore/turtles/htt_nest_protector_en_lr.pdf?src=htt

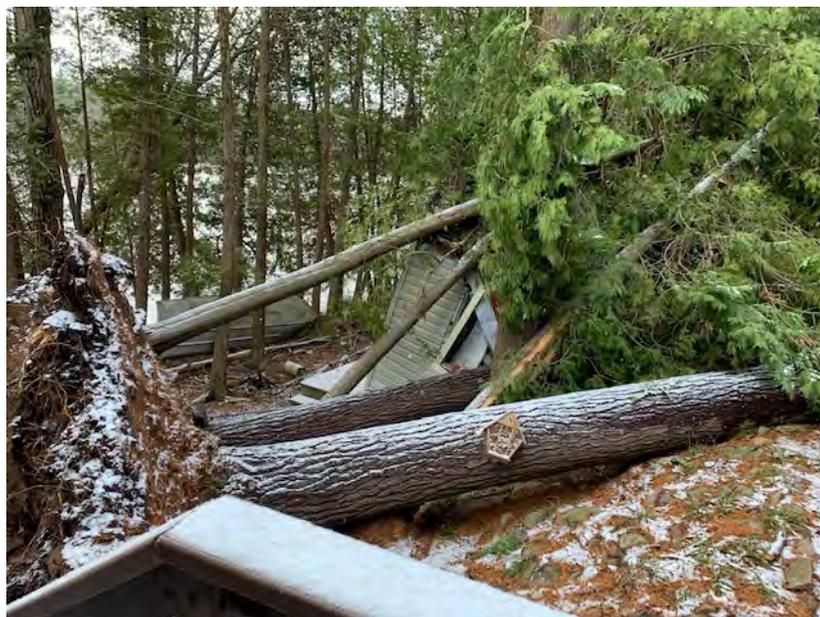
Design detail provided by Turtles Kingston

WINDSTORM ON THE NARROWS

By Carla Baetz

November 2020... for most residents at Skoot, the wind storm that ripped through the woods and down the lake, was a minor inconvenience: power outages and broken branches resulted in frustration and inconvenience for a few days.

But for our little piece of heaven on the Narrows, the felled trees were massive and numerous and could have easily destroyed our boat house and cottage. Instead, the timber that fell like matchsticks, wove around the permanent structures and flattened a small sleeping bunky that was rarely used.



With the help of some wonderful neighbours, notably Doug Potts, and our insurance company, we had the site cleared up within a week. Well... almost. The roots of massive trees remain on the battlefield, decaying slowly like fallen soldiers. A big thank you also goes to our Deer Ridge neighbours Ross Cooper and Jeff Miller who checked on properties, alerted owners of any damage and tirelessly cleared the road of fallen trees.

It could have been worse... a lot worse. We will have our work cut out for us in 2021 but, thankfully, our cottage and boat house remain intact. Some said it was "good karma," others suggested "some sort of spiritual intervention," while we ended up just calling it incredibly "good luck!"

RISING COSTS OF COTTAGES

"Cottage country is the new battleground for housing bidding wars: *High demand has put upward pressure on housing prices for scarce waterfront properties.*"

The article in the November 18th, 2020, edition of the National post went on to say, "it is not apparent when vacationers may board a plane for trips abroad. A holiday within commuting distance is the compromise, which has increased the demand for vacation properties near urban centres."

2020 was indeed a remarkable year for recreational property prices in Canada, and there is no sign that demand is going to ease anytime soon. In their latest Recreational Property Report, Royal LePage reported that 91% of National property regions were reporting low inventory. In Ontario, 87% of recreational real estate professionals said that more than half of properties available on the market are selling above the asking price. Prices increased anywhere from 10% to 30% in 2020, and Royal LePage is predicting further increases of 17% in Ontario in 2021.

Recreational property prices were up an average of 21.5% in Ontario in 2020, with the average waterfront property selling for \$673,400 across the 15 Ontario regions. In the Land of Lakes region prices were up 27.8%, exceeded only by Muskoka/Gravenhurst, at 28.1%. The price of the average waterfront property in the Land of Lakes rose from \$352,000 to \$450,000, significant, but still well below the Ontario average. While the



Photo credit: Paula Vetere

biggest increases have been in traditionally high demand areas such as Muskoka, higher prices are the trend everywhere.

A perfect storm of factors is driving the increase in demand:

- The pandemic has made many people reluctant to travel and they are looking for alternative ways to relax. This has led many to seek to "escape" to the freedom and lifestyle offered by recreational properties,
- The major shift to working remotely, a trend that is expected to continue post-pandemic, and the freedom to do so away from the city, as long as high-speed internet is available,
- Increasing numbers of baby boomers are retiring and looking to move permanently to a recreational property,
- Millennials, many of whom are priced out of the housing market in the city, are looking to invest in a recreational property instead,
- A shortage of inventory as fewer are willing to sell,
- Record low interest rates which are making mortgages more affordable.

Asked about the current market Chris Winney, a well-known local real estate broker commented, "Too few listings and more potential buyers have created a sellers' market. This has been helped by low interest rates in the middle of a pandemic. City dwellers would prefer to get out of Dodge so our Land o' Lakes region has been "discovered" as a destination."

What this means for Skootamatta and the neighbouring area remains to be seen, however it seems that there is a shortage of listings and that properties are often inviting multiple offers. A local realtor might be able to help you navigate this process if you're looking to list your property in this hot market.

So, if you are looking to part with your cottage it would appear you are in a sellers' market. But for those of us who aren't, we should all be grateful that we have such a wonderful place to enjoy.

A NOTE TO OUR ADVERTISERS

We recognize that 2020-2021 has been an incredibly challenging time for all of you. From the local essential businesses who stayed open and supported our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.....to the small businesses that needed to close to keep us all safe.....to our seasonal businesses who are hoping for a timely recovery this summer; our local small businesses are a critical component in our community.

On behalf of the SDRA and all of our members, we sincerely thank you !

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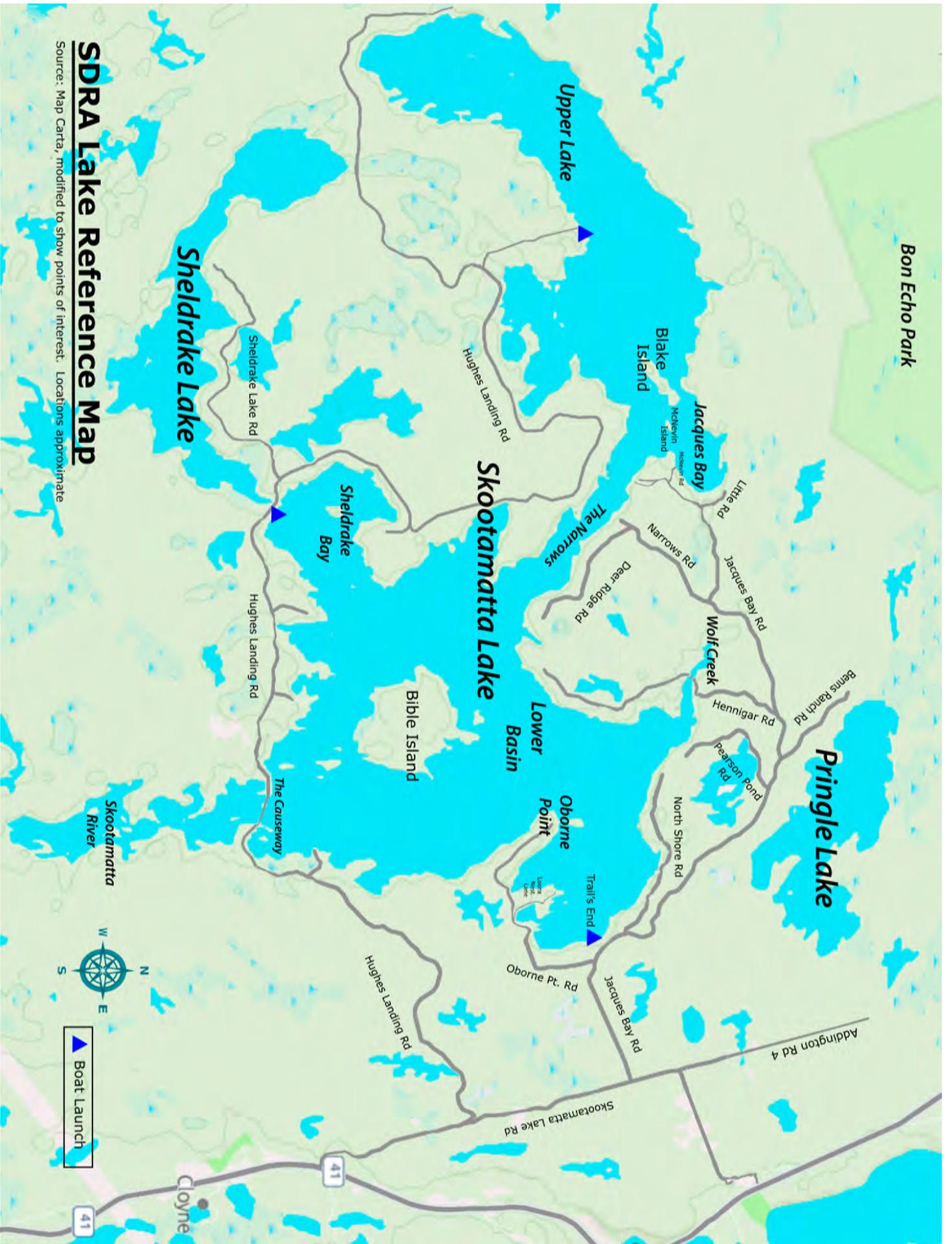
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SDRA Lake Reference Map

Source: Map Cartia, modified to show points of interest. Locations approximate

▲ Boat Launch

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Coyne

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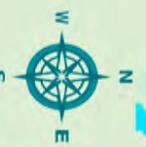
Pringle Lake

Skootamatta Lake

Upper Lake

Sheldrake Lake

Skootamatta River



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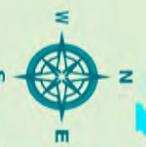
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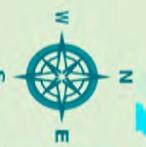
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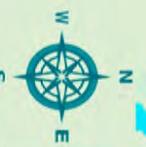
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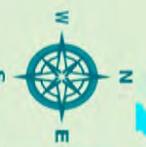
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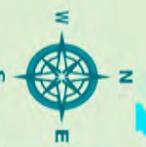
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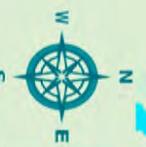
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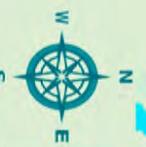
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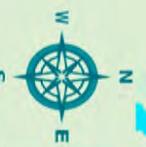
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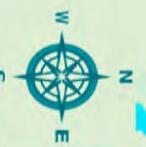
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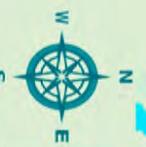
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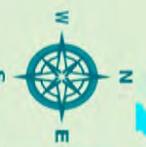
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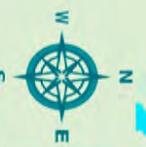
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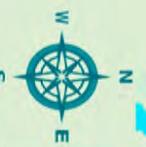
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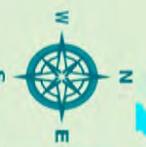
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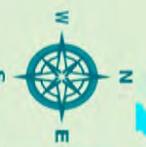
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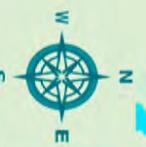
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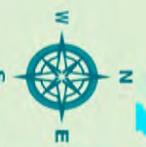
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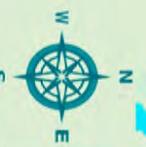
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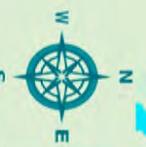
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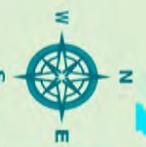
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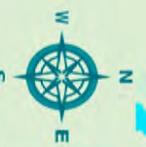
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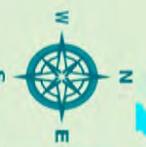
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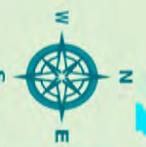
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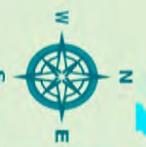
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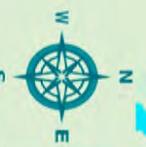
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