

SDRA

2024
Newsletter

Feature Articles:

- LAKE LEVEL MANAGEMENT
- ARE YOU A GOOD NEIGHBOUR?
- 100 YEARS OF SUNSETS

2023 PHOTO CONTEST RESULTS

Photo Credit:
Tricia Sinclair

A MESSAGE FROM... OUR PRESIDENT

By Joel Arthurs



If, like me, you happen to live south of the Canadian Shield, you might be wondering what happened to winter. There's no question, it has been very mild this year, and we seem to be looking at an early spring (maybe the groundhogs were right!). I always get the opening weekend itch as things start to warm up. For us, it's the first week of May, for some it is the May long weekend, and others might wait until after the black flies are done. Whenever your season starts, the anticipation for opening is palpable. I can't remember a time when the ice went out so early!

This newsletter is full of the kind of topics that belong on the cottage coffee table. Our 2024 Events page includes all the details of various events to look forward to, including the Annual General Meeting in July, the Canada Day Boat Parade, the Lake Festival in August, Ron & Esther's Potluck, and the End of Summer Extravaganza!

If you didn't get a chance to see all of the photos from the annual photo contest, there are three pages dedicated to the multitude of fabulous entries.

Our members know just how to capture the beauty of Skootamatta Lake.

Did you know that as a member of the SDRA, you also get the benefits of our FOCA membership? Be sure to check out everything that is included as a member of FOCA.

The generous contributions, by our members, to the Land O'Lakes Food Bank is greatly appreciated, especially as food costs have risen and more people than ever are in need.

While I look back at the previous year, I'm also reflecting on the last decade as I prepare to step down from the role of President of the SDRA Board. I've been on the Board for 11 years and have seen a number of changes, many of them wonderful. As a Director, the Lake Steward, and finally as President, I've had the fortune of meeting so many passionate people and working on some exciting initiatives.

Although I'm stepping down, I'm not going anywhere yet.

I'll be staying on the Board as a director for the next year and assisting the Executive in any way possible.

Thank you to my fellow directors for the amazing work that they've done to serve our members and our community. Thank you to our volunteers, without whom we wouldn't be able to put on so many great events. Finally, thank you to our members who are passionate about this community. I have been privileged to serve in different roles on the Board and strongly encourage others to do the same.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Arthurs'.



2024 SDRA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ALL SDRA Members are Invited!

When: Saturday, July 6

Where: Barrie Township Hall, next to the
Cloyne Museum

9:30-10:00: Meet & Greet

10:00-12:00: Formal Meeting

12:00-1:00: Hot dog BBQ sponsored by Foodland



Please join us on Saturday, July 6th for our Annual General Meeting. The meeting will be held in the Barrie Township Hall, with coffee at 9:30 a.m. and the formal meeting beginning at 10:00.



Parking is available and there will be raffle prizes and a BBQ lunch provided by Foodland.

Charlene & Kevin Van Dusen
Store Owners and Friendly Neighbours

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

fld6740northbrook@sobeys.com

The AGM is a great opportunity to hear about what the Board has been up to, and learn more about some topics of interest. The AGM agenda and proposed board slate will be circulated by email, prior to the meeting.

CURRENT SDRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President / Chair	Joel Arthurs
Vice-President	Marianne Plumb
Treasurer	John Coombs
Secretary	Carla Baetz
Lake Steward	Martha Warriner
Webmaster	Ben Koehler
Communications	<i>Vacant</i>
Director	Jim Chinnick
Director	Bruce Schwenger
Director	Duncan Armstrong
Director (Additional positions)	<i>Vacant</i>

2023 AGM TAKEAWAYS

Our 2023 AGM was held on Saturday, July 8th at the Barrie Township Hall and on-line via ZOOM. It was well attended, and a great opportunity to meet our Board and to spend time with our fellow members / neighbours. The meeting was chaired by our President, Joel Arthurs, who covered a number of important topics.

Guest speaker, Robert Ormston, from Quinte Conservation Authority, presented on Shoreline Naturalization and the importance of protecting and conserving the environmental quality of lakes, rivers and streams in our watershed. The vegetation that naturally occurs along the bank is essential in helping to stabilize and filter out contaminants. Members were encouraged to leave the natural vegetation or augment it with natural / native species. Visit the free web site: forestontario.ca.

Treasurer, John Coombs, took members through the 2022-2023 financial statements.

Lake Steward, Martha Warriner, presented an in-depth review of the lake assessments that have been carried out for the past few years. A question was raised querying the posting of the results on the SDRA website. The answer was yes, the SDRA will ensure that the results are posted on our website.

The Board shared changes that were required to our governing documents to ensure that the SDRA was compliant with the new ONCA (Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act).

Vice-President, Marianne Plumb, took members through the changes to our Constitution (which will now be known as our Bylaws), and the changes to the Letters Patent (now known as our Articles). The members unanimously passed a motion to adopt the changes to both documents. As a final step, the Government has formally approved our Articles and we are now fully ONCA compliant, well in advance of the Government's October 2024 deadline.

Questions from members regarding light pollution were raised as a concern, and suggested as a topic in the next newsletter. Septic systems and their maintenance was raised as another area of concern, including the possibility of a confidential survey to raise awareness.

There was discussion regarding the Addington Highlands official plan, as well as a question for Reeve Henry Hogg on the progress of the official plan. He advised that the completion of the official plan could take as long as two years.

Have you thought about joining 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

2023-2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

By John Coombs

2023-2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT (DRAFT ONLY - FOR APPROVAL AT THE AGM)

Skootamatta District Ratepayers Association

Operating Statement for year ending March 31

	Notes:	2024	2023
Revenue:			
Membership Revenue	1	8,040	7,893
Newsletter Advertising	2	2,140	2,055
Boat Launch Intake		1,096	944
Merchandise sales		0	0
Interest		359	118
Total Revenue		11,635	11,010
Expenses:			
Communication	3	3,041	3,499
Member Events	4	2,768	1,621
Stewardship	5	1,090	2,134
Community Relations	6	1,000	500
Lot and Launch Maintenance	7	1,162	900
Administration	8	463	642
Insurance	9	2,375	2,256
Assets	10	0	734
Total Expenses		11,900	12,286
Net Revenue over Expenses (Surplus/Deficit)		(265)	(1,276)
Opening Cash Position (excluding Fireworks fund)		23,361	
Closing Cash Position (excluding Fireworks fund)		23,096	
Fireworks Fund			
Opening		325	
Contributions		5,220	
Event cost		(5,650)	
Closing Fireworks Fund		- 105	
Closing Cash including Fireworks Fund		22,991	

Notes:

- 1) 201 paid memberships received during the year, including 8 new families. Five memberships for 2024-25 have been prepaid, including 2 new families.
- 2) Total of 34 individual advertisements placed (31 in 2023).
- 3) Cost of Newsletter production (plus webhosting in 2023).
- 4) Increase primarily due to return of the Lake Festival event.
- 5) FOCA membership (plus every-other-year water testing in 2023).
- 6) LOL Lions Club Emergency Preparedness Program donation.
- 7) Trails End lot maintenance, including kiosk derecho repairs.
- 8) Director registration, Zoom renewal, PayPal charges
- 9) Liability and cyber protection insurance, plus volunteer accident coverage added in 2024.
- 10) (Replacement of projector equipment in 2023).

2023 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



1st Place:
Tricia Sinclair
"Anticipation"



2nd Place:
Norinne Coombs
"First One In"



3rd Place:
Sonja Unger
"Narrows Sunset"

Thank you to everyone who participated in our 2023 photo contest by submitting pictures or by voting! We had 65 submissions to vote on this year. Check them all out on the 2-page photo collage spread.

LOOKING BACK - 2023 EVENTS

Canada Day Festivities

Boat Parade



Photo Credit
Jenna Reid

Our members celebrated in style on Canada Day with our annual Dock Decorating Contest and Boat Parade.

The Boat Parade was well attended and the weather cooperated this year. Thank you to Melissa Grant who led the way!

Dock Decorating Contest



First Prize
Submitted by
Maggie Rose



Second Prize
Submitted by
Erin Farrow

SDRA Potluck



Ron Nowell and Esther Demczak were, once again, incredible hosts as we gathered together for our annual potluck. The weather was at first threatening and chilly on July 29th, but the sunshine burst forth later in the day as we enjoyed the amazing food and good chats with lake neighbours and friends.

The Potluck also featured our annual Ladder Golf tournament. Thank you to our Ladder Golf Coordinator, Paul Lindsay, who kept those very competitive teams in check. Congratulations to our 2023 Ladder Golf Champions, Twila and Gord Adams (pictured right).



Labour Day Fireworks

The fireworks were once again amazing! Lots of oohs and aahs. Thank you to Capital Pyrotechnics for an amazing show, and to Ryan Nowell for on-the-ground support.

A great way to end a fantastic summer!



2023 SAW THE RETURN OF...

The Skootamatta



LAKE FESTIVAL

After a brief hiatus, Summer 2023 saw the return of the Skootamatta Lake Festival. This annual event, which has been a beloved tradition for many years, has been a beacon of community and fun on the lake, and one that many look forward to each year.

From Kayak and Swim Races to Axe Throwing, this year's festival brought a blend of old favourites and new additions, catering to both the nostalgic and adventurous. (Did someone say, "Dunk Tank?!")



Even the weather couldn't spoil the magic.

Although the rain did hold off for the events, activities and the always popular BBQ, the medal ceremony was a soggy one.

Despite the rain, everyone stuck it out proving that a successful event is not just about sunshine, it's about the spirit of those who participate.



This Years' Activities Included:

- Fishing Pool
- Bouncy Castle
- Dunk Tank
- Arts & Crafts Station
- Corn Hole and Ladder Golf
- Axe Throwing
- Face Painting
- Kayak and Swim Races

Planning and executing a festival such as this is a BIG job! This year the torch was passed down to the Koehler family. Although they are a family big enough to have their own lake festival (and have full teams for each event), this became more of a community undertaking than a family one. The volunteers, and all who helped, serve as a reminder of people's passion to carry on traditions, and are what keep our Lake great!

Special thanks to The Koehler Family for picking up the challenge and bringing our Lake Festival alive once again, the Stevens Family for an amazing BBQ, and Jill Coté for the goodies!

THANK
YOU





THE LAKE FESTIVAL

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR EVENT WINNERS

SWIMMING RACES

Children 6 and Under

- 1st- Mya Drudge
- 2nd- Rosalee Broek
- 3rd- Tabitha Koehler

Boys/Girls 9-10 Yrs

- 1st-Emery Robson
- 2nd- Mitchell Koehler
- 3rd- Kaelyn Marshall

Boys 15-17 Yrs

- 1st- Tom Birnie-Wortley

Boys 7-8 Yrs

- 1st- Mason Broek

Boys/Girls 11-12 Yrs

- 1st- Nolan Koehler
- 2nd- Nicoletta Brandiferri
- 3rd- Hailey Stacey

Girls 15-17 Yrs

- 1st- Stella McBride

Girls 7-8 Yrs

- 1st- Adelynn Marshall
- 2nd- Emily Miniota
- 3rd- Rylin Nowell

Boys/Girls 13-14 Yrs

- 1st- Luke Koehler
- 2nd- Dickson Koehler
- 3rd- Isabella Brandiferri

Men/ Women 18-40+ Yrs

- 1st- Chris Koehler
- 2nd - Steve
- 3rd- Ken Hook

KAYAK RACES

Boys 8 and Under

- 1st- Mason Broek
- 2nd- Oliver Teed
- 3rd- Owen Grant

Girls 9-12 Yrs

- 1st- Marley Drudge
- 2nd- Kaelyn Marshall

Men/ Women 18-40

- 1st- Tyler Teed

Girls 8 and Under

- 1st- Tabitha Koehler
- 2nd- Emily Miniota
- 3rd- Roselee Broek

Boys 13-17 Yrs

- 1st- Tom Birnie- Wortley

Men/Women 41+

- 1st- John Teed
- 2nd- Ken Hook

Boys 9-12 Yrs

- 1st- Finley Koehler
- 2nd- Reed Robson
- 3rd- Emery Robson

Girls 13-17 Yrs

- 1st- Paige
- 2nd- Abby Koehler



Your Opinion Matters

Your ideas are what make the Lake Festival great!

We would love to hear your feedback on how we can make the Lake Festival even better. To share your thoughts, please email info@skootamatta.ca and we will pass it on to the Lake Festival Committee



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Special thanks to our Lake Festival Organizers for an amazing job!

The Koehler Family

The Stevens Family

Hein Hemmersbach

Nancy Kallina

Jill Coté

Stella McBride

Roseanne Vukobrat

The Birnie Boys

Megan Purdy-Bennett

The Brandiferri Family

Basil Stanton

Sean and Carly Matheson

Just as we saw how the Lake Festival could not possibly happen without a dedicated group of people who selflessly volunteered their time, there is an additional extended group of people who volunteer to help in countless ways to make things happen at our lake community. Your help is appreciated by many.

Thank you to our volunteers for making this such a amazing Skootamatta Community!

Nancy Kallina

Lynn Schwenger

Ken Hook

Mike Cumming

Mike and Suzanne Stevens

Paul Lindsey

Rachel and Jessica Cumming

Rod Trimble

Carolyn & Gord McCulloch

Ron Nowell

Brett Hughes

Lynn Osborne

Esther Demczak

Wayne Arthurs

Krista Marino

Melissa Grant

Christie Arthurs

Ryan Nowell

And then there are those who just help silently without recognition....

UNSUNG HEROES OF SKOOT

Have you ever wondered how things just "HAPPEN" on Skootamatta Lake? How do things get fixed or cleaned up? Many members who are not part of the SDRA Board, and who are not recognized volunteers, do just that... they roll up their sleeves and "muck in".



David and Mel Rattray

We would like to give recognition to two such members: David and Melodie Rattray.

David and Mel are long time cottagers on Skootamatta. Every Spring they clean up the winter debris and rake the sand at the Upper Lake Beach. This is no easy feat because you can only get there by boat. As such, this means that the tools needed must be taken *in* by boat, and the debris collected taken *out* by boat. Even during the summer, before the Saturday crowds, you will often find them raking and tidying up the beach.

David and Mel even donated a wonderful Picnic Table. (How they got it there by boat is beyond me!) Sadly, the picnic table was stolen two weeks later.

Our resident Gold Medal Olympian ... Jamie Lee Rattray, is their daughter, and she can also be seen cleaning the beach when she visits Skootamatta.

The Rattray Family is always there to help their friends and neighbours and they deserve to be commended for their efforts. David and Mel, please know that each and every one of us who enjoys this beach, really appreciates your hard work. Thank you!

Editor's Note: Cottagers on Skootamatta Lake (Loon Lake as it was known years ago) have a long history of helping out and being good neighbours. If you would like to recognize an Unsung Hero, let us know at info@skootamatta.ca.

2024 EVENTS

Please note that these are the planned events.
Please stay tuned to communications from the Board for any unforeseen changes!

Canada Day Festivities



Photo Credit
Jenna Reid

Monday, July 1
Boat Parade and Dock Decorating Contest
Starts at 10:00 a.m.

Time will be confirmed by a POP closer to the date
Starting in Sheldrake Bay
Decorate your boat and docks, then take pictures and send them in!

Annual General Meeting

Saturday, July 6

9:30 a.m. Meet & Greet
10:00 a.m. Meeting Start

Location: Barrie Township Hall, Cloyne

Join us for SDRA updates, meet the Board, and ask questions. Meeting will be followed by a Hot Dog BBQ sponsored by Foodland

We are also planning to provide an online & proxy option as well for those who can't attend. Please stay tuned for further information and links.

Ron and Esther's Potluck

Saturday, August 17

Annual Pot Luck at 1191 Hughes Landing Road - hosted by Ron Nowell and Esther Demczak



Saturday, August 10

Celebrating Summer
With Fun For The WHOLE Family at Trail's End

Enjoy a fantastic BBQ provided by the Stevens Family

Annual Food Drives



Labour Day Weekend and Thanksgiving Weekend

Hwy 41 and Skootamatta Lake Rd

SDRA will be collecting for the Land O'Lakes Food Bank

Summer's End Extravaganza

Saturday, August 31

at 8:30 p.m.

The Causeway

A farewell to summer



THE GREAT CANADIAN SKOOTAMATTA ICE CONTEST

By Paul the "Ice Watcher"

It never ceases to amaze me how many responses we get for the Great Canadian Skootamatta Ice Contest. Each year, I open the contest and wonder if anyone is interested. Just moments later, BOOM, wave after wave of guesses come in. We had 103 guesses this year. We started early out of



necessity. When the warm winter and eyeballs on the ice told us it wasn't going to wait until April, we had to get things rolling. In a most unusual situation, we barely made it past mid-March when we had more water than ice in our contest area. March 18 was the official date this year. Surprisingly, there were no guesses on the 18th, so we went to the next closest dates on the 17th and 19th.

March 17	March 19
John Coombs	Gordon Birnie
Karen Stacey	Ken Hook
Linda Follings	Linda Dzelme
Sean Geddes	Laurie and Marty Carson
Nancy Gilmore	

Congratulations to our 9 closest guessers. We will have a run-off at the AGM in July to determine the number 1 winner.

Thank you to Krista Marino and Lynn Osborne for watching the ice and taking pictures when I was not there.

A "BLOOMIN'" GOOD TALE OF THE STEVENS' COTTAGE

From Jim Osborne as told by his father, J. Ross Osborne, the son of ARO

My grandfather, Alfred Ross "Tiny" Osborne (ARO), laid out the first 35 lots on Loon Lake. Before 1920, when he first went to Osborne Island, he found a Mohawk family, the Beys, summer camped on the North end of the island. They could see in 3 directions, and as the wind picked up speed as it rounded the point, it helped to keep the bugs down. ARO asked them to leave, but hired the boys back to help him build about 18 of the first cottages, starting with his own. He also hired Mike Schwager as his foreman. Later, Mike ran the small post office on the island in the east bay, now known as Mike's Island.

The next summer, the Stevens' cottage was being built on Osborne Island below ARO's. It made sense to share tools, construction material and labour in close proximity. In Spring of 1922, the framework of the Stevens' was moved over the ice to Blatchford Beach opposite Mike's Island, which was uninhabited then. Using block & tackle, and logs for rolling, the cottage shell was moved up to the top of the hill. One of the Bey boys was inside and popped his head out a cottage window with Stevie Stevens' bloomers on his head. The labourers couldn't contain themselves and, with the laughter, lost grip of the ropes and the cottage rolled back down to the beach. On the second try, it came to its current resting place. Today, the cottage is owned by Doug Jones, great-grandson of Stevie.

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS



Land O'Lakes Speakers' Forum

Sponsored by: **RAYMOND JAMES**

<p>TERRY FALLIS AUTHOR April 24</p>	<p>RAND SIMON HOCKEY AGENT May 22</p>	<p>RITA DI GHENT PERFORMING ARTS June 26</p>
<p>Dr. JOHN CRANFIELD ACTING DEAN UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH July 24</p>	<p>Dr. ROELF MAKKEN ECONOMIC PROFESSOR BROCK UNIVERSITY September 25</p>	<p>GARY COLWELL ASTRONOMY PROFESSOR August 28</p>

UPCOMING SPEAKERS
April – Sept 2024

Speakers' Forum takes place at the Lion's Club in Northbrook. Doors open at 6:30, speakers begin at 7:00 followed by Q&A at 8:00.



Lions Club of Land O' Lakes

NORTHBROOK FARMERS MARKET



Saturdays from June 8th - August 31, 2024

10am - 1pm

12238 Highway 41, Northbrook, ON

Farmers | Artisans | Preserves | Fresh Produce
Honey | Quilting | Coffee | Baked Goods | BBQ
Pork | Beef | Eggs | Flowers | Herbs | Maple Syrup

SLOW PITCH ANYONE?



If you're looking for some fun with fellow cottagers and community members, please consider participating in our Slow Pitch games at the Cloyne Ball diamond, just North of the Methodist Church on Hwy 41.

Fridays, starting June 28, from 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Tuesdays, beginning July 2, from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Let's Play Ball!

For the most part, we are an unskilled group, so don't worry about your skill level or lack thereof. We have a couple of extra gloves if you don't have one. There's also no need to sign up. We just randomly make teams each time. We encourage families to play as long as the kids are teens or older.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR TOWNSHIP?

Did you know that you can sign up to get the most recent and accurate news from the Township?

A new edition is released the 15th of every month!

To subscribe to the Monthly E-Newsletter, simply follow the link to sign up:

<https://addingtonhighlands.ca/newsletter/>

COMMUNITY DONATION

LIONS CLUB OF LAND O'LAKES

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

For over 50 years, the Lions Club of Land O'Lakes, has been serving and supporting our area. Through a range of fundraising activities and programs, the 71 members provide operational and financial assistance to many local organizations.

This year, the SDR is pleased to have selected the Lions Club's Emergency Preparedness Program, as the recipient of the SDR's annual community donation, in the amount of \$1000.

In recent years, the Land O'Lakes region and surrounding communities, have experienced a number of extreme weather and climate-related events, resulting in both extensive property damage and increased anxiety among residents. The May 21, 2022 Derecho, prompted the Lions Club membership to assess how the Club could better assist authorities in dealing with the challenges people may face during similar emergencies, that may arise in the future.



Land O'Lakes Lions Club, Northbrook

The Lions decided that the Club's hall on Highway 41 in Northbrook would be an ideal location for a potential Emergency Centre. A study revealed that the right combination of capable people, a will to succeed, and the requisite finances could make the Centre a reality.

Initially, the Lions created a Comfort Centre within the hall, as a place for people to warm up or cool off, and to charge phones. Now they have developed a plan to install a generator and a fire suppression system, upgrade the kitchen to commercial status, add a shower, and build the necessary inventory of equipment and supplies to assist a community in need of round-the-clock temporary accommodation.

The Townships of Addington Highlands and North Frontenac have both indicated their clear support for the project. In August, the Lions launched a Capital Campaign with a goal of \$200,000, incorporating proceeds from the annual golf tournament, a live auction, a series of pancake breakfasts, and a quilt raffle among other fundraising efforts. At the same time, the Lions have reached out to various organizations, including the Lions Club International Foundation, and governments for grant and matching funding. The Campaign is now well on its way to reaching the funding target, and with so much support coming from throughout the community and region, the Lions are confident of success in this highly important endeavour.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LAND O'LAKES EMERGENCY FOOD BANK



L to R: Jill Coté, Sandra Carman & Lois Emond at work

High rates of inflation have had a profound impact on rising fuel and grocery prices, rents, interest rates, and other daily costs for many Canadians. In turn, these economic realities have contributed to the enormous pressure building on Food Banks in cities and towns across the nation.

Our local Land O'Lakes Food Bank has not escaped this reality – in 2023, our Food Bank served over 500 families in Addington Highlands and North Frontenac Townships. A single day during this past November, saw 21 families seeking assistance. In January 2024, the number of people served totalled 138, a 60% increase over January 2023!

These kinds of numbers are clearly challenging in light of the Food Bank's small working space and volunteer work force. These volunteers continue to rise to the occasion with patience, hard work and empathy. The Land O'Lakes Lions Club has also stepped up with additional volunteers to help with sorting and filling food boxes for distribution. The team aims to stretch its resources as far as possible, seeking out deals on-line and scanning numerous paper fliers, cost-efficiently sourcing supplies, and recycling where possible. All this activity is carefully administered and tabulated as part of the Food Bank's cooperation with other organizations in the Ontario Food Bank chain.

The SDRA membership has been, and continues to be, a greatly appreciated supporter of the Land O'Lakes Emergency Food Bank. Thank you to all of you who contribute so generously!



SKOOTAMATTA COMMUNITY FACEBOOK GROUP

By Lynn Schwenger

The SDRA currently has a Facebook Page which is used exclusively for "one way" communication on Board activities and updates, and is not intended for users to post content.

In June of 2023, a SDRA member posted a question to the, "What's Happening in Northbrook" Facebook group, regarding the smoke from the forest fires, and an idea was born!



I suggested creating a Skootamatta Community Group that would allow SDRA members and the Public to post and create dialogue of this sort. The Skootamatta Community Facebook Group was created on July 1st and we currently have over **700+ members!**

This page is a Public group and allows its members to post messages, ask questions and share information on services they may need or offer. So far, the Skootamatta Community Facebook Group has been very active and engaging, and we hope to continue to provide current information to all who visit the page.

If you haven't visited the page yet, give it a look !

SHORELINE CAMPING UPDATE

By Joel Arthurs

Over the years, the SDRA has heard concerns about illegal camping. Many of the instances have revolved around boat launches in Sheldrake Bay and the Upper Lake. The Board has worked with the Township and the Ministry of Natural Resources to try and address some of these issues through the sharing of information to target these problem areas. Last year, we reached out to the Ontario Provincial Police and spoke with Operations Manager, Al O'Byrne. Through these discussions, the OPP increased their patrols of the lake in an effort to both educate, and enforce, applicable laws. During one patrol, the OPP made contact with boaters and issued several alcohol-related offenses.



Below is a summary of patrols and their efforts to manage illegal camping, as communicated by the OPP:

Vessel patrol - 2 officers - 12 hours

The operator made multiple on water & community contacts. The vessel visited the public boat launches on the lake and did not locate any campers on the launch property itself. In speaking with residents, they confirmed that there were campers in the area but that they had departed. It is evident that campers do use the launch areas for camping, but no enforcement took place as we did not locate anyone. Signage certainly was/is an issue with respect to enforcement as the area must be posted in order for an offense notice to be issued.

Vehicle patrol - 2 days of patrols

After the absence of contact using the boat, we conducted vehicle patrols on the seasonal roads, not limited to the boat launches, but focused on them. Campers were on the Crown land areas and they were experienced campers who were respectful of the environment and lands. One camper, however, was located on/near one of the boat launches. This camper did not seem to understand the difference between Crown Land and the Boat Launch area on which it is not permissible to camp. This person's financial/living situation had forced them to this state. It was evident they were in need of social supports, which were provided, and in the end we were able to assist them in relocating, in a reasonable amount of time, to a better location.

"I believe the SDRA's concern is justified and we will include these types of patrols in the coming summer. The issue of signage needs to be explored leading up to the camping season. I know our presence and efforts last year had an impact. We contacted many users of the land and educated them on proper use. I look forward to continuing to work with your community to address their concerns."

The SDRA will continue discussions with the Township and the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry to address the issue of signage around the boat launches. We will also continue to request increased controls by conservation officers.

FOCA FEDERATION OF ONTARIO COTTAGERS' ASSOCIATIONS



What is FOCA? What do they do?

There are 250,000 named inland lakes in Ontario, and a like number of waterfront property owners! Since 1963, FOCA has been the voice of these owners, advocating on their behalf with federal, provincial, and municipal governments and authorities. Currently, this Federation includes more than 525 lake and road associations across the province. The SDRA has been a member for many years, along with five other associations from Lennox and Addington county.

Headquartered in Peterborough, FOCA's focus is the pursuit of healthy, thriving and sustainable waterfronts, for present and future generations, via a range of programs emphasizing education and communication. In 2017, the SDRA won FOCA's Annual Achievement Award in recognition of our association's successes in membership and stewardship.

FOCA's initiatives over the years have embraced successful advocacy on issues such as acid rain, toxic road treatments, municipal voting rights for cottage owners, fair property taxation, and fisheries protection. Current programs centre on such topical matters as cottage succession planning, invasive species prevention, septic system maintenance, boating etiquette, and water quality monitoring. The SDRA continues to participate in FOCA's Lake Partner Program.

Did you know?

As a member of the SDRA you are also enrolled as a member of FOCA! This entitles you to all of the benefits provided by a FOCA membership.

What are my specific member benefits?

Benefits for members include the CottageFirst group insurance program for all of cottagers' personal needs, free or discounted access to FOCA events and seminars, and 25% discounts for Cottage Life magazine subscriptions and Canadian Canoe Museum memberships.

FOCA maintains a comprehensive website detailing all of its activities, events, programs and priorities. Through your membership with the SDRA, you, as an individual member, can also become a member of FOCA, which will allow you to access the wealth of news and information that the organization delivers.

Have a question? FOCA has a comprehensive search engine that can help you gain access to all sorts of Cottage Country questions.

How do I learn more?

Go to the FOCA website:

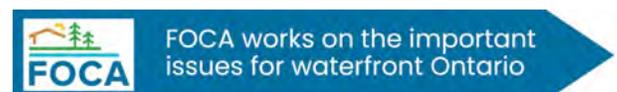
<http://foca.on.ca/benefits>

<http://foca.on.ca/issues-programs>

Keep up-to-date on cottage-country issues with FOCA's E!ert (e-news). Subscribe on their website to receive free monthly email updates.

A new feature this year will allow SDRA members to create their own login to access all of the information on the FOCA website. Watch for more information in an upcoming POP, or contact

info@skootamatta.ca



foca.on.ca/issues-programs/

Climate impacts **Naturalizing shorelines**

Water levels **Noise** **Boating issues**

Development/land use **Invasive species**

RURAL SERVICES **WATER QUALITY** Short-term rentals

WHAT KIND OF NEIGHBOUR ARE YOU?

The warming planet has increased all of our awareness of what it means to be a “good neighbour” in cottage country. Concerns raised by cottagers, questions posed by attendees at our AGM, and Facebook posts have repeatedly asked for increased vigilance, education and reminders, to ensure that our lakes continue to provide the beauty and enjoyment that we all strive for. This is a shared lake and one neighbour's activities will have an impact on another neighbour's well-being.

THESE ARE THE TOP THREE AREAS OF CONCERN RAISED THIS YEAR:

1. LIGHT POLLUTION

For some, the greatest joy of being at the cottage is the thrill of seeing the magnificent night sky. The moon's shifting phases, and the brilliant constellations of stars, are visual gifts that urban dwellers rarely receive. The sad tale that members are reporting is that cottage lighting is ruining the beauty of the night sky. Our research revealed that lighting also has a negative impact on birds, mammals, insects, and even plants, by disrupting their nocturnal behaviours.



Courtesy of Grand County and Moab, Utah

What can we do?

- Eliminate bright, confusing and strings of light bulbs
- Use lower wattage LED bulbs, and choose warmer tones that produce less light pollution than cool white/ blue tones
- Install Nightsaver shields that fit over the bulb in your existing outdoor light to send ambient light *downward*
- When buying new outdoor lighting, choose accredited “Night Sky Approved” lighting

For more information on light pollution, FOCA is a great source: <https://foca.on.ca/light-pollution/>

2. BOATS WHICH CREATE EXCESSIVE WAKE

Motorized boats, and especially high speed or wake boats which are designed to produce an *amplified* wake, can be extremely detrimental to shoreline properties and the environment. Reports include excessive damage to shoreline boats and docks, dangerous conditions for other boaters, and extensive erosion of shorelines, including destruction of wildlife habitats such as loon nesting sites.

What can we do?

- Slow down in bays and narrow water channels where the impact can be amplified
- Always leave and approach the shore in a straight line – turning generates large waves
- Avoid areas populated by cottages, docks and moored boats
- Vary your route frequently. Repeated runs in front of the same cottages is profoundly annoying because of swells and noise
- Observe the shoreline and choose to boat in areas that are rocky. Avoid marshy or soft shorelines which are subject to erosion. This is also where fish habitat and loon nesting are more likely to occur
- Be respectful of other boaters, especially smaller crafts, who can be negatively impacted by your wake

For more information, visit Safe Quiet Lakes website at: www.safequiet.ca BE#WAKEAWARE

3. DISRUPTIVE NOISE

Did you know that Addington Highlands has a ByLaw governing noise? We couldn't have stated it any better than as it appears in the ByLaw:

"People have a right to and should be ensured an environment free from unusual, unnecessary, or excessive sound and vibration which may degrade the quality and tranquility of their life or cause nuisance"
Source: Addington Highlands website

Barking dogs, leaf-blowers, personal watercraft, loud music and late night partying... we are all well aware of the impact of unwanted noise. Remember that noise, like light, amplifies over water! Familiarize yourself with the ByLaw, watch for permitted operating hours and be respectful of your neighbours.

**REMEMBER... THESE ARE THE CONCERNS RAISED BY YOUR NEIGHBOURS ...
YOU CAN DECIDE WHAT KIND OF NEIGHBOUR YOU WANT TO BE!**

PLEASE DON'T FEED THE FOXES

Have you noticed a proliferation of red foxes near your cottage? Chances are someone is feeding them.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry reminds people not to feed wild mammals. Red foxes are excellent hunters and normally prey on small mammals and birds. But foxes are opportunists; they'll take food if it's offered even though they are perfectly capable of finding it on their own.

If people feed foxes, either directly or indirectly, the animals will lose their fear of humans and adapt to that food source. It will be difficult to make them leave an area if they become a nuisance.

Impact on People and Pets:

Foxes are predators: they are "prey-driven" and are wild animals. They are *supposed* to be afraid of people. Feeding foxes results in them seeking out humans for food, which can result in aggressive behaviour, conflicts with people and attacks on domestic pets. Bites can be painful and wild creatures can carry disease.

The Ministry reminds the public that red foxes can carry rabies, mange and distemper. Too many foxes in an area can lead to outbreaks of scabies, a parasitic skin infection caused by mites. Scabies can easily be transferred to pets, and in some cases, people. In addition to scabies, foxes also carry black-legged and deer ticks, the former of which can carry Lyme Disease.

Impact on the Foxes:

Human food isn't healthy for wildlife. Even if your "treat" fits their diet, encouraging these foxes to rely on humans for food is doing these wild creatures more harm than good.

Predators and prey have a delicate balance in any landscape, but humans feeding foxes can easily disrupt this balance. With extra food from humans, the fox population can increase to an artificially high level, potentially outstripping their supply of natural foods. This imbalance can lead to higher fox mortality rates as food sources diminish in the Fall and Winter.

What can we do?

When you come upon these beautiful creatures admire them in awe, keep your distance, take a picture for a keepsake (or the SDR photo contest) but **please don't feed them.**



Photo credit Jeff Miller

LAKE STEWARD'S REPORT

By Martha Warriner

Join us in reading more about the key events, challenges, and achievements that have shaped our stewardship efforts on Skootamatta Lake this past year. New updates to our SDRA website, <https://www.skootamatta.ca>, now provide increased visibility and data sharing of the work being carried out, both past and present. We look forward to another spectacular cottage season, and thank you for being an essential part of our community, working together to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of Skootamatta Lake.

Water Levels

In 2023, we observed significant fluctuations in water levels. Concerns were raised by our members which has resulted in an in-depth description of Lake Level Management and Quinte Conservation's role, which can be viewed in the article on pages 24 & 25.

Water Testing

Our bi-annual comprehensive water testing is scheduled for this summer. Consistent testing at GPS-coordinated sites, establishes a solid baseline for lake health and chemistry analysis. The data indicates that our lake remains healthy and continues to support a diverse ecosystem.

We continue to actively participate in the Water Rangers and Lake Partners programs, with much of this data now accessible on our website. I encourage you to explore some of the suggested web links below for more information on the analysis and its significance. If you are interested in water testing or sampling, contact the board for involvement. We are always looking for volunteers!



Future Water Rangers in Training

Invasive Species

New for 2023 was our participation in the IsampleON program - a partnership between FOCA and the Invasive Species Centre, with funding from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. This joint venture uses the latest in eDNA detection technology. Water samples were collected in August and sent away to be tested. The target species for detection were the invasive aquatic plants: European Water Chestnut and Water Soldier. Results are expected in the second quarter of 2024 and will be shared with our members as soon as they are available.

Unfortunately, 2023 also marked the confirmation of the presence of another invasive species, Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM). Findings on local area lakes prompted Skoot volunteers to perform scouting in late August/September, revealing EWM throughout Skootamatta Lake, with larger clusters near popular fishing spots and public access points. We continue to actively collaborate with neighbouring lake associations to determine the best course of action to tackle this threat. Plans for 2024 include scouting, to determine year-over-year growth, investigating the use of

buoys to mark infested areas to reduce further spread, and the installation of additional signage at public access points around the lake. This signage will alert users to the threat of invasive species and remind all of the requirement to wash equipment and boats when moving between waterways. Visit our website for an EWM map showing growth clusters on our lake, and to find resources on its impact.

Broad-Scale Monitoring Program (BSM)

The Broad-Scale Monitoring Program (BSM) assesses fish habitat, diversity, size, contaminants, invasive species and water chemistry, and operates on an approximately five-year cycle of selected lakes in Ontario. In July 2022, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources conducted BSM on Skoot. Over several days, fish were netted and samples taken to be analyzed by MNR biologists. Data is now publicly available, which assists with identifying and addressing fishery management issues. Check out the website listed below for recent findings.

We engaged with an MNRF representative regarding Walleye decline and invasive species threats, and advocated for the consideration of future Walleye stocking initiatives. However, it was recognized that this, alone, may not ensure a sustainable fish population in our waters. An interesting discovery from these conversations was the detection of Zebra Mussel veligers (free floating larva) in all testing cycles. Fortunately, our lake's calcium concentrations seem to be well below what is required for the adult propagation of this invasive species.

We look forward to sharing the complete findings of the aquatic invasive species report with our members once it is published.

- Water Rangers <https://www.waterrangers.ca/>
- Lake Partners Program <https://www.ontario.ca/page/map-lake-partner>
- IsampleON <https://foca.on.ca/isampleon/>
- Eurasian Water Milfoil <https://www.ontario.ca/page/eurasian-water-milfoil>
<https://www.invasivespeciescentre.ca/>
- BSM Program Details <https://www.ontario.ca/page/broad-scale-monitoring-program>
- BSM Fisheries Bulletins <https://www.gisapplication.lrc.gov.on.ca/FishONLine/Index.html>



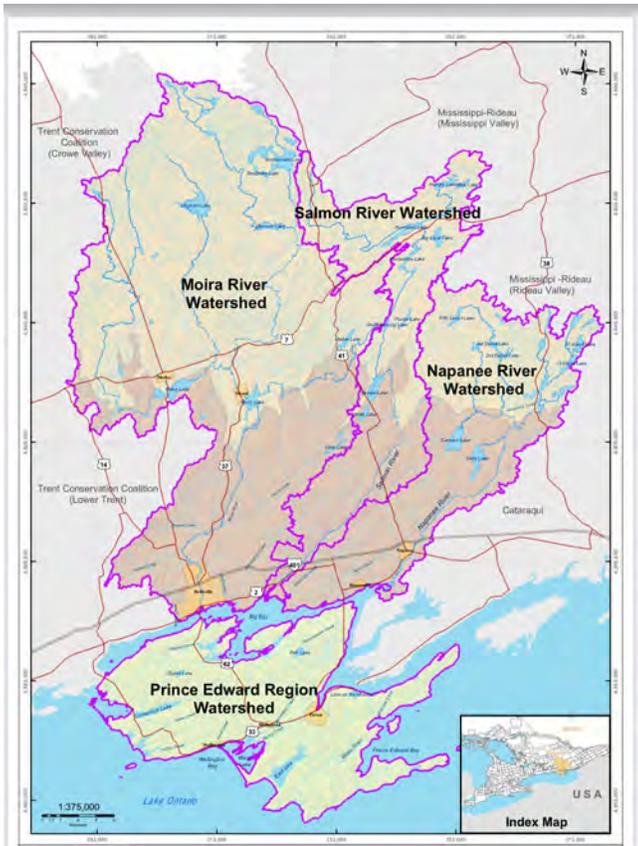
Photo Credits Greg Allen

LAKE LEVEL MANAGEMENT AND QUINTE CONSERVATION

By Duncan Armstrong

Looking back, cottage season weather in 2023 can best be characterized as one of extremes: a hot and dry Spring; a smoky July; a very wet and cool August; followed by a spectacular warm and dry Fall. One especially noteworthy weather event occurred mid summer, when heavy rains led to a rapid and uncharacteristic rise in lake levels, that flooded many docks and near-shore areas for several days. This unusual event was later attributed to successive days of heavy precipitation, and the resultant collapse of a beaver dam which had been holding back a large volume of water in the Wolf Creek sub-watershed.

Some shoreline residents expressed frustration during the unusual and prolonged rise in lake levels, leading to questions about how Quinte Conservation manages the Skootamatta Lake dam. **This article explains why and how 'headwater' lakes, such as Skootamatta, are managed.**



Quinte Conservation watershed map and jurisdiction

While the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is responsible for the Skootamatta Lake Dam, it is Quinte Conservation that carries out day-to-day dam operations that result in changes to lake levels. Quinte Conservation, and its 35 peers, is a provincially incorporated organization, empowered and governed by the MNRF. Quinte Conservation is mandated under Ontario's Conservation Authorities Act to manage surface waters to protect life and property from the twin threats of flooding and erosion, within its jurisdiction.

Conservation Authorities are governed by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from watershed municipalities. Conservation Authorities, including Quinte, fulfill their mandate through a variety of mechanisms, including but not limited to:

- the operation of water control structures, such as dams and weirs;
- permitting regulations to influence responsible, sustainable development adjacent to flood plains and near-shore areas;
- the conservation of wetlands and source water areas;
- provision of education and recreation opportunities.

Of these mechanisms, it is the operation of water control structures to prevent and mitigate seasonal flooding, and provide low flow augmentation during droughts, that most directly affects SDRAs, other shoreline owners and lake users.

It is not unusual for headwater lakes (i.e., those at, or near the start, of a river system, such as Skootamatta and Mazinaw), to experience fluctuations in lake levels, often outside of seasonal ranges. This is increasingly common as we experience more unpredictable, non-traditional weather patterns.

Quinte, and its neighbour, Mississippi Valley Conservation, undertake to slowly release accumulated run-off that might otherwise flood downstream homes, municipal infrastructure and communities.

As many lake residents recall, lake levels remained above seasonal norms for several days following the mid-Summer storms. Elevated lake levels persisted when the outflow capacity of the dam was exceeded by heavy precipitation, and the massive volume of water released following the collapse of a large beaver dam in the Wolf Creek headwater complex. A simple analogy is a bathtub faucet at full volume exceeding a bathtub's drain capacity.

Conservation authorities, the MNRF, and Environment Canada conduct extensive precipitation forecasting and modelling to manage lake and river levels across Ontario, in the most timely and least disruptive way possible. As part of regular watershed operations, Quinte Conservation notifies affected residents of changes in lake and river levels via media releases and electronic communications with key stakeholders. **The SDRA receives these notifications and will post these announcements on their website and/or provide email alerts to SDRA members.**

Quinte Conservation conducts seasonal dam operations to reduce lake levels each Fall. By reducing lake levels in the Fall, conservation authorities like Quinte, the MNRF, and Federal agencies on the Rideau and Trent Severn Waterway canal systems, create capacity to absorb Spring snowmelt and precipitation that might otherwise cause downstream ice dams, flooding and erosion, damage to individual and public property, and higher risks for loss of life.



Skootamatta Lake dam during peak Fall stormwater release

Quinte Conservation strives to hold off dropping lake levels in the Fall, until one to two weeks after Thanksgiving. The replacement of dam-stop logs in the Spring to raise the lake level to Summer norms, is more difficult to determine due to seasonal factors, such as the extent of snowfall, the amount of water in the snowpack, the amount and depth of ice, and Spring weather patterns. **The SDRA will notify the membership once Spring lake levels are restored to Summer norms.**

Seasonal and storm event lake level deviations are indeed inconvenient, and not always popular amongst lake users and shoreline owners. However, failing to undertake seasonal and ad-hoc surface water management could have catastrophic downstream consequences. While a small consolation, Skootamatta Lake level fluctuations from storm events and regular drawdowns in the Fall, are relatively minor in contrast to those on larger watershed systems, such as those in Haliburton, the Kawarthas, the Rideau watershed, and the Ottawa River Valley.

Simply put, Quinte Conservation has a critical and challenging role in trying to protect and meet the needs of an *entire* watershed, from the Land O'Lakes headwaters to Lake Ontario. Local interests in one community or area may not always align with those in another part of the watershed.

As weather events become more unpredictable and pronounced, the Skoot dam and the efforts of Quinte Conservation managing our lake and downstream river levels, will become increasingly important.

For more information on any of Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities, please check out:

<https://conservationontario.ca/policy-priorities/conservation-authorities-act>

For more information on Quinte Conservation, please check out:

<https://www.quinteconservation.ca/en/index.aspx>

For real-time monitoring of Skootamatta Lake Dam water levels, please check out:

https://gis.quinteconservation.ca/Html5Pub/index.html?viewer=QCA_Water_Levels.Levels_Summary

FOREST STEWARDSHIP

By Jim Chinnick

FORWARD THINKING REQUIRES HINDSIGHT

The Derecho Storm of 2022 reminded us that our SDRA properties are surrounded by forests. The damage to buildings from storms can be repaired within a reasonable time, but the damage to trees can be dramatic and can last several lifetimes. Forest stewardship can have a significant impact, reminding us of the importance of managing our forests!

Our surrounding forests fall into two main groups: those owned privately; and, those that are owned by the Province, referred to as, "Crown Lands". Crown Lands are shared by many users, including those involved in the forestry industry. Harvesting trees for wood products is managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), who, in turn, outsource the planning and operations to Sustainable Forest Licensees (SFL). In the SDRA area, the licensee is the Mazinaw-Lanark Forest Inc., (MLFI), who must abide by the rules that are established by the Government of Ontario, and who must develop and manage plans on a 10-year cycle. There is a fine balance weighing such issues as environmental concerns, species-at-risk protection, and indigenous considerations, while attempting to meet wood-harvesting goals.

[The forestry article in the SDRA Newsletter of 2022 describes the efforts of the SDRA to amend the proposed 2021 – 2031 Forest Management Plan (FMP). It is recommended that members re-read this 2022 article to help put the following material in context.]

It's important to consider some new developments, as we begin preparations for our participation in the next 10-year cycle (2031 – 2041):

First of all, one of our objectives in discussions with MLFI regarding the 2021 – 2031 FMP, was to implement improved buffer-zone harvest strategies around water bodies, and to implement similar strategies around private properties, especially lakeshore properties. The MLFI did not agree, and so SDRA initiated the Issues Resolution process administered by the MNRF. Based on an analysis provided by the MLFI, the adjudicator concluded that the requested buffer-zones' strategy would render the economics of the MLFI wood-harvesting plan non-viable, and rejected the SDRA proposal.

It is noteworthy that in reviewing the MLFI 2011 - 2021 Annual Plan, it is revealed that over the 11-year Plan period, the area harvested was only 44% of the Plan area, and the volume of wood-product produced was only 31% of the Plan amount! This was not an anomaly of this Plan period, but rather a *continuation of trends* from earlier Plan periods. Of course, this information would have been well known to MLFI at the time of the Issues Resolution meeting, but was not included in their analysis. It follows that, if less than half of a Plan area is actually used for forestry, then there is an opportunity to look at implementing buffer-zone management strategies, that would support other users of the forests. Such a consideration would not have a negative economic impact on the forestry industry. (As a sidenote, I see that in the recently released report for the 2022-2023 harvest year, the area harvested was a mere 8% of the plan.)

The question naturally arises as to why there is such a discrepancy between Plan and execution. While there is a lot of spin, in the end it comes down to economics: there is not a market for the product envisioned in the Plan. If there is no market, there is no harvest opportunity.

Unfortunately, this looks to be an example of planning by policy, rather than strategically.

A second concern from follow-up to the Issue Resolution process, arises from the SDRA proposal that Lake Associations should have more, and earlier, input to the planning process. This reflects the growing significance of lakeshore property owners as an influential demographic, in terms of social and financial importance, to rural communities. The adjudicator did accept this as a reasonable request, and made the determination that, *"...I recognize the role of the ML Forest Based Lake Associations in the ML Forest and the importance of fostering strong relationships with our stakeholders and I am directing the District Manager to contact you with a view to setting up a teleconference to discuss opportunities to get engaged in the implementation of this FMP and the development of the next FMP."*

Unfortunately, at the subsequent meeting with the Bancroft-based District Manager, this directive was rejected as unnecessary, and no improvement in our access to operational planning was to be implemented. This unfortunate decision brings into question the integrity of the Issues Resolution process, and needs to be carried forward as a lesson learned.

Thirdly, it was noted that management involvement was not evident during our negotiations with MLFI. The previous President had moved on, and had not yet been replaced. While there has been no public announcement, it has been confirmed that management of planning and operations of MLFI, have been outsourced to a consulting firm, Forest Resource Management Group Inc., (FRMG), based out of New Liskeard. Apparently FRMG has been operating in this type of role in northern Ontario and is now moving south. It is uncertain how this will impact planning involvement for the next FMP, but clearly the process will be less "local" in its focus than it has been.

Looking forward, there are several activities that as members of SDRA we should consider:



Photo Credit - FRMG

- Become involved. We need to show that we are indeed stewards of our forests.
- Visit sites near your property where logging is, or has been, taking place. Take pictures of the good and the areas of concern, and share your findings with an SDRA Board member.
- Continue to support the SDRA water quality monitoring process. This gives us a good picture of the quality of the water in our lakes and our extensive areas of wetlands. Monitoring also helps to assess how well run-off is being managed.
- While the FMP documentation is a bit daunting, it is very informative to read the parts that are not too technical. Being aware of the issues and concerns of the MLFI helps us all. Key documents can be found here: https://nrip.mnr.gov.on.ca/s/fmp-online?language=en_US
- Be aware of changes in Provincial environmental legislation, which have shown a tendency to reduce protections to enhance economic growth. Whether good or bad is a personal consideration, but awareness is important.
- SDRA will also continue to advance the interest of our members, agitate for release of updated forestry guidelines that have been "promised" since 2016, and hold the MNRF and MLFI accountable to Provincially and Federally defined sustainable forestry practices.
- SDRA will also re-visit our involvement in the next generation FMP planning process.

A HISTORY OF TRAIL'S END

Submitted by Rod Trimble

Loon Lake (Skootamatta Lake)

From the notes of Eleanor Fennell, circa 1996.:

Ed Landon was a World War I veteran, and rumour had it that the Trail's End area was a land grant, because of his poor health as a result of the war. He was apparently a playwright, and had friends who were writers. There were musty books given to him by other writers – I remember two – Merrill Dennison (who gave Bon

Echo Park to the province) and Father Coughlin, who was an American radio personality and author.

Trail's End, apparently, was first a log cabin and then Ed had the later cottage built in front of it. Surrounding it were at least three cabins – just big enough for a bunk bed and chair.

Mr. and Mrs. Fennell bought the property in the late 1930's, from Mr. Landon. Mrs. Sadie Wise, Mr. Fennell's aunt, and her son, Bob, were instrumental in bringing it to the attention of the Fennell's.



Trail's End Lodge

Mr. & Mrs. Fennell cleared brush from around the cottage. They also tore down the cabins except for one near the road in which Mr. Fennell kept his tools. They painted the cottage and put in flowers. At the back was an ice house; during the winter someone was paid to cut and put ice in so it could be used for an ice box in the summer.

When the cleaning & painting was done, Mrs. Fennell started a small store in the porch of the cottage. She kept cigarettes, canned goods and candy. She also had the milkman come from Parham and she sold milk. The milk was kept in a cooler full of water with ice floating in it. She also sold soft drinks and blocks of ice, for no one had refrigerators. In the store was a shelf on which mail was kept. If someone was going into Cloyne they would take the mail to go out, and bring any mail that was there for the cottagers. They often met at the store and had visits with each other. The cottagers would also shop for each other. There was even a horseshoe pit in front of Trail's End.

Also on the property was a larger cottage which was owned by the father of Harold Ballard, of the Toronto Maple Leafs. Harold Ballard paid a fee every year so he could cross the Fennell's property to get to his.

In 1944 or 1945, the Fennells sold their place in Norwood & spent the winter in Cloyne. They rented the United Church manse and lived there until Mr. Fennell died in 1951. Mrs. Fennell then sold Trails End to Mr. Harold Maybe in 1951 or 1952.

Harold and his wife, Alice, and Alice's sister, all came from Toronto. He had a large garage built near the road. He had a well dug at the back of the cottage and hydro put in each building. He also had the 2 cottages at the bottom of the hill built; and they are still there today, by the boat ramp.



Alice died, and after a few years and a few partners, Harold eventually sold the property to Cliff Weeks. Cliff built a very small store at the dock, rented the cottages, tended store, rented boats and motors, and sold real estate.

Mr. Weeks sold the property to the McDonalds. They enlarged the store, bought Al Glover's old cottage and skidded it across the lake and I think put up another building. They tore down the original Trail's End Cottage and put an addition on one of the other cottages. They built the white house where the original store was at the top of the hill; it is now gone. Sometime in this era, the old log cabin of Harold Ballard was torn down. There wasn't enough business to support a family and the McDonalds sold the Trail's End business to the Stewarts. Subsequent owners included The Bingham, The Mencers, Brian Boyes, Gino(?) & Mark Woolgar, and to the present day, Rod and Cynthia Trimble. Rod is one of Eleanor Fennell's nephews.

Some people who had cottages on the lake at the time were the Woods, Stammers, Osborne, Stevens, Jacobs, Carlyle, Shupe, Bible, Dick, Pearson, Shultz, Schwenger, Clark, Herrington, Blatchfords, Masson & his brother-in-law – Mr. Bell, Dr. Stewart who bought Masson's, and Dr. Wylie.

On the road into the landing, just up from Trail's End, was where Mr. & Mrs. Reid lived. They grew vegetables and flowers and sold the vegetables to the cottagers. Remember there was no electricity or telephones yet. The Reids sold their place to Ernie Tulley who came after World War II.

Mr. & Mrs. Archie Meeks, who was blinded in WWI, lived on the other road closer to where Highway 41 is now. He owned some of the old boathouses at the landing. In these boathouses he had boats he rented and he would store other people's boats. He also had boats that he left up at Sheldrake Lake.



The only access to property around the lake was by boat. The cottagers left their cars at the landing. Some had boathouses where they kept a boat available, others rented boats or had someone take them across. Some cottagers came on the train to Kaladar and were met there and brought to the Lake. In my time, I was met by Mr. Harry Levere who lived in Cloyne. He got the mail, freight and any passengers.

Trails End Landing and Boathouses

In the early days before Loon Lake Lodge was built around 1946-47, there was another lodge around the point called Rutland Lodge. Harry Davis would come across the lake to meet incoming guests from the train or who had driven themselves down. You always knew him by the way he sat in the boat.

Mrs. Stevens also took in guests. When they arrived at the landing they blew 3 times on the car horn for someone to meet them, regardless of the hour, day or night.

Over the years, and still I guess, watching people put their boats in and out was a great pastime. Some could do it with a minimum of confusion and others made it a real fiasco. The air would be blue with cussing and sometimes it was blue because the tires spun on the gravel and there was a big flat rock that really caused some fun. It was always more excitement if the car driver had had a bit too much to drink. Sometimes the ones from the cottage would go down and push. Things have certainly changed since those days, except watching the boats go in and out.



Landing Dock, Skootamatta Lake

100 YEARS OF SUNSETS

5 GENERATIONS OF THE MATTHEW FAMILY

By Melanie Burch and Carol Matthew



The story of the Matthew Cottage begins one hundred years ago, when an acre of lakefront was purchased from Robert Guest by Norman R. Matthew. Two years later, the twin parcels of Crown Land were granted by the Province to Helen Matthew, and her son, for a whopping sum of \$10 each!



A log building, suspected to be a trappers/hunting cabin built by Indigenous People, stood at the top of the hill. By 1930, Norman owned both parcels of land, where he set to work to build a second building at the top of "the hill". Norman's "new" construction, a kitchen, joined the original log building, and shortly thereafter he added a boathouse on the lake.

thereafter he added a boathouse on the lake.

Building these two new structures was no small task. Without the luxury of 2-lane highways, gravel roads were used to carry building materials to Trails End. From there, builders came in by canoe to the building site. The



journey from Toronto was a full day affair. Without

hydro or the luxury of an ice box, a hole in the ground was used to keep food cold! It would not be until 1958 that Hydro was installed.



While Norman would travel back & forth on weekends to work in the city, his wife, Elizabeth (Betty), would remain at the cottage all summer long with her two young children, Mary and John.



Twenty-five years later, with the passing of Norman, the property was passed to his widow, Betty, who, in turn, sold the property to her son, John, and his wife, Carol, for the sum of \$7000 in 1971.



Later, in the 1970s, the boathouse was renovated by John's son, John Neil Matthew, to become the main cabin, and remains the building it is today. John continued to add to the property with a "pre-fab barn" for storage, and "concrete docks", which were likely the first of their kind on the lake.

Eventually, John & Carol became busy with their farm, and their visits to Skootamatta became fewer and farther between. In 2016, John passed away, and his widow, Carol, became the sole owner of the property.



As so often happens with cottages, the next generation of family arrived just in time to fill the gap. Melanie, who had been coming to the cottage since she was a babe in arms, started to show more interest in her 20's. It was a fun place to come with friends to enjoy time away from the city. To this day, Melanie continues to enjoy the cottage with her husband, Dean Burch, and three children, Matthew, Summer and Nicholas. Dean and Melanie have taken over management of the property to maintain the existing buildings while continuing to update.

Without running water, the cottage remains a rustic and relaxing place to spend spring, summer & fall days. When feeling brave, the family will muster their courage and visit their cottage on a winter's day.



Sadly, the 2022 Derecho had a devastating impact on the Matthew Cottage. Five trees tore apart the original cabin, ripped out the hydro, and completely demolished the storage barn. It is now up to the next generation to maintain the cottage with hopes to keep the property in the family for many years to come.



We welcome anyone to stop by to say "hello"!

Carol Matthew & Melanie Burch

LAND O' LAKES GARDEN CLUB



LAND O' LAKES GARDEN CLUB
ANNUAL PLANT SALE, SATURDAY MAY 25TH
STARTING AT 9:00AM
JANIS'S GARDEN 1444 HWY 506, CLOYNE



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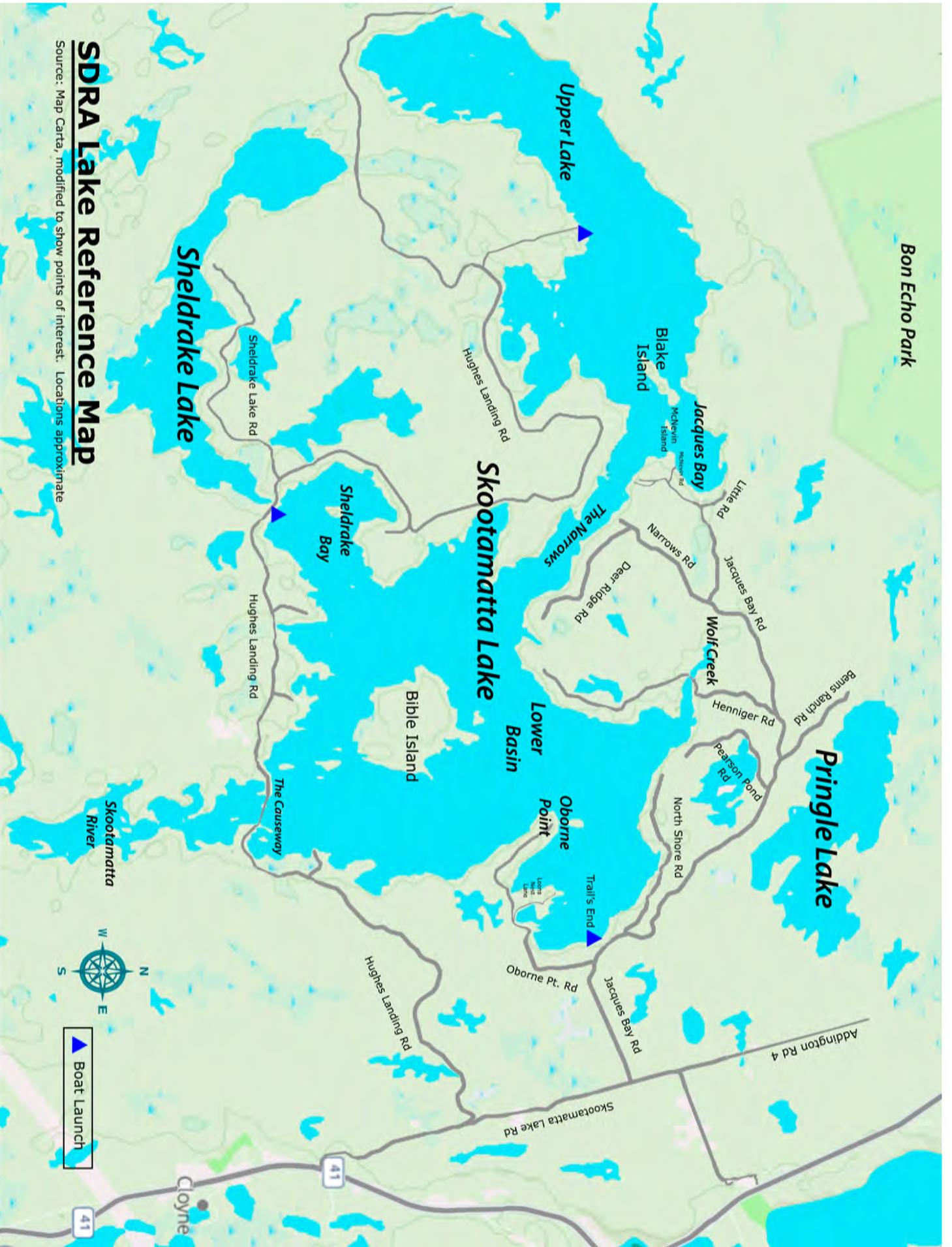
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Labour Day fireworks have been an important tradition on Skootamatta.

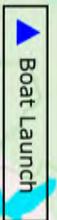
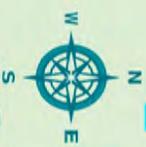
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SDRA Lake Reference Map

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



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