

The Loon's Call

MAY, 2023
VOLUME 23, ISSUE 1

President's Message – Randy Levine

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring Greetings

Most of us use our cottage primarily in the summer and the May long weekend has traditionally been the weekend when we open up. We wanted to get a newsletter out to you prior to that to update you on developments that have transpired since our last fall newsletter and to help you get ready for your cottage opening.

Our mission and main focus continues to be advocating on behalf of our members for matters that may have a negative impact on the ability to enjoy the land and beautiful lakes that surround us, including potential land developments, environmental issues and water quality. We liaise and lobby, as required, with all levels of government. We also try to organize events to allow people to meet and socialize with their fellow neighbors.

Over the last several months, we have been hard at work assessing the damage that salt runoff causes to our lakes as well as other environmental matters, raising concerns regarding a proposed development at the Gravenhurst Muskoka Warf and meeting with town and government officials to ensure your concerns are voiced and heard.

Congratulations to our newly elected Mayor, Heidi Lorenz. Brian and I met with Heidi recently to discuss issues of mutual concern. Heidi listened and expressed a desire to work with us. The Mayor reminded us that there is a new by-law relating to short term property rentals that our members should be aware of. Click [here](#) for the new regulations. She also noted that fundraising will begin shortly to assist in the building of a new hospital that will serve our members. Gravenhurst is a lovely town and I encourage all of you to support local businesses and local events (see section below).

It's that time of year and if you haven't already done so, it's time to renew your membership for the 2023 cottage season and I'd encourage you to do so as soon as you can. This can be done online or by mail.

Go to www.gull-and-silver-lakes.ca

We are planning to have our AGM this year on July 15th. It's a great opportunity to meet fellow residents and to discuss the common issues that face us all- please come! Also, we are always looking for new Board members and have a specific need for a Membership/Social Director. If you are interested, please let me know so we can include you in our elections at the AGM.

Brian has put together this great newsletter with input from Board members. I hope you find it as informative as I do. I'm looking forward to another fabulous summer, spending lots of time at the cottage and hopefully meeting more of our members around the lakes!



GSLRA Annual General Meeting

Saturday July 15th, 2023
9-11 am
Town location to be
Announced

COTTAGE OPENING CHECKLIST

It's time to open the cottage, making May 24 one of the most chore-filled weekends of the year.

Here's a simple checklist of tasks you should review so you can make the most of your opening weekend!

Before You Head Up

The better prepared you are, the more quickly you'll be able to kick back and relax.

- Make sure your electricity is turned on.
- Be sure that everything is insured and up to date. This includes boat, trailer, and cottage insurance.
- Remember any and all keys you'll need.
- Gather some cleaning supplies.

On Arrival

If you haven't been there all winter:

- Check for any damage to power lines, phone lines, the chimney, the deck, the dock, windows, screens, and under the cottage at the posts, pads, and beams.
- Head inside and look for signs of animal and water damage

Tuning up

- Replace batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Make sure fire extinguishers are charged.
- Turn on the taps and fill your hot water tank

That's it! You've got water, hot water, a shelter, and electricity. What else do you need? You remembered cold beer, right?



Hewitt St. Lakeside Garbage Collection is Back!

Water-access-only members who use the Hewitt St. Landing will once again be provided with "lakeside" garbage collection this summer. The District of Muskoka will dispatch a garbage truck to the Hewitt St. Landing every Sunday (3:00pm to 5:00pm) to collect bagged household garbage and recyclables from water-access residents. Initial reports indicate the program was well received and most of our members found it convenient.

The program will be in effect from Victoria Day Long Weekend in May to Labour Day long weekend in September. The GSLRA will continue to advocate for an extension to Thanksgiving weekend in October.

OTHER ECO NEWS:

A huge thanks to Bruce Elliott, for his ongoing work with our Gull & Silver Lakes MLA Water Quality Monitoring Program. Thankfully, the 2022 data shows both lakes with improved water quality compared to 2021!

As mentioned in our Fall newsletter the GSLRA is now part of a Fishing Line Recycling Program, supported by the Muskoka Conservancy. In 2022, a collection tube was installed at the Boat Launch Dock on Church St. Please drop off your used/tangled fishing line here, rather than having it cause more environmental damage in the water or on shore. Fishing line is NOT recyclable, but the Berkley Fishing group will melt it and convert it into fish habitat pods.

Joanne Smith continues SCIENCE SUNDAY on our [Gull & Silver Lakes Residents' Association Facebook page](#) which we encourage you to view regularly.

ROAD SALT MONITORING INITIATIVE

What began as a simple question on road salt damage to our lakes has unearthed an issue of significant concern that impacts all Lake residents. Just prior to last year's AGM, we obtained sodium chloride data from the DMM (District Municipality of Muskoka) from 2004 biannually to 2022. In addition, a webinar by Dr Norman Yan, (Friends of the Muskoka Watershed- FOTMW), showed research that zooplankton in our soft water lakes are far more vulnerable to sodium chloride (salt) than those of the harder GTA waters, (where Federal Guidelines were established). Zooplankton is critical to our Lakes continued "health". Click [here](#) for the Federal Guideline summary overview.

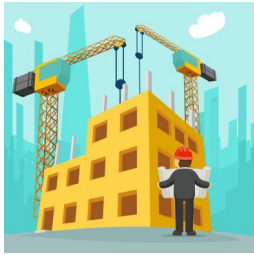
If we as lake residents continue to ignore this issue, our Lakes will no longer be viable "living" Lakes. Chloride builds up, but cannot be removed. Led by our own Joanne Smith, an ECO-Group (EG) was formed, comprised of some of our concerned residents, to address this significant concern. The EG has accomplished a lot over the winter months thanks to the efforts of all those involved. It has done research on facts, supported increased levels of advocacy, and is starting to develop steps forward. Joanne was referred to Dr Neil Hutchinson, (FOTMW) to ascertain how to measure and monitor various sites around the lake. As a result, the EG became the FOTMW's "Citizen Scientists", receiving 3 of their Chloride Test Kits. The EG has initiated a frequent collection of data to create a meaningful database. It continues to test two sites on Bethune Drive, one at the Phillips St culvert and several runoff areas into Gull Lake. The EG is also monitoring the ditch and pond at the McDonalds plaza, which drains south into a wetland and then the highly damaged Jevins Lake. The data is very significant and alarming. More information on our data and discussion will be tabled at this year's AGM!

Public education and policy changes are needed if we are to prevent permanent long term damage. The EG arranged for Neil Hutchinson to present at IGNITE (Gravenhurst Winter Festival) and visited the Town Engineer, to learn about our town's Policies and Procedures regarding road salt usage. The EG then invited local Probus group to a similar meeting with the District Engineer. The EG is also hosting a meeting of other Lake Associations and the MLA to elevate its concerns regarding this issue; Further, we will be highlighting this issue to the Gravenhurst town council in late June. The EG has also been featured on social media, in the Newsletters of the MLA and FOTMW, in the Gravenhurst Banner, and on CTV Barrie News regarding the salt issue.



Click [here](#) to watch the CTV interview and video taken on Bethune Drive North on how we are monitoring and actioning the health of our lakes

Land and Property Development Updates



Gull and Silver Lake Development

The GSLRA regularly monitors pending developments on both of our lakes so that we can keep our members informed and advocate as one voice on their behalf. Below is a summary of current properties that could be developed on Gull Lake:

Moody Bay

The 13 acre property just north of the Church St. Parkette, was sold to a developer out of Bolton called RAFAT Homes, a division of RAFAT Construction. There was a Facebook post about 13 cottages that would be built but at the current time of this newsletter, we are not aware of any development proposal being considered by the Town.

Pinedale Inn

Pinedale Inn has recently been put up for sale on MLS.ca but has not sold.

Great Gulf 50-acre property on the Northeast section of Gull Lake

We are not aware of any movement in development proposals for this large tract of land, although last fall, there were surveyors on the property. We are fully engaged in monitoring any potential activity with respect to this property.

Developments within our Proximity

In addition to developments on either Gull or Silver Lake, the GSLRA works with other Lake Associations to support their concerns about development that could either set a negative precedent for future development impact on Gull and Silver Lakes or impact our residents regarding their use /interactions with surrounding communities.

Starboard Development on Muskoka Wharf (Gravenhurst), Lake Muskoka

On February 28, 2023, the GSLRA appeared before the Gravenhurst Planning Council as part of the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) to voice our support for the concerns voiced by the MLA regarding a development application by The Rosseau Group Inc.

The proposed development, known as "The Starboard" is a large 7 storey mixed-use condominium project on 4.9 acres at the Muskoka Wharf. The developer is seeking approval to build 165 condo units, and a two-story boathouse complex that would extend 427 feet out into Muskoka Bay. The boathouse complex would include retail shops, a restaurant, and a microbrewery.

The major concerns with this specific project are based upon the number and scale of exemptions and variances being sought from the existing Gravenhurst Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations requested by the applicant. In view of the numerous exemptions requested by The Rosseau Group, the GSLRA supported the MLA in urging Council to insist that significant changes to the developer's proposal must be made before Gravenhurst Council considers granting approval of this development. Click [here](#) to read our submission to Council.

No Council decision was made at the February 28th meeting as it was an information session held to allow residents and interested parties to express their opinions on the development. The Gravenhurst Planning Staff is now preparing their final report and recommendations which will be presented at a future Council meeting.

The GSLRA worked together with the MLA and the Muskoka Bay Property Owners' Association to request that Council uphold their Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law regulations.

Our biggest local concern here is that if significant exemptions are granted for this project, it could also set a precedent for development on Gull and Silver Lakes, including Pinedale Inn, Moody Bay and the 50 acre property at the north end of Gull Lake owned by the Great Gulf Group of Companies.

Gravenhurst Municipal Representation for the GSLRA

The following is the contact information for the Town Councilors who represent the Wards that include both Gull and Silver Lakes:

Ward 1- Penny Varney
705-687-3412 ext. 2253

Ward 4- Randy Jorgensen
705-687-3412 ext. 2249

Ward 5- Christina Hunter
705-687-3412 ext. 2223



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Vacant



MEMBERSHIP Benefits of the GSLRA

At the GSLRA, we are passionate about looking out for our member's interests in keeping our Lakes environmentally thriving and safe for all of us to enjoy. Muskoka is world renowned and it's our lakes that make it so great. We have key priorities we are focussing on to achieve this, and have listed them below:

- Water Quality of Gull and Silver Lakes – we test and monitor and report on the 'health' of our lakes.
- Responsible and Sustainable Property Development - We monitor and act on issues/matters that could negatively impact our lakes e.g. high density housing, destruction of natural shorelines, salt runoff, excessive noise and/or lighting etc.
- Safe and Lawful Boating Practices – We encourage safe water activities for the enjoyment of ALL lake residents including promoting minimal wakes in narrow waterways and observing all boating regulations
- Liaise and lobby with all levels of government to promote common member interests where warranted.
- Create and sustain social Interaction amongst our neighbours. We plan to organize future events so our members can meet, network and discuss common issues and interests
- Communications - we provide information to our members through various means to inform, update and solicit input from our members

Please contact Brian Ochab at e55och@gmail.com if you have any questions about the benefits of being part of the Association. We appreciate your support and welcome new members!

Events in and Around Town This Summer

The GSLRA continues to monitor events happening in our areas and voice the concerns of the membership when it comes to noise, inconvenience and overall lake health. The following are events listed on the Town Website as well as the TORC boat racing event on Gull Lake and the Park. You can access more information by clicking [here](#):

- Antique and Classic Boat Show- July 8th, Muskoka Wharf
- Dockside Festival of the Arts- Aug 16- 18, Muskoka Wharf Park
- Gravenhurst Car Show- June 17th, Gull Lake Rotary Park
- Toronto Outboard Racing Club Boat Racing- June 24, 25. Gull Lake Park
- In-Water Boat & Cottage Show with Muskoka Ribfest- July 26- 28. Muskoka Wharf Park

COMMUNICATIONS

WEBSITE- www.gull-and-silver-lakes.ca

EMAIL— gullsilverlakes@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE—reach out by email or phone to anyone listed

FACEBOOK— there is an active Facebook group for the Gull and Silver Lakes residents that is administered by Garson Hoffman, a long time cottager on Gull Lake. While this is not a GSLRA initiative, your executive supports and encourages members to join.

Got something interesting for our website or next Newsletter? Reach out to: Brian Ochab, our Communications Chair at: e55och@gmail.com

