

Mary Lake Association



2020 SPRING NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

These are unprecedented times for every living member of the Mary Lake Association. Through the disruption we've heard conflicting and changing directions from our leaders and experts.

Have some sympathy for them. We're all still reading the book that is Covid-19 and it has some plot twists. Our leaders have made mistakes and will make more. However, they are honest mistakes based on best judgment and a spirit of cooperation across levels of government and party lines that has not been seen in this country for many years. If there is a Canadian character, it's the will to come together when times are toughest. That will literally be a saving grace.

You haven't seen advice from the Mary Lake Association because you don't need one more voice with no special knowledge. That said, there are things we can do that are Muskoka-specific.

The District has two conflicting priorities. It has been almost coronavirus-free and is desperately trying to stay that way. The Muskoka infection rate is a fraction of city rates and especially GTA rates. However, the economy is largely based on the income from three months, and tourists must stay away this year. That makes income from seasonal residents critical.

If you're seasonal, look for ways to support the local economy from a distance. Can you buy using click-and-collect or delivery? Can you arrange for work to be done when you're not around? Is there a major purchase you were planning for next year that you could pull forward? Minimize your time in public places, but try to make that time support Muskoka, Huntsville and Port Sydney businesses. They are us.

This too shall pass. Until it does, look out on the lake and count our blessings.

John Hogg

MLA AGM GOES ONLINE!

In 2020, everything comes with an asterisk. Gatherings like our Annual General Meeting (AGM) will still be out of the question in early July, so like many other organizations, we'll have a phone/online meeting this year using Zoom. Since we don't need to physically gather, we won't take a fine July morning; instead, the date will be:

Monday June 22nd at 7:30 PM.

We won't have a keynote speaker, so the meeting won't take much of your evening. You'll be able to ask questions and vote as usual.

You'll see the notice of meeting shortly. We'll send reports with the notice so you'll have a chance to review them.

Welcome to the new normal.

**New board member
nominations will be
welcome at our online AGM.**

Our New Website is now up and running...
www.MaryLakeAssociation.org

Report on Short Term Rentals

Short Term rentals have become a hot issue in our area as well as in the rest of the province. As of November 18, 2019 there were an estimated 375 of these rental units listed in the Huntsville area through internet platforms like Airbnb.*

A short term rental is categorized as any rental of 28 days or less. These units can be single or multiple units and be located in a separate building not occupied by the owner/renter (termed primary unit), or in the home of the renter (termed secondary unit).

Concern arose in the hospitality industry among proprietors of other types of accommodation such as local inns, hotels and motels over the lack of health and safety standards and inspections, absence of licensing, and the fact that these landlords did not pay the 4% local tax already levied on the other accommodation providers.

The Town of Huntsville, after concerted research to develop a fair playing field for all accommodation renters as well as protection for the safety of renters, approved the SHORT TERM By_LAW 2019-122 December 2019.

These short-term rental units must be licensed through the Town. This requires proactive registration by owners, compliance with stipulated conditions, and an on-site inspection. The registration fee must be paid and owners must agree to pay the Town's accommodation tax of 4%.



Compliance by both landlord and rentee is complaint-based rather than through regular inspections by town officials. If you are a renter, rentee or a neighbour of one of these short term rental units you can quickly reference these by-law pages listed below to learn what conditions are non-compliant.

By-Law 2019-122

Short Term Rentals Quick Reference List

Definitions	Pg 2-4	
Penalties and Fines.....	Pg 10-11	
Renters Code of Conduct	Pg 15-17	Appendix A
Accommodation Fee Schedule	Pg 18	Appendix B
Offences Listed and Fines.....	Pg 19-20	Appendix C

in Muskoka

You can read the details of the 20 page By-Law 2019-122 using this link to the Town of Huntsville's web site:

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS BY-LAW](#)

Below is a quick list of topics and page numbers for your convenience:

If you would like to make a complaint you can fill in this online form:

[CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT](#)

Source:

*Huntsville Staff Report
November 2019

Nancy Laurie

Early Settlers Around the Lake

Pitman's Bay north of Thoms Bay...

Where the name Pitman comes from remains a mystery. It has been suggested that since a family named Petman owned the land in 1886 it may be a misspelled version of that name. By the 1930's it was owned by the Bain family. George Bain died in 1921 but his wife and children camped on the property in the summers during the 1930's and she took in washing to help with the costs. In 1945 it was learned that the property was going to be sold. Rather than let it end up being used for more cottages, George Hutcheson, Claude Wardell and Sid Avery decided to buy it to be used by the youth of North Muskoka for camping. The cost was \$2500. From 1945 until 1951 it was used by various youth groups and church groups as a summer camp. Mrs. Bain continued as camp cook. In 1951 the Town of Huntsville purchased the 63 acres for \$2000. The purchase was in trust for the boy scouts and youth of the Huntsville area. In 1964 the scouts purchased another 50 acres north of the original land to protect it from further development.

In the late 1980's the scouts had to give up the land to the Town of Huntsville because of the problems of assuring that user groups had liability insurance. It will remain for the use of our youth.

These excerpts are from "The Newcomers" written By Ryan Kidd and is available from Trafford Publishing.



L-R, Wally Johns, Frank Booth, Charlie Booth, Rev. Frank Milligan. Digging holes for the new Dinning Lodge in 1953. In the background is Muskoka Constructors bulldozer, leveling the two fields. This was done free of charge thanks to Don Lough.

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Next AGM Will Be
Monday June 22nd, 7:30pm
Check our New and Improved Webiste for details
www.MaryLakeAssociation.org

THE GIFT OF GREAT TASTE!



A Benign Runoff and

As many members of our Association will be aware, the 2020 spring runoff was a non-event. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) drew the river system down by March 8 to a level below their own March target although a bit above the record drawdown of last year.

The Big East River brings most of our spring flood water down from Algonquin Park. The moisture content of the Park's snowpack was 'normal' this year (it was over 200 percent of normal last year). The Big East crested on April 1 and that crest reached us around April 6. For the next week our lake level dropped steadily toward late summer levels. Unusually low for April.

That was it for our 2020 spring runoff. And then the strangest thing happened. The MNRF relogged the dams so that the lakes throughout the system, including Mary Lake, were raised about 35 cm in what constituted a 'man-made flood'. Some of the older docks and boathouse decks around the Lake were under water (for no apparent good reason) and shoreline erosion, accelerated by several days of strong winds, began in earnest.

The Mary Lake Association, as well as several other lake associations, appealed to the MNRF to bring levels back down. This was done, eventually, although not back down to the level of the freshet peak, leaving soft shorelines exposed to severe beach erosion and to the undercutting and future collapse of banks.

A Bit of Background About Water Levels

The dam at Port Sydney was built around 1870. The dominant industry in Muskoka at that time was lumbering, and controlled flow was needed to power sawmills and accommodate the spring log drive. The dam raised the level of the lake about four feet.



In his wonderfully detailed history of the settlement of the Port Sydney area, "The Newcomers" author Ryan Kidd notes that the first cottage on Mary Lake was probably the Garden family cottage built in 1904. Over the next five or six decades, many more were built, often with docks and boathouses. These shoreline structures were built in reliance on well known and by then a long established water level management policy which accommodated the major economic drivers of Muskoka - lumbering, which was in decline by 1925, hydro electric power production which was relatively stable, and the burgeoning industry that by the mid-twentieth century had come to dominate the region: the care and feeding of thousands of waterfront property owners flocking here to enjoy our natural environment.

A Man-Made Flood

This water level management policy was formally articulated and set down in the Hackner-Holden Agreement of 1940. It remained in place (with some minor deviations) until 2006. In that year, after perfunctory consultation, the MNRF put in place the Muskoka River Water Management Plan (MRWMP). Instead of managing to Hackner-Holden's flat, stable, three-season target, the 2006 Plan has the MNRF managing to a downward sloping line, producing much higher levels from spring to late August, and lower levels from then to late fall.

When he first saw Mary Lake in 1853, Geological Survey of Canada surveyor Alexander Murray noted the preponderance of beaches. The erecting of the 1870 Port Sydney dam covered a portion of them, but photographs from the 1900's show very substantial beaches surviving. Indeed, over half of Mary Lake and all of the river up to Huntsville is and always has been characterized by soft shoreline. The point is that from 1870 to 2006 that soft shoreline, including substantial beaches, had adapted to and stabilized around the Hackner-Holden water levels.

After thirteen years in operation, the 2006 MRWMP has taken an accelerating toll through its prolonged higher water levels in spring and summer. Anyone who has boated up to the Huntsville locks in the last couple of years will have seen the grand old white pine which stood on stable riverbank for a hundred years and which is now falling into the river. There are hundreds of lesser trees suffering a similar fate. And there are lakeside owners with high banks who are now witnessing the collapse of portions of their property because of undercutting by the MRWMP's prolonged high water. Another family with a 1935 boathouse and dock have reported that for decades their

dock was almost never under water on the May long weekend, but that on that weekend since 2006 it is almost always submerged.

As soon as the damaging potential of the MRWMP became apparent, the Mary Lake Association paid for a consultant's report and negotiated some relief in the form of an agreement called the Hatch Agreement of 2008. Regrettably, and despite reminders and face to face meetings, the MNRF continues to manage our levels on the high side of that downward-sloping curve set out in the MRWMP and with apparent disregard for Hatch.

The Mary Lake Association has addressed these concerns to other audiences, including a Provincial Environment Department Task Force reviewing the MRWMP whose report is expected soon. Huntsville Mayor Karin Terziano is also aware of our concerns and is being helpful.

Property owners with concerns about this issue are encouraged to be in touch with her and with the MPP in the constituency in which they live, with a view to encouraging MNRF Minister Yakabuski at Queen's Park to end the damage from the MRWMP and return to the stabilizing policy which worked so well under the Hackner-Holden Agreement.

Ted Johnson

Monique Heemskerk
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New Buoys

After twelve years, the buoys at the north end of Mary Lake are looking a little worse for wear. The Mary Lake Association is investing close to \$3000 for a new set of buoys, chains, and anchors. A very special thank you goes out to Bill Beckner who will be installing the buoys before summer.

Navigating in and out of the river at the north end of Mary Lake can be a bit tricky and so the channel is marked with six buoys – three red and three green. By navigating between these buoys, boaters can avoid the long shallow sandbars on either side of the mouth of the river.

Upstream generally means going against the current. In Mary Lake, upstream is heading toward MBC and the river.

After a long winter, here are a few reminders for navigating the buoys:



Green Port Buoys

- Called “cans” because of their flat top.
- Mark the left side of the channel or the location of a hazard.
- Keep these buoys on your left side when going upstream.



Remember the 3 Rs – Red Right Returning

- When you are returning to the headwaters (heading upstream), the red buoy is always on your right.
- Port Sydney is downstream.

Disclaimer: Although the Mary Lake Association does mark some hazards, we are not responsible for marking all hazards or to continue marking hazards. Please keep in mind that all watercraft operators are solely responsible for safe boating, including the avoidance of any water hazards.



Bad Weather?
Can’t make out their colour?
Don’t panic!

Just look at the top of the buoy

- Green buoys have a flat top.
- Red buoys have a pointy top.

Keep to the right in the channel and slow down to ‘no wake’ as you approach the last set of buoys closest to the river.

Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is illegal to tie up to a buoy. Altering, removing or concealing a buoy is also against the law.

Jill Perry

Enjoy the new buoys and safe boating!



Red Port Buoys

- Called “nuns” because of their pointy top.
- Mark the right side of the channel or the location of a hazard.
- Keep these buoys on your right side when going upstream.

Membership Update

I am writing this on May 12, 2020 and I can’t believe with thick socks on, the furnace running and a white world outside of my window, when will spring be? I hope by the time you are reading this I am wearing my flip flops, which by the way, will probably be the only thing fitting after all these Covid-19 snacks.

Oh how Covid-19 has changed our lives, our trip South was cut short, I missed out on my parents’ 60th anniversary in Holland, and life is just put on hold with a weekly trip to the grocery store as our only outing, which by the way is no fun at all! I am sure you all have your Covid-19 stories to tell; it affects all of us in one way or the other. Let’s hope that one day we can fulfill all those lost moments although life might never be the same.

On a more positive note; my closets are clean, all the jigsaw puzzles in the house are done, I had plenty of time to update my MLA membership list and I already notified you if your payment will be due for the upcoming year, but now....I am definitely ready for the world to open up....step by step that is, because our health is important.

Your board just recently had their MLA board meeting; the first meeting by Zoom in history. Our current membership count is 172, still climbing but we can definitely do better. We want to attract members who are deeply invested in the long-term best interest of the lake.

Please know that our membership invitation does not stop with Mary Lake waterfront owned properties only, it extends within our Watershed. So if you have a friend/family member/neighbor to invite and you are not sure if their property is within our designated areas, you can always contact me to confirm.

Please visit <https://www.marylakeassociation.org> Our website is re-designed and has all the information/resources and links to explore the excellent benefits of membership.

Please don’t forget our Bulk buying propane group for our members, which offers some great savings. If you want information, just let me know.

Our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2039917379657167/> is up and running & looking for members to interact.

Currently there are no lost and found items for this Winter/Spring. I am sure at some point our list will be growing, you know where to find me.... heemskerkhuntsville@gmail.com It is great to know that most of the items are returned to the rightful owners. It can be hectic at times but so far we are doing a great job.

Last but not least, I really hope that you are doing ok, that soon we can go out and enjoy each other’s company, visit family & friends and soak up the fresh air in Muskoka. Stay healthy, stay safe!

Monique Heemsker

Membership Director

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FAST FACTS: Shoreline Buffers

Q: What is a Shoreline Buffer?

A: Shoreline buffer is an area of undisturbed or minimally impacted vegetation adjacent to a lake, river or stream.

Q: What are the zoning rules regarding shoreline buffers for Mary Lake, and surrounding area?

A: The Huntsville zoning by-law states that:

- A shoreline buffer must be maintained for 15 metres (49 feet) measured back from the shoreline
- Vegetation in the buffer area must be maintained in a natural state, except for removal of dead and decaying vegetation
- The buffer must be maintained across 75% of the lot, measured along the shoreline
- Any structures at the shoreline, such as docks, sheds, sitting areas and stairs, cannot exceed 15 metres in total (49 feet) or 25% of the lot frontage, whichever is less.

Q: Why do we need shoreline buffers?

A: The short answer is to maintain the health of the lake! A healthy, undisturbed shoreline buffer is critical to maintaining the pristine beauty of our lake. Shoreline buffers provide many benefits including

- Filtration of pollutants and septic runoff before they reach the lake
- Reduction of shoreline erosion
- Mitigation of flood damage

Filtration

Most of the land surrounding Mary Lake slopes downward toward the water. This means that the lake is susceptible to runoff which comes from roads, roof tops, driveways, parking lots, lawns and pathways.

Runoff can pollute the lake because it collects sediment, heavy metals and chemicals such as pesticides, fertilizers, oils and fuel, and carries them into the lake. Fortunately, the vegetation along the shoreline acts as a living filter to intercept and absorb these sediments and chemicals.

The living, decaying, and dead vegetation that make up the shoreline buffer provide a barrier that slows down and intercepts runoff before it reaches the water. After this slow down, most of the runoff infiltrates into the soil within the shoreline buffer. Sediments (many of which have pollutants bound to them) are trapped, and many of the chemicals and other pollutants are either taken up onto plant surfaces, incorporated into plant tissues, or are broken down into less harmful substances by soil bacteria and other microorganisms.

Erosion

Shoreline buffers help to protect your property by preventing shoreline erosion. Erosion can be



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caused by both natural actions such as waves, wind and ice, and human actions such as boating. Shoreline plants help to counteract the forces of erosion through their root systems which help grip the earth in place. Shoreline vegetation does a much better job at erosion control than grass because it has a more expansive root system. Aquatic vegetation also helps prevent erosion by absorbing wave energy before it hits the shore and has the chance to do any damage.

Flood Mitigation

Well vegetated shorelines help to minimize flood damage by providing a barrier against moving water. Vegetation slows the water down and reduces the force, height, and volume of floodwaters by allowing them to spread out horizontally and relatively harmlessly across the floodplain. Trees and shrubs also use large amounts of water in transpiration, which transfers floodwater to the atmosphere.

Q: What makes a good shoreline buffer?

A: An effective buffer mimics the complexity of nature, with vegetation of different heights, types, and ages all mixed together. In addition to plants and trees, a healthy buffer may have standing dead trees, fallen logs and different sizes of stones and rocks.

Lawns do NOT provide a functioning buffer. In fact, lawn maintenance contributes to lake pollution.

Resources

For more information on the topic of healthy shorelines, and tips on how to naturalize your shoreline, visit these websites:

Love Your Lake: www.loveyourlake.ca

Watersheds Canada: www.watersheds.ca

Linda Kangas

Land Use & Planning Committee

Mary Lake Marina will be CLOSED for GAS this 2020 Season



Due to Covid-19 Restrictions

This is a year we all have to adapt to a new "new". We are sorry for the inconvenience but your and our health is # 1.

Stay safe

Mary Lake Marina

Boat rentals/Gas/Docking

Owners: Jack and Monique Heemskerk.

P.O. Box 5268, Huntsville ON P1H 2K6

(705) 789-8359

info@marylakemarina.com

www.marylakemarina.com

Boat Rentals are still available!

What's in a Name? (Item three)

In previous Newsletters we covered the naming of our lake and its evolution from Mary's Lake to Mary Lake, and we delved further back into time out of memory when the name was Gitchee-nageek-chiching, meaning "Lake of the Great Otter", and how it is thought that came to be. So when a friend told us recently that Stephenson Township was named for a local family, we thought this might provide an opportunity for a bit of historical record correcting.



Brunel Township and the Brunel Road were named for I.K. Brunel in 1861. His 1843 steamer SS Great Britain was the largest ship ever built up to that time. She is on display at the Brunel Museum in Bristol, England. (Photo by Ted Johnson)

Mary Lake sits in two townships - Stephenson and Brunel. A third township - Watt - is to the west and covers part of Lake Rosseau. In the 1850's the government of the Province of Canada, consisting of Canada East (now Quebec) and Canada West (Ontario) was

anxious to populate the nearly bankrupt Canada West. Colonization roads were surveyed and eventually built to open the massive territory. One of these was the Muskoka Road, surveyed in 1860, which still exists and runs through Utterson and Allensville, paralleling Highway 11.

To facilitate the orderly granting and occupation of land, townships were surveyed on either side of the Muskoka Road in the Mary's (as it then was) Lake area in 1861 and in a classic act of colonial subservience the surveyors named them for three famous British engineers of the early nineteenth century: Watt, Stephenson and Brunel.

Perhaps these names gave familiarity and even an element of prestige to the pioneers who would soon arrive from Britain to take up land and begin farming this rock strewn and heavily forested territory.

James Watt (1736-1819) was a Scot. His 1776 Watt Steam Engine is said to have made a very important contribution to the Industrial Revolution in Britain. His name would have been a household word in Britain and its colonies in 1861.

George Stephenson (1781-1848) was a Brit, known as "the father of railways". His Locomotion No.1, with a top speed of 15 mph, was the first steam locomotive to carry passengers on a public rail line. His 1830 Liverpool and Manchester Railway was the first public inter-city rail line.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859) was one of the "greats" of British engineering and of the Industrial Revolution. Among many achievements he was the builder of the Great Western Railway, several steamships including the first propeller driven transatlantic steamer and numerous important bridges and tunnels.

Armed with the foregoing, can any of us henceforth drive Stephenson Road 2 or the Brunel Road or even Watt Road 5 for that matter, without smiling quietly to ourselves, confident in knowing where their names came from?

Ted Johnson

Thoms Bay

A Passion for People!!



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