

Summer 2013

The North Sounder is the newsletter of
The North Sound Cottagers Association Inc.

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NSA IS NOW ONLINE - FIND US AT
www.northsoundassociation.com/

THE NORTH SOUNDER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Welcome to Summer 2013! Many of you have already opened your cottages and are once again enjoying life on Georgian Bay; and while looking out over the beauty of the landscape, you've probably noticed a significant drop in the level of the water yet again this year. If you've driven up the Highway 400 extension, you've probably also noticed a number of banners announcing, *Stop the Drop*. Stop the Drop is a grassroots community engagement program that was developed to help raise awareness and concern for the falling water levels in Lake Huron. This Summer edition of the North Sounder will bring you up to date on the issue of the Great Lakes water levels and explore what you can do to raise your awareness, voice your concerns and become involved in determining what is to be done.

Water levels in the Great Lakes have been noticeably declining year over year. Last summer saw alarmingly low waters levels throughout Georgian Bay creating challenges for waterfront properties:

- difficulty accessing water- based properties and marinas
- hazardous or unusable boat traffic through smaller navigation channels
- reduced property values and the viability of businesses due to inaccessibility
- reduced natural flushing of bays and inlets
- significant expense to relocate, repair or rebuild docks or boathouses in order to gain access to water
- increased need to blast or dredge harbours and/or small channels for safe traffic and accessibility

In an effort to study the issue, an International Joint Commission (IJC) between Canada and the United States was set up to study the water levels in the Great Lakes. After consultation with scientist, policy experts, independent peer reviews and public hearings the IJC prepared its own Recommendations of the International Upper Great Lakes Study which was made public April 15, 2013. A summary of the report is presented here, and for anyone who wants to read it, the full report can be found at <http://ijc.org/iuglsreport/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/IUGLS-IJC-Report-Feb-12-2013-15-April-20132.pdf>).

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WATER LEVELS

Anne Wellenhofer

What is happening with water levels?

While our water levels may stay low for this summer, the International Joint Commission (IJC) has responded to the calls of many Georgian Bay stakeholders. In its April report, the IJC recommended that the governments of Canada and the United States investigate structural options to restore water levels in Lake Michigan-Huron by 13 to 25 centimeters (about 5 to 10 inches), including a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis and a detailed environmental impact study. What does this mean? We are no longer looking at a “do nothing” approach in response to low water levels. The Georgian Bay Association (GBA) has stated that, *“the return of 10 inches of water to these lakes from the current level this spring would put us into the low end of the historic healthy range.”* Still, there will be no quick solution as a cost-benefit analysis and an environmental impact study will likely be lengthy processes.

Water Levels: What is the GBA doing? What is our Mayor doing?

The North Sound Association is an associate member of the Georgian Bay Association (GBA). The GBA deserves much credit in getting water levels into the eyes of the media and politicians. Our Council also deserves credit, as Mayor Harrison has participated in an association of Georgian Bay mayors who have also been working together to address water level issues. The GBA and Georgian Bay Forever are working together to create an Economic Impact Assessment of our low water levels.

To assist both water front residents and businesses experiencing accessibility issues, Carling Council has passed a temporary zoning by-law amendment (By-law C506-2013) that allows for dock extensions. Council has also passed a By-Law amendment to the Official Plan that prohibits construction of any new boathouses.

What can I be doing about water levels?

Write a Letter

At the recent GBA Spring Meeting, Minister Tony Clement (MP) and Minister James Bradley (MPP) spoke; both were clearly aware of the issues and willing to advocate for action. Minister Clement has appreciated hearing from many stakeholders and suggested that similar letters be written to other Members of Parliament. The GBA has advised, that “[e]ven though we have now had a positive report from the International Joint Commission, Minister Clement’s advice is still something we should heed and act on. Minister Clement stressed that it will take support from across the Conservative Caucus and the opposition Party Caucus’ to get action. As the principal residences of most Georgian Bay property owners are located in other parts of the Province, Minister Clement suggested that GBA members send letters to the MPs who represent the ridings in which each of us lives” (GBA). US residents who own land on Georgian Bay and/or share our concern with the impact of low water levels and want government action should write to their elected officials. Suggested talking points and a list of addresses can be found on the GBA website under the Political Action tab. The GBA hopes that this action could influence the Government of Canada to petition the US Government to agree to task the IJC or the Great

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Lakes Executive Committee to fast track a study of the options for controlling water levels in Middle Great Lakes and specifically Lake Huron/Michigan.

Join Stop the Drop

Stop the Drop is an online resource and community for those who care about restoring water levels in Georgian Bay. Stop the Drop believes that mass community engagement will be the driving force that can change public opinion (and if you think about public engagement on acid rain a few decades ago...they may be on to something). By going online at www.stogetherdrop.ca, you can get current information on water levels from varying perspectives. If you only have a little time and want to know more, their Water Levels 101 is a great place to start. Surveys are used to help gather user data that could, in turn, be used as public opinion data to drive broader policy decisions. Check it out – you can read as much or as little as you like.

WATER AWARENESS

Mary Lou Armour

Great Lakes Spring Refresh

On behalf of the North Sound Association, I attended the Great Lakes Spring Refresh on Saturday April 13, 2013 at Kempenfeld Centre in Barrie, which was presented through a recent grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Helping to organize this great event was a basin-wide steering committee composed of Great United, Environmental Defence, Canadian Environmental Law Association, Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association, Ecojustice and Tides Canada.

The forum offered tremendous capacity building opportunities designed specifically to spark creativity and innovation in our collective efforts to build an engaged Great Lakes constituency. Building on the recommendations of the Ontario Great Lakes Needs Assessment that was completed in 2012, this gathering gave those passionate about the Great Lakes an opportunity to come together and celebrate their commitment to protect our legacy. Presentations were made on how to develop funding and how to garner media attention in order to create public awareness and ultimately move policy makers.

Who Knew? how easy and accessible it is for anyone to become aware and learn more about water issues. From the family friendly programming offered through public broadcasters to weekend seminars and retreats, there is a level at which everyone can become involved. Here are a few suggestions:

Canada Water Week

Canada celebrated Water Week on March 18-24 (when most of our water is frozen!) to coincide with World Water Day which takes place March 22. Public broadcaster TVO presented special programming that examined political, economic and environmental issues dealing with water issues in the Great Lakes and around the globe. If you are interested in exploring some of their educational on-line programming in more depth you go to <http://ww3.tvo.org/special/tvo-marks-canada-water-week>

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Huntsville Environmental Conference Centre

The University of Waterloo has a facility in Huntsville that hosts a variety of events about the environment. For example Lessons Learned working towards effective Lake Stewardship a workshop about the health of our lakes and watersheds. To check out events of interest go to:

<http://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-summit-centre/events>.

Federation of Ontario Cottagers Elerts

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers (FOCA) helps to organize conferences, workshops, seminars and other events. For those who want advance notification for these types of events, you can sign up online.

To receive the automatic FOCA Elerts go to <http://www.foca.on.ca/contact-us> and add your email address to the Elerts request. Or for updates, check out their Great Lakes Hot Topic web page at:

http://www.foca.on.ca/Great_Lakes_Issues

North Sound Association Website

Did you know the North Sound Association now has its own website, we can be found at www.northsoundassociation.com/. All issues of the North Sounder newsletter are posted to the website along with updates and information on local issues including information about the Great Lakes water levels. **Check us out!!** And if anyone would prefer to review the newsletter online instead of receiving a hard copy by snail mail, please send a request by email to the North Sounder Newsletter Editor, Shari Cohen (scohen2959@hotmail.com).

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Helen Wellnhofer

Carling Township continues to be very supportive of the stewardship program. This year the stewards are preparing the campsites this month, ahead of the main camping season. Miranda, one of last year's stewards is returning and we have a new steward, Kelsey, from Parry Sound working with her. Again this year they will be spending two days per week in the Franklin area and one in the Huckleberry area.

Their jobs include tidying campsites, relocating privies when necessary, keeping fire rings to one per campsite, talking to campers about good camping practices and completing the Carling Township questionnaire with them so that there are good statistics on numbers etc.

Last fall the North Sound Association, West Carling Association and Carling Township all applied for grants to support our stewardship program. Unfortunately, none of the applications was successful. Please let me know if you hear about any grants which could benefit our program. Donations from individual cottagers are always welcomed by the Township. It is important that we all support the Carling Stewardship program by welcoming the stewards to our area and chatting with campers about the unique features of Georgian Bay, that it is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and encouraging them to show respect for all that is special about the Bay.

Many thanks to Carling Township for running this program again this year.

NOTICES:

North Sound Association Annual General Meeting

9 am Sunday July 28th

Carling Community Centre, Recreation Hall

Highway 559

Former Councillor, Helen Crawford

Helen Crawford passed away on Sunday May 26, 2013 at the age of 82. Helen was a Councillor for Carling Township for over 30 years and was instrumental in the creation of the Carling Fire Department. She will be missed.

JOE MACLEAN MEMORIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

The NSA created the **North Sound Association / Joe MacLean Memorial Environmental Award**, to recognize an NSA member for his or her efforts to promote sustainability and environmental responsibility at the cottage. The NSA Executive would like your help selecting a worthy recipient for this year's award. Nomination can be made by filling out the attached form and submit it to any NSA Director or Executive Member.

JOE MACLEAN MEMORIAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD NOMINATION FORM

NAME OF NOMINEE: _____

CONTACT FOR NOMINEE: _____

NAME OF NOMINATOR: _____

REASON FOR NOMINATION: _____

The North Sound Association is grateful for the ongoing support of local businesses:

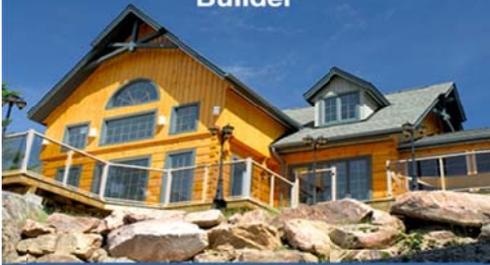


**Kayak
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SUP**
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Lessons

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**LAKEFOREST
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Greg Hudolin
Master Carpenter
Builder



Muskoka / Parry Sound
705-342-9604
lakeforest@cogeco.ca

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THE NORTH SOUND ASSOCIATION

YOUR 2013 MEMBERSHIP IS NOW DUE

Membership in the North Sound Association is based on the calendar year. The Association hopes that you will pay now, to avoid the line-ups that usually occur at the Annual Meeting. **If you have already paid for 2013, please keep this application to pass on to a neighbour, or a new cottager who is not now a member.** If you are paying for Auxiliary Members don't forget to include the \$10.00 per member with your fees.

Make sure your address is correct. Also we would appreciate a telephone number if you have a cottage phone, and a winter number where you can be reached. **If any information has changed please advise us. If there has been a change of ownership of your property, we would appreciate receiving this information with the name of the new owner, if possible. Please print clearly, so there is no error in your information.**

New _____

Renewal _____

NAME _____

COTTAGE LOCATION _____

WINTER ADDRESS _____

PHONE WINTER _____ PHONE SUMMER _____

E.MAIL ADDRESS _____ FAX NUMBER _____

I understand that the information I have given will appear on the North Sound Association Membership List. Please initial _____

Mail this form with your **\$40.00 Membership Fee** payable to the North Sound Association and forwarded to:

**Treasurer Craig Waite,
3825 9th Line North, R.R. #4,
Coldwater, ON L0K 1E0**

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AUXILIARY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name of Full Member _____

Cottage Location _____

Auxiliary Member _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Email _____

Additional Auxiliary Member _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Email _____

Additional Auxiliary Member _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Email _____

The fee for each Auxiliary Membership is \$10.00 each per year, applicable when one family member pays full membership of \$40.00. Each applicant will be put on our mailing list to receive our Newsletters and will have a vote at the Annual General Meeting on Civic Holiday Weekend.

Cheques are payable to the North Sound Association and forwarded to

**Craig Waite, NSA Treasurer
3825 9th Line North, R.R. #4,
Coldwater, ON L0K 1E0**