



Newsletter Volume 43, No 2, Summer 2024

President's Message

Welcome to the 2024 cottage season. We had quite the start to this year. Our Spring was very atypical with bouts of warm to hot weather and then back to rain and snow. An ice storm in early April caused some tree damage and gave Hydro One workers more overtime in trying to restore power. The water level at the lake is still rising especially with all the rain/snow. Besides raising the level of the lake closer to normal levels, all of this precipitation has lowered the forest fire risk for our area.

FOCA held their Annual General Meeting and Spring Seminar – “Water Matters” as a hybrid event on Saturday, March 2, 2024. There were one hundred attendees in person at the Bayview Golf and Country Club in Thornhill, and an additional 150 participants via Zoom webinar.

- A. Mandatory PFD (personal floatation device) wear is still being contemplated by Transport Canada, with possible thresholds including age (children vs. adults), vessel type (powered or not), and vessel size (under or over 6 metres) under consideration. We expect to hear more this year about a public comment period. Sgt. Dave Moffett, Provincial Marine Coordinator with the OPP, gave an insight presentation on the correlation between drownings and not wearing lifejackets. Most fatalities last year occurred in Northeastern Ontario, with Eastern Ontario a close second. The highest number of deaths occurred in males, ages 65-74 years of age. The main issue was the “shock factor”, which happens when someone accidentally falls into the lake/river and inhales water. As a result, they don’t resurface. Please check out Sgt. Moffett’s full report in the AGM section of the website.
- B. I have been invited to join the Lake Networking Group which is centred out of the Perth/Rideau Lake area. I think it is important that we are involved with various groups to understand what issues they are facing at the lake. It also allows us to begin to share resources with other networking groups, so we are not all reinventing the wheel.

In the last federal budget the government proposed changes to the **capital gains tax** that is deeply concerning for our members. Instead of paying tax on half of all gains under current rules, individuals will pay tax on half of gains under \$250,000 and on two-thirds of gains over \$250,000. This tax poses a significant threat to the ability of families to maintain their cherished cottages for future generations, and could have profound implications for our families.

Attached are two documents, one from FOCA which is actively opposing this new tax increase, and a template letter you can use to express your own concerns to your local MP.

I am on the executive of the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA) as a director and have just been elected to the role of vice-chair. The new website is up and running and I encourage each of you to set up your own login and password so you can access all of the amazing resources available to you. The website for FOCA is <https://foca.on.ca>.

Activities for Summer 2024

New AGM Location - We have decided to change the date and location of this year's AGM. It will take place on Saturday, July 13 at the ClarMill Hall in Plevna. We will have access to the hall as well as indoor washrooms. The guest speaker will be our Mayor, Gerry Lichy. If you have specific questions or topics that you would like the mayor to address, please send them to me well in advance of the AGM and I will make sure that he receives them prior to the AGM.

I am happy to announce that Will Egan has agreed to organize the **Kids' Fishing Derby** again this year on Saturday, August 3rd.

We are also in need of a volunteer to organize our **Golf Day**. If you are interested, please contact Greg Best.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a special **"Thank You"** to **Karen Saer, Debbie Bird, Greg Best and Keith Rowe** for doing an amazing job on our calendar. Congratulations on a job well done.

Just a reminder that all the news and events regarding Big Gull Lake East End Cottage Association can be found on our website at www.bgleeca.ca.

Stay safe and healthy and hopefully we will see you at the lake this summer.

Donna Commerford
President, BGLEECA



PUBLIC NOTICE

Day Time Burning Restrictions in Effect as of March 28, 2024

Day time burning restrictions are now in effect, no burning between 7am & 7pm as of March 28 until Oct 31, 2024. Camp fires are still permitted, provided they are less than 1 meter in diameter and all combustibles are cleared at least 3 meters away from the camp fire pit. Please remember you must be in attendance of the fire at all times.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

From Humble Beginnings to a Time-Honored Tradition

Richard McIlveen - rmcilveen@gmail.com

In the summer of 1975, two brothers, Jeff McIlveen and Richard McIlveen, and a friend and nearby cottager, Dave Davies, embarked on a venture that would become a long standing and fun tradition on Big Gull Lake - the Annual EAST BIG GULL LAKE Sailing Race.

The Genesis of a Tradition

The trio, fueled by their passion for sailing, organized the inaugural race on Big Gull Lake in the summer of 1975. "Back then, it was just a few of us who loved sailing, looking for a way to bring the community together. Little did we know that it would grow into something that has lasted as long as it has," reminisces Jeff McIlveen, one of the race's founding fathers. After a few years of unpredictable Labour Day weekend weather conditions, the event moved to the Sunday of Ontario's August Civic Holiday. This shift ensured better sailing conditions, allowing participants to fully enjoy the experience.

A Race for Everyone

What sets the Big Gull Lake Race apart is its inclusivity. Unlike many competitive sailing events, this race caters to casual sailors, welcoming participants of all skill levels. Whether sailing on a Sunfish, a Laser, or any other single-sail sailboat, the only requirement is that each vessel must have two people on board. This unique feature fosters a sense of camaraderie and fun, making the race accessible to both seasoned sailors and newcomers alike.



As the years passed, the organizers recognized the diversity of sailboats on the lake. In response to this, a second category and trophy was introduced, specifically for sailboats equipped with two sails. This addition not only broadened the competition but also added a new layer of fun.

Community Spirit

Beyond the thrill of the race, the Annual Big Gull Lake Race has become a celebration of community spirit. Families gather on the shores or in motorboats to cheer for their loved ones, and locals engage in friendly banter about the year's chances for favourable winds.

"It's not just about the competition; it's about coming together as a community. We look forward to this event every year—it's a time when Big Gull Lake seems to come alive," says Jim Papineau, a longtime cottager, avid supporter and oft organizer of the race. As the sun sets on the eve of the race, sails billow in the breeze, and the excitement builds. The Annual Big Gull Lake Race stands as a testament to the enduring power of fun on the water, friendship, and the timeless joy of sailing. Each year, it continues to weave its way into the fabric of the lake, leaving a lasting legacy.

Hitting the Half Century Mark

A couple of weather wash outs and a Covid-19 cancellation aside, this year's race will mark the 50th year for BGL sailors to vie for the prize. The names on the trophy, which has long outgrown its original design, chronicles families who have made a generational commitment to Big Gull. Names like Hindson, Papineau, McIlveen and Dickenson.

So, if you might have imagined that the sailboat race was exclusive or was comprised of sailing aces, be rest assured the goal of the race is to have fun and create a sense of community on the lake. If you have a sailboat, old or new and would like to have some fun... this year's race will be on the Civic Holiday Weekend. Weather conditions permitting, it will be held on Sunday August 4th at 2pm.

If you would like further information, drop me a line at rmcilveen@gmail.com



Year End Financial Report

Fund Revenue and Expense Summary, April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

	General Fund	Calendar Fund	Environment Fund	Total Funds	
Beginning Balance	17,801	7,093	13,499	38,394	
Total Revenues	6,337	3,935	-	10,272	Total Net
Total Expenses	8,571	4,391	-	12,961	Gain
Current Balance	15,567	6,638	13,499	35,704	\$ (2,690)

General Fund Income Summary

Dues	3,090
Bank Interest	391
Misc (Sale of hats & tees	45
Sale of Dock Signs	1,435
Fees paid in error	1,375
Total	6,337

General Fund Expenses Summary

Activities	567
Bank Fees	67
FOCA	525
Insurance	1,311
Tick Kits Incl. with Calendar	1,112
Newsletters, Website, Zoom, Signs	836
Picnic & AGM	131
Directors' Expenses	174
Dock Sign Purchases	2,187
Refund Fees paid in error	1,375
Miscellaneous	284
Total	8,571

LISTEN LOOK & LEARN

Everyone has heard the iconic cries of the loon under a moon lit summer night sky. I've been fishing and had loons swim under my boat chasing bait fish, with bubbles stretching to the surface from the kicking of their feet as they pursued their prey. Last summer while the morning mist was burning off the lake, I watched seven adult loons swimming in a circle like Killer Whales trapping fish under water, then one at a time they would dive into the middle and come up with a fish in their beaks. We are truly blessed to have a bounty of loons on Big Gull Lake, but for how long?

The biggest threat to our loon population after destruction of habitat is lead poisoning. Imagine a piece of lead the size of the tip of a pencil is enough to kill an adult. What is the source of this deadly toxin...lead fishing tackle!

The lead in sinkers, jigs, and worm weights is ingested into the bird's stomach, which uses a "gizzard" to grind food so stomach acids can breakdown the food. It doesn't matter if the lead is encased in plastic, their digestive mechanisms quickly break down the covering of fishing tackle whether it's painted or covered by a plastic. The neurotoxins are quickly released into the loon's bloodstream. The bird will swim to lake bottom searching for small stones to swallow to assist their gullets with grinding process. One small round lead weight is dull grey in colour and easily resembles the ideal size pebble they are looking for.

A loon can handle a fish hook stuck in its esophagus, which is broken down by its stomach acids, causing the hook to dissolve. But lead is simply a painful death sentence. And not just for loons, but all waterfowl which eat baitfish, such as Trumpeter Swans, Eagles, Blue Herons, Sandhill Cranes and Merganser ducks. Baitfish can be time bombs for waterfowl, as a dying fish, struggling through the painful death of lead poisoning is easy prey for opportunistic waterfowl.



Fishing with lead-free tackle prevents lead poisoning in loons, eagles and other wildlife while helping protect water quality in our lakes.

For more info, visit
FISHLEADFREE.CA

So you see lead poisoning doesn't have to be a first hand situation, but something of an unexpected side effect caused by lead fishing tackle.

Wolfe Lake Cottage Association in Westport have decided to do something about this issue and a program which promotes lead-free fishing called "Get The Lead Out". Their program was sponsored through a generous grant from Mayor Vandewal of South Frontenac Township, plus an endorsement from Mayor Hoogenboom of Rideau Lakes. Community education is how the success of this program works and once people understand the dangers of fishing with lead, they are encouraged to turn in this dangerous tackle to drop off locations. Last year Wolfe Lake collected over 300 lbs. Charleston Lake collected 68 lbs and the list of cottage associations is growing quickly. The lead turned in, is sent to Kimco Metal Recycling in Kingston, which processes it and sells it back to battery manufacturers, so it's the perfect solution to getting it out of Ontario lakes.

BGLEECA have announced its participation into "Get The Lead Out" and will soon have drop off locations set up at our bulletin boards at three sites around the lake: Helen Lane boat launch, South Shore Rd and Greer Rd at Number 10 Rd. Efforts are underway to have The Township of North Frontenac participate and will be announced at a future date. Any cottage attending our AGM on Saturday July 13th at Clar-Mill Hall in Plevna can bring donations to our meeting. The back page of our calendar this year is also promoting the Get the Lead Out initiative.

I encourage every angler to go through their tackle boxes this spring and set aside any lead equipment for donation. Not sure what is lead, follow these steps:

- Lead is a soft metal, easily crushed by pliers or strong fingertips.
- It's a dull grey colour and will leave a mark when scratched on paper.
- Lead is not magnetic.

Most importantly be more proactive when fishing:

- If you see a loon in the area where you are fishing, reel in and move to another spot.
- Never cut line with tackle attached, gather it in by hand and bring the ball of line to be disposed at your cottage.
- If you see fishing line in the water, take the time to collect it.
- Encourage local retailers to carry lead free tackle as an alternative to lead.
- Tell people about fishing lead free.

A large shout out to Margie Manthey and Donna Garland from Wolfe Lake who have been very helpful to BGLEECA with resource materials and support.

Keith Rowe
Director of Communication