



Fall 2025 Newsletter

BAPTISTE LAKE ASSOCIATION

www.baptistelake.org

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mybaptistelake@gmail.com

Drought to snow



Loons' survival depends on mama feeding baby. Photo by Anne Coleman



Does anyone need ice for their drink? Jack Baptiste can provide. Photo by Bowerbank Collection



Temperature changes herald winter. Photo by Tracy Meloche

BLA 2026 Events

OPENING EVENT

May 17, 2026

FISHING TOURNAMENT

Saturday, July 4, 2026

CANOE KAYAK DAY

To Be Determined

REGATTA

To Be Determined at Ponacka

AGM

August 8, 2026

CORN ROAST

September 6, 2026, Ponacka

NOTICE

Effective Spring 2026 we will be discontinuing the mailing of printed copies of our Newsletters to residents without recent paid up memberships. Newsletters will continue to be available for download from our website at <https://baptistelake.org/WS/Main/newsletters.php>.



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Monthly
**THE ANNEX
GALLERY**
EXHIBITIONS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Marlin Horst

I am writing this in early October and I cannot believe the warm weather we have had in September and continue to have in October. The summer was hot and clear but people forget that May and June were cool and wet. For those of us with seasonal cottages we will be closing soon. Lets hope the great weather continues.

Once again we had the opening event on the May long weekend at Birch Cliff Lodge. It was great to see so many people show up and get caught up again. A big thank you to Birch Cliff Lodge.

On July 5 we again sponsored the annual pike tournament. It was again a very popular event. I believe over 70 boats participated. I am not personally a fisherman but anything that brings the lake together is good in my book. A big thank you to Mike Di Cintio, Paul Coleman and Gary Pirko for spearheading this. They all worked very hard to make this a success. We look forward to this event again next year.

On July 19 we held the canoe and kayak day. Thank

you to Paul and Anne Coleman for letting us use their waterfront for a much deserved BBQ lunch after the event. The BBQ was overseen by me so I apologize to everyone who had to eat the food I cooked.

A group of very keen volunteers revived the Regatta for 2025. Camp Ponacka was a very generous host. The event far exceeded my and

many others hopes. This was a great event for kids of all ages (with a crashed canoe that dumped the occupants into the water!). We hope to replicate the event next year. Please keep an eye on the BLA website and facebook for details of the Regatta again for next year.

We held our AGM in early August. I was happy to see the large number of people attend. The Mayor, Tony Fitzgerald came and gave a good overview of what has been happening in the Municipality since his presentation to the AGM in 2024.

On the Sunday of the Labour Day weekend we were also able to hold the Closing Event again at Camp Ponacka. There was a fairly large turnout and the weather was fantastic!.. Thank you to Camp Ponacka for allowing this event to take place and also thank you to the Morowitz family for donating the corn..

Once again we have worked with Watersheds Canada to improve the fish habitat in the lake. I confess I do not understand all that is being done but a spawning bed has been "cleaned" this fall and lots of wood bundles were put in the lake to improve fish habitat. As I have learned a healthy fish population means a healthy lake and everyone can agree that we want the lake to be as healthy as possible. Thanks to the many volunteers that have made this possible. I would also like to make a plug for Watersheds Canada. They are a small organization that relies on donations from people like you and me. I would ask you to consider donating to them to help them keep improving lakes throughout the region.

The BLA continues to be part of the Hastings Highlands Interlake Group and FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottagers Association). The Interlake Association held its AGM in Maynooth in early June. I continue to be Chair of the group so I attended along with Gary Pirko. Gary gave a presentation regarding the underwater drone which we have helped purchase. It is very exciting. The HH Interlake also joined forces with the Municipality of Hasting Highlands, Bancroft and Area Stewardship Committee and Watersheds

...continued on page 3



BLA Officials - Fall 2025

Marlin Horst, BLA President
Alan Stephen, Vice President
Anne Coleman, Director, Editor
Lake Plan Implementation & Secretary
Eric Hooley, Director, Webmaster

Shelley Pickard, Director, Advertising,
Membership Chair, Website Co-coordinator
Diane Jared, Director, Treasurer
Beth Greenberg, Director
Hilary Phillips, Director

Gary Pirko, Director, Watersheds Canada
Liason, Fish Hatchery Liason
Sandra Irvine, Director, Regatta
Lindsay Cook, Director, Regatta
Contact us at mybaptistelake@gmail.com

...from page 2 President's Message

Canada to present two seminars (Spring and Fall) regarding shoreline rehabilitation. This was a first step in working with the Municipality to improve lake protection. It is a first step that will hopefully lead to more cooperation and more action by the Municipality.

Please visit our website regularly to see what is happening around the lake. In addition if you have not provided us with your e-mail address please do so as this is one of the most effective ways to communicate in the modern world. Please be assured that we use e-mail addresses only for the purposes of the BLA and we do not inundate you with messages. Please send your e-mail to membership@baptistelake.org along with your cottage address. Finally if you are not a member I would encourage you to become a member.



Liliane and Edwin at the corn roast.

The cost is minimal (\$25 per year or 3 years for \$60) and benefits are so much more.

If you have any questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to contact myself or any other member of the board. This is your association.



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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

By Tony Fitzgerald

As you close up the cottage and take one last look at the beautiful fall foliage, take a moment to appreciate where you are. We are clearly blessed in Hastings Highlands with clean, pristine and healthy lakes. However, we must never become complacent and assume that they will remain this way without our constant attention and monitoring. To the many volunteers who give selflessly of their time, money and physical efforts to preserve our lakes, THANK YOU!

As I write this article, HH is preparing to host the second workshop in our Shoreline Health Project. With funding from upper levels of government and in partnership with Watersheds Canada, Hastings Highlands Interlakes Association and Bancroft and Area Stewardship Council, participants are educated on the importance of a healthy shoreline and given a bundle of native plants to use to enhance the vegetative buffer on their shorelines.

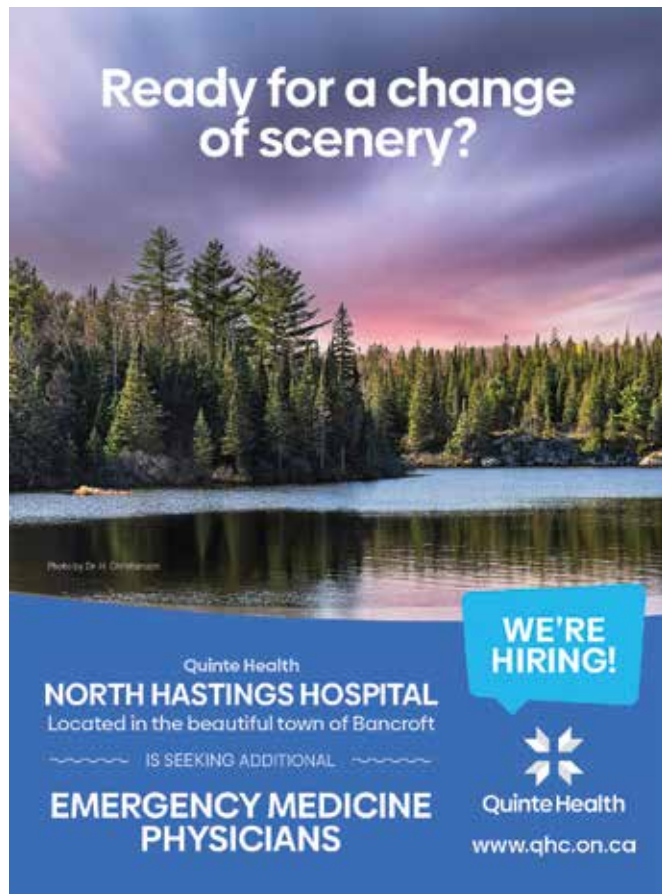
Many thanks to all involved with this tremendously successful endeavour.

Another partnership is just forming now, which will, hopefully, result in the enhancement of the boat launches in HH. Despite some jurisdictional issues with the MNRF and MOECP and the ever-present financial pressures we face, HH is hoping to partner with local groups to make these necessary improvements.

Recognizing that we have a lakes-based economy in HH, and in alignment with the Provincial Planning Statement and County of Hastings Official Plan, HH continues to control development on our many lakes. When reviewing applications for waterfront development, the Committee of Adjustment, with the guidance of our registered professional planner, may require that the existing natural shoreline be conserved, maintained, enhanced or restored as a condition of approval.

Together, we can keep Hastings Highlands "Beautiful by Nature"!

*Submitted respectfully by your Mayor,
Tony Fitzgerald*



Left to right, BLA President Marlin Horst, Lake St. Peter President Tom Scanlan, Hastings Highlands Mayor Tony Fitzgerald and Gord Brown at the fishery dinner. Photo by Gary Pirko

Wow - WHAT A DAY!

By Gary Pirko,

Baptiste Lake Pike Derby Team Fishing Derby

Thank you to everyone who came out for the 5th Annual Lake Baptiste Pike Derby on July 5th. It was an absolutely incredible day on our beautiful lake.

This year was a SELL OUT! We had 74 boats and 201 anglers casting lines in the name of fun, competition, and conservation. Together, we brought in a total weigh-in of 700 lbs 13 oz from 55 boats - an impressive average of 12½ pounds per boat!

Here are this year's winners:

Big Fish \$300 – 13lbs 8oz -Randal Wheeler

1st Place \$700 – 37lbs 8oz - Caleb Grant & Isaac Laundry

2nd Place \$300 – 36lbs 10oz - Jeff Goeree

3rd Place \$200 – 36lbs 9oz - Chris Mills

4th Place \$100 – 33lbs 9oz - Arek Akasamit

5th Place 23lbs 11oz - George Tsagrinios (Merchandise)

6th Place 22lbs 5oz - Gavin Gerrits (Merchandise)

7th Place 22lbs 1oz - Tyler Davis (Merchandise)

8th Place 21lbs 5oz - Janet McGhee

Proceeds from this year's derby will benefit two incredible partners:

- The Baptiste Lake Association (BLA)
- The North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery

With Ticket Sales, individual donations, and sponsor donations we brought in \$5,180! After paying out prize money and some minor expenses we will be netting \$2,937. Thank you for supporting our efforts!

This year's funds are going toward a \$6,000+



*Caleb Grant and Isaac Laundry,
first place winners. Photo by Gary Pirko*

investment in an underwater drone system. This isn't just cool tech - it's a vital tool to map the lake bottom, monitor fish spawning beds, and assess lake health. BLA is leading the project, and the Hatchery will help train users and keep it running smoothly. Best of all, this technology will help protect not only Baptiste Lake but also nearby lakes, supporting the health of our entire region's ecosystem.

A huge THANK YOU to every one of you who made the day so special. Whether you hauled in a trophy fish or simply enjoyed a day on the water, you were part of something important. The community spirit was fantastic.

...continued on page 6





Some of the 74 boat entries at the public docks for an early morning start. Photo by Gary Pirko

...from page 5 Wow - what a day!

PHOTO ALBUM - Use the link to see the Day's Photos and please share some of yours!
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/7GduL5EKk76JMsXQ8>

Please show some love to our amazing sponsors who help make this event possible:

Pipewerks, Glacier Tackle, Makin' Waves, Freymond Lumber, Baptiste Marina, Madawaska Management, Tom Morawitz Riding Plane, Cedar and Co Botanicals, Boyer GM Bancroft, Birds Creek Farm Supply, ItStix Signs, Mack Attack Outdoors, Joan Grant ReMax, DeAnna Pirko and Algonquin Cookhouse.

Mark your calendars - we'll be back next year on the FIRST SATURDAY OF JULY! Keep an eye on your email and our Facebook page so you can sign up early. We can't wait to see you back on the water.

Until then - tight lines, safe travels, and long live Baptiste Lake!

LAKE TROUT SPAWNING BED CLEANING A GREAT SUCCESS!

By Gary Pirko

Our recent Lake Trout Spawning Bed Cleaning event was a tremendous success and a great example of community teamwork in action.

With the help of 10 dedicated volunteers, we restored three spawning beds using four tons of clean river rock. The newly refreshed beds are now clean, rocky, and ready to welcome this year's Lake Trout eggs.

This annual effort plays an essential role in supporting a stronger, healthier Lake Trout population on Baptiste Lake. By removing sediment, algae, and invasive growth, and improving water flow, we're helping to create the ideal environment for spawning and egg incubation through the long winter months.

A sincere thank-you goes out to Watersheds Canada for organizing and guiding the restoration, to Leveque Bros. for generously donating the river rock, and to all of the volunteers who gave their time and energy to make this project possible.

Together, we're making a lasting difference for the future of Baptiste Lake and its thriving ecosystem.



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LAKE REGATTA 2025 – A SPLASHING SUCCESS!

By the Regatta Committee

What a fantastic day on the lake! The Regatta made its triumphant return — and it was everything we hoped for and more. Families, friends, and neighbors came out in full force to celebrate, compete, and reconnect in the spirit of summer fun.

A huge thank you to our generous hosts, Camp Ponacka, and our wonderful sponsors: No Frills, Kawartha Dairy, and Black Creek Livestock. Your support made this event possible and helped bring the community together in such a meaningful way.

Swim Races kicked off the day with a splash — literally! Participants of all ages dove in with enthusiasm, showing off their strokes and cheering each other on.

The Canoe Races were a highlight, with crowd favorites like the Multi-Generation Relay, the hilarious Crab Race, and the competitive Team Canoe Timed Trial.

In a thrilling turn of events, the Cottagers reclaimed victory in the Team Canoe Race, against the 16-year-old CIT campers from Camp Ponacka. The friendly rivalry lives on! The winners of the Team Canoe Race were: Craig Creighton, Sarah Ladner, John Wootton, Matthias Lamm, Gary Tran, Christina Pilz, Adriano Sobretudo Jr, Mary Galic, Mark Lamm, Jordan Hume, Osa Campbell, and Mitch Morawetz.

It was heartwarming to see so many families en-

joying the day together — from toddlers splashing at the shoreline to kids, parents and grandparents swimming, canoeing and cheering from the docks. The Regatta reminded us all why we love this lake and the community that surrounds it.

We're already looking forward to next year. Until then, thank you to everyone who made this day so special!



Many thanks to Sandra Irvine and Lindsay Cook.



Exuberant reactions.

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DIANA GURLEY AND FOREST FIRE RESCUE

By the Gurley family

This is a further account from my daughter Eleanor of the fire on the east shore in Grassy Bay on August 6, 2025.

So this is what happened in a nutshell when we were up at the Hacienda with visiting German friends before the family wedding.

On Wednesday, August 6 they had just announced a complete fire ban.

We were all sitting on the dock and enjoying the lake and Dylan's German friend Jan noticed smoke and large flames straight across the lake.

We realized that was on the Crown Land and that the flames were occasionally shooting up and the smoke too.

We decided to go across on the boat and see what was going on and if there were people there having a bon fire and maybe they didn't know there was a fire ban.

When our boat reached there and I called out 'Hello' a few times, no one responded and we realized no one was there and it was an uncontrolled fire.

We took the boat back to the cottage and found a large bucket. A few guys went back on the boat and swam to the shore with the bucket.

The fire was doused by Jacob with probably 30 bucketfuls of water.

Kyle and Jacob walked into the forest and saw evidence of a bonfire and the burning bush with burning embers had spread all around the pit. Probably a 10 ft radius by the time they got there.

So grateful that Jan noticed the fire across the lake while we were sitting on the dock!

I guess you can also mention that we called 911 and I spoke to someone with the fire department. They told me they were relaying our description of the fire to the Ontario's Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES), part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

I described over the phone to them the area on the lake and what bay area that the fire was located.

In approximately half an hour an emergency helicopter arrived and it did a very thorough search of the entire forested area where the fire had been. Even though the boys had put it out already, they took their time flying all around and making sure there was no evidence of it or any possible spreading of the fire.



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A serious emergency averted.

Photo by Eleanor



Jacob swimming with a bucket to douse the fire.

Photos by Eleanor

As we assemble this newsletter there are outbreaks of serious bush fires in Pembroke and Barry's Bay areas.

CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT

By From the Baptiste Lake Association Members

There are currently plans being made to develop a 2,000 acre site (over 4 separate parcels of land) near and on Benoir and Elephant Lakes and the York River. The developer is 95 Developments (2463756 Ontario Inc.), a subsidiary of Woodside Square Investment Trust, a group that develops condominiums in the GTA and owns the Woodside Square Mall. In total they are proposing to build 1,271 'upscale cottages' despite having no apparent experience building in rural areas or around environmentally sensitive sites. They have called the development Algonquin Garden.

The proposal is being processed in phases, with the first two - the Northern Phase behind existing lakefront cottages on Benoir Lake Road and the Southern Phase along the shores of Elephant and Benoir Lakes and the York River (known locally as "the Ripples") - currently going through approval processes. Some of these applications are being heard at the municipal level, which is the Municipality of Dysart et al, and others at the county level, which is the County of Haliburton. The full set of planning documents submitted by the developer can be found on Dysart et al's website in the Current Development Applications section - the matter reference is Official Plan Amendment D08-OP-2025-001 2463756 Ontario Inc.

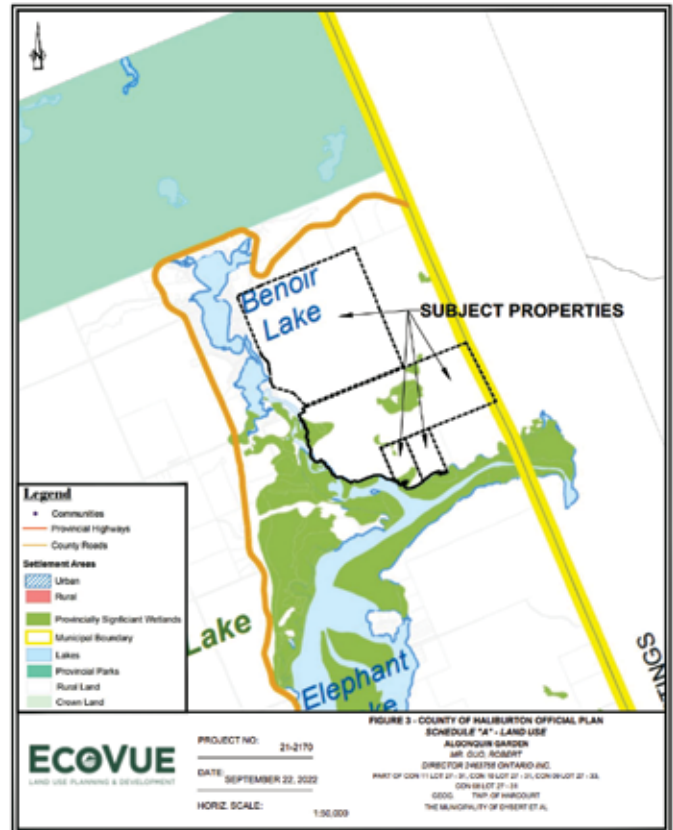
How will this affect Baptiste Lake?

The "Ripples" are an important ecosystem feature for Baptiste Lake. They act as a natural filter, maintaining water quality and supporting biodiversity. This development could impact fish habitats in Benoir, Elephant and Baptiste Lakes, significant wetlands, as well as important habitats for other animals. This could also directly impact the cold-water fishery on Baptiste Lake, hurting our efforts to protect our Lake Trout, Walleye, Bass, and other fish populations. A lot of the land in the area is designated as a Provincially Significant Wetland (including the Baptiste-Elephant Lake Wetland) and is part of a Harcourt Environmental Protection Zone.

Baptiste Lake is particularly vulnerable, as water from Benoir and Elephant Lakes filters through these wetlands before entering our lake. The destruction or removal of these essential wetlands could cause serious harm to Baptiste Lake.

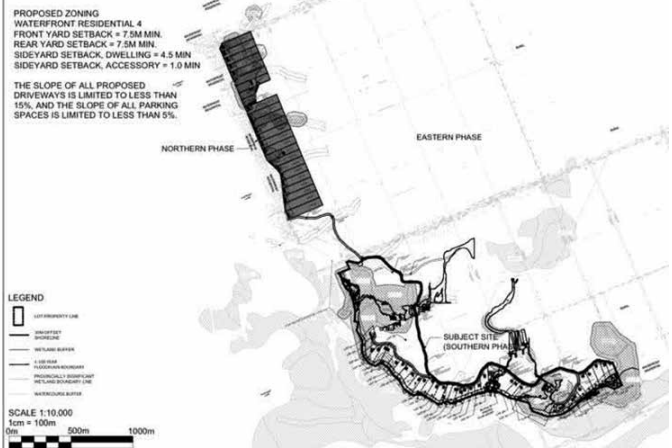
What has happened so far?

On September 23, 2025 the Municipality of Dysart et



GENERAL NOTES:

- Topographic LIDAR survey via aerial drone was sub-contracted to Drone Services Canada Inc. and supervised by King EPCM
- Horizontal Projection - NAD83(CRS) UTM Zone 17N
- Vertical Projection - CGVD28 Height
- Field work completed during June 18 - 20th, 2024, with King EPCM field visit and data verification on June 19th, 2024



This map is connect to the article on pages 9 and 10. 95 Developments proposal as presented to Dysart et al

al considered an application to redesignate land from Rural Areas to a Site-Specific Waterfront Residential Area in order to build the Northern Phase of the proj-
...continued on page 10

...from page 9 Concerning Development

ect, which is 25 cottages built directly behind the existing cottages on Benoir Lake Road, with proposed access to the lake being via a common water access located in the Southern Phase. The application was refused by Dysart et al on the grounds that the proposal is not consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, is not in conformity with the Municipal Official Plan and is not locally appropriate. While every win is important for the conservation of our lake systems, the developers can appeal this decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

Anyone interested in hearing what the municipal planners, developers' representatives, councillors, and members of the public had to say can watch the meeting in full on the Dysart YouTube page, which can be accessed from the Dysart et al website or directly from YouTube.

The developers are requesting that the Provincially Significant Wetlands bordering nearly the entire waterfront of the Southern Phase of the project be re-zoned from Environmentally Protected (EP) to Waterfront Residential (WR4L). This would enable

them to build 38 cottages, as well as a community centre, a multi-boat dock, and 56 parking spaces that would serve as a hub for all backlot cottages (25 initially, but over 1,200 in their full plan) to access and use the lake system. This would place substantial environmental strain on one of the most important and sensitive areas in our watershed.

The County of Haliburton is the approval authority to process and approve plans of condominium and subdivision. They also process Official Plan amendments. Both of these will be required for the development to go ahead. We do not currently have details of any meetings or hearings at county level.

Call to action

We believe we should all strongly oppose this development, as it will threaten the water quality of Baptiste Lake, our fish, and the ecosystem in the surrounding areas. Simply put, Baptiste, Elephant, and Benoir Lakes, and the York River, are not equipped to handle 1,271 new homes and the number of new residents using them. The increased load on the ecosystem, including runoff and waste for both phases, could impact the watershed, potentially increasing weed growth and the makeup of the ecosystem. This would have direct impacts on Baptiste Lake as well as Benoir and Elephant Lakes and the York River. It is our duty to protect the lakes we all cherish, steward, and use. Now is the time to act if we want to help preserve our lake system and ensure it is kept pristine for generations to come.

The best way to do this includes contacting decision makers at the municipal, county, and provincial levels to make our voices heard.

Municipal - Dysart et al Planning and Land Information/Kris Orsan, Manager of Planning
email:korsan@dysartetal.ca

County - Haliburton Planning Department/Elizabeth Purcell, Director of Planning
email:epurcell@haliburtoncounty.ca

Provincial - Laurie Scott/MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, email: laurie.scottco.pc.ola.org

Ric Breese/MPP for Hastings – Lennox & Addington
email:Ric.bresee@pc.ola.org

The BLA will monitor developments around this project and continue to advocate for the health of the lake system for future generations to come. Watch our Facebook page for updates.



A TREASURE OF BAPTISTE LAKE MEMORIES

By Hilary Phillips

When Anne Bowerbank called me this past summer to book her favorite cabin at Sunrise Lodge, cabin #6, I asked her when she had been here last as I didn't recognize her name. "Oh" she said, "It's been a few years, but I grew up on Baptiste Lake, with Sam and Rose Baptiste." My curiosity was piqued, she told me a bit more of her early years on the lake, it was fascinating, I love personal stories of lake history. So I asked her if she would tell me her story in detail for an article. This is Anne's story.

Annette Bowerbank, nicknamed Lolly, arrived on the shores of Baptiste Lake around 1948 at the ripe old age of 6 weeks, along with her sister Sylvia, 1 year old, and their mother Margaret. She spent her first 6 years or so living on the lake with Sam and Rose Baptiste, whom she called Grandma and Grandpa and Samuel Hancock and his wife Eva, whom she called Nana and Papa. At this point in Anne's telling of her story around the kitchen table of cabin #7, she paused and said, "Ok, I have to back up and give you a little history of how we got to Baptiste Lake."

Chief John Baptiste had a son, Samuel, he married Rose and they lived in a log cabin on Baptiste Lake. Rose's sister had a son who was also named Samuel, but when she died in childbirth Sam and Rose took him in and raised Samuel as their own. Jump ahead a couple of decades, Samuel came to Hamilton, where he met Anne Bowerbank's grandmother Eva. They were married, returned to Baptiste Lake and built a log cabin so they could live near family. Sometime later, when Margaret's husband abandoned his family in Hamilton, it was Samuel and Eva who took in tiny Anne (Lolly) and young Sylvia to live with them on Baptiste Lake. Margaret had to return to Hamilton to her work, but she returned several times by train for visits and at times stayed for long periods depending



Greg, Sylvia and Anne.

Photo by the Bowerbank photo collection

on her work situation.

Anne remembers her very early years growing up between the log cabins of Sam and Rose and Samuel and Eva as very happy. She remembers feeling safe and loved and accepted in the Algonquin community. The hard business of living off the land took up every minute of the day, and took a community to look after everyone's well being. She has memories of helping in the garden, having chickens, rabbits and ducks running around. They fished and hunted, drying and salting the meat, making preserves. She remembers blocks of ice being cut and hauled from the lake, then packed with sawdust and put in low sheds to keep the preserves through the summer months. It was a lot of work but they had fun too. Anne doesn't remember feeling isolated in the bush, there were friends to play with, uncles and cousins that visited, boat trips to and from the public dock at Grants across the lake to their cabin.

...continued on page 12



Food preservation depended on ice blocks from frozen lakes. Sam Hancock and Jack Baptiste provide the man force to create these blocks.

Photo by the Bowerbank photo collection

...from page 11 A Treasure of Baptiste Lake

When the lake was frozen they sometimes crossed with a horse and sleigh. She learned to swim by being dropped over the side of the boat and treading water. She and Sylvia became very good at treading water.

Grandma Rose would give Anne and Sylvia a little can and send them off to pick blueberries, but warned them, "Watch out for the bears, watch the bears!" Growing up in the bush they had been taught how to behave if you see a bear, "Stand still, then back away, but keep facing them, look to the side, no eye contact." Anne said that they never had any bear encounters while out picking berries, but one winters eve they did.

Her recollection of the story is that one night, with the cabin nice and warm from the wood stove, she and Sylvia were cozy in their bunk beds, her mother was quietly reading when suddenly the door came crashing in with a bear following. Her mother snatched up a broom and gave it a good wack on the head and it turned and ran off into the night.

Another vivid memory was when her mother decided that the children needed to go to school, and moved them all to Bancroft so that they could attend the Catholic school. The first day didn't go so well, they

had never seen a nun before and the sight sent them running home, yelling 'Witches!' They were escorted back to school for proper, calmer introductions.

Anne's mother was of a particular mind to give her children more educational opportunities as they grew, so after the early grades of schooling in Bancroft she made the decision to move the children back to Hamilton. It was a very difficult decision, made more so because a romance had blossomed between herself and Jack Baptiste, Sam and Rose's son. They had a son together, Greg. Jack wanted Margaret to stay, to marry and live on the land. It was heartbreaking.

That brought a quiet moment around the kitchen table in cabin #7, then Anne said, "Ok, lets jump forward a couple of decades." Sylvia received her BA at Carleton University in Ottawa, her BE at University of Toronto, her MA at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, and finally her PHD at McMaster University in Hamilton where she remained teaching. Anne studied at Mohawk College, got her degree to become an RN and worked at Hamilton Health Science. Greg also studied at McMaster University, receiving a BA in computer science, and worked as a data analyst. Apparently mom's determination paid off.

...continued on page 13



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...from page 12 *A Treasure of Baptiste Lake*

Their early childhood on Baptiste Lake influenced them throughout their lives. Among her many academic accomplishments Sylvia was instrumental in developing the Women's Studies program and Indigenous Studies programs at McMaster. She was one of Canada's first eco-critics and an influencer of green thinking. One of her well known essays was called "Sitting in the Bush, or Deliberate Idleness" musings of walking with her dogs on her 10 acre property in Lynden, close to Beverly Swamp in Southern Ontario. There she built a timber frame cabin using traditional methods, held together with strong cherry wood pegs. She carried on the tradition of climbing a fur tree, as high as you could reach, to cut a branch that was then nailed to the peak of the cabin. Originally it was placed there to prevent accidents during the build, but also for luck and good fortune.

Anne returned to Baptiste Lake many times, sometimes with her mother to explore the past. She said that each time she saw the evergreen trees or swam in Baptiste Lake she felt such joy in remembering her time there as a child. It was during some of those visits that Anne and Sunrise Lodge crossed paths. She loved cabin #6 overlooking the water, but the hill down to the cabin proved too much on this latest trip, hence all of us sitting in the kitchen of cabin #7 for the telling of her story.

Greg became the historian of the family, organizing all the photos by date, identifying who was who and reaching out to extended family members. He graciously provided their family photos for this article.

Anne Bowerbank's stories of her early years on Baptiste Lake add a personal



*Jack Baptiste and a treasured Lake Trout.
Photo by the Bowerbank photo collection*

layer to the overall history here that is sometimes lost in the chronological accounts of the lakes milestones. Above all, she said that the feeling of acceptance and love is her most treasured memory.

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BRUSH BUNDLES PROJECT – 20 NEW FISH HABITATS IN BAPTISTE LAKE!

By Gary Pirko

Small fish need a place to hide to become BIG FISH!

That's why the Baptiste Lake Association, in partnership with Watersheds Canada and with the approval of the MNRF, placed 20 new brush bundles in the east end of Baptiste Lake this September.

Despite a forecast calling for rain, eight dedicated volunteers showed up bright and early on September 22nd to help load, transport, and submerge the bundles into their new underwater homes. These structures provide critical shelter for juvenile fish, giving them a better chance to survive and grow—helping sustain the lake's healthy fish population for

years to come.

A big thank you goes out to the volunteers who supplied brush, tied bundles, and helped with deployment, as well as to the three BLA Board members who cooked up a delicious burgers-and-dogs lunch to keep everyone fueled and smiling throughout the day.

And the results are already in! Using the new Fi-Fish underwater drone, we've confirmed that the bundles are doing their job—schools of small bass, rock bass, and perch have already moved in and are calling these new habitats home.

This project demonstrates once again how community teamwork, innovation, and conservation come together to make Baptiste Lake a thriving ecosystem.



*Hard work to clean spawning beds.
Photos by Gary Pirko*



Transporting bundles to the east side of lake.

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OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY



Wendy serving up snacks. Photo by Jessica O'Neill

By Jessica O'Neill

Another Busy Summer Comes to an End at Hastings Highlands Public Library Our summer recap is here, and what a busy summer it was! This year we had 3350 visits from people all around the world—that's over 200 more than last year—with signatures in our guest book showing travellers from other Canadian provinces, as well as the United States and Europe. Almost 500 of those visits were for our two toddler groups: Romp & Read, which happens every Tuesday morning at 10am and is in partnership with the Metis Nation of Ontario, and Come Drum With Me, which is facilitated by the Algonquin Inòdewiziwin Early-ON Child and Family Centre and held in the library on Thursdays at 10am. We kicked off the season with the return of our popular Summer Reading Challenge. Last year, we challenged the kids to read as many books as they could, and they rose to the occasion with over 1000 books read between them. This year, we tried something different: in order to get a ballot for our draw, kids would have to complete a Bingo on the card we gave them. Each square represented its own challenge, like reading a book that teaches them a new skill, or a book by an author they've never read before. This resulted in less ballots, but more thinking outside the box and branching out to other genres and book formats. We also ran several Geography scavenger hunts all summer long, encouraging kids to answer questions using our giant World Map and Map of Canada in exchange for prizes. Questions ranged from "What's a country that's taller than it is

wide?" to identifying continents and rivers, as well as Provinces and Capital cities in Canada. We had easier questions for kids who haven't begun working with maps yet in school, like identifying the colour of Canada or the name of an ocean. As the summer went on, kids gained a better understanding of navigating maps to answer the questions we provided, and took advantage of teamwork whenever they found a question was a little more difficult. This summer we also hosted a book launch with the White Pine Writers Inc., for their book AMETHYST: Facts, Myths, & Legends. Their book was published to celebrate the 50th anniversary of declaring the amethyst as Ontario's official gemstone, as well as to promote this year as the 60th year of Bancroft's Rockhound Gemboree. Thanks to Hastings County, the library now offers a Rockhounding Kit that can be signed out with your library card! This is the latest addition to our library of things, following our Nature Discovery Backpacks courtesy of Watersheds Canada, and our Instrument Lending Library, courtesy of numerous generous donors in the

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...from page 15 *Our Public Library*

community. You may have also seen us doing a little community outreach at the Maynooth Pride event, where we did a community art and postcard activity, or at the Kids' Fishing Derby & Community Gathering in Lake St. Peter Provincial Park, where we partnered with the Lake St. Peter Property Owners Association and Watersheds Canada to put on a night sky activity. To close off the summer, we partnered with the municipality to host a back to school Kids Dance Party at the Maynooth Skating Rink. Thanks to DJ Sean and his young assistant Levi, we were able to keep the tunes going while kids lined up at the rink shack for free snacks, drew chalk art, and did other fun activities to pass the time. We also had a variety of school supplies as giveaways, including funny pens, pencil cases, notebooks, backpacks, calculators, and stickers. With Fall on the horizon, we are looking forward to the return of both our kids and adult book clubs, as well as our upcoming Halloween Costume Exchange. You can stay up to date with the latest programs and events happening at the library by following us on Facebook or visiting our website.



Mayor Tony Fitzgerald and Wendy Keating share congratulations for the summer readers.

Photo by Jessica O'Neill

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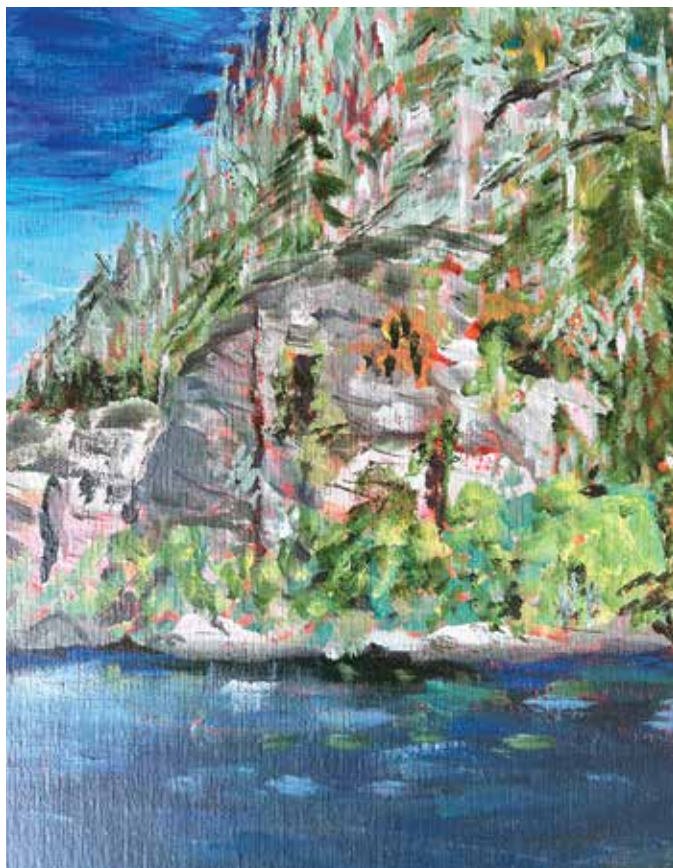
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Blueberry Island acrylic on canvas, Anne Coleman

ART IN THE COMMUNITY: THE AGB IN 2026

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By Molly Moldovan

Located on Flint Ave just steps from Bancroft's main drag, the Art Gallery of Bancroft (AGB) is proudly marching into its 44th year of promoting art and the creatives of our area and beyond. With monthly exhibitions of work by a roster of accomplished professional artists, we bring to the Bancroft area a series of diverse and interesting exhibitions.

This volunteer-led gallery is also home to an eclectic shop filled with exceptional work by local artisans and artists. As well, this year we began selling art supplies in partnership with The Art Factory in Renfrew.

We are currently in the throes of planning our February 2026 fundraiser. The 2025 event was reported to be the most fun event of the year, and we know that 44!! will be just as successful. The event will include a Mystery Art Grab and an online auction of beautiful artwork donated by artists from across Ontario. The auction will culminate with a very fun party at the gallery on February 21 when the Mystery Art Grab takes place. Anyone can place an auction bid from any location. For the Art Grab, 44 artists will each create a 10" x 10" artwork which will only be signed on the back. 44 numbered tickets will be sold, and when the ticket number is drawn, the ticketholder will go up to the wall and remove the artwork of their choosing. Only then will they know who created the artwork they chose. Art Grab tickets will be available in December, and from Feb-

ruary 3 until the 21st, we will mount a preview exhibition of the Mystery Art Grab and online auction items.

Another successful "first" for the AGB has been our Artist in Residence program, with the chosen

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...from page 17 Art in the Community

artists working in the gallery as their studio for an entire month, one in May and another in November. The residency is thematic – Finding Community. The artists are free to express that in any way and will have a joint exhibition of their work in May 2026. As both artists are from outside our area and represent different demographics, we expect that the resulting artwork will be interestingly varied and nuanced.

A perennial favourite is December's annual juried exhibition, now in its 43rd year! There will be much to view – this popular exhibition has historically featured work from more than 60 Ontario-based artists; in 2024 there were 70 accepted artworks. Our juror for this year's exhibition will be Loree Lawrence of Wildewood Gallery in Maynooth.

The 2025 exhibition year has been amazing and we're looking forward to what 2026 will bring. For information on our exhibitions past, present and future, check out our website at artgallerybancroft.ca.

Like many small galleries and non-profit organizations, the AGB could not exist without the generous gift of time from our volunteers. Volunteers learn the day-to-day business of gallery operations. They are

given insight into the intent and meaning of each exhibiting artist's work, creating opportunities for interesting and enlightening discussions with the visiting public. If you are someone with time and energy and want to become more involved with your community, the AGB may be a perfect fit! Your involvement could be as much, or as little, as you would like. More information at: www.artgallerybancroft.ca/index.php/join-and-support/become-a-volunteer.

As a non-profit public art gallery, the AGB funds itself without arts council support. Memberships form the single largest component of the gallery's operating budget. Members receive a 10% discount on purchases (excluding art supplies) from the gallery shop; they have a vote at the annual general meeting and receive regular updates on events. An AGB membership makes an amazing gift to anyone in your life who is interested in art and culture. Most importantly, your membership supports the AGB's ongoing activities and, by extension, the artists who exhibit there. Memberships range from a modest \$25 to \$1,000; tax receipts are available for all memberships and/or donations of \$25 or more. You can join online at <https://www.artgallerybancroft.ca/index.php/join-and-support/become-a-member>, or in person at the AGB's front desk.

We hope to see you at our opening receptions, 7:30 pm on the first Friday of every month! You'll find us at 10 Flint Avenue in Bancroft (just off the main street, downtown).



*Look forward to winter visits.
Photo by Molly Moldovan*

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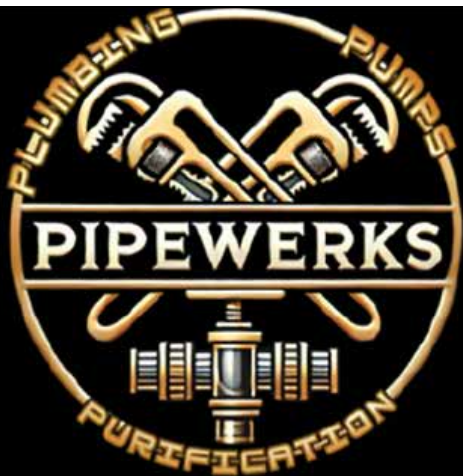
THE ART OF PLUMBING

By Anne Coleman

Talented, intelligent, masterful are words to describe the work accomplished by D J and his Pipewerks team. Tradesmen and women, in general, don't receive adequate acknowledgement for their care and attention to detail when it is deserved. I personally, have not engaged Pipewerks for projects in my home, but when I saw what he had created at my friends' homes, I was struck by the mastery of his work. The pictures here demonstrate the pride and effort that went into his recent installation. Van Gogh and Picasso would love his artistic flair. We need to respect the intelligence and the loyalty tradesmen and women offer us when they do work we are not trained to do ourselves. There are many accomplished men and women in our area who help us make our living space enjoyable to say the least.



DJ's finished work of art that will keep the clients' feet warm all winter as well as being beautiful. Photos by Anne Coleman



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AUTUMN AND WINTER ENTERTAINMENT RIGHT IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

By Katherine Cappellacci

Even with the hustle and bustle of the summer season behind us, there's still plenty to see and do in the Bancroft area. Out of town road trippers hunting for dazzling autumn colours and local year-round residents alike should consider adding live entertainment to their itinerary.

The place to check out? In the heart of Bancroft sits the beloved Village Playhouse. Since assuming the building's operations in 2022, Tweed & Company Theatre has made many upgrades to the venue, including new bathrooms and enhancements to stage curtains, lighting grids, audio technology, and so much more. Thanks to these improvements, the theatre's programming has continued to grow over the years, solidifying its reputation as one of the community's most notable hubs for performance arts.

Since 2009, Tweed & Company Theatre has been producing professional grassroots theatre right here in Hastings County. They also own, operate, and program performances at the Marble Arts Centre and the Tweed Outdoor Stage in Tweed. As part of the 2025 Festivals and Events Ontario's Top 100 list, winner of the Top Performings Arts category in Attractions Ontario's 2024 Ontario Choice Awards, and a Belleville Community Votes 2024 winner, they're certainly making the region's arts and culture scene known throughout Ontario.

"When we moved into the Playhouse, we were blown away by Bancroft's desire to participate in and enjoy live entertainment," says Tim Porter, Tweed & Company's Artistic & Co-executive Director. "There is such a vibrant arts scene here and we do our best to uplift it."

...continued on page 21



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...from page 20 Autumn and Winter

Indeed, the company works hard to do so in every way. They offer fall and spring drama classes for youth and adults, as well as summer camps and public youth performances. They often include local artists and young performers in their professional productions, including their upcoming holiday show, *Hook: A New Family Musical*. A re-invented take on the classic tale of Peter Pan, this original production will entertain audiences of all ages at the Village Playhouse from December 10th - 20th, 2025.

They also host engaging community events throughout the year, including the recent 24-Hour Theatre Project, where Bancroft artists could sign up to put together a play and perform it to an audience in just under 24 hours! Along with this, they bring in tons of events, comedy, concerts, and more. Their TIFF Film Circuit Bancroft plays movies (on a brand new larger screen) approximately once per month in the fall, winter, and springtime. This season, catch *A Nice Indian Boy*, and *The Life of Chuck*. Movie tickets are \$6.99 for youth/students and \$13 for adults, taxes included.

Tweed & Company is wrapping up their 2025 Season, *Just Imagine...* which was their biggest and most successful one to date. It included two major summer musicals: Bad Hats Theatre's *Alice in Wonderland* and the record-breaking box-office smash hit, *Jersey Boys*, which had to extend its Village Playhouse run due to popular demand.

They've just wrapped *The Rocky Horror Show* and are preparing for *Hook*. These professional musicals were put on by some of the biggest stars in Canadian theatre and were met with top-notch reviews. In between these major productions, Tweed & Co. also hosts big-name acts at their venues. This fall, catch illusionist Buzz Collins, Tommy Youngsteen's Fleetwood Mac, *Boreal: Songs for the Snowy Season*, George Canyon and Aaron Pritchett's *Cowboy Christmas*, and *The Fitzgeralds Canadian Christmas*.

Plus, they've JUST announced their 2026 season, so keep an eye on their website for program information, show passes, and individual ticket sales. "We're really taking it to the next level this season," Porter adds. "We're putting on bigger productions, scheduling more community-based events, and bringing in great concerts and shows. We're able to do this because of our amazingly attentive board and staff team - and because of the continuous support of our community."

A registered charity, Tweed & Company Theatre offers some of the most accessible theatre ticket prices in the country. Their main season shows range from \$25.50 - \$39.50 +HST, with special pricing for students, youth, arts workers, and seniors. Plus, group rates are available for the mainstage productions and many hosted concerts and events. For tickets and more information, visit www.villageplayhouse.ca or contact the box office at 613-478-6060.



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RARE Designs

Of the many layers in creating this newsletter, we depend highly on Rachel Etmanskies expertise. She is the one who accomplishes the digital layout and design with skill and insight. Many thanks from the BLA to Rachel for her constant and enthusiastic support.

COOPER AND FIN DIESEL

By Paul Coleman

“Hey Grandad- is diesel fuel any good in a boat motor?”

One evening Coop and I had a great fishing trip to the far end of the lake just as the sun was going down. So the next day I suggested we do the same trip an hour before sunset. On spec, I had an attendant fill my jerry cans with what I thought was premium but alas it was not. I’m sure she said diesel but I heard/thought premium and so, old age embarrassed me once again.

Off we went at 7pm and I sensed that the power of the boat was not quite right. It sounded different and just couldn’t get up to my normal speed. We arrived at our “special” spot and the motor died! Hmmm. I did fill up the tank so maybe the line needs to be primed? Nope, the motor stuttered then shut off. Ohhh boy, here we are at the other end of the lake, the sun is setting, the wind picked up and we had no cell service.

Ok Coop let’s get the trolling motor cranked up and head home! “But grandad, at this speed we won’t get home till midnight, the bugs are coming out and it’s getting cold.” Ok, check your cell again, do you have reception? Yesss! Ok, look up “is diesel fuel any good for a 4 stroke boat motor”.

Not good, Cooper passes me his phone. “The performance of the motor will be reduced, it will slowly

come to a stop. If you are lucky there will be little or no damage. You have to empty the tank, clear the line and change out the filter.”

Oh great, so I called our illustrious BLA president who by chance had just finished supper with friends and who were interested in an adventure! (And, to get a good laugh at my expense). Marlin towed us to the Baptiste Marina and then took Coop and I home.

Thank you Marlin, and Brad at the marina for saving the day.

“Hey Coop, don’t tell anyone ok.” “Too late grandad, I texted mom and now the whole family knows!”

So the name Fin Diesel is now my moniker and the adventures of Cooper and grandad continue.

Submitted by Fin





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BUILDING A FIRE PUMP BRIGADE FOR BAPTISTE LAKE

By Gary Pirko

As wildfires become a growing concern across Ontario, the Baptiste Lake community is exploring proactive ways to protect our shoreline, cottages, and forests. One initiative now taking shape is the creation of a Fire Pump Brigade — a network of self-propelled water pumps placed strategically around the lake, ready to be operated by trained volunteers in the event of a fire.

With the Hastings Highlands Fire Department facing budget reductions, station consolidations, and fewer available volunteer firefighters, local response times are becoming longer. Combine that with increasingly hot, dry summers, and the risk to our community has never been greater. As residents who deeply care about the lake and its environment, we have an opportunity to step up and prepare ourselves.

The concept is simple: small neighborhood networks of about ten cottages would join together to purchase and maintain a shared gas-powered fire pump. Each group would have one designated cottage responsible for housing the equipment so it's always accessible. The total cost of the pump and related accessories — roughly \$2,100 — would be shared among the participants, averaging about \$210 per cottage. Each network would also elect a Captain, serving a two-year term, to organize training and coordination.

The recommended setup includes a Honda High Pressure WH20 pump, a 100–200-foot fire hose with high-pressure nozzle, a 25-foot suction hose with a strainer to keep clear of the lake bottom, and a 20-liter backup fuel can. With this equipment, a small group of volunteers could deliver a powerful, sustained water flow capable of protecting shoreline properties while awaiting fire department support.

Training would take place each summer in a short, two-hour session led by the group Captain, covering pump operation, safety, and fire-control techniques. In addition, all Captains would meet every Labor Day weekend, either in person or via Zoom, with the Hastings Highlands Fire Marshal to review readiness and update emergency plans for the coming year.

If a fire were reported in the Baptiste Lake area, the Fire Department would issue an emergency signal to the Baptiste Lake Fire Network Volunteers. Local brigade members could then mobilize their equipment by boat or vehicle to support professional responders in containing and extinguishing the fire.

While still in its early planning stages, this project is gaining momentum. As organizer Gary Pirko explains, “This has to be a community movement — it’s too big for any one person to take on alone.” Once refined, the plan will be presented to the Baptiste Lake Association Board for review and consideration.

If you’re interested in being part of this important initiative, have a pump already, or know others who might want to help organize networks around the lake, please contact Gary at garypirko@gmail.com. Together, we can make Baptiste Lake safer, more resilient, and ready to respond when it matters most.

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