



# BAPTISTE LAKE ASSOCIATION

[www.baptistelake.org](http://www.baptistelake.org)

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[mybaptistelake@gmail.com](mailto:mybaptistelake@gmail.com)



*Update to Baptiste Lake Dam repairs, see page 22.  
Photo from Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry*

## BLA 2025 Events

### OPENING EVENT

SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025,  
LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED.

### PIKE TOURNAMENT

SATURDAY, JULY 5, 2025  
7 AM TO 4 PM, PUBLIC DOCK,  
BAPTISTE VILLAGE

### REGATTA

TO BE ANNOUNCED.

### AGM

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2025,  
BIRCH CLIFF LODGE. 10 AM

### CORN ROAST

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2025,  
CAMP PONACKA, 5 TO 7 PM



*Director Eric Hooley, delivering brush with Watersheds Team member Paige Jessup and BLA volunteer Natalie Brownell.*

*Photo by Monica Seidel*



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THE ANNEX  
GALLERY  
EXHIBITIONS

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By Marlin Horst*

I am writing this the weekend after the Labour Day weekend and temperature has turned cold and it is very wet. We expect another spell of warm weather next week. Lets see how the fall is, given the wet summer.

We once again 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. It was a pleasure to meet the new owner of Birch Cliff Lodge and we are thankful that he allowed the association to use the Dining Hall again. A big thank you to Birch Cliff Lodge.

On July 6 we sponsored the Fourth annual pike tournament. It was again a very popular event. I believe over 70 boats participated. I am not personally a fisher-

man 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 20 we held the canoe and kayak day. There were over 20 participants and despite the breeze all had a good time. Thank you to **Paul and Anne Coleman** for letting use their waterfront for a much deserved BBQ lunch after the event.



*Kayakers trip to the dam.*

*Photo by Diane Jared*

We held our AGM in early August. I was happy to see the large number of people attend. Our **Mayor Tony Fitzgerald** came and gave a good overview of what has been happening in the Municipality since his presentation to the AGM in 2023.

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 Morawetz family for donating the corn.

We have started working 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 is going to be "cleaned" this fall and lots of wood bundles are being 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 our lake to be as healthy as possible. Paul and Gary exemplify the meaning of partnership, networking and

*...continued on page 3*

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## BLA Officials - Fall 2024



Marlin Horst, BLA President

Alan Stephen, Vice President

Paul Coleman, Director, Editor

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

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...from page 2 President's Message



*Corn roast crowd. Photo by Paul Coleman*

co-operation through their direct contacts with the Fish Hatchery, BASC, MNRF and Watersheds. Without the interaction of these entities, we would not be achieving so many environmental and fishery goals as set out in the Lake Plan. Thanks to the many volunteers that have made this possible.

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 **Anne Coleman**, who acted as Secretary of the Meeting, and **Gary Pirko** who gave a very informative talk on fishery in North Hastings. We also spent quite a bit of time talking about septic re-inspection and how we can help the Municipality to put something in place. In August we were approached by the Municipality to see if we would be willing to partner with them on an Environmental Study or action. There are grants available to Municipalities that partner with local community groups. I, along with some other Interlake Members, will be meeting with the municipality shortly to brainstorm some ideas.

A group of very keen volunteers is going to try to revive the Regatta for 2025. Elsewhere in the Newsletter is a notice looking for volunteers. If you have any in-



*Canada Day Flotilla.*

*Photo by Anne Coleman*

terest please contact us. The more people involved the easier it will be. This could be a fun event for children of all ages.

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](mailto:membership@baptistelake.org) along with your cottage address. Finally if you are not a member I would encourage you to become a member. 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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# THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING AND MAINTAINING CONTACTS

*By Paul Coleman and excerpts from Frank Hicks' study papers.*

In 2009 the BLA produced a Lake Plan that included a concern about water quality of many of the 43 undocumented streams running into Baptiste.

**Frank Hicks** our resident MNRF expert set out to measure data which classified these streams for fish community, environmental parameters and site specific information.

Prior to this, **Al Davis** a BLA director conducted a specific study to evaluate streams to support Walleye spawning beds. I remember Al coming to Sunrise Lodge to ask all fishermen (ladies) to track information about how big the Walleye were and where they were caught. I seem to recall him fundraising as well to support his project, a true inspirational leader of our Lake!

Al reviewed 10 streams and Frank later incorporated many of them into his study by installing temperature data loggers into the streams. These loggers recorded daily water temperatures and light information from spring to freset (the flood of water of

a river from heavy rain or melted snow.) Of note Frank tied them to trees or rocks. One such tree was taken down by a beaver and the logger travelled way down stream!

Based on the efforts of these 2 pioneers, the Diamond Creek was chosen for the 1st Walleye spawning bed rehab program 20 years ago.

Now, how networking works and leads to action and results. **Anne Coleman**, your director and chair of the Maynooth public library, received newsletters from Watersheds Canada which educated her about spawning bed rehabilitation projects. Anne contacted Watersheds to invite their representative to speak at our AGM. Being impressed, she then invited **Fred McConnell** a key researcher working with the MNRF, to speak at our next AGM. He informed us about invasive species, fish stocking programs and the need for preservation of our fishery. Anne's newsletter article then led **Gary Pirko** and **Mike Di Cintio** on a mission to receive funding and support of the Baptiste Fishery. Meetings were established and evaluation tours of Baptiste were set up to see if we met the criteria as per the various ministries and organizations.

As good fortune would have it, our key contacts within the MNRF, the BASC, the North Hastings Fish Hatchery and you, the land owners around the lake helped us bring a much needed Walleye spawning bed rehab into reality as you will see in the following article.

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*Map of streams into Baptiste, listed from top left to right Hamilton Lake Dagmar Creek, Jogi Creek, Diamond Creek, Hound Lake, Edwards Creek, Milne Creek, Cullen Creek, MCGarry's Creek.*

*Photo by Frank Hicks*

# REPAIRING A WALLEYE SPAWNING BED OBSTACLES AND INGENUITY

*By Paul Coleman*

Hello Baptisters! You would think it easy to coordinate the movement of 3-4" stone from the shore across a bay to the upstream of a river, right?

Wrong! It took a small feat of engineering, task mastering, Macgyvering, teamwork, chemistry and 24 hardworking folk.

## **The Plan**

- Ensure that all approvals and fundraising have been secured to cover all costs of the project.
- Pick up rock from a quarry and haul to the specific site as per Watersheds guidelines
- Fill buckets to put in boats and carry to the spawning bed site
- Dump in creek, repeat till complete.
- In 2 hours we will be done! Not!!



*BBQ break before trip up the creek.  
Photo by Paul Coleman*

## **Reality**

- Permission of the landowner **MUST** be granted, oops, a last minute requirement!
- All MNRF applications must be submitted and official approvals signed off.
- Request for volunteers and commitments secured.
- Completion and acceptance of the days' plan to be put in motion.
- Leveque Bros graciously offered to deliver the stone so we did not have to trailer it.
- All tools/equipment on site, BBQ set up and food and beverages coordinated by **Bruce Drake** and **Frank Hicks**.

## **Actuality**

• Driving rains threw a curve into the start of the day. My buddy **Sabe Belcastro** was not impressed with the pelting rain smacking his face whilst I had my wind screen to protect me!

• Parts of the water pump needed to wash the stone were missing.

• The trained professionals **Andrew Pilacinski**, **Gord Peel** and **Dave Machum** went into action and jury rigged the pump into operation.

• Carrying buckets from the washing station to the boats was too arduous and so **Richard Pilacinski** offered us his side by side!

• The water levels rose with the rainfall which created a stronger current than expected to run the silt screen from shore to shore. Exhausted **Gary Pirko** needed extra people power to securely tie the ropes to the trees on the bank.

• Fallen branches prevented **Scott Whetham's** boat to motorize his way up so oars were needed to propel us the remaining distance.



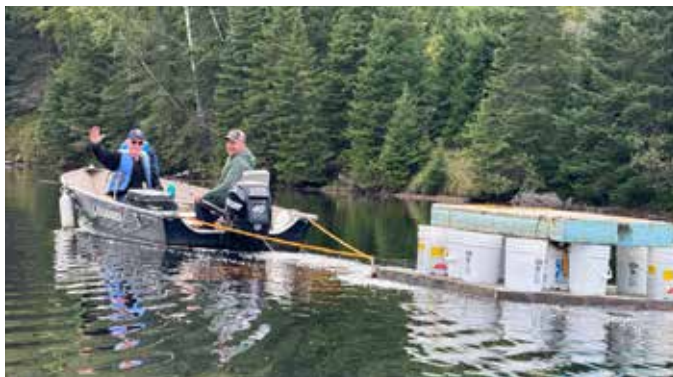
*Richard Pilacinski, Sabe Belcastro, Scott Whetham, Natalie Brownell and Dave Machum hand bombing rocks.*

*...continued on page 6*



...from page 5 *Repairing A Walleye*

- Hand bombing the 30 pound buckets over the silt screen by **Sabe Belcastro** and **Natalie Brownell** became impractical. Also, walking the buckets from the silt screen to the bed by **Dave Machum** and **Gary Pirko** was too difficult. So the team devised a floating raft to transport 12 buckets at a time from the silt screen to the bed. Then we got another raft to load 12 buckets from shore, pull them behind the boat rather than having the buckets in the hull of a boat which made it awkward to lift up and out. Once at the site, we swung the raft to the silt screen to move the stone more easily over the screen.



*Paul and Scott Whethem delivering raft carrying buckets of stone. Photo by Richard Pilacinski*

- The Watersheds crew had brushed out and hosed down all the existing stone to remove all of the silt that had been built up.
- Finally, the “Streamlined” process came to fruition as all the stone was carefully placed in the refreshed spawning bed.



*These BLA spawning bed organizers are Richard Pilacinski, Gary Pirko, Paul Coleman, Gord Peel and Andrew Pilacinski.*

Based upon our continuous efforts and communication, we are very pleased to announce that the MNRF have approved two more spawning projects next year.

A huge take away from this project is that so many cottagers are asking to get involved and very much appreciate the importance of taking care of your fishery. It shows us that by meeting fellow lake residents, networking and team building helps us achieve the many goals of the Baptiste Lake Association Lake Plan.

Thank you so very much to our other team of volunteers who include **Sean Yauk, Eric Hooey, Ian Hendry, Kevin Vance, Mike DiCintio** and **John Vanderpas.**



*Spawning beds goals accomplished. Photo by Paul Coleman*



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# LOON MAGIC AT THE LAKE

*By Steve Elsworth, UK Author*

It's Sunrise Cove at 7pm. The setting sun filters through the branches of the silver birches. The lake lies still, mirror-like, under the spreading clouds. All is peace and quiet.

Suddenly there's a scream. Heheheheheheheha!

What was that? It came out of nowhere, not a sound I'd ever heard before.

When you hear something new, you run through your memory bank, comparing notes. No. There were no comparators.

Then, from the other side of the lake: aao, weee-wea weee-wea weee-wea!

There were six of us by the lake. We were stunned into silence.

That was my introduction to the great northern diver, better known as the common loon.

They are frequently seen around these parts, so much so that it's the provincial bird of Ontario, and appears on the 'loonie' - the one-dollar coin. And they are interesting birds. They mate for life, with pairings lasting ten years or so. Their call was to defend their territory, and let each other know where they were. Maybe a hint of romance? Who knows. But I had never heard this eldritch screech before. The call of the loon is an alien sound.

There is something physically restful about large expanses of water. You look out at the sea, or over a lake, and you feel the tension easing at the back of your head. I get that feeling with Baptiste Lake.

But human beings are stimulated by the new, and lulled by the familiar. I've seen leaf-cutter ants in Costa Rica, mating snakes in Bali, and nurse sharks in Belize. But when you say, "Wow! Look at that!" to the locals, they say, "Oh, it's only a...!"



*Young loon observing elder fisherman.*

*Photo by Paul Coleman*

So, I'm here to say the call of the loon should never be dismissed as "It's only a...". I'll remember that loon conversation till the end of my days. And Baptiste Lake should never be taken for granted. You're so lucky here: you have your own personal piece of paradise. Please enjoy it every day you wake up.



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# MAYOR'S MESSAGE

*By Tony Fitzgerald*

It has been a busy year in the municipality of Hastings Highlands! After a light winter and surprisingly dry early spring, the clouds opened up and drenched us with several major rainfall events during the summer. Our fall looks great, so get out and enjoy what is left of this good weather before the arrival of winter.

Last December saw HH pass a Capital Budget of just over \$5.2 Million, with the bulk of that going towards our roads, bridges, culverts and equipment. Despite our best efforts at budgeting accurately, inflation reared its ugly head and forced us to draw down from reserves over \$286,000 to cover the over-budget costs of two tandem snow plow trucks and a bridge re-surfacing at the Little Papineau Bridge on former highway 62.

Early 2024 kept Council busy passing an Operating Budget of approximately \$12.6 Million in early April. It took several rounds of cuts to bring the final tax increase down to 5.66% after the County and Provincial portions were added. While we hope this will get us through the year, it left us with depleted reserves, a serious concern as we move forward, knowing that we face increased

costs in every area, including items that we have no control over, such as OPP services.

On a more hopeful note, Deputy Mayor Davis and I met with the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, in April, to discuss our pressing need for financial support in maintaining and resurfacing the former provincial highway 62. Talks continue as we are pursuing Connecting Link status for this road, which will give us access to annual funding up to 90%. Keeping our fingers crossed on this one!

Other items of note; In May HH Council passed a new Strategic Plan, a document that we can be proud of that will serve as a roadmap for the next three years. This summer the municipality hosted a public meeting about HH Fire Services and later passed a Fire Station review, setting us, finally, on the pass to consolidation and stability for the Fire Dept. Council passed approval for seven new cell towers to be erected in HH in 2025 as part of the Cell Gap Project, which will increase badly needed cell coverage in many areas, as well as improve internet connectivity for many. Negotiations with our CUPE unionized workers should wrap up later in September and a structural culvert failure on N. Baptiste Rd will be replaced in late September; unfortunately, with a hefty (unbudgeted) cost of approximately \$200,000.

So, as you can see, a busy year indeed with many old and new financial pressures coming to the fore. While the future remains bright for HH, and I remain permanently optimistic, I realize that we will face many difficult challenges and tough decisions will need to be made to deal with them. Hopefully, Council will rise to the task and continue to lead us into a prosperous, healthy and happy future.

All the best.



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*Washout on North Baptiste Lake Road, July 27 causes major repairs. Photo by Paul Coleman*



# NORTH BAPTISTE LAKE CULVERT COLLAPSE

*By Anne Coleman*

July 27th an event occurred on the North Baptiste Lake road that stopped all traffic.

After many torrential rainstorms, the ground became so saturated it gave way. The continuous passing of heavy trucks travelling the NBL Road also created the perfect storm for the earth giving way around the culvert. The pictures show how deep the crevice was and it was indeed a fortunate thing that it happened in daylight. There were no casualties and it took the municipality roads department only a few hours to complete the emergency repair.

This collapse demonstrates how dependent the residents of McGarry Flats and the folks along the North Baptiste Lake road are to keeping this artery open. There is only a continuation of a logging road at the end of McGarry flats which might serve in a stark emergency. It's doubtful that an ambulance would be able to pass through that logging road. It also demonstrates how dependent we are on the municipality to keep us connected. Therefore, we extend to the roads team our sincere thanks for getting out there on a Friday evening, after 4:00 p.m. and wasting no time to give us access to our homes for the duration of the summer. They were finished around 9:30 p.m. That was fast.

We also thank the Liverseed Family for offering parking space at their property for people stranded on their side of the culvert and also Karl Crerar for being on hand to help out as needed. Great community effort by them is appreciated.

Plans to replace the culvert and return the road to a two lane passage were made. September 23 to 27 was the time period chosen to install a system of cul-



*Major walleye spawning route to be completed before freeze up. Photo by Anne Coleman*

verts and repave the section. The road was closed that entire time and traffic was rerouted through the Herschel Logging Road onto Peterson Road. Again, it underlines the dependency we have on the single artery, North Baptiste Lake Road, to have quick access to Highway 62. On the bright side, maybe the logging road will be maintained for emergency exits.

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## EARLY MAY TREE PLANTING

By Anne Coleman

This spring, a highly enthusiastic group of local high school teachers and students affectionately known as the NERDS, descended upon the water access only property of the Pirkos. They systematically planted 100 trees and shrubs under the watchful eye of Forester **Fred Werner**, BASC Chair **Ian Hendry** and BASC director **Coleen Drew-Baehre**.



*Local highschool teachers and kids prepare for tree and shrub planting project. Photo by Paul Coleman*

The Pirko's property was selected for Gary Pirko's outstanding contribution to the BLA in representing us as a Fish Hatchery director, our lead contact with the MNRF, our director of the Pike



*Bruce Drake, Coleen Drew-Baehre, Franks Hicks, Ian Hendry and Fred Werner. Photo Paul Coleman*

tournament and organizer of our Bush Pile and Wall-eye Bed rehabilitation projects.

Two volunteers, the legendary biologist **Frank Hicks** and hockey sharp shooter **Bruce Drake**, joined by **Paul Coleman**, ensured the safe delivery of the team from the Community Dock. As it was early spring, there was a certain chill to the air and the water, so it was not taken for granted that careful boat service was a key safety factor to the project.

Several months later, all trees and shrubs are doing well thanks to the timely planting plus the lovely early rains we had this past summer. Another successful accomplishment for the BASC and BLA partnership.

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# 4TH ANNUAL PIKE TOURNAMENT



*Gary Pirko and Mike Di Cintio organizing the early morning boat launch. Photo by Paul Coleman*

*By Mike Di Cintio*

## Derby Highlights :

1st place was defended by 2023 1st place winner John Broere using only Fly fishing techniques!!

Biggest fish 34.25" caught by a 14 year old!!

Most volunteers we have ever had!

Shout outs to Alim Suleman at the filet table, photography by James Michener, prize table and score card volunteers: Anna Michener, Ariel Leuschner, Clara Vance, BLA directors: Beth Greenberg, Hilary Phillips, Marlin Horst and Alan Stephen. Data entry: Bruce Crouse, Beth Crouse, Launch supervisor: Kii'in Huddart-Amik, Advertising: Trevor Olszewski, and last but not least our Derby directors: Gary Pirko and Paul Coleman!

First year we are equally supporting both the Baptiste Lake Association - Ontario and North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery

Huge Thanks to our Sponsors:

Baptiste Lake Marina, True North Baits, Up North Beauty & Wellness Clinic , Belcast Cottages, Nothing to Hide Inc, Rapala, MAD Fishing, Joan Grant, Boyer GM Bancroft, Bancroft Sport & Marine, Makin' Waves Marine, Cedar & Co., It Stix Signs &

Graphics Inc., Madawaska Property Management, Bancroft Timbermart, and Tim Hortons.

All of the pike skins and bones will be put to great use by Nothing to Hide Inc. Using traditional Metis techniques to make clothing, leather and crafts!

It was amazing to see the community come together to support Baptiste Lake. Our volunteers did a great job, we even had participants and people that came to watch the derby helping out! There were a few anglers that took on people who didn't have a boat so they could join the event. Many groups of friends and whole families that joined together as a team to fish.

That is exactly what fishing is all about, at least what it means to me, learning about the lake, targeting species that are invasive or too abundant, figuring out the patterns and the most effective ways of catching each species, releasing breeder sized fish that are native to the lake to preserve the balance of the fishery, and sharing that knowledge with family, friends and community members.



# BAPTISTE MARINA 2024

*By The Marina Team*

As the crisp autumn air settles in, we're excited to reflect on our recent Customer Appreciation Day, which turned out to be a resounding success! Thanks to the generous spirit of our marina family, we collected an impressive 243 pounds of food, as well as cash donations, for the North Hastings Community Cupboard. Your contributions are making a tangible difference in our community, and we couldn't be more grateful for your support.

In addition to our food drive, we hosted our very first "Yoga on the Dock" with the wonderful Deb Kerr. The serene setting, combined with Deb's expert guidance, made for a truly rejuvenating experience and we were thrilled to see so many of you embrace this new initiative.

Looking ahead, we're eager to build on this momentum with more community-focused events next year. Stay tuned for updates as we plan to offer more opportunities to connect. Thank you for being a part of our marina family, and we look forward to sharing more memorable moments with you in the seasons to come!



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## CANOE KAYAK DAY

*By Anne Coleman*

July 20, 2024 was a very warm, sunny day. About 15 avid water enthusiasts gathered at Sunrise Docks with their kayaks and paddle boards ready for an excursion to High Falls. Guided by **Greg Gibbons**, they struck out at 10:00 a.m. for the 2 hour paddle. **Marlin Horst** and **Diane Jared** accompanied the group in a pontoon boat in case need arose for first aid. Evelyn and Gord Lang joined them as they passed Blueberry Island, which was a very welcome addition to the group.

It was relatively easy passage heading east toward the dam, but the return leg was extremely challenging as they had to paddle directly into the north-west wind which had strengthened as the morning progressed. Congratulations to all the members who completed the journey! They were welcomed by **Paul and Anne Coleman** at the Coleman dock with

cold beer and other beverages, followed by a barbecue. After some socializing, these athletes headed back to their cottages, again in their kayaks, paddle boards and canoe. The Baptiste Lake Association appreciates their participation and we look forward to another such Canoe/Kayak Day next year.



*Breezy crossing. Photo by Diane Jared*

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## RESURRECTING THE REGATTA FROM THE 60s

Calling All Volunteers!

We are excited to bring the Regatta back to Baptiste Lake and need your help to make it a success. Whether you're interested in joining the planning committee or volunteering on the day of the event, we would greatly appreciate your support.

If you're willing to contribute your time and effort, please email the Baptiste Lake Association at email: [mybla.regatta@gmail.com](mailto:mybla.regatta@gmail.com)

Thank you for your enthusiasm and support!

We are really looking forward to helping bring back the Regatta to Baptiste Lake.

Regards,

Sandra Irvine 64 Irwin Lane cell 416-409-9653

Lindsay Cook 84 Irwin Lane cell 416-274-8683



Early Regatta on Baptiste



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## BUILDING BRUSH PILES FOR BAPTISTE LAKE: A COMMUNITY EFFORT FOR SHORELINE RESTORATION AND FISH PRESERVATION

*By Gary Pirko*

Building Brush Piles for Baptiste Lake: A Community Effort for Shoreline Restoration and Fish Preservation

On September 9, 2024, a dedicated group of volunteers from the Baptiste Lake Association (BLA), Watersheds Canada, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) came together for an important environmental project: the creation and placement of brush piles in Baptiste Lake. This initiative was aimed at restoring the shoreline and supporting fish preservation.

Why Brush Piles? Brush piles serve as a critical component of aquatic ecosystems. They provide vital shelter for young fish, offering them protection from predators, ensuring a healthier, more balanced fish population in the lake. As the fish find refuge, they can thrive, contributing to recreational and conservation-focused fishing in Baptiste Lake.

This year, the project saw the successful placement of 20 brush piles throughout key areas of the lake, including the Main Basin, West Bay, and Grassy Bay. Carefully selected, these locations will offer the best conditions for enhancing fish habitats. Next year, the initiative will continue with an additional 20 brush piles scheduled for deployment in the Eastern Basin



*Jonathan Miller and Watershed's Manager  
Melissa Dekars. Photo by Monica Seidel*

Bays.

The Construction Process Volunteers from the Baptiste Lake Association worked to assemble the piles in advance. Each brush pile was constructed from light branches, some with foliage to mimic natural underwater shelter. Measuring approximately six feet by three feet, the piles were bound with environmentally safe cord and weighed down using two eight-inch

*...continued on page 15*



*A blustery day for dropping brush piles. Photo by Monica Seidel*



*Brush pile team. Photo by Monica Seidel*

...from page 14 *Building Brush Piles*

concrete blocks.

With 22 enthusiastic volunteers participating in the building and placement of the brush piles, the effort became a true community collaboration. Four boats, each making two trips, carefully deployed the piles into designated areas of the lake.

A special thanks goes to Watersheds Canada, which spearheaded the project and secured vital funding from organizations such as Bass Pro Shops, the Cabela's Outdoor Fund, the Bass Fishing Hall of Fame, Ontario Bass Nation, and the Ontario Federation of

Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) Community Conservation Fund. Without their leadership and financial support, this project would not have been possible.

The success of this brush pile initiative is a testament to the power of collaboration between community members, local organizations, and conservation groups. By working together, we can make a significant impact on the health and sustainability of Baptiste Lake's ecosystem, ensuring that future generations can enjoy both its beauty and its bountiful fishery.

## NETWORKING AT THE BBQ

*By Paul Coleman*

While seeing me cook up some hot dogs and burgers at the Corn Roast this year, the **Alexanders** were reminded that I had written a previous Newsletter article about Beech tree infestations.

Thinking that I was an expert in gardening they showed me this picture and asked "Is the infestation shown here a Beech Beetle?"

What do you think it is?, the answer is found on page 22.



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# WEST BAY COTTAGE OWNERS INVEST IN FIRE PUMP FOR ENHANCED FIRE PROTECTION

By Susan Latremoille

In response to reduced fire protection services in Hastings Highlands and the remote proximity to the nearest firefighting teams, a group of 10 dedicated West Bay cottage owners have come together to purchase a fire pump. Led by **Susan Latremoille**, the group made the collective decision to ensure their safety in case of emergencies.

The pump, which cost approximately \$1,000 and includes hoses and a nozzle, was divided equally among the owners, with each contributing around \$100. This initiative was born out of a growing concern for the need for quicker response times in the event of a fire.

To ensure proper use of the equipment, a training was held August 3, 2024. Fourteen participants from the group attended, gaining hands-on experience with the pump under guidance. The pump will be stored at **Tom Morawetz's** boathouse for easy ac-

cess if an emergency arises.

This collective effort reflects the strong sense of community and responsibility among the West Bay cottage owners, providing peace of mind and increased protection for everyone involved.

The Baptiste Lake Association commends this initiative, which will hopefully inspire residents of other areas of the lake to do the same.



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# A LIFE ON BAPTISTE LAKE: DAN PEEL REMEMBERS FOREST VIEW LODGE BEFORE THE BEGINNINGS OF THE GROUP OF SEVEN



*All photos provided by the Peel family.*

*By Ken Andrews*

In 1877 Dan Peel's great grandfather affectionately known as Gordon #1 (there are 3 Gordons in the lineage) emigrated from Ireland and settled in Highland Grove and began homesteading the Peel Farm adjacent to the current Forest View property. "The farming was brutal", Dan says as it was in much of the area north of Highway 7 where the land gradually transitioned to Laurentian Shield. The scratchy, shallow rock soil hardly lent itself to productive farming.

Gordon (1) was later drawn to Saskatchewan for a better way of life. Gordon (2) was born, followed by Dan and his brother Gord(3). Eventually Dan's family circled back to Ontario and spent many years vacationing at Baptiste where other original families still resided at the old homestead.

During their absence, the land at Forest View was purchased by **Ken Lewis** who built the Lodge, 11 cabins and 50 campsites. There were up to 200 guests at any given time! He established riding stables, offered horseback riding, fishing, Boating, hiking, hunting bears in the spring, whitetail deer in the fall and camping to many American and Canadian guests alike. The cottages rented for \$15/week per couple or \$30 for 4 people! Of note, the small island off their point was purchased for \$60.75!!

Dan actually worked at Forest View as a youngster and later on when his parents owned the property between 1969-74. Dan always looked forward to the beginning of summer and playing with the other kids who'd stay at the Lodge. "We'd get to know everyone and their families, run everywhere, swim, make forts in

the bush, and row over to the island," he says. "I lived in shorts and ran around on bare feet all summer. By the end of the summer the bottom of my feet were like leather."

Campfires by the shore. Breathtaking night skies. Fishing so abundant that pickerel were once caught from the dock. Vacationers who love the lake and its ambience.

There were always parties and entertainment at the Lodge, and Dan's mother sang and played the piano and his father played the fiddle in the rec room, mainly old-time country music.



*Eleanor on the piano and Gord on the fiddle.*

"Maple Sugar was my Dad's

*...continued on page 18*

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...from page 17 *A Life on Baptiste Lake*

favourite,” Dan fondly recalls. Guests would join along, bringing guitars and even a bass.

“We always had a lot of fun,” Dan says, and the Lodge had a jukebox too, so music could be on the go at any given time.

Fishing was the main attraction at the Lodge. “The pickerel and muskie were far more plentiful then than they are now,” Dan says. “You could even catch them off the dock.”

Introduction of pike into the lake in the ‘90s changed the balance of fish in the lake, along with crappies that were added to the lake. The result was that the natural dominance of pickerel, muskie and bass declined, much to the dismay of fishermen.

Campers tended to rent for the entire summer, while cabins were rented by the week. Parking was available for about 30 cars. The parking lot also served cottagers across the lake in Hay Bay who at the time, before the North Baptiste Lake Road was built, had no road access to their cottages.

Boats were everywhere at the Lodge, with a series of small docks spread out along the waterfront to serve camper and cottager needs.



*Eleanor with son Dan and an American guest.*

Breakfast, lunch and dinner were served to Lodge visitors and groups visiting from Bancroft for a special event or celebration, for example, as well as to campers and cottagers who preferred a meal in the Lodge as an alternative to their own cooking facilities.

Dan became an employee at the Lodge to help with maintaining the boats, raking leaves in the fall, yard maintenance, plumbing, and of course cutting grass in the summer.

“It took forever to do the grass,” Dan recalls. “I had a push mower, after all, not a ride-around! Once I finished I had to start the grass all over again because it had taken so long to cut it.”



*Dan’s brother Gord showing off his trophy Muskie.*

Dan’s parents meanwhile moved to a home further north down Forest View Road where Dan continues to live today. His brother Gord owns another home nearby. The first houses and cottages in that section of the road were built in the 1940s.

The final Lodge owners were **Craig and Sue Walton**, who purchased the Lodge in the mid-1980s. Eventually it was acquired by John

...continued on page 19



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*Ironically as we wrote this article, the girl in the photo Julia Arff daughter of previous owner, caught up to Dan after 45 years.*

...from page 18 *A Life on Baptiste Lake*

Puffer who developed the Group of Seven.

While all the accommodation from Forest View Lodge has disappeared with construction of the Group of Seven cottages, the stone work that was a distinguishing feature of the original Lodge still stands, principally along the front of the lake at the bottom of the original Lodge, complete with fireplace.

Maintenance of the lodge facilities and grounds was always a challenge, Dan says, as one might expect of so large a facility. "Upkeep and maintenance and septic tanks - there was always something, and things could suffer."

By the early 2000s the Lodge had closed and in the meantime, Dan had developed a successful career in the construction industry and was hired by John Puffer to build the cottages at what we know as the Group of Seven. Dan completed construction of the seven cottages between Labour Day 2011 and the fall of 2012.

Building the cottages, not surprisingly, wasn't without moments of nostalgia for Dan.

"When we started to knock down the cabins," Dan says, "I took a walk by myself, thinking back to my



*1970s photo of the Peel family snowmobiling.*

childhood and all the memories." All the good times, all the fun, all the friends he made over the years at the Lodge came back in an instant.

No one could have known the land better than Dan. One surprise when building the cottages was coming across a buried saw blade. The blade might have indicated, Dan says, that the site had been used in the timber trade years previously when logs were transported down the lake to High Falls.

In one way or another, Dan has been part of Forest View Lodge and Group of Seven for 55 years.

In fact, his association these many years later continues. On a snowy, wintry day, one might see Dan clearing roads in the Group of Seven complex.

In the process, his mind might wander back more than 50 years when he roamed the area as a young lad, remembering all the campers, cottagers, boat rides, fishing and music. Perhaps, clearing the snow as he rounds the site of the original Lodge, he hears his Mom on the piano and his Dad on the fiddle.

"This is where I grew up," Dan says, "and where my parents retired, and where I still live."

"Over the years I've got to know every square inch of the lake and all the bush down to Highland Grove like the back of my hand. We never saw the need to go on vacation. It was like we were on vacation already - the swimming, the hunting, the boating, fishing, ice fishing and camp fires."

"Here, it's like a little slice of heaven."

**Ken Andrews**, a resident of London, Ontario, is privileged to enjoy the seasonal changes of Baptiste Lake with his family as a member of the Group of Seven cottages as well as the Baptiste Lake Association. [kan-drews5678@gmail.com](mailto:kan-drews5678@gmail.com)

# SEPTIC SYSTEM

*Informative information provided by FOCA*

A septic system treats your waste water and sewage, if you are not on a municipal water system. Your household drains connect to a septic tank and a leaching bed. Both are buried beside your home or cottage. The leaching bed is made up of pipes with holes, buried in gravel and surrounded by natural or imported soil.

FOCA encourages all landowners to look after your septic system, to protect your waterfront investment, and as a matter of good environmental stewardship. WHY? Proper maintenance can help to avoid potentially serious impacts, including:

## **Overload/leaking of sewage**

A septic system is designed to treat a set volume of waste water. Every time water goes down the drain into your septic tank, the same amount of liquid leaves the tank and enters the leaching bed. If too much waste water enters the tank - from extra guests, heavy water use - too much waste is forced out, too soon. Untreated waste water escapes, including solids that can clog up pipes and/or enter the leaching bed, as well.



## **Wiped out waste digesters**

Sewage is broken down by millions of bacteria and enzymes in your septic tank and the soil within the leaching bed. That bacteria is harmed or killed by cleaning products that are antibacterial, non-biodegradable chlorine-based and/or full of toxic materials or hazardous products: varnish, paint, pesticides, gasoline.

Poisoning yourself Hazardous products dumped down your drain, come out of the septic system just like they went in, but now they're in the ground and water with the potential to poison wells & lakes.

## **Build-up of solids**

There's a lot that can't be digested by your septic system. Fats, oils and grease don't break down, and can form a scum layer at the top of your septic tank. Paper products, coffee grounds, hair, tampons, etc., inhibit the work of bacteria, quickly fill tanks, clog the system and hamper its effectiveness.

## **Contaminated drinking water and swimming areas**

*...continued on page 21*

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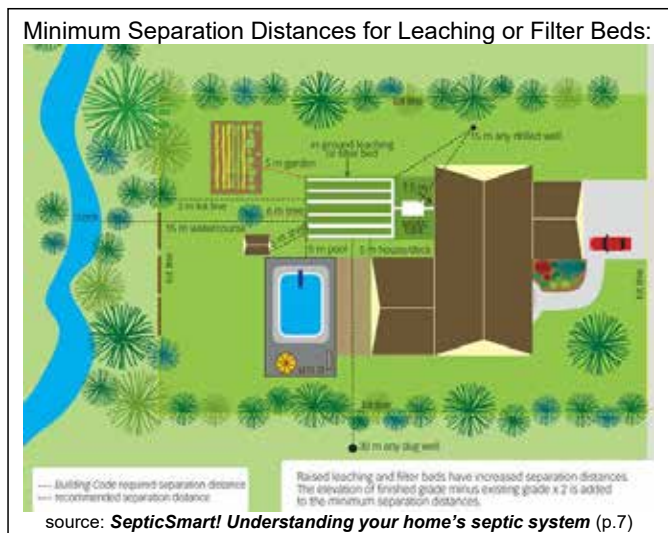
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...from page 20 *Septic System*



Septic systems were designed with public health in mind. They are designed to remove contaminants such as organic solids, bacteria, and viruses, but not to prevent the release of nutrients. If your sewage is leaking, not getting cleaned, or building up, the end result could be contaminated water entering wells, ground water, lakes, streams, etc. Your health and the health of the environment are at risk.

### What goes in must come out

To allow waste water the time it needs to be treated in the tank, conserve water. Ensure the size of your system can handle the quantity of waste water you create. Many older septic systems may be grossly undersized for the current number of visitors to your cottage on any given day!

### Don't poison your poop processor

Always choose biodegradable, non-toxic shampoos, detergents, soaps, and cleaners. Many products in your cottage are loaded weapons for your septic system. Make septic-friendly product choices.

### Nutrients not needed

Keep the input of phosphorus to a minimum. Use

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low-phosphate or phosphate-free cleaners.

### An ounce of prevention...

Like all household systems, your wastewater treatment needs to be maintained. Regular maintenance includes ensuring that the tank is less than 33% full of solids (in the first chamber), cleaning the effluent filter at least annually, and visually inspecting the leaching field for liquid break out, odours or other signs of trouble. Excess solids means it's time for a pump out. Replacing a septic system (and repairing its impacts) is expensive; regular maintenance keeps thousands of dollars in your pocket.

### Plants, not trees

Plant with caution in the nutrient-rich area on top of the leaching bed! Do not plant trees or shrubs within three metres of the tank or bed. Roots will seek out and crack your pipes. Shallow-rooted ground covers are ideal.

### Location, location, location

Soils play a big role in how water travels from the leaching bed, what contaminants get absorbed/broken down, and how far they travel. Your septic system must be designed for the type of soil around your cottage. Make sure your system meets the rules (Ontario Building Code) that specify how far a septic tank and leaching bed can be built away from buildings, wells, and waterbodies.

# UPDATE TO BAPTISTE LAKE DAM REPAIRS

*By Paul Coleman*

Work is ongoing at The High Falls Dam. In the front page picture you can see the temporary walkway that was installed on top of the overflow weir. On the downstream side of the overflow weir you can see the wooden forms that will be used to pour a 15cm thick coat of concrete over the entirety of

the existing weir. Concrete resurfacing on the downstream side of the valve is complete. Details to follow in the spring. Also, work on the 1st sluiceway is complete (bottom 5 stoplogs replaced and downstream re-surfacing complete). Still more work to be done.

## ANSWER FROM PAGE 15

I confess, I am not an expert, however I do have resources at the MNRF who have provided us with the correct answer:

You are correct, it is an alder. The infestation is not the Beech scale insect but **Woolly Alder Aphid**. You can let the cottagers know that in terms of managing the aphids they could wash down the plant with a pressure washer or even with a brush and soapy water. They may have to wash them down again in the spring.

Ladybugs and other predators will prey on the aphids naturally. Generally, the aphids don't destroy the stems of the plant but the owners could also cut and dispose of the stems appropriately, meaning either burn, bury, or dispose of them where the aphids won't find a suitable other host..



*Concrete work at the dam. Photo by MNRF*



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## ANOTHER GREAT FALL SEASON OF LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AT THE BANCROFT VILLAGE PLAYHOUSE

*By Tim Porter, Artistic Director*

'Tis the season for dreamy weekend getaways to catch bright autumn colours and crisp, countryside air. Whether you're a longtime resident, driving through, or you're at the cottage taking out the dock, there's lots to see and do in Hastings County this time of the year.

The company just wrapped up a wildly successful summer season which included the Ontario premiere of **Dear Rita**, a musical tribute to Canadian songstress Rita MacNeil and an over-the-top successful run of a Canadian favourite, **Anne of Green Gables - The Musical**. Featuring their largest cast ever, they had to extend the run and add shows multiple times, making it their biggest hit yet.

The autumn season is already in full swing. After-school classes started up in mid September, including youth and teen musical theatre and dance classes. The TIFF Film Circuit Bancroft has also returned to the Village Playhouse. Running until spring 2025, there will be one film per month (usually on the first Thursday), with two showtimes per day, at 2pm and 7pm. **Wicked Little Letters** show on November 7th, and **It Takes a Christmas Village** on Saturday, December 7th. The four spring films (titles to be announced soon - stay tuned) will run on January 2nd, February 6th, March 6th, and April 3rd! On November 15th, Canada's own celtic rock warriors, **Mudmen**, will return to Bancroft. Then, see some of Canada's biggest comedians when the **Great Canadian Comedy Caravan** comes to town on November 23rd.

This fall, Tweed & Co is delighted to present their spook-tacular original production, **A Night at the Grand Ghoull Opry**. Celebrate Halloween with this family-friendly show that'll also feature

a costume contest, adult trick or treating, themed drinks, and a haunted house. Capped off by a fabulous concert by **Dracula, Frankenstein, Wolf Man**, and more! The show runs October 30th to November 3rd.

Just in time for the holidays, catch Canadian star **Laila Biali** as she plays a concert of wintersongs and holiday classics on November 16th. Then, the **Fitzgeralds** siblings return on December 5th with their Canadian Christmas show. Don't miss these hometown heroes as they play toe-tapping fiddle music and present their Ottawa Valley step dancing skills.

To wrap up their incredible 2024 season, the company will then present their original take on a holiday classic, **A Christmas Carol**. Playing from December 11th to 21st, this fresh rendition will feature all your favourite characters including Ebenezer Scrooge and Tiny Tim. Come experience the laughter, magic, and joy of this holiday classic!

A registered charity, Tweed & Company Theatre operates the Village Playhouse in Bancroft, as well as the Outdoor Stage and the Marble Arts Centre in Tweed. The latter has been undergoing major renovations over the last year, as they turn their beloved flagship venue into a state-of-the-art cultural hub. Prioritizing accessibility, they provide some of the cheapest theatre tickets in the province, ranging from \$23.50 - \$38.50 +HST. There's discounts for students/youth, seniors, and arts workers for their major productions. Want to take your work team to A Christmas Carol to celebrate the holidays? Groups can take advantage of 15% discounts. To learn more and purchase tickets, visit [www.villageplayhouse.ca](http://www.villageplayhouse.ca) or call the box office at 613-478-6060.

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