

Through education, advocacy and engagement, our mission is to foster a healthy natural environment, responsible waterfront development, a thriving community, and a Lake of Bays shared respectfully and safely by all.

the **Leave** **Leaves**

The best way to be nature friendly this fall is the easiest one to do
—simply do nothing

by Kate Dickson—The Land Between

Your Questions ~answered~

by Tim Hadwen

Q: Why does the Township of Lake of Bays have rules about the alteration of your waterfront property and the removal of its vegetation?

A: The Township knows what we all know. The most precious area of our lakes and waterways is the shoreline. Almost all aquatic life is born, raised and fed in the shoreline. Water quality is protected by a natural shoreline. The lake is beautiful because the shoreline is beautiful. To keep this ecosystem healthy, and lovely, and to buffer the impact of development, rules are needed that limit site alteration, shoreline development and vegetation removal. We all have a personal interest in the development and alteration of our own properties and we all have a real stake in the development and alteration of each other's properties, and of the whole shoreline.

Q: How does the Township of Lake of Bays oversee the development of your property on the shoreline of Lake of Bays?

A: A new Township of Lake of Bays Community Planning Permit (CPP) By-law came into force in the spring of 2024. It replaces two former by-laws—the Development Permit By-law and Comprehensive

...continued—page 2

As the radiant reds, oranges, and yellows of fall turn to a pile of brown on the ground, many folks take to their yards with a rake in hand, eager to get to tidying up. Between cleaning up fallen leaves, removing woody vegetation, and trimming back dead flower heads in our garden, we humans sure do go to a lot of effort to leave our properties spick and span for the winter months. Unfortunately for nature, however, this seemingly innocent activity comes with a loss of habitat and a food source that many wildlife rely on for survival during the winter.

...continued—page 2



Cathy Vorhies

continued—Your questions...page 1

Zoning By-law. Zoning, site plan and minor variance applications are now combined into a more streamlined and integrated process. The CPP By-law contains provisions about site alteration and vegetation removal, particularly along shorelines.


The Township has a new brochure that contains a summary of the CPP provisions governing the waterfront zone. You can read all about the CPP and download the brochure at LakeOfBays.on.ca/zoning.

Anyone considering development or site alteration in the waterfront zone should read the brochure and consult with the Township prior to starting any work. We should all want to follow the rules. There can be penalties if by-law officers find work

The Township has a new brochure that contains a summary of the CPP provisions governing the waterfront zone.



has been done that does not comply with the by-law or has been undertaken without the benefit of required permits.

If you are concerned about development, site alteration or vegetation removal on a neighbour's property, inform yourself about the rules and talk with your neighbour to better understand their plans and actions. If you are still concerned, you can speak with the Township Planning Department at 705-635-2272 ext. 1228 or the By-law Enforcement Department at ext. 1253. We all have a stake in the protection of the shoreline we share. 

continued—Leave the Leaves...page 1

Leave the Leaves

This is because old stumps and logs as well as fallen leaves create habitat for many wildlife we share our spaces with, especially throughout the chilly, snow-filled months. Fallen leaves in particular are important for overwintering insects, including pollinators, whose numbers have faced catastrophic declines—recent research indicates that 45% of the planet's insects have been lost in the last 40 years alone.

We encourage you to resist the humanly urge to tidy up your property this fall and instead let nature do its thing!


The scale of this decline is concerning in its own right, but it's even more alarming when you consider that over a third of the food we eat requires the services of pollinators. Further, dead flower heads that are filled with seeds are an important food source for year-

round birds—many of them pollinators too—here in *The Land Between* bioregion that Lake of Bays is a part of. In this way, an untidied garden is akin to, or perhaps even better than, artificial feeders with no cost or maintenance!

The best way to be nature friendly this fall is the easiest one too—do nothing and simply “leave the leaves” and everything else. In the spring, when leaves, other vegetation, and dead flower heads have served their purpose, you can engage in a spring tidy up to get your garden ready for the upcoming season. Be sure to leave stumps and logs in forested areas though, as they are useful habitat for wildlife year-round there. You should wait until nighttime temperatures have been consistently over 10°C, we recommend for 10 nights, before you engage in any tidying. If you don't like the idea of leaving leaves all over your lawn, a good compromise is to rake them into your garden bed. As an added bonus, this can infuse your garden (or your lawn, if you leave the leaves there) with nutrients from the fallen

leaves too. Just be sure not to do any raking too late in the season when insects may already have made a home!

We encourage you to resist the humanly urge to tidy up your property this fall and instead let nature do its thing! Wildlife will benefit from what you leave behind and you'll benefit from getting to enjoy visiting birds during an otherwise desolate time of year, the pollination services that the insects you've given a home to have to offer, and so much more!

~~~~~  
Kate Dickson is the Director of Conservation Strategy and a Project Ecologist at *The Land Between*, a conservation organization named after the bioregion it works to protect. Spanning Parry Sound down to Orillia and east into the Ottawa Valley, *The Land Between* is home to a number of important but disappearing habitats, is a refuge for wildlife, as well as a place of historical and cultural significance. Because it is home to 59 federally listed species at risk of extinction, *The Land Between* was named a Community Nominated Priority Place at a national level in 2018. 

**A**s I begin the first year of my three-year term as President, I would like to thank our Past President Wendy Gibson for her outstanding leadership and dedication to LOBA's vision and mission over the past three years. Wendy led us through several important issues ranging from a municipal election, by-law enforcement and shoreline development policy, producing the *Welcome to Boating on Lake of Bays* information sheet, and working with the Governance team to restructure our Board and develop a five-year Strategic Plan. Without a doubt Wendy's most significant contribution was her work and commitment to the Langmaids Island development proposal. Wendy was involved from day one for over six long years and LOBA was recognized by the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations. I am pleased that Wendy will be staying on the Board as Past President. All of us on the Board greatly value her wise counsel, knowledge of the lake and commitment to maintaining Lake of Bays as a healthy, natural environment.

A bit about myself. My wife's family purchased a plot of land in Whiskey Bay in 1969 and built a small seasonal cottage. My first trip to the cottage was in 1977, and I was immediately taken by the beauty and serenity of Lake of Bays. After Anita and I married in 1984, we took up residence in Toronto and started the ritual of loading the car up on Friday nights and driving north for the weekend. As we took over ownership and our family grew, we replaced the original cottage in 2012 in favour of a four-season home. Both Anita and I retired eight years ago and have been year-round residents for the past three years.

Career wise, for almost 30 years I worked in the Development Department of Ivanhoé Cambridge, which is the real estate subsidiary of the Caisse de Depot et Placement du Quebec. For the final 11 years of my career, I headed

up the department as Executive Vice President and Chief Development Officer. I oversaw over \$6 billion in development, primarily shopping centres as well as some office buildings largely in Canada, but also in the USA, Brazil, Spain, Germany, Scotland and China. Vaughan Mills and the Outlet Collection at Niagara are examples of some of the projects I oversaw in Southern Ontario.

While I may have a pro-development background, I have always respected the fact that good development conforms to local by-laws and building standards and embraces the character of the local community. Becoming a full-time resident and joining LOBA's Board of Directors three years ago has only heightened my awareness of the challenges we face in preserving the quality of life that Lake of Bays offers and the effort we must put forth to maintain it. Ensuring the Township enforces by-laws and building standards has been a priority for LOBA. We believe this can be partly achieved by better educating property owners as to planning standards. We were pleased that in response to a LOBA delegation to the Township, Council passed a resolution last August to proceed with compiling and releasing an updated education document on Township by-laws pertaining to waterfront properties.

# president's report

**Paul Gleeson**

**While I may have a pro-development background, I have always respected the fact that good development conforms to local by-laws and building standards and embraces the character of the local community.**



The Township is reviewing and updating its Official Plan which outlines the objectives, policies, and goals that will direct growth, land use, and development in the Township for the next 10 years. LOBA will actively participate in this process and will keep members advised of its progress and opportunities for public input.

The District of Muskoka's Resort Development Policy is to be updated. LOBA will advocate for policies that adhere to commercial zoning, ideally in areas that have municipal services, and that do not open the door for high-density waterfront residential development under the guise of resort development.


One of the most contentious issues we are currently dealing with pertains to Roads License Agreements which are formal legal arrangements between the Township and property owners who access their properties via private roads or driveways on Unopened Road Allowances that are owned by the municipality but have not been developed into a public road. The Township believes these agreements are necessary to establish road maintenance responsibilities and protect taxpayers against potential liability claims. This issue has resulted in confusion and misinformation. LOBA has had several discussions with the Township and has questioned

continued—President's Report...page 3

the need for such agreements. As a result of public outcry, on August 13 the Township passed a 180-day moratorium on the Roads Licence Agreements By-law. LOBA will continue to engage on this issue.

By joining the North Muskoka Buying Group, LOBA has strengthened our Propane Discount Program with Superior Propane. This program is providing substantial savings to members. I recently switched to Superior and can report a substantial saving on my first refill. This program is available to LOBA members exclusively.

Finally, I would like to thank the talented and diverse group of volunteers making up our Board of Directors, Area Stewards and committee members. Executing our Strategic Plan to the expectations of our members requires a strong group effort. Currently we are looking for one new Director to join our Board. We also require additional Area Stewards to welcome new cottage owners, follow up on membership renewals and receive input on activities in your area that could have an impact on the lake and waterfront. If you do not have an Area Steward on your road or in your area, please consider becoming one yourself. For further information, please contact us at [info@LOBA.ca](mailto:info@LOBA.ca)

Remember, its all about the lake! 

## SAVE THE DATE

Winter Town Hall Meeting

Saturday  
January 25, 2025  
10:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Coffee before and lunch following the meeting

Bethune United Church,  
Baysville

# Chloride, an element of road salt, is increasing in Lake of Bays!

by Dr. Neil Hutchinson



*Road salt is toxic to sensitive aquatic life in Muskoka—and a lot of road salt is used in Muskoka. The soft water of our lakes and rivers is particularly vulnerable to the chloride ion that is a component of road salt.*

“The most recent data from the District of Muskoka Lake Monitoring Program shows that, although chloride levels in Lake of Bays have increased, they are still within levels we consider safe,” says Dr. Neil Hutchinson, director of Friends of the Muskoka Watershed (FOTMW). “We should continue to monitor and reduce road salt use because the trend is upward.” Hutchinson, through FOTMW and with the help of Citizen Scientists, has been studying the road salt levels, sources and impacts.

Hutchinson reviewed information collected by the District of Muskoka since 2005, for seven sites in Lake of Bays. The results show increasing chloride concentrations in much of Lake of Bays. Hutchinson says much of the increase in salt levels has taken place since about 2013.

Of the seven sites monitored, Dwight Bay, Rat Bay, Ten Mile Bay, South Portage Bay and Trading Bay have all shown increases of 0.5 mg/L or more when comparing the most recent five years with the long-term 20-year record. The analysis used data from the 2023 Muskoka Watershed Report Card (produced by the Muskoka Watershed Council and the District of Muskoka). Trading Bay had the greatest change, showing an increase of 0.7 mg/L. With the community of Dorset, Highway 35 and many year-round residents in this area, there is likely more salt usage in the Trading Bay area.

He says no sampled Lake of Bays site has a measurement greater than 3.5 mg/L, so it is safe—for now. “But it is still 10 times higher than levels estimated in Muskoka’s lakes 50 years ago.”

...continued—page 5

continued—Salt Levels...page 4

Hutchinson explains levels of 10 to 20mg/L are dangerous to the reproduction of sensitive aquatic zooplankton, which are important components of the aquatic food chain that help keep the water clear by eating algae.

Much of the salt in the lakes comes from the roads. “The District has changed methods of road salt application and has reduced the amount used,” says Hutchinson. “They continue to look for more ways to reduce road salt usage, but residents can also play their part by reducing the amount of salt they apply to driveways and sidewalks.”


Salt enters our waterways from runoff. Sources include streets, sidewalks, highways, driveways, drainage and parking lots. Once salt is in the lakes, it can only be removed by natural flushing. This can take years, depending on the lake’s flow. Salt impacts more than our lakes, it is hard on concrete structures, cars and other metal, leather boots, pet’s feet and more.

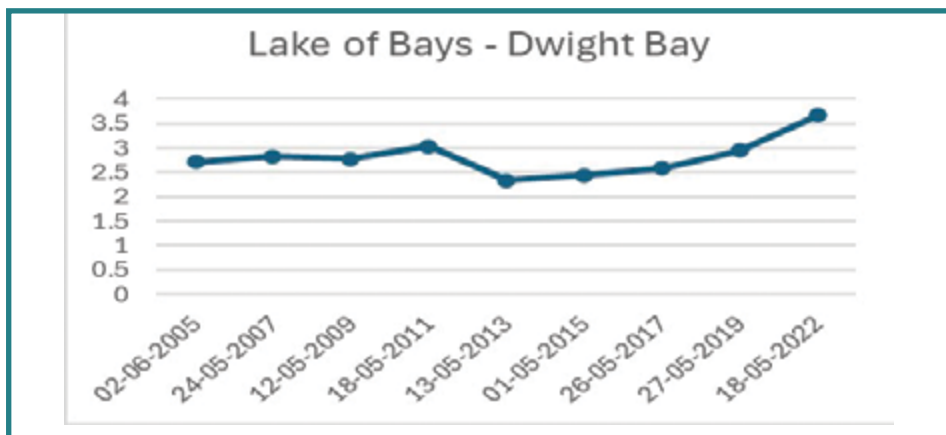
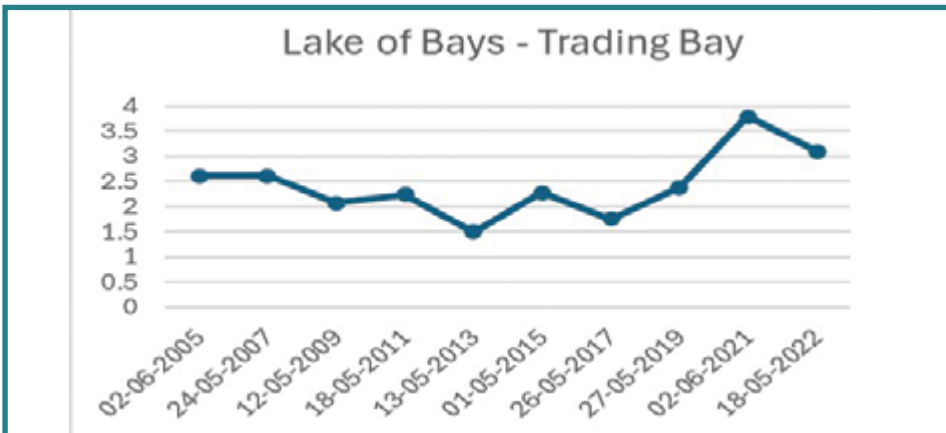
FOTMW is planning some new salt programs starting this fall that include more citizen science opportunities and working with schools, lake associations and businesses to help reduce road salt use and make the community more aware of the toxic impacts of road salt.

### There are things community members can do to help:

- Use less salt—a 300ml (10 ounce) cup will do an average driveway (enough for 10 square metres).
- Use sand when possible.
- Shovel first and more often.
- Only use salt if the temperature is over -12 C. Any colder and salt is not effective.
- Store salt in a water-resistant closed container.
- Clean up spilled and excess applied salt to save for another time.
- Wear boots with good traction.

- Redirect downspouts away from walkways.
- Check that the melt path of your snow does not create icy, slipping hazards.
- Use winter tires and reduce driving speed. Stay home if it’s icy.
- Gather up the sand from snow piles left to melt. This sand has toxic road salt that will continue moving into our waterways.
- Share this information with others.
- Join Friends of the Muskoka Watershed as a member or donor or sign up for our newsletter. Visit [fotmw.org](http://fotmw.org) to learn more or email [friends@fotmw.org](mailto:friends@fotmw.org)

*Dr. Neil Hutchinson studied aquatic toxicology for his doctorate. Hutchinson is now retired but during his career, he was the District of Muskoka consultant for the lake health program and helped develop local water quality policies. About 25 years ago, Hutchinson’s consulting company designed the original phosphorus and bacteria monitoring program for LOBA. He sits on the boards of Friends of the Muskoka Watershed, Muskoka Watershed Council and Georgian Bay Forever. *



**left and left above:**  
The District of Muskoka monitoring program shows marked increases in chloride concentration at 5 of 7 sites on Lake of Bays, with marked increases in the past 10 years.

## Although elusive animals, bears will travel widely in search of a food source to fatten up for hibernation

**A**t a September 25 Huntsville Town Council meeting, Micheline Mamone, Ministry of Natural Resources provincial coordinator for human/wildlife interactions including the Bear Wise program was asked that question. She attributed the increase in bear calls this year to a lack of food such as acorns and beechnuts, as well as berries such as blueberries and raspberries in the forest.



# What's with the Bears?

“Bears really are elusive animals, and they like to stay away from humans, but bears are also driven by food, and they have to get that food in order to fatten up to survive for hibernation,” Marmone said. “And if it’s not available in the forest, they start traveling widely in search of food sources, and those travels can lead them to areas of human development. And if they can find available food in those areas, then they’ll stay there and take advantage of those foods.”

Marmone said the Ministry sees significant bear-reporting swings year to year. “This year, we are seeing an increase in the number of calls. It has been since about mid to end of August when we can surmise that the berry crops were, for the most part, done, and bears were moving on to the fall food sources,” she said. Because foods like acorns and beechnuts are not produced every year, some years are worse than others. “Those trees don’t produce crops every

**Since female bears typically hibernate in the mid or end of November, and males even later in December, we can still expect to encounter bears around our homes and in the wild in the weeks ahead**

year, so if we had a widespread good year for acorns last year, we can assume that we are not going to have as widespread a good year for acorns this year, which is likely one of the reasons that we’re seeing an increase in calls.”

Since female bears typically hibernate in the mid or end of November, and males even later in December, we can still expect to encounter bears around our homes and in the wild in the weeks ahead.

Here are a few tips from [TheFurBearers.com](http://TheFurBearers.com):

- Regularly remove attractants like pet food, fallen fruits and berries, unsecured garbage or compost, bird feeders, and barbecue grease traps, from around your home.
- Keep dogs on leash, particularly in areas where black bears live.
- Bears want to avoid us! When hiking or in nature, use your voice, a bell or other noisemaker to let nearby wildlife know you’re there.
- Always give wildlife like bears space and do not approach them.

The Ontario Bear Wise website [Ontario.ca/bearwise](http://Ontario.ca/bearwise) suggests the following if you encounter a bear:

- Stop. Do not panic. Remain calm. Generally, the noisier the bear is, the less dangerous it is, provided you do not approach. The noise is meant to “scare” you off and acts as a warning signal.

...continued—page 7

continued—Bears...page 6

## Do...


- Slowly back away while keeping the bear in sight and wait for it to leave.
- Throw objects, wave your arms and make noise with a whistle, air horn or yelling if the bear does not leave.
- Prepare to use bear spray.
- Get inside a building or vehicle, if you are nearby, as a precaution.
- Drop any food you may be carrying and slowly move away.
- Leave a bear alone if it is in a tree. Leave the area. The bear will come down when it feels safe.
- Play dead only if you encounter a mother bear with cubs.

## Do not ...

- Run, climb a tree or swim.
- Kneel down.
- Make direct eye contact.
- Approach the bear to get a better look.
- Attempt to feed a bear.
- Let your dog off its leash.
- Play dead unless you are attacked by mother bear defending her cubs.

## If a bear attacks ...

- Use bear spray and immediately leave the area.
- Fight back with everything you have.
- Do not play dead unless you are sure you are being attacked by a mother bear defending her cubs.

Get educated about living, working and conducting recreational activities in bear country at [Ontario.ca/bearwise](https://ontario.ca/bearwise). The Bear Wise program has a bear reporting hotline **866-514-2327** operated 24/7 throughout bear season—April to November. You can call this line to both report a non-emergency encounter with a bear as well as to get tips on how to bearproof your residence or manage any situations that may be happening. In an emergency, call 911. 


# LOBA Board Update

**A**t the 2024 LOBA Annual General Meeting, the members said goodbye to two long-serving directors, welcomed new director Tom Fenton, were introduced to incoming **President Paul Gleeson**, and acknowledged **Wendy Gibson's**—see President's message—achievements as she moved into the position of Past President.

**Tom Fenton** is a recently retired corporate lawyer with over 35 years experience in governance. His family are long-time, four-season Lake of Bays cottagers. In accepting his nomination to the Board, Tom said, "I want to volunteer to give back to LOBA and our great community". Welcome, Tom!

Retiring director **Ian Beverley** strongly supported LOBA's commitment to a clean and healthy environment, responsible development and promoting the education of our members and community. His experience as a lawyer in municipal affairs served LOBA well over 12 years, including four as President. Thank you, Ian!

**Mary Ann Peden** also retired from the Board after nine years, over which time she served as Communications chair, President and Past President. Mary Ann navigated LOBA through the uncharted waters of the Covid-19 pandemic with remarkable resilience and foresight. She ensured that our operations continued seamlessly by spearheading virtual AGMs, Town Hall meetings, and Board sessions, keeping our community connected and our mission on track. She also led us through the challenging Langmaid's Island Appeal, a period requiring not only robust leadership but also a commitment to making tough, pivotal decisions. She skillfully guided us through that confusing process, ensuring that the board remained well informed and focused on the material issues. Most recently, as the Chair of the Governance Committee, Mary Ann was instrumental in driving our new Strategic Plan project. Her leadership kept us progressing steadily, ensuring that our governance practices are robust and forward-thinking.

Mary Ann was honoured for her outstanding service to LOBA, her wisdom and unwavering dedication and for leaving a legacy that will inspire and guide LOBA for years to come, with the Betty Day Award which recognizes extraordinary efforts in performing volunteer activities that further the goals of LOBA. 

## Don't forget to submit your pictures for the 2024 LOBA photo contest!

**LIFE at the LAKE:** people, pets and dwellings  
**NATURE:** wild plants and animals  
**LANDSCAPE:** land, water and sky

Open to all Lake of Bays Association members and families.

Photos must be previously unpublished and taken in the current year—limit of 5 per category. They must be in high-resolution, digital format. Send to [info@loba.ca](mailto:info@loba.ca), subject line Lake of Bays Association photo contest.

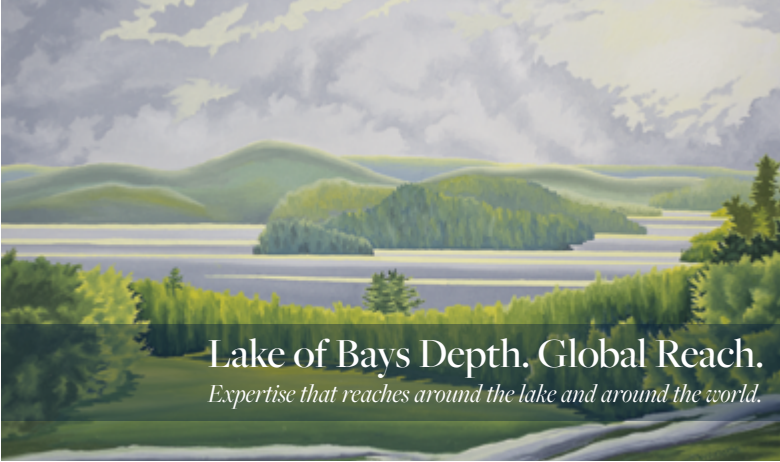
Deadline December 30, 2024.



**RETURN  
ON LIFE**

Keep the Cottage  
in the Family:  
Fund your Future

[www.returnonlife.ca/cottages](http://www.returnonlife.ca/cottages)

**Lake of Bays Depth. Global Reach.**  
*Expertise that reaches around the lake and around the world.*

**David Woodside**  
Sales Representative  
416.276.5337

**Sotheby's**  
INTERNATIONAL REALTY  
Canada  
[sothebysrealty.ca](http://sothebysrealty.ca)

*There is no substitute  
for experience.*  
30+ Years REALTOR®



**Susan Brown, Broker**  
705.788.4176  
[susanbrown@vianet.ca](mailto:susanbrown@vianet.ca)  
[www.lakeofbayscottages.com](http://www.lakeofbayscottages.com)

**CHESTNUT PARK**  
REALTY

Chestnut Park® Real Estate Limited, Brokerage



**Huron**

Security & Monitoring  
Fire & Safety  
Audio Video  
Lock, Key & Safe

Safe. Secure. And Sound.

**Muskoka**

705.645.4108 | 844.363.9311

**Midland**

705.526.9311 | 844.363.9311

**Collingwood**

705.445.4444 | 844.363.9311

**[huronialarms.com](http://huronialarms.com)**

**Don't forget!**  
**It's time to renew your LOBA  
membership for  
2025  
RENEW TODAY!**

Your membership fee supports our efforts to educate, advocate and engage in issues that impact the sustainability of the environment, economy, and natural beauty of our lake community. Where a strong united voice is required, each member counts.



Go to [loba.ca](http://loba.ca) to renew/join and pay online or download a membership form to renew by mail.

Questions about your membership?  
Please contact the office at 705-767-3395 or by email at [admin@loba.ca](mailto:admin@loba.ca)

**Support  
Businesses  
that Support  
LOBA**

We know you like to support local businesses and particularly those who support your lake association! When you are looking for a service provider or retailer refer to the Yearbook or the back page of any Current Connection newsletter.

Advertising in the 2025 Annual is now open. Contact Bryan Dearsley at [bdearsley@live.ca](mailto:bdearsley@live.ca)

**CURRENT CONNECTION** is published two times a year by The Lake of Bays Association for the information of its members. Suggestions, inquiries, manuscripts, photos, etc. can be sent to: Lake of Bays Association P.O. Box 8, Baysville ON P0B 1A0 ■ Phone: 705-767-3395 ■ [info@loba.ca](mailto:info@loba.ca) ■ [loba.ca](http://loba.ca) ■ [www.facebook.com/lobaontario/](http://www.facebook.com/lobaontario/) ■ [@lakeofbaysassociation](https://www.instagram.com/lakeofbaysassociation)



**MIX**  
Paper | Supporting  
responsible forestry  
**FSC® C103131**