

Proposed Settlement of Wiikwemkoong Land Claim in Northern Georgian Bay

By Bob Duncanson,
Executive Director, GBA

Early this summer GBA was contacted by the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs to inform us of the progress that the Government of Ontario has been making in their negotiations with the Wiikwemkoong (Wiky) First Nation on the latter's long-standing land claim on Georgian Bay.

The Wiky claim that their Treaty with the Crown signed in 1836 recognized their right to all islands between Penetanguishene and Sault Ste Marie (the entire coast of the North Channel and eastern Georgian Bay). They claim that subsequent Treaties did not override that right. The Wiky filed a Statement of Claim with the Ontario Court in 1997, with an amendment in 1998. While a formal court hearing was not conducted at that time, the Judge who reviewed the Claim issued a Judge's order stating that, in the Court's opinion, the Wiky have an interest in all the islands in their Claim area and must be consulted on any sale, license or lease of land granted until a final settlement of the Claim is made.

Continues on page 2



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Champlain 400th Anniversary



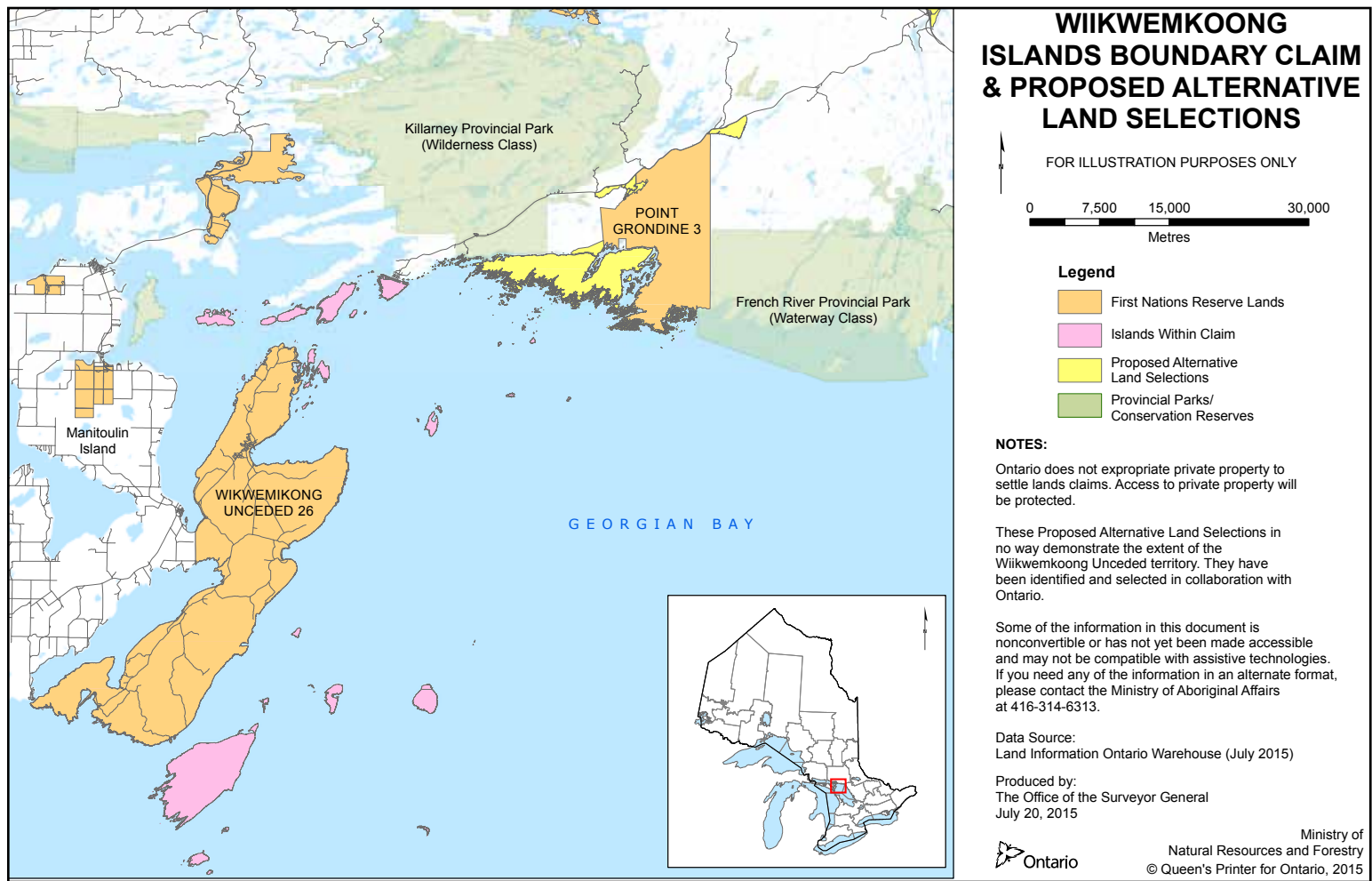
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PM # 40038178

“ The Wiky claim that their Treaty
with the Crown signed in 1836
recognized their right to all islands
between Penetanguishene
and Sault Ste Marie... ”



In 2004 the Federal Government accepted the Wiky Statement of Claim based on a legal and historical analysis. By 2007 the Government of Canada and the Wiky agreed on a protocol on how to adjudicate the Claim. Formal negotiations began in August of 2008. The Ontario Government obtained an opinion from independent counsel that the Claim had legal merit, particularly the portion that was supported by the oral evidence provided by a Wiky Chief in 1896 which laid claim to the islands on the south and east sides of Manitoulin Island stretching as far as Killarney. The Government decided to try to reach an interim settlement with the Wiky, and for the past few years has been negotiating with them to arrive at a package of Crown land and cash. It should be noted that some of the islands in the Claim area are privately owned and it is the policy of the Government of Ontario not to expropriate private land to settle land claims.

This brings us to the present. The Government of Ontario and the Wiky leadership have identified 17,000 acres of islands and

several small blocks of mainland that are currently Ontario Crown land and that, combined with cash, might be acceptable to the members of the Wiky to satisfy their Claim. See the map showing the Crown lands proposed for settlement above. Philip Edward Island (PEI) and smaller islands around PEI make up a significant portion of the Crown land involved because a large island within the Claim area, Fitzwilliam Island, is privately owned, the owner has indicated that he is not interested in selling, and the island will not be expropriated to settle the Claim.

“ The Government of Ontario is committed to balance the rights and interests of all concerned. ”

PEI had been previously identified by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Parks Ontario as Crown land that should be developed into a park. Under the terms of the 1998 court order MNR had already

begun discussions with the Wiky about the park option. The Ontario Government decided to combine the discussions on settlement of the Claim with the discussions on making PEI into a park and offer PEI as a replacement for Fitzwilliam Island. The decision to include the PEI archipelago was made by MNR and MAA without public consultation, despite the fact

that a number of these islands had been severed many years previously, private lots sold and cottages built on them, and much of the area is used extensively by the public for both recreation and access.

The Northern Georgian Bay Association (NGBA), GBA's Member Association located in the Killarney area of Georgian Bay, is very engaged on this file because, if the proposed settlement is approved, their members will be surrounded by Wiky First Nation lands instead of Crown land. Islands that NGBA's members' have used for recreation over the years, and in some cases parts of islands with cottages on them, would become Wiky lands and no longer available to them. Future First Nation plans for PEI and the islands are unclear.

While this issue affects the NGBA's membership, it also affects other GBA members and stakeholders who use Philip Edward Island and its surrounding islands, Beaverstone Bay, Mill Lake and Collins Inlet as places to camp or moor a boat and explore along the small craft channel on the Georgian Bay coast. Furthermore, there could be implications from the terms of the proposed settlement on the larger Wiky Claim covering islands from Penetanguishene to Sault Ste. Marie, as well as other potential First Nations land claims along eastern

Georgian Bay. Consequently, GBA has retained legal counsel who has expertise in First Nations and land claims issues to advise us, as this issue is very complex and there is a long history of treaties and legal proceedings to understand.

The Government of Ontario states that it is committed to balance the rights and interests of all concerned. To that end they have held public information sessions in Killarney, Little Current and Toronto. These were opportunities for members of the public to learn more about the proposed settlement and express any concerns they may have on the impact of this settlement on their use of the lands in question.

GBA attended these sessions. We also held two meetings with the Chief Negotiator, one by phone and one in person. We have also reached out to boating associations and outfitters to let them know about this proposal.

We are striving to determine what meaningful input we can make in the discussions between the Government and the Wiky that reflect the views and concerns, and protect the interests, of members of GBA Member Associations.

Please refer to our web site www.georgianbay.ca for ongoing updates. ■



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GBA Mission Statement:

To work with our water-based communities and other stakeholders to ensure the careful stewardship of the greater Georgian Bay environment.

The Georgian Bay Association is a volunteer umbrella group representing 20 community associations with over 3,200 dues paying property owners and over 18,000 residents.

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The Greatest Plans of ...

As I write this article, we are anchored in Indian Harbour, on our way back to Penetang Harbour. There is only one other late-season cruiser nearby, an American vessel doing what is called the Great Loop. Boat traffic consists largely of work boats; the rush is on to close up cottages or make a dent in as yet unfinished projects.

Beth and I have spent 9 weeks aboard our sailboat, *Annie's Song*. We've gone from the south end of the Bay to the North Channel, and now back again. It has been a truly wonderful experience. We've seen many beautiful places that until now we only knew by name. We visited several GBA member associations, renewed old friendships, made many new ones, and enjoyed bountiful hospitality on all occasions.

The attention paid to Phragmites over the past year undoubtedly sensitized us to this invasive species wherever we traveled. We spotted it in an ever growing number





of locations and became more adept at distinguishing the bad from the good species. My compliments to those member associations and many volunteers who have not only identified stands but who have taken on the challenge of eradicating this invasive plant. They are commendable examples of the far greater effort that will be required over the coming years.

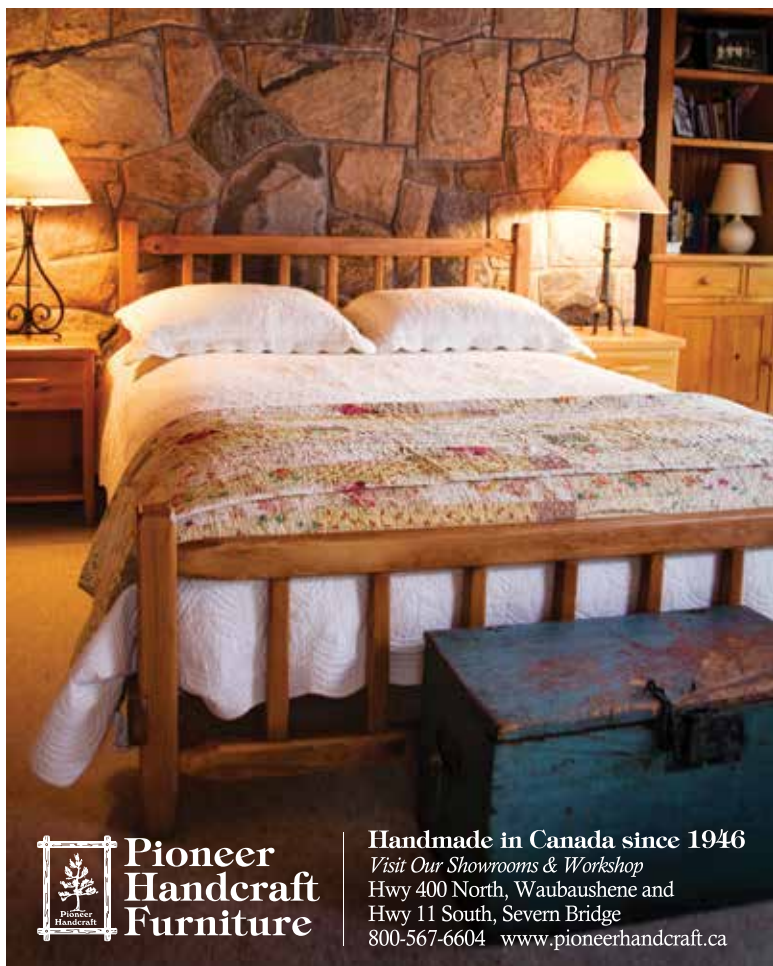
I spoke at a few member association AGMs and toasted Champlain at the re-dedication of the monument to him across from the Ojibway Club in Pointe au Baril. Next year I hope to visit those associations that we were unable to drop in on this summer. As this cruise draws to an end, I realize that it was somewhat an exploratory one. We now have an appreciation for what is out there, what we missed this time around, and what we wish to see – in perhaps a more casual manner – next season.

There is a philosophy among many sailors that a detailed plan and itinerary is a waste of time. Identify a destination and a course, and what will be will be. In our case, situations arose that we had not anticipated. The little rock that grazed our keel and should not have been there. The water pump that decided it had enough and forced us into The Bustard Islands and then a sail in the fog to Britt and Wrights Marina for repairs.

In mid-summer the GBA was made aware of a proposed settlement between the Government of Ontario and the Wiikwemkoong (Wiky) First Nation on the latter's long-standing land claim in northern Georgian Bay. Bob Duncanson provides a backgrounder on the proposed settlement in this issue of *UPDATE* and at this time I will not attempt to expand on what is without question a very involved and complex issue. Suffice to say that the past weeks have been a steep and rapid learning curve on the part of those involved and that the ongoing process will require considerable time, effort and resources as GBA and its Board strive to support the Northern Georgian Bay Association, our member association which stands to be

the most impacted, while also safeguarding the interests of all other GBA member associations the length of the Bay.

Notwithstanding these changes in course during our summer cruise, we are left with one all-encompassing impression. The different parts of the Bay may vary – in their topography, the rock formations, the vegetation (we lost count of the number of islands called Green Island, let alone Burnt Island, Red Rock, etc.), the density of cottages ("camps" in the northern end) and architecture. But it is all beautiful and worthy of our collective efforts to protect and preserve. ■



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Penetanguishene's Rendez-Vous Champlain Celebrates Local History

Four hundred years ago, French explorer Samuel de Champlain arrived on the shores of Toanche to establish relations with the Huron-Wendat people. His journey may have been centuries ago, but this summer from July 31st - August 2nd we were reminded of the impact of his arrival as Penetanguishene hosted Rendez-Vous Champlain. This event served not only to commemorate his arrival, but also to celebrate 400 years of French presence in Ontario.



The event began Friday evening with a Procession of 400 Years of Penetanguishene history. With over 500 participants, the procession marked the beginning of a spectacular weekend. Friday evening also included a Community Fish Fry in Rotary Champlain Wendat Park, right on Georgian Bay. Those who attended could also enjoy a free concert sponsored by the Government of Quebec featuring The Willows, Les Hay Babies, Damien Robitaille and Marie-Pierre Arthur. During this time, the Feast of Three Sisters Gala was also held – an elegant black tie affair with delicious food, great speeches and local French-Canadian music.

Friday evening's success was followed by a bright and

sunny Saturday morning. Vendors arrived, music began and Rotary Champlain Wendat Park sparkled as its new statues were unveiled. Thousands of people, including special guests Premier Kathleen Wynne, Chief Sioui, Minister Madeleine Meilleur, Minister Jean-Marc Fournier and Consul General of France Jean-François Casabonne Masonnave, gathered at McGibbon Point at Rotary Champlain Wendat Park overlooking Georgian Bay to see a re-enactment of Champlain's arrival and the unveiling of the main statue created to commemorate the event.

Hundreds of actors in full costume took part in the re-enactment. Champlain's canoe arrived and he set foot on Penetanguishene's shore just as he did exactly 400 years ago. Then the long-awaited unveiling of *The Meeting Statue* by artist Timothy Schmalz took place. A blanket covering the statue was pulled aside, revealing a 14-foot bronze portrayal of Champlain meeting Huron-Wendat Chief in 1615. Georgian Bay provided a beautiful backdrop for this stunning statue that captures a pivotal moment in Canadian history.

After the opening ceremonies, activities began throughout the Park, including the experiential Wigwam village constructed by Survival in the Bush. They had spent weeks prior to the event building wigwams and creating authentic tools on-site. Those who stopped by were able to learn about the history of each component of the village. There were also performances on the two stages in the Park all day. Francophone artists, the Sandokwa Dance troop and Wendat storytelling were amongst the featured acts. The themed food market was another great addition, serving authentic food such as tourtières, poutine, crepes, corn and native foods. A beer tent inside the concert venue served custom-brewed Champlain Beer, Legends of the Bay, created by Hockley Brewing Company.

Saturday night featured our Cheers to 400 Years concert under the stars with artists Céleste Lévis, Brian St-Pierre, Andee, Damien Robitaille and Roch Voisine. The crowds were excited to see such talent in our small town of Penetanguishene. As Saturday came to a close, it became clear that Penetanguishene was the place to be that weekend.

Sunday's activities began with the re-enactment of the meeting of Huron-Wendat and French beliefs through legends, stories and Huron-Wendat and Latin songs. Sunday featured similar activities to Saturday and music was again played throughout the day. After the re-enactment of Champlain's

departure, the day was unfortunately cut short due to a storm. Regardless of the final weather, the weekend was undoubtedly a resounding success. To thank the community for their heartfelt support, Penetanguishene's sky was filled with magnificent fireworks the following night.

Rendez-Vous Champlain enabled Penetanguishene to share its beauty with visitors from all over Ontario and Quebec. Thanks to grants from both the provincial and federal governments, the Town is left with a beautiful waterfront park full of historical statues, exceptional landscaping and memories from the event. The Town flourished during this weekend and will surely continue to thrive due to the immense success of Rendez-Vous Champlain. We eagerly await the 500th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's arrival! ■



Photos from Town of Penetanguishene

GBA Champlain Monuments Rededicated

GBA co-hosted Champlain monument rededication events with four of our Member Associations this summer in honour of the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain arriving on Georgian Bay.

The first was held on the Canada Day long weekend in Honey Harbour in conjunction with a Honey Harbour community event. Bob Duncanson, GBA's Executive Director, was the guest of honour at this event and was accompanied by a Scottish piper in advance of his speech.

The second rededication took place in Sans Souci after the Annual Meeting of the Sans Souci and Copperhead Association. Bob Duncanson was again the keynote speaker (see photo).

The third rededication was at Pointe au Baril. A small crowd gathered on the dock at the Ojibway Club, facing the Champlain Monument which is on a small island across a narrow channel. Tam Fairlie, who is a PaBIA member and grandson of Tom Fairlie (Past President of the GBA under whose watch the monuments were built), delivered the rededication speech.

The Cognashene Cottagers Association hosted the last rededication. The monument in Cognashene is on a small island called Cupid Island across the channel from Blarney Castle. Given the size of the island and its abundant poison ivy most of the attendees stayed in their boats anchored off island. Amongst the rafted boats was "Old Dutch" belonging

to the Davis family with the Honourable Bill Davis on board. Speeches were delivered by MPP Norm Miller and Councillor Peter Cooper. The keynote speech was again delivered by Bob Duncanson.

At all four rededications the speakers shared the history of Champlain's voyage on the Bay and the history of the monuments that the GBA erected between 1948 and 1954 to mark Champlain's voyage along the eastern Georgian Bay coast. Each rededication ended with this toast: *To Champlain, explorer extraordinaire, and to current and future explorers of Georgian Bay. May we all continue to explore and do our part to protect this beautiful part of our world.* ■



Photo by Eric Armour, GBA Director, Sans Souci

Fall 2015 Update



Where did summer go? As I write this at my desk in Toronto the day after Labour Day we are basking in a heat wave that rivals any that the past summer served us. Unfortunately there is no dock and cool Bay water to help me through this heat.

This summer was as busy as usual for me. I appreciated the opportunity to toast the 400th anniversary of Champlain's visit to Georgian Bay in Honey Harbour, Sans Souci, and Cognashene. (John McMullen represented GBA at the Pointe au Baril rededication.) I was also invited to speak to the Annual meetings of Honey Harbour, Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay, Woods Bay, and the Sans Souci and Copperhead Association. Unfortunately I was sick and had to miss the Honey Harbour meeting and I was fogged in so couldn't get to the Woods Bay meeting. At the latter, Woods Bay President Richard Crouch, connected me to the meeting by holding up his cell phone to a megaphone. I delivered my speech through the phone. It was a little awkward at my end giving a 15 minute soliloquy into a phone but I gather it was well received nonetheless.

Water levels died down as an issue thanks to a second year of higher than average levels. I continue to get the odd complaint about "high" water levels! Seems you can't please everyone!!

Many Associations held Phragmites removal events this summer. Some of these were with the assistance of Georgian Bay Forever. We look forward to hearing reports on how these events worked so we can relay lessons learned (good and bad) to all Associations.

Several of our First Nations neighbours have been involved with activities that are of interest to us. The Henvey Inlet First Nation has advanced their work on a large commercial wind turbine project. We have been monitoring progress on this and consulted with our Key River Association, which will be the most affected by this development. See the report on the progress of the project in this edition of *UPDATE*.

The Wiikwemkoong First Nation (Wiky) has been in negotiation with the Ontario government in an attempt to settle a long-standing land claim at the north end of Georgian Bay. The GBA has been working closely with our Northern Georgian Bay Association on this issue, since their members will be the most impacted by the proposed settlement, and with the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. We have also reached out and begun a dialogue with the Chief of the Wiky, Duke Peltier. This is very much a file in progress but a short article in this *UPDATE* provides some background information.

I expect we will have more contact with First Nations in the region over the next few years. We will look for opportunities to have a positive and open dialogue with our neighbours to work together to enjoy and protect Georgian Bay.

Federal Election

Looking ahead we have a Federal election in mid-October. The GBA encourages all of our Canadian members to engage the candidates in their home ridings on Georgian Bay-related issues and exercise your franchise by voting.

We prepared the following questions that we are asking candidates for office, and suggest you do the same. These questions were posted to the GBA website several weeks ago.

Water quantity

➤ The International Joint Commission provided Advice to the two Federal governments in April 2013 that recommended that structures be built in the St. Clair River to restore some water that was lost through manmade alterations over the years. The Canadian government has yet to respond. Will you pursue a response?

Water quality

- The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has identified many priorities that the two federal governments should address to improve and protect water quality. The Canadian government has reduced funding to Environment Canada to the point where they have limited ability to follow through on these priorities. Will you support increased funding to Environment Canada to protect Great Lakes water quality?
- Industrial fish farming in Canadian waters on the Great Lakes using open net technology results in 46 – 52 tonnes of phosphorous being dumped into the public waters each year. Will you support a review by DFO and Environment Canada of these harmful industrial practices?

Invasive Species

- The Canadian government has responsibility to work with the Province of Ontario and our US partners on the Great Lakes to avoid Asian Carp entering the Lakes. Will you support having the Canadian government put resources behind prevention?

First Nation Land Settlements

- First Nations are negotiating land settlements with the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. Some of these have and will consider transferring existing Crown Land to the First Nations. Will you work to ensure that all facts around land ownership and Treaties are reviewed before settlements are made? How will you protect the rights of other members of the public who have historically used some of these public lands? ■

Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council – Active Again!

In 2000, the Eastern Georgian Bay / North Channel Fisheries Stewardship Council was formed, made up of a broad range of stakeholders. This group worked with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to gather public input and improve fisheries. The Council changed its name to the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) in 2006, when it was incorporated into the MNRF's Ontario Stewardship Network. In 2012, MNRF discontinued their Ontario Stewardship Program, and unfortunately, many stewardship councils have since folded. After a brief hiatus, EGBSC incorporated as an independent, not-for-profit organization in 2014, and is back working on projects again!

EGBSC is a not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization whose mandate is to protect and enhance environmental health along the eastern shore of Georgian Bay and adjacent inland watersheds. EGBSC brings stakeholders together to develop stewardship goals that will benefit Eastern Georgian Bay and works with partners to carry out projects to achieve those goals. To date, EGBSC has completed bass nest creation projects, four Walleye spawning bed rehabilitation projects and Walleye stocking projects. In addition, EGBSC has hosted workshops on several issues to help create greater public awareness and supported survey work (fisheries and trumpeter swans), campsite co-management of the Outer Islands, garbage clean-up projects with the Stewardship Rangers, and invasive species work.

Here are a few of the projects EGBSC has been working on:

Walleye Outreach Project

With a grant from Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program's Prevention Stream, EGBSC developed a public

outreach project to create greater awareness about the state of Walleye and promote stewardship practices that will improve Walleye habitat. Walleye runs in the tributaries to Eastern Georgian Bay were once famous. Over the years the Walleye population has declined dramatically, based on local knowledge and index netting. According to recent monitoring work the Walleye populations in all of the Shebeshekong, Musquash, Key, Magnetawan and Severn Rivers are severely stressed, and populations in the Moon and Serpent Rivers are stressed.

In addition to their socio-economic importance, Walleye play a key role in the aquatic environment and are important to the inshore fish community. Many factors are contributing to the decline in Walleye stocks, including human activities, dam construction, invasive species, shoreline modifications, habitat alterations and water level changes. EGBSC held two workshops in February 2015 to discuss Walleye issues, threats, potential solutions and opportunities for spawning bed rehabilitation. The participants represented environmental organizations, First Nation communities, government agencies, angling groups, townships, community associations and community members.

Workshop participants recommended a number of actions:

- Walleye harvest by all fisheries should be reduced.
- Walleye stocking should be resumed.
- Water management plans should be better-coordinated and followed to support successful spawning.
- Increase site protection by creating fish sanctuaries.



Based on the workshops and monitoring data, EGBSC developed a booklet called *Walleye Woes*. Based on feedback received, we feel that promoting catch and release is one of the most effective and practical actions to focus on. For copies see: <http://www.georgianbaystewardship.ca/pdf/walleye-woes.pdf>

Key River Walleye Spawning Bed Rehabilitation Project

EGBSC received two grants from MNR's Land Stewardship and Habitat Restoration Program and Lake Simcoe / South-eastern Georgian Bay Clean-Up Fund to restore two Walleye spawning sites on the Key River in the fall of 2015. Walleye stocks in the Key River were assessed as severely stressed, and those familiar with the site noted a decline in both the number of Walleye spawning and the number of eggs deposited. River rock will be added to the existing spawning sites to improve the quality of habitat available and increase the total spawning area. Anchor rock will be used to create flow deflectors, to help keep spawning sites underwater for sufficient time to allow eggs to hatch.

Fish Habitat Assessment and Restoration

Funded by the Environmental Damages Fund, the goal of this project is to identify whether sufficient accessible fish habitat (spawning, nursery, rearing and foraging) exists in tributaries to Eastern Georgian Bay to support self-sustaining populations of the Walleye, Lake Sturgeon and Sucker species. Habitat assessments will be carried out in ten tributaries to Eastern Georgian Bay, up to the first major fish migration barrier. Surveys will evaluate the location, quantity and quality of fish habitat and potential restoration opportunities for spawning areas. Detailed assessments of two to three spawning areas will be carried out, which is essential to developing scientifically sound and adaptable restoration designs.

The project partners (which include Georgian Bay Forever and the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve) will analyze the data

to determine if restoration of spawning beds is needed, and if so, priority sites will be identified. One spawning restoration project will be completed for the highest priority site. EGBSC will collect monitoring data and local knowledge as part of the project. A workshop will be held to share project findings. Volunteers and community members will be involved wherever possible.

Moon River Falls Clean Up

Both the north and south shorelines at the Moon River falls are Crown land, and many people camp there. In previous years, a large amount of garbage was left behind, and EGBSC coordinated efforts to remove the garbage. In August 2015, Bill McRobb, EGBSC Board member and owner of Moon River Cottages, organized a clean up with the MNR's Stewardship Youth Rangers. The north side was fairly clean but a lot of garbage was removed from the south side, and site damage from campers cutting and girdling trees was noted. EGBSC would like to thank the Stewardship Youth Ranger crew for helping make the clean up a success!

We have a new website!

Visit us at www.georgianbaystewardship.ca

If you have any questions on any of our projects, please get in touch with us at egbaystewardship@gmail.com or 705-685-7532. ■



Photos from Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council



Wind Farm Planned for Henvey Inlet

The 300MW Henvey Inlet wind energy project, located just south of the Key River on Georgian Bay (see map), is in the final planning stages. On completion, Henvey Inlet will be the largest First Nation wind project in Ontario. The target date for start of operations is February 2018.

The project is a 50-50 joint venture between Pattern Development and Nigig Power. Pattern is an American renewable energy company that has launched 15 wind, solar and transmission projects since 2009 in several countries. Nigig is wholly owned by the Henvey Inlet First Nation. The turbines, service roads and transmission corridors will occupy 500 acres of the Band's 20,000 acre reserve.

Henvey Inlet First Nation (HIFN) is an Anishinabek community located along Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound. HIFN is comprised of two reserves, one just south of the Pickerel River and the other bordering the south shore of the

Key River and stretching west to the shore of Georgian Bay. The latter location is where the turbines, service roads and transmission corridors will be located.

In August, HIFN approved a 22-year lease, effective from the commercial operation date, for the use of its reserve as a wind farm. First Nations have the legal authority to grant leases, and do not require provincial permits. The wind farm will be regulated entirely by HIFN, as permitted by the First Nations Land Management Act. However, the Band has pledged to comply with the Renewable Energy Act, and invested \$2 million on

stewardship regimes.

The Band Council has commissioned an extensive environmental impact assessment by Acorn, a company associated with Pattern. The Band has identified impact on migrating birds and endangered snakes to be of particular concern. An environmental assessment report is expected

“ Henvey Inlet will be the largest First Nation wind project in Ontario. ”

Wind Farm Location
North Portion of
Henvey #2.

The South portion is
set aside for
commercial purposes.



in September, with a 30-day review period to follow. A final decision on the environmental assessment is expected in November.

The project will consist of approximately 90 turbines and two transformer stations. Pattern is considering two options for a transmission line: a 14 km route east to an existing 500 kV Hydro One line and a 86 km route south to the Parry Sound transformer station.

The wind farm has a 20-year power purchase agreement with the Independent Electricity System Operator, formerly known as the Ontario Power Authority. The 15 cents/kWh FiT price includes a 1.5 cent/kWh aboriginal price supplement.

Unlike most of the wind turbine installations in Ontario, the project includes a decommissioning provision that requires the tenant to remove the wind farm components and restore the lands in accordance with a decommissioning protocol. Decommissioning would occur at the end of the lease, or of an extended lease if the turbines are still in working order.

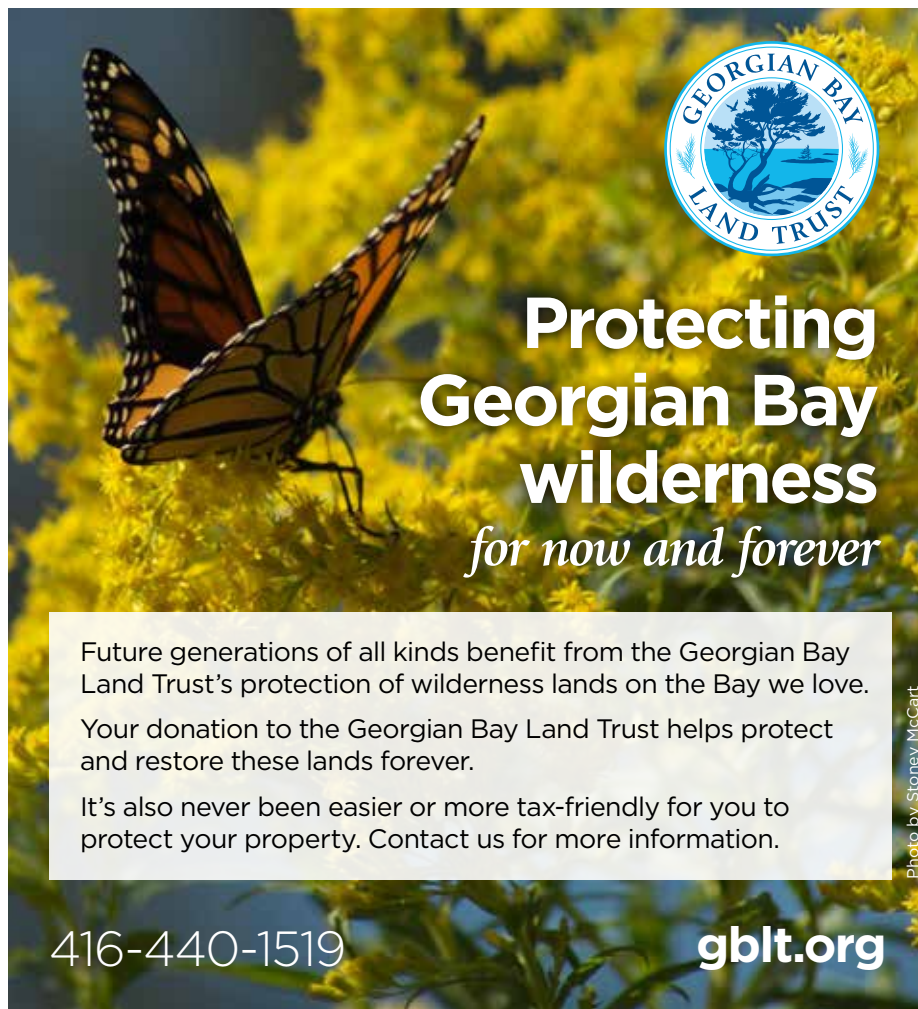
The protocol has yet to be made public but its inclusion at the outset of the project should be viewed positively.

HFIN and Pattern held several public open house meetings during the spring and summer to hear input from local residents, including the Key River Cottagers Association. This healthy dialogue between the First Nation and its neighbours (mainly residents of the Key River area) appears to be alleviating some concerns, including the environmental impact. Some wind turbine sites have been changed or eliminated to address concerns of Key River residents. The turbine sites that border the River will have a set-back of at least 1.5

“Some wind turbine sites have been changed or eliminated to address concerns of Key River residents.”

km. Still, there are a few cottages near the Henvey Inlet that will be impacted visually.

The GBA will continue to monitor and report on the progress of the Henvey Inlet Wind Farm as the environmental assessment is completed and the preferred route for the transmission line is decided. ■



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GBA Surveys Member Associations about Water Testing

The GBA actively monitors water quality issues in Georgian Bay and the Great Lakes, and we regularly make submissions to governments on the issue. We only knew what a few member associations were doing on water testing, so last Spring the GBA sent out a short (8 question) survey to find out more. What are GBA associations doing about water testing? Were they doing the testing themselves? What were they testing?

We received 8 responses to the survey (of the 21 associations). A big thank you to all the associations that responded, especially Linda Bartlett and Lynda Montgomery from Bay of Islands, who were the first to respond and they provided a very informative analysis of their testing program!

Survey Results

- Seven of the eight responding associations conduct water testing or have done so recently. They are: Bayfield Nares (BNIA), Bay of Islands (BICA), Pointe au Baril (PaBIA), Sturgeon Bay, Woods Bay Community, Sans Souci & Copperhead (SSCA), Wah Wah Taysee (WWTa).
- Two of the associations have been testing for over 30 years, and 2 others have been testing for over 20 years!
- Five of the seven associations that conduct water testing have volunteers that take samples, one association pays people to take samples, and one association has a grant to cover labour costs.
- Six of the seven associations that test, test bacterial indicators (Coliforms and *E. coli*), and 5 associations conduct this testing in conjunction with their Township (one association goes directly to the Public Health lab).
- Four of the seven associations that test are part of the provincial Lake Partner Program where volunteers test water clarity by using the Secchi dish and collect samples. The Dorset Environmental Science Centre analyses those samples for low-level phosphorous.
- Two of the seven associations monitor nutrients beyond what the LPP covers:
- BNIA monitors phosphorous (Environment Canada grant).
- Wah Wah Taysee monitors phosphorous, BOD, nitrogen and algae in the water column (through Environment Canada, McMaster University and the Sierra Club)

Some clarifications about Water Quality Testing and the indicators used

When we test water from the Bay we are testing one of the

following:

- Water that we think is suitable for drinking (i.e. treated surface water or well water). This includes laboratory analysis of bacteria and sometimes chemicals (sodium, nitrates, etc.).
- Water for recreational purposes (public beaches). This is usually tested by a municipality or a health department and includes laboratory analysis of bacteria and perhaps beach posting (i.e. the Blue flag program).
- Water for ecosystem health, which may include laboratory or field analysis of nutrients (e.g., phosphorus, BOD), species detection and so on.

The presence or absence of coliforms and or *E. coli* does not inform us about the presence or absence of other bacteria, many of which are human health concerns. The presence of coliforms and/or *E. coli* only tells us that conditions are suitable for the growth of bacteria harmful to humans.

The presence or absence of coliforms and or *E. coli* also does not inform us about parasites. *Guardia* is a common parasite in surface water (i.e. lake water) that is *not* killed by chemical disinfection.

Detailed Responses about the Results of Testing

The Bay of Islands Association (BICA) shared with us details of their results. They have developed several averages of data that are used to compare to current readings. Average results for consecutive five-year periods are used to note any long-term changes in the data, both overall and at specific sites. A 10-year average is used as a more reliable baseline calculated from a larger number of samples.

BICA has observed that coliform counts appear to be affected by three major factors:

1. Time of year – July and August yield higher coliform readings than September or June. This appears to be due to a combination of water temperature and cottager traffic.
2. High winds in the days preceding sampling – Winds that push water levels higher cause coliform-laden sediments from the shoreline to be washed into the lake. This affects samples collected near shorelines. Dead-end sites have yielded higher coliform counts than flow-through sites.
3. Heavy rain in the days preceding sampling – Rain produces similar results to high winds. The effect from

heavy rain appears to be more significant than from high winds, particularly on *E.coli* counts.

These observations have been also been reported by other associations and from scientists from Dorset Environmental Centre, Environment Canada and the Ministry of Environment. They emphasize that it is the small embayments, or sites with less water exchange, that are more likely to have higher nutrient loading and a higher likelihood of algal blooms.

Other Recent Research and Findings

As part of the *State of the Bay* program, David Bywater of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve conducted an inventory of water quality monitoring efforts in eastern Georgian Bay early in 2015. There were found to be 16 different monitoring programs within the GBBR area conducted by different agencies testing different parameters at different sites! Strong programs exist for open water and nearshore coastal areas but there is a need to develop strategic monitoring of embayments and rivers. The GBBR is leading a multi-year project funded by Environment Canada that will help to coordinate these efforts, and ultimately improve the consistency and quality of nutrient monitoring in Georgian Bay. Volunteer monitoring programs will be a critical aspect of the program.

Phosphorous levels in the open Georgian Bay are declining. The reasons for the decline are not well understood but involve a number of contributing factors, including the rise of invasive zebra and quagga mussels. We expect to hear more about this in the coming years.

Two recent papers received from Andrew Paterson of Dorset Environmental Science Centre summarize the work of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change as part of the CWN project in Muskoka (including Three Mile and Brandy Lakes, both of which experience blue-green algal blooms). Predictive modeling for algae found that climate (including water temperatures, wind and extreme storms) was the significant factor for algal blooms.

Recommendations for Member Associations

These recommendations have been gathered from the GBA survey, subsequent e-mail correspondence, ongoing discussions and from various water quality meetings where the GBA has been a participant. Note: recommendations are listed in order of priority.

1. Treat all drinking water that comes from Georgian Bay or a lake to kill/remove parasites and bacteria by boiling, ultra fine filtration (ceramic), ultra violet (UV) radiation, reverse osmosis (RO) or other means. Note: Activated carbon filters, like the Brita® pitcher-style filter, are intended to be used with treated water. They are helpful to remove particles and remove chlorine but do not make lake water safe to drink.
2. Test all drinking water regularly through Public Health. See the article on Water Wells in this issue of *UPDATE* for links to websites with information on water testing procedures and submitting samples for testing.
3. Encourage practices that protect and preserve water quality, including maintaining septic systems and avoiding use of soap/shampoo in the Bay.
4. Become part of the Lake Partner Program to use provincial standards for long-term water quality monitoring. Your data will be accessible on the website and can be downloaded at any time for the years available. Check the map to see if there is an active monitoring station near you: <http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/map-lake-partner>
5. If you want to start a testing program, or improve an existing program, set clear measureable objectives for what and why you are testing. Learn from our member associations that have testing programs, the GBBR and your municipality. New recommendations on water testing protocols are expected in the near future.
6. If you conduct testing, have the data scientifically analyzed to produce base-line data, document trends and make findings.
7. Share your results through newsletters, websites, conversations and meetings to raise awareness about the need to test and treat drinking water and other issues related to maintaining water quality.

More reading

<http://www.muskokawaterweb.ca/lake-data/cwn/cwn-projects/>

<http://www.severnsound.ca/programs-projects/monitoring>

<http://www.georgianbayforever.org/water-quality>

<http://stateofthebay.gbbr.ca/get-involved/total-phosphorus/>

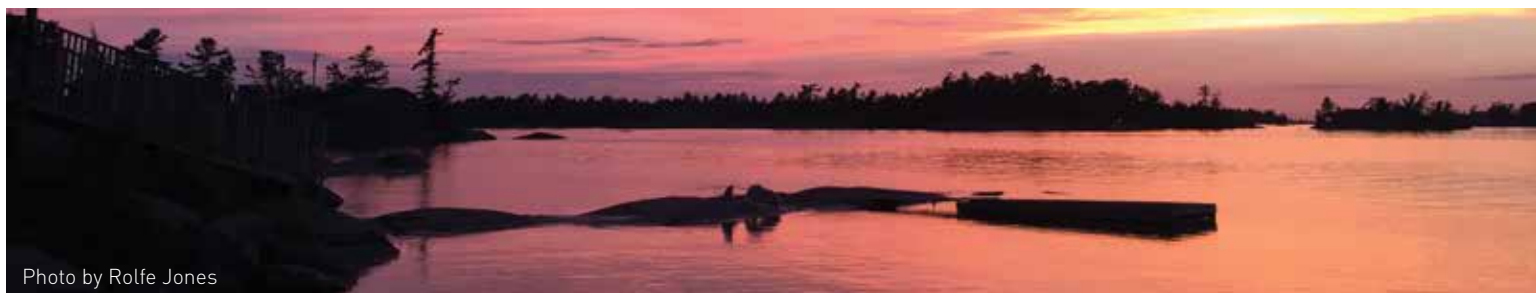


Photo by Rolfe Jones

All Might Not Be Well If You Drill A Water Well!

I feel compelled to share my story about having a water well drilled on my property on the shores of Georgian Bay at Twelve Mile Bay (near MacTier, Ontario), so others are aware of the risks involved and hopefully can avoid the serious problems that I ran into.

The decision to drill a well arose because of falling water levels in recent years and difficulties maintaining water lines into the lake at those levels. I contacted a drilling company whose owner assured me that I would have access to plenty of water with a new well drilled on my property. Both my neighbour and I had wells drilled. We assumed that the many thousands of dollars we were investing would increase our property values and provide plenty of fresh, potable water. We looked forward to having lots

of good quality water for drinking, preparing food, bathing and washing clothes.

What I did not realize is that drilling companies guarantee **quantity** of water, **not quality** of water. The well drilling

“ The well drilling company never informed us of the potential risks involved in drilling a well. ”

company never informed us of the potential risks involved in drilling a well in close proximity to Georgian Bay. No doubt it's not in drilling companies' interests to inform potential customers of possible problems with water wells! I did search the internet before deciding to have the well drilled, but

very little information is available about the quality of well water from wells drilled in the Georgian Bay area, so I was completely unaware of the risks of drilling a well.

My neighbour had his well drilled (about 90 feet deep) a few days after my well (over 400 feet deep) was drilled. As soon as his hook-ups were completed he began to notice issues with his water. I also had problems with my plumbing – high quantities of iron were present in the water and my toilets and appliances began to stain heavily. Laundry had a red tint. My dishwasher could not properly clean glassware or dishes. My neighbour's well developed more severe problems – plants that he watered with well water started to wither and die. The drilling company refused to discuss our water quality problems.

MoE Testing Results

We contacted the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, which sent out technical hydrology scientists to test the water from both of our wells. The results were shocking. My neighbour's well water was several times saltier than seawater and dangerous for human consumption. He was ordered to decommission his well because the water could not be made safe for human consumption.

My well, located only 100 or so feet away, was found to be “borderline” due to sulfates in the water. I was fortunate because the water proved to be safe for human consumption, but I was cautioned to make sure to test my well water on a regular basis. The Ministry's scientists suggested installing an iron filter on the water lines to clarify the dirty water and address the staining. That cost

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\$ 2,500 but solved the staining problem. They also suggested installing a 7-part reverse osmosis filtration system to try to ensure the safety of my drinking water. It cost another \$3,000. The installer maintains this filtration system at the cost of the replacement filters (\$200 each). The water is tested every 3 months; happily it now tastes great and our test results show no problems with water quality.

I was stunned to learn from the Ministry's scientists that they were not surprised to find such "salty" water in a well on the shores of Georgian Bay. One pointed out that *Windsor* salt was harvested from stores found under the Great Lakes. Both the scientists and the water treatment companies advised that drawing water directly from Georgian Bay and treating it for human consumption would have been a far better solution than drilling a well. It was a case of "too soon old and too late smart," so I share my story as a cautionary tale to others considering having a well drilled near the Bay.

Further Information

All wells drilled in Ontario are registered with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and information about well water in any area of Ontario can be accessed through the Ministry. Information on decommissioned or problem wells is also available here.

Drinking water from wells and treated surface water (including lake water) should be tested at least annually by the

Public Health Laboratory. For details on how to test well water, see:

Public Health Ontario – Water testing <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Water-testing.aspx>

Pick up a sampling kit from:

➤ any Ontario Public Health Unit: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

➤ or the new location of the Ontario laboratory: 17th floor front reception, 661 University Avenue, Toronto, Monday - Friday, from 9:00 to 4:00.

Samples for testing must be dropped off on the same day as they are collected. Samples can be taken to any Public Health Unit or Laboratory, including the Parry Sound Office of the North Bay - Parry Sound Health Unit, 70 Joseph Street, Suite 302, Parry Sound Mall, Monday - Thursday from 8:30 to 3:00.

For further information see:

Ontario Ministry of the Environment – Drinking water <http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/drinking-water>

Environment Canada – Water

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/eau-water/default.asp>. ■

Upcoming Events

We have received the following information from our sister Georgian Bay organizations on upcoming events.

Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve

Films that Make You Think –

All at 7:00 pm at Museum on Tower Hill, Parry Sound

'Midway' – October 13

'Sand Wars' – November 10

'Greedy Lying Bastards' – December 13

See: <http://www.gbbr.ca/films-that-make-you-think/>

Community Stewardship Program Workshop -

Oct. 15, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Tiffin Centre for Conservation, 8195 8th Line, Utopia.

Register with Carrie McIntyre at Carrie.McIntyre@ontario.ca or 705-725-7523.

Public Forum on Water Quality in Eastern Georgian Bay –

Thursday, October 29th from 10am to 2pm

Inn at Christie's Mill, Port Severn, Ontario

Lunch provided with registration at

<https://gbaywaterforum.eventbrite.ca>

Georgian Bay Land Trust

Bayscapes Bash + Auction – Friday, November 20,

The Burroughes, 639 Queen St West, Toronto

The Big Sound plays all the favourites, bid on spectacular art and photography, one-of-a-kind items and experiences, and more.

Visit gbt.org or call 416-440-1519 for details and tickets.

Winterlude – Thursday, March 10th, 2016

Bishop Strachan School, 298 Lonsdale Road, Toronto

Featuring the film *Painted Land*, a beautiful look at the real-life landscapes painted by the Group of Seven. Filmmakers Nancy Lang and Phyllis Ellis will be in attendance for a Q&A after the show.

Rossiter 14 Boat Raffle

Enter our fundraising lottery for a chance to win a Rossiter 14 and 40 horse Yamaha motor, donated by Rossiter and Desmasdons. All proceeds to the Georgian Bay Land Trust to protect Georgian Bay wilderness.

Tickets are \$25 each, 2 for \$40, or 3 for \$50.

Call (416) 440-1519 x102 to purchase.

The draw will take place on January 19th, 2016.

What's in Our Water?

A Not So Watered Down Prescription

I've been drinking from the tap in my house and cottage for over 48 years. I haven't had a limb spontaneously sprout from my forehead so far, but some of the stories about the types and quantities of pharmaceuticals and chemicals from household and industrial products ending up in both pre- and post-treated water are enough to make you peer a little more closely into the mirror each morning.

Canadians spent over \$33.9 billion on prescription drugs in 2014 and that will climb in the coming years. That's a lot of pills to pop which amounts to half of us taking at least one prescription drug each day. So you might wonder what happens to those prescription drugs that either don't get absorbed by the body or are leftover in the bottle.

For me, when I fractured my collarbone (in a spectacular hockey injury!), I had plenty of leftover painkillers. The easy thing to do was throw them in the garbage or down the toilet (I took them back to the pharmacy). Unfortunately, many people throw caution to the wind and toss their prescription drugs either out or down the drain.

Here's something to think about. Many of the drugs that we take don't get adsorbed by the body and therefore end up in our waste or surface water. Pharmaceuticals also don't break down, nor are they completely removed during wastewater or conventional drinking water treatment, so microconstituents remain in our water supply.

Recent studies are causing some alarm – both real and imaginary – and increasing public awareness of the presence of pharmaceuticals in our drinking water is tempting politicians to pursue legislative and regulatory responses. But the occurrence, environmental chemistry, human health significance and ecological effects are not well understood.

In addition to human pharmaceuticals, animal and agricultural pharmaceuticals are also entering our water supply through excretion and agricultural runoff. Add in the fertilizer runoff into our lakes and streams and it is clear that a significant amount of untreated effluent and nutrients are entering our water supply!

If you take prescription drugs at the cottage, you will have traces of the drug's microconstituents ending up in your septic tanks and ultimately in the waters of Georgian Bay. Compounds migrating from septic tanks and/or leach fields can

contaminate ground water and surface water. In addition, after a long rain you can expect water quality to degrade, especially if you have Canada Geese fouling your property!

Detecting Contaminants in Water

Detecting these microconstituents is extremely difficult and costly. Advanced analytical instrumentation is required to isolate these emerging contaminants. The health significance of a detectable contaminant is usually unknown and may even be insignificant. Furthermore, the technologies required to remove, degrade or transform more resilient organic contaminants in drinking water are energy-intensive and still cannot completely reduce many compounds to a level below the detection limits of current analytical tools.

Another emerging concern is Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDC's), a class of pharmaceuticals typically found in birth control medications, hormone therapies and household

cleaners, pesticides, personal care products and plastics. These agents interfere with the functioning of natural hormones in the body and have been appearing in municipal wastewater treatment plants, surface waters and sources for drinking water.

EDC's have been demonstrated in laboratory studies to cause endocrine effects in fish. What does that mean? EDC's can disrupt the central nervous system, including pituitary integration of hormonal and sexual behavioral activity, female and male reproductive system development and function, and thyroid function. So far there is little evidence that EDC's have produced adverse endocrine effects in humans.

At the end of the day people are more likely to be exposed to pharmaceuticals and EDC's through their own diet, inhalation of airborne chemicals, and dermal absorption (i.e. from topical medications or application of personal care products) than through the water they drink. Consequently, people need to put the water they consume into perspective with other potential contaminants that may or may not be in the environment around them.

The Ontario Ministry of Environment (MoE) conducted a survey on selected pharmaceuticals and other contaminants of emerging concern in 2005-2006 to determine levels of occurrence in untreated source and 113 municipal drinking water systems in Ontario. Forty-six compounds were analyzed,

“ Pharmaceuticals are not degraded or removed during wastewater or conventional drinking water treatment. ”

including pharmaceuticals, antibiotics, hormones and Bisphenol A (BPA). Of the 46 analyzed, 27 were detected at least once in either untreated source or finished municipal drinking water or both, with concentrations in the parts per trillion range. Most detected were:

- carbamazepine (treats epileptic seizures and nerve pain)
- gemfibrozil (drug used to lower lipid levels)
- BPA (BPA is an industrial chemical used to make polycarbonate, a hard, clear plastic, which is used in many consumer products. BPA is also found in epoxy resins, which act as a protective lining on the inside of some metal-based food and beverage cans.)
- ibuprofen (anti-inflammatory)
- naproxen (anti-inflammatory)
- lincomycin (antibiotic)
- sulfamethoxazole (antibiotic)
- acetaminophen (pain relief)
- monensin (antibiotic)
- benzafibrate (lowers cholesterol)
- trimethoprim (antibiotic)
- erythromycin (antibiotic)
- sulfamethazine (antibiotic)

The survey was limited to the presence of compounds and did not assess the potential impact on human health. However, based on the measured levels of carbamazepine, gemfibrozil, ibuprofen and BPA in treated municipal drinking water, an individual would have to drink thousands of glasses of drinking water a day to reach a maximum acceptable daily intake (ADI) for any one of these detected compounds in the finished drinking water.

Ultimately, we really know very little about the impact of having low levels of many different contaminants in our water. We also know very little about the cumulative effects of very low exposures over a lifetime, or if these low level exposures might impact developing brains and bodies more than adults. More research and investigation are required.

Further Information

My recommendation? As a cottager and stakeholder in the health of the waters of Georgian Bay, you are urged to take some time to check the sites below, especially the "I Don't Flush" campaign, to educate yourself and your family/friends on the dangers of pharmaceuticals ending up in our precious waters.

Current media campaigns to heighten awareness of pharmaceuticals in drinking water and promote safe disposal of wastes include:

- <http://idontflush.ca/>
- <http://www.healthsteward.ca/>
- <http://www.makethedrop.ca/>
- <http://www.ourwatershed.ca/> ■

Sources:

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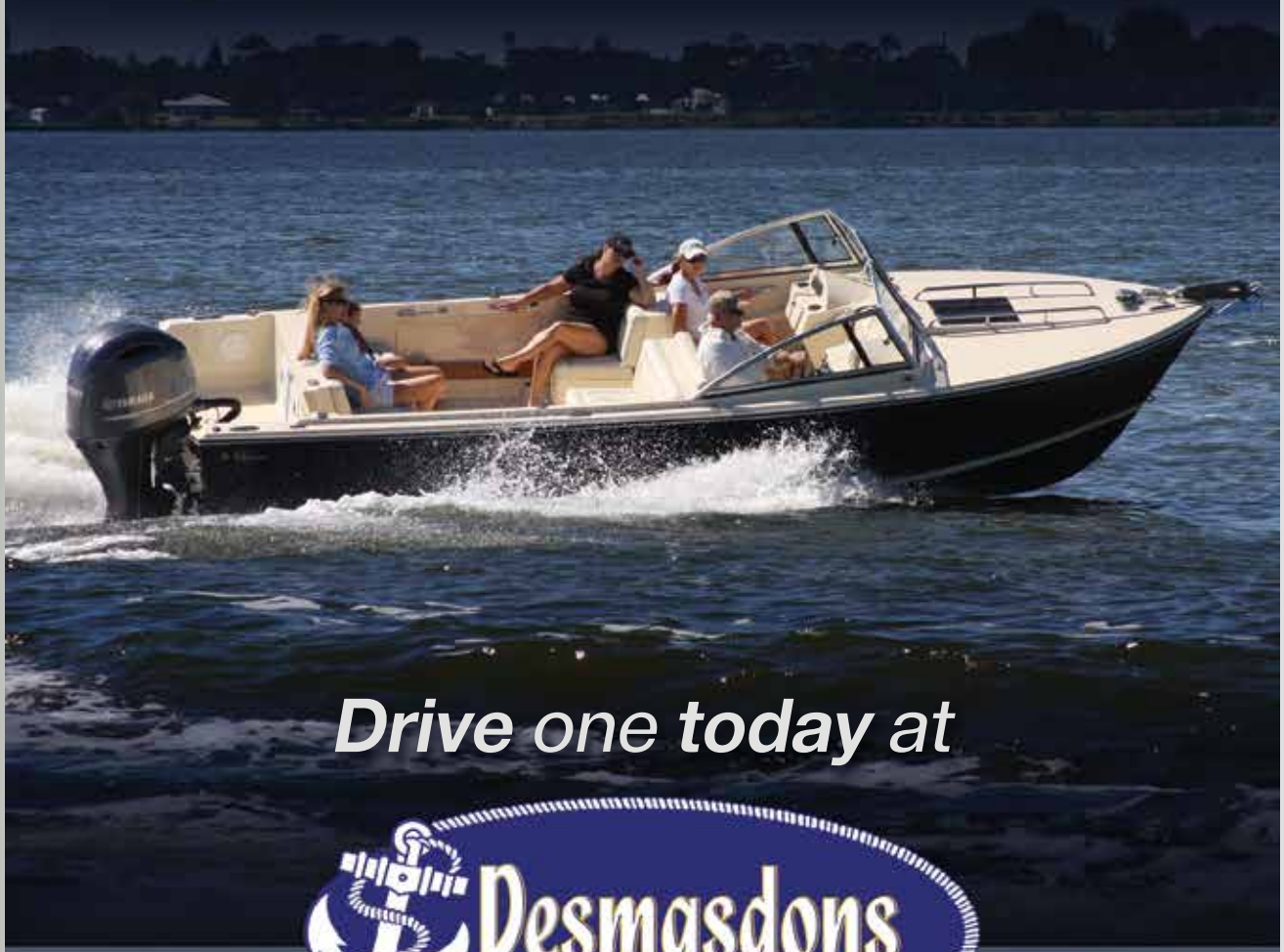
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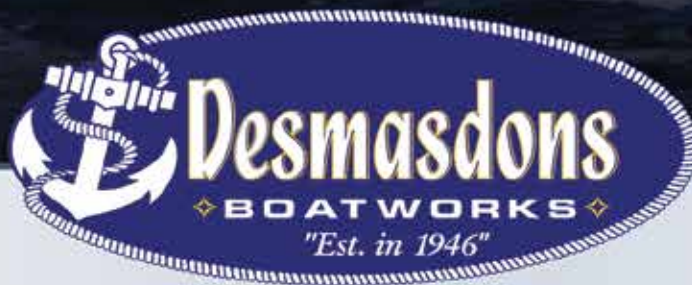


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