

## CONTENTS



6

### Annual Spring Meeting



12

### What exactly is an Archipelago?



19

### New GBA Website and Facebook

#### ALSO INSIDE

Contests .....	18
ED Notebook .....	17
Education and Political Action .....	4
GBA Holds 97 <sup>th</sup> AGM .....	8
GBBR's Kids in the Biosphere .....	14
Municipal Elections 2014 .....	17
My Experience with Turtle Tally .....	16
On the Waves: the Latest in Boating ...	10
OPP Funding Model under review .....	5
President's Message .....	9
Species at Risk – Spotted Turtle .....	15
Upcoming Events .....	7

## The Economic Impact of Low Water Levels

Mark Fisher – CEO Council of the Great Lakes Region

**M**ark Fisher, CEO Council of the Great Lakes Region (CGLR), was a keynote speaker at GBA's Annual Spring Meeting.

CGLR is a new bi-national regional organization that was spearheaded by the Canada-U.S. Law Institute at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland and the Mowat Centre at the University of Toronto, along with many of the region's key organizations.

CGLR aims to bring together stakeholders from the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors to advance effective, coordinated, and broadly shared responses to the region's common challenges. Similar regional Councils have been established in other parts of North America and have been very effective in advancing the interests of stakeholders in those regions.



“

**CGLR was born out of a realization that no one organization existed in the region that can speak to the region's inter-related interests and priorities.**

”

#### SNAPSHOT: The Great Lakes Region

- 105 million people live in the Great Lakes region – equivalent to the 12th largest country in the world.
- Regional economic activity is valued at approximately \$5 trillion US – equivalent to the world's 4th largest economy.
- The region provides jobs for 39.3 million people.
- Over 3,500 plants and animals rely on the basin's unique and complex ecosystem.
- The Great Lakes contain 20% of the world's freshwater.

*Continues on page 3*



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Because water is one of the key features of the region, both economically and ecologically, **CGLR's first major project is engaging the Mowat Centre to conduct a study into the economic impacts of low water levels in the Great Lakes.**

(The study is funded mainly by Georgian Bay Forever.) Mark shared some insights from the study, which will be released this Spring. The study looks at the impact of water levels on many aspects of economic activity including navigation, hydro-power production, municipal water supply, property values and tourism.

For instance, on navigation, commercial shipping and its connection to inland transport brings in \$33.6 billion US of economic value annually and supports nearly 227,000 jobs in the US and Canada. Lower water means lighter loads and puts the economic value and jobs at risk.

And on property values, there are an estimated 93,400 properties along the shores of the Upper Great Lakes and their connecting channels. These are enjoyed by roughly 233,000 full-time and seasonal residents. The value of these properties

to the local, state / provincial and federal governments amounts to somewhere between \$39 billion and \$66 billion US annually. Lower water in the Lakes reduces the intrinsic value of many of these properties and puts the tax revenue at risk.

Mark and CGLR hope that the economic study will incent governments to take action to protect the water in the Great Lakes. ■■



From Left to Right:  
Bill Klassen (Northern Georgian Bay Association), Paul Morgan (South Sound Association and GBA Director),  
Freda Klassen (Northern Georgian Bay Association and GBA Director) and Jeremy Gawen (President West Carling Association).



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# Water Levels – Education and Political Action

by Roger Gauthier, Chair,  
Restore Our Water International

**W**ater Levels in Georgian Bay have benefited from an extraordinarily wet year in 2013 across the broader Lake Michigan and Huron watersheds. Water levels on Georgian Bay rose year-to-year through October 2013 by 13 inches, reflecting the unusually high water supplies received last year through the fall months. It was the 112<sup>th</sup> wettest year of the last 113! The region has also endured the most severe winter in a generation. The most recent U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water level forecast projects that most of the relief in water levels should be sustained through August 2014, if spring/summer rainfall is near normal. Some wishful thinkers believe that recent modest improvement in water levels have reached a “turning point” signaling the end of the low-water crisis across the middle lakes. Others are more pragmatic, emphasizing that climate conditions are changing and that problems in the water balance of the upper Great Lakes still need to be corrected.

The International Upper Great Lakes Study (IUGLS) concluded that the protracted 15-year low-water crisis was caused primarily by a warmer and drier climate. This study acknowledged that additional pressures on water levels were directly affected by increased outflow through the St. Clair River caused by channel modifications (dredging) and subsequent erosion, as well as by minor geophysical processes. Collectively, the IUGLS reaffirmed that Lake Michigan-Huron has been permanently lowered by at least 20 inches since 1865 because of channel modifications in the St. Clair River. The International Joint Commission (IJC) subsequently advised the Canadian and U.S. governments to further investigate potential remedies to the increased St. Clair River outflow problem. Unfortunately, this advice has languished for over a year in the offices of the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its U.S. State Department counterpart.

Over the last year, an umbrella volunteer organization entitled Restore Our Water International (ROWI) has been working behind

the scenes in the halls of Washington and Ottawa to break this log jam. ROWI is a non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Michigan, composed of affiliated shoreline and environmental groups and small businesses from Georgian Bay, Saginaw Bay, Grand Traverse Bay and the Straits of Mackinac. Sierra Canada Club Foundation (SCCF) and the Federation of Tiny Township Associations (FOT TSA) have been instrumental in representing Georgian Bay interests within ROWI. ROWI and GBA directors have been discussing how the two organizations can work together to push the Canadian and U.S. governments toward resolution of the low-water problem across the region.

ROWI and its affiliated members have focused attention on restoring Michigan-Huron water levels by promoting the start of a three-year, \$3 million engineering design and evaluation process to be conducted by the Army Corps to look at structural options in the St. Clair River. This work is referred to by the Corps as a “General Reevaluation Report” or GRR. The GRR would further refine engineering options, define costs and benefits, and assess local and regional environmental effects. Given the bi-national implications of this effort, significant coordination with Canadian federal and provincial agencies would need to be included, along with the engagement of affected user groups, including commercial navigation interests and shoreline property owners on both sides of the border. Unfortunately, “the devil is in the details.” Two thorny issues have to be addressed; first, the U.S. Congress has to expand the scope of its authorization to the Corps and second, the U.S. Congress needs to appropriate necessary funds to complete the effort.

Currently, the Army Corps is authorized to study only “compensation” for increased St. Clair River outflows directly attributed to channel dredging activities that occurred in the 1930s and 1960s, or about 7 inches of permanent lowering of lakes Michigan and Huron. The authorizing language needs to be broadened to allow

for engineering/economic and environmental analyses for restoring the full 20 inches of permanent lowering caused by human activities in the St. Clair River. Further, the existing authorizing language does not include designing measures to reduce potential flooding/erosion upstream through adaptive flow-reduction and ice-control structures in the St. Clair River. The current authorization also does not address designing temporary measures in the Detroit and Niagara rivers to eliminate all potential





downstream impacts on lakes St. Clair and Erie, respectively. ROWI and its collaborators have been working with key U.S. Senate offices to expand the current authorizing language to address these shortcomings.

In early March 2014, an initial (and modest) allotment of \$50,000 was provided to the Army Corps in the U.S. President's budget to start the GRR process. These funds must be expended by October 2014. The \$50,000 will be used by the Corps this year to develop a comprehensive work plan on how to conduct the design and analysis process and how to engage all affected parties. Unfortunately, the remainder of the \$3 million has yet to be budgeted by the U.S. President or by the U.S. Congress to complete this work.

ROWI and collaborating organizations are pushing to resolve this funding shortfall through educating key players and direct lobbying in Washington D.C. over the next few months. If the Canadian federal government decided to share the cost of the Army Corps' effort and to become actively involved in the GRR process, such action would radically improve the political equation in Washington D.C. Educating and lobbying in Washington and Ottawa are costly endeavors requiring funding support from affected parties. Please consider donating to these efforts by visiting the ROWI web site at: [www.restoreourwater.com](http://www.restoreourwater.com) or through SCCF, One Nicholas Street, Suite 412B, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 7B7. A tax receipt can be provided to Canadian taxpayers by the latter.

Mother Nature has provided the region with some modest relief over the last 12 months, but the water balance of the upper Great Lakes will remain out of whack until human modifications in the St. Clair River are mitigated. ■■

### GBA's View on Water Levels – A Way Forward

To provide our members with a full picture of the state of the water levels file, this issue of *UPDATE* includes an article by Roger Gauthier, Chair of Restore Our Water International (ROWI). As well we have included Georgian Bay Forever's regular newsletters in all *UPDATE* mailings, including this one, through which members will be familiar with their position on water levels.

Readers will recognize that two perspectives exist on the priorities for government action on water levels. One is to focus on restoring up to 20 inches of water in Lakes Michigan-Huron and Georgian Bay by installing structures in the St. Clair River to offset past alterations to deepen shipping channels in the river. The second is to focus on the longer-term impact of Climate Change on water levels across the Great Lakes Basin. The fear is that, with warmer winters and less precipitation, water levels will trend down beyond historic lows on all Lakes in coming decades.

GBA is supportive of both restoring the St. Clair River and taking a more holistic approach to water management across the Great Lakes in the face of Climate Change. We see one as a shorter-term step and the other as an issue that needs to be addressed in the longer term. We believe the two approaches are complementary.

GBA is committed to try again to reconcile the differences in perspectives, since we believe that presenting competing priorities to governments could well create reasons for governments to decline to act on water levels. We have proposed a facilitated process to all stakeholders on water levels – including ROWI, GBF, Stop the Drop, the Canadian Ship Owners Association and the Council of the Great Lakes Region – that would involve individual discussions with each organization, hopefully leading to a meeting among all of us to develop consistent key messages to governments on priorities for action.

Time, money and other resources are finite commodities. We aim to develop a coordinated and credible approach that will deliver results without duplicating efforts or requiring any organization to change its priorities. ■■

## Ontario Provincial Police

### OPP Funding Model under review

The Province of Ontario is conducting a review of how OPP policing costs are billed out to municipalities. The current model allocates costs based on the amount of crime that occurs in each community. The proposed model would use a 73/27 fixed/variable formula with the fixed portion being based on the number of houses (permanent and seasonal) in each community. And the new model would exclude commercial and industrial developments which have a history of attracting crime in a community.

Some municipalities have calculated that the new model will increase their policing charges by up to 10 times. The Township of the Archipelago, for example, calculated that their costs would rise from \$110,000 per year to \$1.2 million. They estimate that this would translate into an 11% tax increase for their ratepayers. Based on a quick survey that GBA conducted, most (but not all) Georgian Bay municipalities are concerned about the impact of the new model. Some are asking their ratepayers to write letters to Provincial officials. We would encourage all GBA members to contact their local municipal office to see what position your municipality is taking with regard to policing costs and what, if any, action they recommend you take. ■■



# Annual Spring Meeting

**G**ordon Walker, Interim Canadian Chair of the International Joint Commission (IJC), was the second keynote speaker at GBA's Annual Spring Meeting.

The IJC was established as a result of the Boundary Water Treaty between the US and Canadian Governments in 1909. Simply put, the role of the IJC is to prevent and resolve disputes over trans-boundary waters. The IJC works with Advisory Boards in over 12 regions from coast to coast, including one in Alaska/Northern BC. The Great Lakes present the IJC with one of their busiest and most complex regions. Gordon pointed out that the IJC provides advice to the two governments but does not, in and of itself, make decisions.

“

**Despite the slight improvement in water levels the IJC stands behind its advice to pursue further investigation of placing compensating structures in the St. Clair River...**

”

On the Great Lakes the IJC has been dealing with a wide range of issues including water levels in each of the Lakes, water quality/blue green algae (particularly in Lake Erie), and aquatic invasive species.

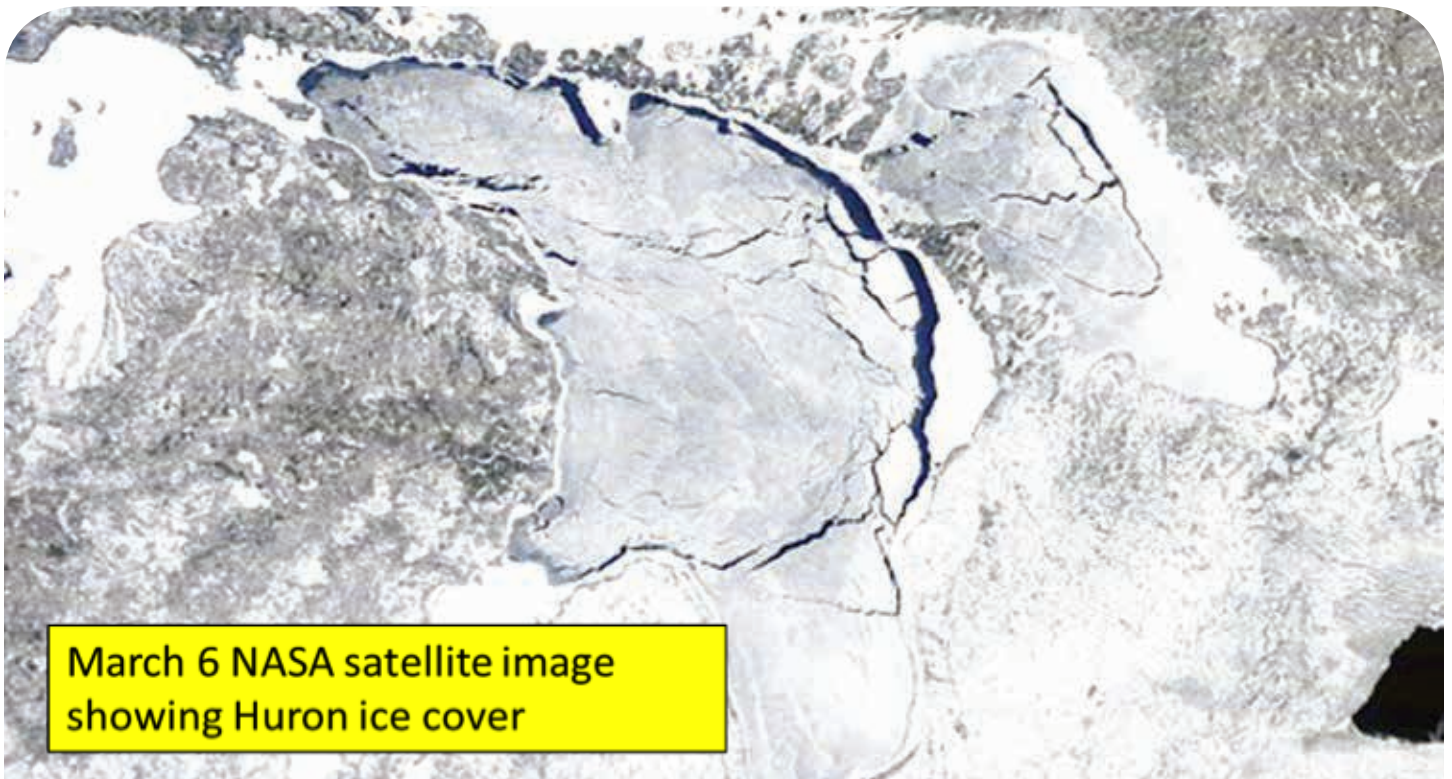
Gordon shared his, and the IJC's, current thinking on water levels in Lakes Huron, Michigan and Georgian Bay. Water levels in these Middle Great Lakes have increased over the past year thanks, in part, to a wet spring in 2013 and significant ice cover this winter (see picture of ice in Lake Huron and Georgian Bay taken by NASA on March 6 2014). The IJC believes there may still be ice in parts of Lake Superior into June of this year!



Gordon Walker,  
Interim Canadian Chair of the IJC

Despite the slight improvement in water levels, the IJC stands behind its advice to the two Federal governments to investigate further placing compensating structures in the St. Clair River to increase water levels in the Middle Lakes. Gordon showed several slides depicting what had been previously examined, including weirs extending into Lake Huron, flap gates and speed bumps on the bottom of the St. Clair River, and even a dike obstruction between Stag Island (a Canadian island in the River) and the Canadian mainland. He noted that technologies have evolved greatly since these ideas were first proposed. He supports consideration of newer technologies, such as those used on the Thames River in England, that would enable water to be held back or released depending on prevailing conditions.

Gordon remains optimistic that the two Federal governments will heed the advice of the IJC and that we will see some action from the governments in due course. ■■



**March 6 NASA satellite image showing Huron ice cover**



# Upcoming Events

We have received the following information updates from our sister Georgian Bay organizations and pass them on for your information.

## Georgian Bay Land Trust

### **GBLT screening of Edward Burtynsky & Jennifer Baichwal's Watermark Film –**

Thursday July 24 at 7:00 pm. Honey Harbour Catholic Church. \$12 suggested donation. *Watermark* is a feature documentary film that brings together diverse stories from around the globe about our relationship with water: how we are drawn to it, what we learn from it, how we use it and the consequences of that use.

**GBLT's "Geology of Georgian Bay: 2 billion years of change" Rock Walk Series** hosted by Dr. Nick Eyles. Bring your walking shoes, a picnic lunch and come spend the afternoon learning about the unique geology of Georgian Bay.

1. Thursday July 31 at 1:00 pm at the Pancakes, Carling Township. \*We will meet by the Government dock at 11:00 am. Please boat pool if possible.
2. Thursday August 7 at 1:00 pm at Painted Rocks, Bayfield \*If you wish to convoy as a boat flotilla with us to the Painted Rocks, meet with your boats at the Bayfield Boat Club at 11:00 am.

### **GBLT's Kids Conservation Quest Program**

– Thursday August 7, 10:30 am to 2:00 pm on the Lizard, Cognashene. Please bring a bagged lunch and arrive promptly at 10:30 am.

A free program for kids ages 8 to 11 where they will learn about the natural environment of Georgian Bay.

Honey Harbour, the Ojibway Club and the Sans Souci and Copperhead Association (SSCA) will also be running sessions at their respective camps, please stay tuned to their newsletters and websites.

More details on all the above will be available at [www.gbtl.org](http://www.gbtl.org)

## Georgian Bay Forever

### **GBF Vital Signs IV speakers series –**

Saturday October 18, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm at the Metro Toronto Reference Library, Bram and Bluma Appel Salon.

## Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve

**Films That Make You Think**, second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm, Museum on Tower Hill, 171 George St., Parry Sound. (705) 774-0978.

### **Environment Days**

Pointe au Baril Community Centre Environment Day – Thursday July 17.

Sans Souci Environment Day – Thursday July 24.

Blackstone & Crane Lake Environment Day, Crane Lake Resort – TBA.

### **GBBR Annual General Meeting –**

Saturday August 16. All welcome to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of our UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve! Grand Tappattoo Resort, 30 Tapattoo Trail, Seguin Township.

RSVP to (705) 774-0978.



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# GBA Holds 97<sup>th</sup> AGM

by John Carson, GBA Update Editor

The GBA held its 97<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on March 22, 2014. This meeting was attended by representatives of GBA's Member Associations – in most cases the association's President – as well as GBA Directors. (The GBA's annual spring public meeting was held a week later and is also covered in this issue of *Update*.)

Sue Grundy, GBA President, chaired the meeting. Before presenting the slate of directors for 2014, Sue thanked six retiring directors of GBA (see President's message for details).

The directors elected for 2014 are:

GBA BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014	
Bay of Islands	Lindsay Richards
McGregor Bay	Gerry Quinn
Northern Georgian Bay	Freda Klassen
Key River	Alan Burke
BNIA	Anne Stewart
	John McMullen
Pointe au Baril	David Ballentine
	Ian MacLeod
Sturgeon Bay	Kyle McQuat
Blackstone Lake	Robert Moos
West Carling	Marc Cooper
	Carolann Moisse
South Channel	Paul Morgan
Sans Souci	Eric Armour
	Rupert Kindersley
Woods Bay	Richard Crouch
Manitou	Darin Buckland
12 Mile Bay	Silvia Hermann
Wah Wah Taysee	John Carson
Madawaska Club	Sue Grundy
Cognashene	Doug Carr
	(1 vacant)
Honey Harbour	Alan Waffle
	Peter Koetsier

Sue Grundy will continue as GBA President for 2014.

The associations approved minor changes to the GBA's by-laws to formalize the Executive Committee of the Board. The financial statements for 2013 were also approved. They showed a small surplus, despite our onetime \$10,000 donation toward the Economic Impact Study of Low Water Levels in the Great Lakes.

## 2014 Priorities

Sue Grundy presented GBA's top 3 priorities for 2014: water levels, membership and communications. (See the President's update for more information.)

## Committee Reports

The chairs of 8 committees of the Board of Directors then presented reports on their activities and plans for 2014:

1. Membership – *Marc Cooper*
2. Communications – *Rupert Kindersley*
3. Government Relations – *John McMullen*
4. Water Levels – *John Wilson*
5. Water Quality – *Bob Duncanson*
6. Boating and Safety – *Anne Stewart*
7. Lands and Forests – *Wendy Parker*
8. Fisheries – *Gerry Quinn*

Articles in this issue of *Update* on current Boating issues and the new GBA website cover several key parts of those Committee reports. Highlights from two other reports were:

The **Water Levels Committee** made substantial progress in addressing the short-term crisis in water levels last year. They worked on 6 important initiatives:

- Support for a streamlined approval process for dredging and blasting by marinas and others affected by last spring's critically low water levels.
- Successful lobbying of the IJC to make recommendations for action on low water levels.
- Increasing public awareness through media interviews, reports and appearances at public meetings and before government bodies.
- Lobbying Federal Ministers and the PMO for their support on the issue.
- Financial support for the Council of the Great Lakes Region's Economic Impact Study (being conducted by the Mowat Centre) through a directed donation to Georgian Bay Forever.
- Worked to forge consistent key messages on government action by the key water levels stakeholders.

This year the GBA will continue to focus on the need to develop a consistent message across organizations that are involved in the water levels file. Although the immediate crisis has abated, due to higher precipitation levels over the past year and good ice cover this winter, GBA will continue to prioritize the water levels file in 2014. We will maintain pressure on Canadian politicians and officials, the IJC and other levels of government to take action, and continue media communications to maintain public awareness of the long-term nature of this problem.

The **Membership Committee** is preparing an online resource of marketing materials to be shared with all associations. The Committee is also considering a Family Membership Proposal to assist our associations in attracting new members, particularly from generations younger than the primary member. At least 4 associations already have more than one membership category, but most do not. ■■



# Update Spring 2014

by Sue Grundy, President of GBA

After such a long winter, I'm sure that, like me, you are looking forward to a good spring and summer on the Bay this year with your family and friends.

I want to update you on the Georgian Bay Association's priorities for 2014. These priorities were developed in consultation with the chairs of the various GBA committees, and approved by the Board and by the Presidents of the local cottagers' associations that make up the GBA at our Annual General Meeting in March.

GBA's top priorities for 2014:

1. **Water levels** - Water levels are up, but the levels in Georgian Bay and the middle Great Lakes are still significantly below the long term average. We will continue to press for a long term solution to low water levels.
2. **Membership** - We will help our local associations put together concrete initiatives to provide value to their members and help build their membership. Growing the local associations helps the GBA's advocacy on your behalf, because the more members our associations have, the more people we represent. Please encourage your neighbours and family to join your local association if they are not already members. We will also consider inviting additional local associations to become part of the GBA.
3. **Communications** - We will be working to enhance communications with our members through our website, Facebook page, monthly reports to the associations, and our *Update* newsletter. We will also continue to communicate effectively with other organizations, governments, etc.

## Other Initiatives

There are several other areas where the GBA plans to be active this year. They include:

- **Election readiness** for the municipal elections this fall.
- **Water quality**, with an emphasis on ensuring that governments commit to actions to implement the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and that water quality testing is done and reported effectively.
- **Boater/cottager relations**: There have been problems with overcrowding of moored boats in some areas, primarily in the southern end of the Bay. We will help to address these problems, including the updating and publicizing of the Boater/Cottager Code of Conduct.
- **Fisheries issues** including Asian Carp, open net aquaculture and invasive species.

## GBA Board of Directors

Several GBA board members retired at this spring's annual meeting. Our retiring directors are:

- **Craig Bowden** (Cognashene). Craig joined the Board in 2006 and has served the GBA in many roles. Craig was my predecessor as President from 2011 to 2013, and has served as Past President for the past year.
- **Jeremy Gawen** (West Carling). Jeremy joined the Board in 2004 and retired from the board for the first time in 2007. He rejoined the board in 2008. Jeremy was the Chair of GBA's Wind Subcommittee, which monitored proposals for wind turbines on the Bay, and has been active on water levels issues.
- **Wendy Parker** (Cognashene) – Wendy joined the Board in 2008. She has served for many years as the Chair of GBA's Lands and Forests Committee and has written many articles for *Update* about the flora and fauna of the Bay.
- **Paul Percheson** (Honey Harbour) – Paul joined the Board in 2009. He brought his scientific credentials to bear as chair of our Water Quality Committee.
- **Cam Richardson** (Pointe au Baril) – Cam joined the Board in 2007. He was an active member of the GBA's Governance Committee as we did a significant governance review. He also served as Treasurer for the past two years.
- **John Wilson** (Manitou) – John joined the Board in 2006. He has led many GBA committees including the Government Affairs Committee, the Fisheries Committee, and most recently the Water Levels Committee.

On behalf of the GBA, I would like to thank each of the retiring board members for their many significant and vital contributions to our organization.

We are also very pleased to welcome several new directors.

**Doug Carr** (Cognashene) joined the Board last fall. Doug has taken over as the GBA's Treasurer. Three directors have joined us this spring: **Darin Buckland** from Manitou, **Peter Koetsier** from Honey Harbour and **Carolann Moisse** from West Carling. We look forward to working with all of them.

If you would like to get involved in any of the activities of the GBA we would be glad to hear from you. If you are interested, please contact Bob Duncanson, our Executive Director, the representative of your local cottagers' association, or me. Our contact details are on the GBA website. ■■

# On the Waves: the Latest in Boating

by Anne Stewart, GBA Boating and Safety Committee

Our Boating Subcommittee, composed of both GBA directors and members of the boating community, is working hard on boating and cottager issues, mostly relating to noise, wake, gray water discharge, trespassing and privacy. We have lots of news on boating to share with our members (see below), and we want to hear your input on these issues! Please send comments to either Anne Stewart or Paul Morgan, the new chair of the GBA Boating and Safety Committee, at [gba@georgianbay.ca](mailto:gba@georgianbay.ca)

## Navigation issues

Paper charts are being phased out, although you can still get them printed. Canadian Nautical Charts and Services now use a print-on-demand technology through dealers. With the increased use of GPS and mobile devices, it is recommended that you do not rely entirely on electronic navigation. There may be changes in channels and/or channel markers for many reasons that do not show up on your electronic device. Check your bearings, keep a visual watch and go slower in poor conditions!

## Boating safety

OPP reports for 2013 show that the number of boating-related fatalities was about the same as in the last few years. About 80% were male, and over 50% of the fatalities were persons over 51 years old. Kayaks and canoes accounted for 30% of the fatalities.

Use of lifejackets and other safety equipment is advised, even in smaller, non-motorized vessels.

## Boat Licensing

The Pleasure Craft Licensing Program has been under review for a number of years and boat licensing may change to annual licensing in the near future. If you own a boat, it is advisable to get it licensed now, as current licenses do not expire. See [https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-paperwork-paperwork\\_boat\\_licence-3212.htm](https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-paperwork-paperwork_boat_licence-3212.htm)

## Pleasure Craft Operator Competency Program and operator cards

New course providers, new agreements and a national database are now in place so that enforcement officers can verify operator cards. Fines are substantial, so make sure you carry your card.

## Pleasure Craft Operator Competency Program for rental boats

To accommodate the rental boat industry and out-of-country visitors, rented boats are required to meet a Rental Boater Safety Standard and Checklist. This is being updated and 5 different vessel-specific versions have been developed.

## Pleasure Craft Courtesy Check (PCCC)

Transport Canada's Office of Boating Safety and its partners deliver a PCCC program. This enables you to have your boats checked for compliance to ensure they are properly equipped and safe. We suggest you consider finding an authorized person in your association to conduct this check, or get someone trained to do it. The *Safe Boating Guide* is a good resource and is available at <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/tp-tp511-menu-487.htm>

## New types of vessels

New technologies and new vessels keep coming to market. Stand-up Paddleboards (SUPs) and fly-boarding are two that have raised safety requirement concerns. SUPs will probably be treated like surfboards: if they travel from point A to point B (behaving like a vessel), they will be required to have PFDs.

## A BIT ABOUT A BOAT



Forty years ago, George Rossiter decided he didn't want to be a doctor, like his parents, or a fast-track business whiz, like most of his friends. He wanted to build boats. And stubbornly, that's what he did. He started out building rowing boats sleek, streamlined boats, through which a person could find both fitness and peace.

He then went on to study marine architecture and built his boats for the ultimate in style and function. He built hydrodynamic, smooth-in-the-water boats and created innovations in the Loudon, our Powerboats and other models that others should have thought of but never did. Today, Rossiter Boats are still made slowly and carefully, by hand.



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TOMORROW'S IDEAS

Visit [www.rossiterboats.com](http://www.rossiterboats.com), or phone the Boatshop at 866-251-3280 for more information or a representative nearest you.



### Coast Guard changes

The Coast Guard implemented significant changes in 2013. Nationally, the former 5 regions have been reduced to 3. For Georgian Bay the closest rescue centre is in Trenton. Traffic control has moved from Thunder Bay to Prescott and Sarnia. Aids to Navigation are still based in Parry Sound. The Coast Guard plans to tender out maintenance of most navigation channel buoys. ***You can reach the Coast Guard without a VHF radio by dialing \*16 on a cell phone.***

### Fire pumps

Fire is a major risk in cottage country. Many different fire-fighting arrangements exist, including: association-owned equipment, equipment provided and maintained by a municipality, and mapping and publicizing of privately owned pumps and locations. The cost of owning pumps and the related hoses has fallen substantially. Although installing a fire pump may not reduce your insurance premium it is good insurance none-the-less! But it is critical to practice using the pumps and train other people how to use them.

### Distress signals and communication

Several changes in the requirements relating to distress signaling and communication are likely. It is almost impossible to dispose of expired flares, since it is illegal to set them off and no agency is officially willing to take them back. In future, manufacturers will be required to take them back. The requirement to carry flares has not been updated for many years and many alternatives now exist, including strobe lights, better horns, lasers and LED lights. So the number of flares a vessel must carry may be reduced, especially for smaller vessels. In communications: VHF radios with registered 'Automatic Identification Systems', Emergency Positioning Locator Beacons (EPIRBs), personal locator beacons, and using \*16 from cell phones are all enhanced options. Reminder: VHF radios with AIS need to be registered for the system to work!

### Lifejackets and PFDs

The inconsistencies between Canadian and US standards for labeling lifejackets and PFDs are being addressed by Underwriters Laboratory. Harmonization is coming soon, with the ultimate objective being to develop a common international standard. These new standards will be based on the amount of buoyancy (i.e. how high out of the water it will float a person) and will include pictograms. ***The GBA has a seat on the Standards Technical Panel, so please forward your input on this to Anne Stewart.*** ■■

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Spotted Turtle. Photograph by Kary Firstbrook

## SAVE THE DATE! Georgian Bay Land Trust Annual Art Auction

November 14, 2104  
St. James Cathedral Centre

The Bayscapes Art Auction is one of the GBLT's most important fundraisers and is a great occasion to make your mark on Georgian Bay and help protect the land under GBLT stewardship:

- 1,327 wilderness acres
- 39 stewarded properties
- 42 native species-at-risk

Mark Friday, November 14 in your calendar now to make sure you join an evening of art, camaraderie and preservation of our unique archipelago.

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# What exactly is an Archipelago?

by the Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT)

Those of us who love Georgian Bay often talk about “our unique archipelago” and we speak proudly of the fact that eastern Georgian Bay contains the world’s largest freshwater archipelago. On some maps the area is referred to as “the 30,000 Islands”; this name was in fact officially recognized by the Canadian Geographical Names Committee in 1989.

We’ve heard widely varying claims about the actual number of islands, so we thought we’d take a closer look. What exactly is an archipelago? How many islands make up the archipelago of eastern Georgian Bay? Is it really the world’s largest freshwater archipelago? And where is the world’s largest saltwater archipelago?

The origin of the word is from the early 16th century: from the Greek *arkhi*, meaning “chief,” and *pelagos*, meaning “sea.” The word was originally used as a proper name for the Aegean Sea, which is notable for its large numbers of islands. Later the word was used to describe the Aegean Islands. It is now used to refer to any island group, or sometimes to a body of water containing a large number of scattered islands.

Pinpointing the world’s largest saltwater archipelago depends on

whether you define it based on its total area, or by the number of islands it contains. The world’s largest archipelago by area, at over 2 million km<sup>2</sup>, is the Malay Archipelago, consisting of over 25,000 islands located between mainland Southeastern Asia and Australia. The Archipelago Sea, located in Finnish territorial waters of the Baltic Sea, is the largest archipelago in the world, with an estimated 50,000 islands.

There is a notable saltwater archipelago in Canada. The Arctic Archipelago is comprised of about 36,500 islands and is situated in the northern extremity of North America. It covers about 1,425,000 km<sup>2</sup>, an unimaginably huge area, encompassing the entire northernmost portion of Canada. This obviously eclipses our archipelago in terms of both overall size and number of islands, although we do come close on the latter measure.

How many islands are there in eastern Georgian Bay? The number of islands arguably varies as water levels rise and fall, and also by what constitutes an “island”. The figure can only ever be an estimate. Henry Wolsey Bayfield, who also gave Georgian Bay its enduring name in honour of England’s King George IV, surveyed Lake Huron,

## Georgian Bay Archipelago is the world’s largest freshwater archipelago.



Photo provided by John Sallinen of RE/MAX Parry Sound - Muskoka Realty





**Raja Ampat archipelago is part of the world's largest saltwater archipelago, the Malay Archipelago.**

Georgian Bay and the North Channel during the years 1820-1822. Bayfield is said to "have charted and defined 34,560 islands on the east side of Georgian Bay". A remarkable achievement given the massive area covered and technology available at the time, not to mention the treacherous terrain and seas we know he must have encountered. Bayfield's detailed survey remained the recognized chart for Georgian Bay for close to 70 years.

Other Great Lakes / St. Lawrence archipelagos include the Apostle Islands, a group of 22 islands in western Lake Superior off the Bayfield (yes, Bayfield) Peninsula in northern Wisconsin, the Lake Erie Islands, a group of 28 that straddles the Ontario /Ohio border in mid-Lake Erie, the Thousand Islands (in fact over 1,800 islands by a very inclusive definition of "island") at the top of the St. Lawrence downriver from Kingston, and the Hochelaga Archipelago at the confluence of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence Rivers. This last of course includes the island of Montreal, and is also known as the Montreal Islands. Here too the estimated number of islands varies, between a generally accepted 234 to as many as 325.

Thirty thousand appears to be a conservative estimate of the number of islands in eastern Georgian Bay and would apply during times of any water level, although as in other archipelagos, the requirement for qualification as an island remains pretty vague. Ours is however, by all accounts, the largest of its kind in both area and number, and we are hugely privileged to spend time there. ■■

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## GBBR's Kids in the Biosphere

by Rebecca Pollock, GBBR

Since children are immersed in nature during the summer, **Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve** decided to connect them with local ecological phenomenon, including facts about biodiversity and species at risk. A *Kids in the Biosphere* pilot program was set up in Pointe au Baril for the summer of 2013. Each of the 50 families who signed up received a kit with activity instructions and a few materials, such as insect magnifying boxes, and began a friendly competition that saw cousins and neighbours compete for points and prizes. These self-guided activities, like photo scavenger hunts, were

designed to last all summer, and are now available at [www.gbbr.ca/education/kids](http://www.gbbr.ca/education/kids) to families wanting to participate in them.

Beyond nature observation, the activity kits invited kids to conduct science experiments and participate in a provincial frog monitoring program. Families that submitted photos of their discoveries had them posted on the Biosphere website. The photos included remarkable documentation of mammal skeletons and snapping turtles mating! Although the activities are mainly self-guided, there are a few opportunities throughout the summer for families to interact with

Biosphere staff and guest experts, such as Bill the Bat Boy who helps build bat boxes. Environment days, hosted by GBA member associations, proved to be another good opportunity for offering children's programming.

The success of the pilot *Kids in the Biosphere* has inspired the creation of a booklet that will include many of the popular activities, information on local wildlife species and much more. The *Kids in the Biosphere Activity Booklet* will be available for sale this summer in various retail outlets or directly from GBBR.

An online blog will share fascinating facts and allow Biosphere staff to answer questions that are submitted, including the identification of "mystery" species. Through a partnership with the Township of the Archipelago, Biosphere staff will offer the program in other areas over the next few years, with Sans Souci and Crane Lake/Blackstone Lake scheduled for 2014, along with a second year at Pointe au Baril, that will be supported by local businesses and donations.

Delaina Arnold, Education Coordinator, says: "Children never forget that there is so much more to our landscape than the iconic majestic white pines, shield rock and islands with open water. They make it their business to spend time looking at the small details and basking in a sense of wonder at the UNESCO World Biosphere in their backyard!"

To support environmental education offered at area summer camps, resorts, and other organizations that work with children, GBBR staff will be offering training workshops for staff that will focus on how to develop and deliver highly successful outdoor education programs that communicate local environmental issues, biodiversity threats and stewardship methods.

Associations interested in setting up a program, or to volunteer or to sponsor any of the programs, please contact Delaina at [education@gbbr.ca](mailto:education@gbbr.ca) ■



"We've had so much fun collecting pictures and looking at nature this summer. Your kit has been a big hit! We built and put up a bat box, listened to the sounds of frogs and looked at the health of our little Wetland. Thanks for a great summer!!"

Kids with mammal bones. Photo credit: Amanda Ley



## Species at Risk – Spotted Turtle

The last issue of *Update* included an article about Ontario's Endangered Species Act. Species at Risk (SAR) in the Georgian Bay area were listed, based on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' SAR map tool. It has been noted that one species, the Spotted Turtle (*Clemmys guttata*) was missing from the list. In fact, the Spotted Turtle is an endangered species that is found in the Georgian Bay area and in other scattered locations. It prefers semi-aquatic habitats such as ponds, marshes, bogs and even drainage ditches. The Spotted Turtle is a small turtle, whose shell is rarely over 13 cm long. More information can be found at:

[http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Species/2ColumnSubPage/MNR\\_SAR\\_SPTTD\\_TRTL\\_EN.html](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Species/2ColumnSubPage/MNR_SAR_SPTTD_TRTL_EN.html) ■■



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# My Experience with Turtle Tally

by Mary Campbell, Sans Souci

My name is Mary Campbell. I am 11 years old and have cottaged in Sans Souci since I was a baby. I love reptiles, especially turtles. There are 6 different turtle species that I have seen in Georgian Bay. They include the spotted turtle, which is endangered, Blanding's and stinkpot turtles, which are threatened, the snapping and northern map turtles, which are under special concern, and the Midland painted turtle. My favourite turtle is the spotted turtle.



Burke Korol, who used to work with Ontario Parks, was the person who got our family really interested in turtles and taught us how to locate the different species.

I find more turtles than anyone I know. How do I do this? First, I have to know where to find the species of turtle I am looking for. For example, I would go to a wetland to find a Blanding's turtle. Then you have to look very closely and persevere because the same turtles will often stay in the same general areas. You will have the best luck finding a turtle on a sunny day in June. Always bring your binoculars, a camera with a zoom lens and a snack. If you spend enough time looking, you will find one. My mom and I take many photos of turtles.

Last summer, some turtle researchers from McMaster University came and stayed at our cottage for a few days. They told us about the Turtle Tally, a community-based conservation program run by the Toronto Zoo that records where Ontario turtles survive, what threatens their populations and where the habitat that sustains them is found. We started sending our photos and other information about our turtle sightings on-line. In the fall, we were invited to a Turtle Tally and Frog Watch meeting and lunch at the Toronto Zoo. We learned a lot about turtles and frogs in Ontario and the conservation efforts that are underway. There were biologists there to answer our questions, and real

turtles to see and hold!

One of the advantages of participating in the Turtle Tally is that they will send you back an information kit. The information kit has turtle stickers, an egg identification chart, the turtles of Ontario poster and the stewardship guide. In the guide it tells you about each type of turtle, how you can help them, how to protect turtles and their nests and much more. For more information, see <http://www.torontozoo.com/adopt-a-pond/turtletally.asp>

Now that you know a bit about the Turtle Tally I encourage you to start sending in your sightings to the Toronto Zoo! It will really help scientists to learn about and protect the turtles. ■■





Winter is over (I think)! And what a winter it has been. For those who like getting to the cottage by ski or snowmobile it has been fantastic. For those who prefer a warmer winter it has been overly long. Weather is a regular topic for discussion when I meet with people and more often than not, this winter, the conversation starts with a complaint about the cold. I quickly respond with a few of the positives that come from a traditional Canadian winter like the one we have just enjoyed. First and foremost the cold has created ice cover on most of the Great Lakes. This has in turn reduced evaporation. Water levels will increase as a result. Secondly, many of the forest pests, such as Emerald Ash Borers and Gypsy Moths, are killed off by sustained sub zero temperatures. I'm not saying that these pests will be eradicated by the cold temperatures this winter, but their numbers should be greatly reduced. As with many things in life there is a silver lining if you look hard enough.

Water levels will indeed be up this summer over last summer. How much they will be up will largely be a function of how wet the spring is. Remember last year when we received 200% of our average rainfall in the month of April and the Lakes responded extraordinarily. Let's keep praying for rain!

Our cover message in the last edition of *GBA UPDATE* stated, "Water Levels – Relief Not Redemption". GBA continues to actively pursue and support government work on studying and implementing solutions to avoid a repeat of the record low water levels experience in January 2013. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter there has been some good news on the water levels front, but much more work lies ahead.

As we approach summer 2014 there is a lot else on the go. GBA continues to be actively engaged with:

- Aquaculture – promoting the evolution of this industry into closed, contained, non-polluting operations.

- Monitoring and providing comment on how to avoid, eradicate or, where necessary, cope with aquatic and terrestrial invasive species such as Quagga Mussels, Round Gobies, Asian Carp and Phragmites.

- Boating issues including boater – cottager friction.
- Water quality monitoring including how to prevent and/or eradicate blue green algae
- Political affairs particularly with municipal elections this fall and likely a provincial election sometime this spring.

GBA's strength since its inception in 1916 has been its members. We have benefitted over the years from bringing together the best and brightest from our communities to work with government on the problems of the day. As time has evolved our communities have grown and generations have turned over. As you will read elsewhere in this issue of *UPDATE* we are concerned with membership engagement particularly with the next generation of Georgian Bay cottagers. We need to find ways to engage the younger set to bring their energy, passion and talents to the table. Most of the issues we tackle are ones that will benefit them and their children. If you are reading this you are already plugged into the GBA. Please give some thought on how to connect GBA with those in your family and community who are not currently plugged in. I am always available to listen to your ideas. The future of the GBA and the future of Georgian Bay depend on this.

As in past summers I plan to be on the Bay for most of it and visit many of the Georgian Bay Association member communities. I hope to see many of you during my travels. ■■



## Elections

# Municipal Elections 2014 – Exercise Your Franchise

All municipalities in Ontario will be holding municipal elections on October 27 of this year. If you own a property in a municipality (and are a Canadian citizen) you are eligible to vote. GBA strongly encourages its Members to get engaged in the municipal election process. Learn who your candidates for office are and what their vision is for cottage country. Remember how much tax you pay each year to your local municipality – You have a right to be heard!

We believe that all of the municipalities in the GBA region – including Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands, Killarney,

Township of the Archipelago, Seguin, Carling and the Township of Georgian Bay – allow mail in voting. BUT it is important to make sure that you are on the Township's voters list. **We encourage every property owner to contact his or her municipal office to make sure that you are on the list.** Also ask about who is running in your municipal election. Some municipalities have stable Councils and a number of Councillors will be acclaimed. Listen to what your local Community Association has to say about the various candidates. And on October 27 exercise your franchise from an informed position. ■■

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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.

**Patrons of GBA:** The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.  
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## CLOSE ENCOUNTER ... WITH AN ENDANGERED SPECIES



For Adults Only

Write a 300 word story about a close encounter you have personally had with an endangered species of Georgian Bay. Include photos if possible.

**The GRAND PRIZE**  
**winner will be published in the**  
**2015 GBA Spring UPDATE.**

The GBA has the right to post any submission on our GBA website from time to time.

Submit by January 1, 2015 to  
[gba@georgianbay.ca](mailto:gba@georgianbay.ca)

To find a complete list of  
 ENDANGERED SPECIES  
 Check out **GBA 2014 Spring Update**  
 on our website.

**Lands and Forest Committee**  
 The Georgian Bay Association  
[www.georgianbay.ca](http://www.georgianbay.ca)

## POSTER CONTEST

Must be ... Under 16 &  
 a Nature Lover!!



### Steps to making a winning poster!

- 1) Choose an endangered species
- 2) Research – need accurate facts
- 3) Eye catching title or phrase
- 4) Creativity using hand drawn artwork
- 5) Include how we can protect them

Take a photo of your poster and send to  
[gba@georgianbay.ca](mailto:gba@georgianbay.ca)

**SUBMIT BY SEPTEMBER 1, 2014**

**Keep your poster**  
 If you are **ONE OF THE LUCKY WINNERS** we will contact you.  
 Your poster will be featured in the **GBA 2014 Fall Update!**

To find a complete list of **ENDANGERED SPECIES**  
 Check out **GBA 2014 Spring Update**  
 on our website.

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## New GBA Website and Facebook page

by Eric Armour, GBA Webmaster

The GBA Communication Committee's web strategy is to broaden the outreach to our water-based communities and other stakeholders using effective and convenient communications methods. Under this strategy we have developed a multi-year plan. Last year we removed the technological limitations of our original website and start the build out in new areas of communication, such as social networking. In the long term, under the web strategy, we plan to re-visit the design of the updated website to add richer functionality and improve ease of use. We will also look at expanding our communication to other social networking opportunities like Twitter or Instagram, or the next popular social networking tools. Change never stops in this field!



By launching our new improved website ([www.georgianbay.ca](http://www.georgianbay.ca)) access was greatly improved for people using multiple browser platforms (Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Opera, Sea Monkey, Flock, etc. . .). We also enabled the website to function and display properly on mobile devices like tablets and smartphones. At the same time, we delivered more flexible publishing tools enabling GBA board members to post their own articles and updates to the site. In the social networking space, we launched our first social networking presence with Facebook. This site was launched in 2013 and can be found out at [www.facebook.com/GBayAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/GBayAssociation). This is a very active site with over 300 likes and regular updates from around the Bay. Join us on Facebook!

What's ahead? Content, content, content! More and more GBA Committees are leveraging the website to report on their activities. We've just added a new subscribe feature that lets you receive automatic alerts when new items are posted to the site. Did you know we are posting weekly water levels reports? You can also download the latest and back issues of *GBA UPDATE*. Later on we'll look at how the design of the website can be improved for simpler navigation and access to content. Stay tuned for updates.

As always, we welcome your feedback on these initiatives. Feedback can be sent to [gba@georgianbay.ca](mailto:gba@georgianbay.ca) or by clicking on the envelope icon on the [www.georgianbay.ca](http://www.georgianbay.ca) home page. ■■



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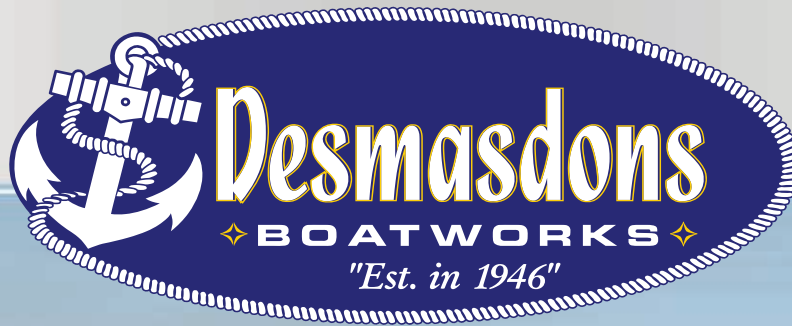
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