

# LTCA Newsletter – June 2023

Lots of news to share with our LTCA Members and others interested in our Association.

Some of this will be somewhat repetitive to those that follow us on Facebook as we use our Facebook page to post quite regularly but not everyone uses that social media platform so an emailed Newsletter provides the best opportunity to reach everyone at the same time.

**LTCA Finances** - Your Association is in a very enviable position with 160 paid Memberships in 2022, a substantial amount of financial donations, a very low \$35 membership fee and approximately \$17,000 in our bank account to start 2023. Mike Marrs is now reviewing last year's financial statements prior to Treasurer Lorraine Poisson submitting our T2 Short Return to the CRA. Lorraine has emailed everyone their 2023 Membership renewals using the new Quickbooks software. We maintain an up to date Membership List on an Excel spreadsheet which is revised regularly.

**Summer Students** - Our application for a 2023 Canada Summer Jobs Grant was not approved after 2 years of approvals of approximately \$10,000 per year. Apparently funding has been reduced post-COVID. Ontario Parks has agreed to increase their grant by \$500 to \$3,500 for Summer Student work within the Mattawa River Provincial Park. YES Employment Services will be providing a \$5-\$7 an hour grant for the hiring of one new student. A substantial grant has been approved for one of returning student so we are now in a position to move ahead for 2 Environmental Summer Students for July and August. The minimum hours will be 24 per week, being Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Mondays. Summer Student Supervisor Clint Wilson will be again hiring, training and supervising. The Students will be visiting every cottage/residence along Lake Talon and Kaibuskong Bay.

**AGM** - Last year the AGM was held virtually during a September evening using ZOOM. I expect we will do the same again this year as it worked very successfully. After last year's AGM, in order to post the recorded meeting, LTCA volunteer, Robert Poisson created the LTCA's YouTube Channel. If you are interested in finding our channel, or wish to view last year's meeting, search our full name, Lake Talon Conservation Association and it will come up. The channel is public and is searchable. We do need a few more Volunteers to come forward to assist in the running of the Association.

**LTCA ByLaws** – The recently passed Ontario Not-for-Profit Act (ONCA) requires the LTCA and all other Not-for-Profit organizations to revise or develop their Bylaws to conform to ONCA. Your President and Treasurer have participated in a FOCA – CLEO webinar and hopefully this task can be completed for consideration and approval at the 2023 or 2024 AGM.

**Blanchard's Landing Dock & Boat Ramp** – A considerable amount of time and effort has been spent over the past 6 years trying to bring various parties together to secure funding for the replacement of the existing "floating" dock and the dredging of the boat ramp and immediate area. This has been very discouraging as the need is so apparent but Ontario Parks have no capital \$. Don Paquette, President of the Madadjiwan Economic Development Corporation and Chief Clifford Bastien Jr., Mattawa – North Bay Algonquin First Nation have recently brought together a partnership of LTCA, Bonfield Township, Calvin Township, Ontario Parks, NBMCA and others to make one final initiative for funding by both the Federal and Provincial government grants. Long time LTCA Members John Kelsall Sr., Chris Whalley and Garth Gummo are participating in this endeavour. We thank John, Chris and Garth for their involvement. The

funding Applications are now being prepared and will be submitted shortly. The timing is perfect as we have both Vic Fedeli MPP and Anthony Rota MP briefed on the issues. The proposed project will be large and will include extensive dredging and likely take several years to complete depending on the extent of funding approvals. The immediate priority is replacement of the dock with a longer one as well as dredging of the boat ramp. LTCA has indicated that we will make a donation for the dock replacement depending on contributions from local townships as well as the provincial and federal governments.

**Instagram** - LTCA volunteer, Robert Poisson has also taken over the LTCA's Instagram account and has actively been posting submitted photos since the start of the season. If you have any photos that illustrate cottage life, the outdoors, nature, wildlife or points of interest around the lake, please feel free to send to Robert at [LTCAMedia5@gmail.com](mailto:LTCAMedia5@gmail.com) You can follow us at laketalon.c.a, or you can search LTCA and it will come up.

**Septic Pump-Outs** – The last septic tank pump-outs for water access cottages was carried out in September of 2021 with 28 being pumped. The next scheduled pump-outs will be in 2026, being on a 5 year interval.

**Dock Numbers** – George McLellan and I will be endeavouring to get this finalized in the next month so signs can be ordered for those persons that previously requested them. If you are interested in obtaining a Dock Number please advise ASAP.

**Friends of Mattawa Portage Signing** -The Friends of the Mattawa River Group have proposed a replacement and/or repair of all of the portage signing along the Mattawa River between Trout Lake in North Bay to Mattawa. They are now negotiating with Ontario Parks on this matter but no progress has been made. The LTCA has offered to support their efforts in this important project.

**Mattawa River Canoe Race** – The annual Mattawa River Canoe Race will not take place this year. The organizer, North Bay – Mattawa Conservation Authority has decided to take a pause for 2023 and return again next year after a complete review. LTCA has offered to support this important event.

**Obituaries** – Three long time cottagers and LTCA members have recently passed away. Our sincere condolences go to the family and friends of Jack Chadbourne, David Dedels and Franz Ohler Sr. Please forward any future notices for posting on our Facebook page.

**Kaibuskong Bay Narrows** – Many of our Members who reside adjacent to the shallow Narrows on Kaibuskong Bay, opposite Talon Lake Campground & Marina report continuing nuisance and property damage by speeding watercraft creating large wakes as they pass through at high speed. Boats travelling within 30 meters (100 feet) from shore are limited to 10 kmh (6mh) in Ontario. Please be considerate and go very slow as you travel in this area and other shorelines.

**Hazard Marking** – The LTCA has done preliminary investigation of taking on the responsibility of purchasing and installing Hazard Markers throughout the waterway. Our Insurance has advised that this liability can be covered at a reasonable cost. We cannot proceed with this important safety initiative unless we can get sufficient Volunteers to come forward to assume this responsibility. We need an overall person to be in charge and several others to look after the seasonal installations and removals, monitoring, record keeping, etc. Email [LakeTalonContact@gmail.com](mailto:LakeTalonContact@gmail.com) if you are interested in participating.

**Starlink Internet Service** - Starlink Hardware Sale is currently advertised for those interested. Several cottagers have reported delivery within a week of ordering and some installed the dish themselves. This offer does not apply to the RV Mobile option. There are approximately 6 cottages currently using this service. No seasonal suspension of service except the RV Option. [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=226786386820932&id=100084687157843](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=226786386820932&id=100084687157843)

**Water Level Management** – I have posted on Facebook very frequently on this critical matter which impacts almost everyone along Lake Talon and Kaibuskong Bay and I will summarize the latest information I have here.

There has been significant turnover in the District staffing of the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry (MNRF). Graham Mewett is no longer in that position so please remove him from your Contacts. Brian Mills, IRM Technical Specialist is the primary operating contact. The Manager is now Robert Baker, Acting District Supervisor. Randall McLaren is the Acting District Manager.

There has been an obvious learning curve for them over the past 3 months. Water levels were extremely high (10.275 metric in the Spring runoff with many docks lost or floated away. The water dropped precipitously to 9.800 around May 8<sup>th</sup> and rose quickly thereafter and has been frequently above 10.150 for the last 4-5 weeks. Many people contacted the Ministry over this period. Several weeks ago I met with Robert Baker and received his assurance that they would make this a priority and my conversation with Brian Mills yesterday confirms their commitment to be proactive. Here is the recent correspondence below. The MNRF agreed that I was permitted to post Mr. Mills' reply as they are committed to full transparency and accountability within their available resources. Quotation marks and italics are used for Mr. Mills.

Copied from my LTCA Facebook posts of this week

My letter of June 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:53 p.m. follows:

Brian (Mills) & Robert (Baker)

The water level at Lake Talon is quickly rising well beyond the so-called High Normal. This is unprecedented at this time of year and there appears to have been no discernible action taken to draw down the water levels last Friday or this morning given the widespread rainfall weather warnings.

Docks are going underwater and some waterfronts are flooded and if a wind comes up tomorrow or the next few days there could be severe damage.

Can you please explain what the Ministry's plan is to bring the water levels down to a more reasonable level.

Brian Baker  
LTCA President

Brian Mills of the District MNRF did promptly reply to this inquiry with the following statement which was approved for general circulation:

*"During late spring and summer, when experiencing dry conditions, we strive to maintain water levels at the high end of the operating range. Lowering levels is always an option, but bringing levels back up can be much more challenging at this time of year. Late last week, we reviewed the forecast which predicted rainfall occurring primarily on Monday. We decided not to operate on Friday as pulling logs going into the weekend could drop levels more than anticipated. If the*

*forecasted rain did not fall, this would have put us in a challenging situation moving into dry summer months. It was also very dry last week and it was expected that much of the rainfall would be soaked up by the landscape. The forecasted rain came early on Sunday and produced higher amounts locally than anticipated. A crew was sent out Monday morning to remove 2 rows of logs from the dam which did not lower levels enough as rain continued to fall into Monday evening. A crew returned on Tuesday to remove 8 more logs to bring levels back within range. I anticipate returning Thursday to put logs back in once water levels are within range. Our office continues daily monitoring of water levels and weather forecasts to inform and direct water level management decisions.”*

Current water level at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 15th is 10.025

Ministry staff advised that they are visiting Talon Chutes Dam today (Thursday) and will be replacing logs removed on Monday and Tuesday of this week in order to keep water levels at a more normal level.

Yesterday I spoke to Brian Mills of the Ministry and the following points were discussed.

- The lengthy period of water levels above 10.150 was not the best choice even though we were in a drought position as some properties and docks are very negatively impacted, especially during wind events.
- The recent drought period definitely showed that there was sufficient incoming water to maintain the water level during this lengthy no rain event.
- The recent flooding conditions early this week demonstrated clearly that the water levels need to be actively managed and the dam cannot be left with all logs in.
- The Ministry will be very cautious not to let the water level drop below 10.000 during the boating season given demonstrated issues at Talon Lake Marina and Camp Conewango Marina.
- Heavy siltation in these areas have noticeably increased the problem of boat launching and navigation.
- The Ministry and your LTCA President recognize that there are strong and diverse opinions on water levels, some wanting high and others low and it is a very difficult, if not impossible task to keep everyone satisfied.
- The Ministry, like almost every other government service, are faced with budget and other restraints and people need to recognize that fact. Anyone needing medical attention over the past few years can attest to a noticeable and distressing trend in public services.
- The Ministry has asked myself as LTCA President to be the focal point of receiving comments or criticisms of their water level management and I have agreed to be the liaison person with their staff and I have accepted this responsibility as your President. They have indicated that they want to operate in a fully transparent manner and we are moving forward on that basis. Individuals can still contact Ministry staff if they choose to do so.

I trust that everyone will appreciate the many difficulties in managing the water level and hopefully the situation improves for the rest of the year. Weather forecasts, overtime restrictions, and other issues contribute to the difficulty in managing water levels to everyone's complete satisfaction.

To summarize and move forward it is my opinion and I think that this is shared by the new Ministry staff that the following guidelines should be now applicable:

- Water levels should not be dropped below 10.000 for any length of time due to navigation hazards particularly at Talon Lake Marina and Camp Conewango Marina. A

water level of 9.950 causes noticeable problems and should only happen rarely and for brief periods.

- The goal is to try and prevent water levels rising above 10.150. Water levels above 10.150 should only be permitted during or shortly thereafter heavy rainfall events and mitigation measures should be taken ASAP to drop the water to the 10.000 level.
- Long range weather forecasts should be de-emphasized in adjusting log levels in advance and more emphasis placed on more quickly responding to actual rainfall received in conjunction with frequent monitoring of the water level graph and adjusting more frequently as may be required.
- The previous Ministry guidelines of Low Normal of 9.850 is not currently practical so in effect the Ministry will need to be more proactive to manage the water levels as close as practical to 10.000 or slightly higher.
- The Ministry's past practice of drawing down the water in October in preparation for winter needs to be further reviewed to ensure that their timing does not jeopardize fish spawning and boat launching/removal. (Note – not yet discussed with MNRF)
- I will continue my practice of not publishing screenshots of the Water Level Graph as they were creating more issues than benefit.

Your comments and suggestions are always encouraged and welcome by email to [LakeTalonContact@gmail.com](mailto:LakeTalonContact@gmail.com)

Time does not permit me to engage in lengthy responses or debate.

Our Lake Talon Conservation Association – LTCA Facebook page remains the best and most immediate method to keep up to date on various matters. You do not need to be a Facebook member to view but Facebook members have the only way to comment independently. Others wishing to comment on a Facebook post need to email me so I can post your comment.

Brian Baker  
LTCA President

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