



Sparrow Lake Association (SLA) *News and Views*

Serving Lakefront Property Owners and Cottagers

Lock # 42 Washago—Lock # 43 Swift Rapids

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Note: Click on underlined text in this newsletter to access relevant websites.



Photo courtesy of Emma Bowman

Welcome back to the cottage for 2016.

After a winter of modest snowfalls and some early spring days with temperatures in the shorts-and-t-shirts range, I'm sure you are as anxious to get back into the cottage season as I am. And after seeing the first eager water-skiers pass my dock on April 17th, we know that summer fun is not far away.

A few heavy rainfalls and excessive runoff in late March surprised many cottage areas with higher than expected water levels. Our neighbours in the Muskoka Lakes area experienced major ice damage to boathouses and shoreline structures. This damage was caused by the high water level, which allowed large ice floes to blow into the structures.

While still high, the water levels in Sparrow Lake are gradually declining. When the water was at its highest, many cottage waterfronts were left with lots of debris, including relocated dock sections, chairs, and water toys. Please be cautious around your shorelines. If you do discover anything missing or found, we may be able to connect you with the other party. Send us a note with the description and your contact information, and the Sparrow Lake Association (SLA) can send out an email blast to help with the recovery.

For flooding updates, see <http://ontario.ca/flooding>.

Spring also is the start of your cottage outdoor cleanup, raking, and burning. As our friends on Lion's Head Road pointed out, April 2016 marks the third anniversary of the loss of three area cottages due to carelessness (one on McLean Bay and two on the Seven River).

It took 14 trips with a water bomber, 30 men, and seven vehicles from the fire department, paramedics, OPP, and MNR to keep the fires from causing even more damage. We still lost these buildings, plus 3.1 hectares of forest floor.

Please respect the fire ban laws, ensure you obtain the appropriate fire permits, and obey the burning rules, times, and specific burning requirements for your respective townships. Muskoka Township calls for night burning only, while Severn Township permits burning only during daylight hours.

Your SLA Board members continue to keep up to speed on the latest events with the federal, provincial, and local municipal governments. Much of our information comes to us via the Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations (FOCA). I urge you to look at the [FOCA](#) website. Several of their current topics are linked to this newsletter.

Water testing, water quality, and weed observation are key elements monitored by the SLA and all cottage associations. The water testing facility in Orillia is currently not testing lake water quality, but we are in the process of connecting with an alternate facility until the one in Orillia is back in operation. SLA conducts water testing on specific areas in Sparrow Lake, Deep and McLean Bays, and the Severn River. Any significant results will be shared with our members.

I also encourage you to view the [Sparrow Lake Association website](#). It's a great tool for checking dates, activities and information about **your** cottage group. I also ask that all members promote the benefits of being a member to your neighbours. Not only is the \$30/year (or \$75 for 3 years) cover a cost-effective family admission to the Regatta, membership fees are also used towards the costs of testing and monitoring water quality, staying connected to FOCA, and covering prizes and awards for the Regatta.

I hope you all have a great 2016 cottage season! Please do join us for the annual Regatta and Fishing Derby (see the reports in this newsletter).

I look forward to seeing you throughout the summer.

Cheers, Bob

2. Membership

Judy Moore Vey

Below are some of the many things the SLA does for its members. Please pass these notes on to your cottage neighbours and friends, and encourage them to join us!

- Voices can be heard—of all Sparrow Lake property owners
- Timely discussions—for all SLA members
- Visibility at local municipal council meetings—to represent our property rights
- Membership in FOCA (the voice of 50 000 cottagers) as the Sparrow Lake Association
- Sustainability—cottage stewards bringing our precious lakewater into the future
- Environmental protection—promoting ecological lakefront development; monitoring water quality
- Lake development—monitoring zoning bylaw issues in Severn & Muskoka Townships
- An active website—keeping cottagers informed of current events and activities all year
- Membership—easy online registration or use a printable form to mail to SLA
- E-blasts—updates on upcoming events; reminder notices
- SLA newsletter online—including current events, key issues, and SLA initiatives
- Social media communications (e.g., Facebook)
- Networking opportunities—socialize with other members and keep informed
- Summertime events—family and friends annual picnic; fishing derby, regatta, etc.
- Fundraising—annual golf tournament to raise donations to a local organization
- Annual general meeting in August—all members can attend to discuss issues
- Education workshops (e.g., boating safety, estate planning, environmental concerns)
- Waterfront safety—liaison with O.P.P.; promoting safety issues and safe boating
- Prevention and protection—placing markers on rocks; identifying hazards

If your membership expired in the last four years, you will have received an email advising you of your expiry date. We encourage you to please renew your Sparrow Lake Association Membership early in the season. If your email address has changed in the last year or so, or you haven't heard from us, please complete the form.

1-year membership: \$30 / 3-year membership: \$75

There are two ways to renew:

1) Print the Membership Application found on the website (under the Join tab) and mail the form with a cheque payable to Sparrow Lake Association. Please be sure to complete all the information on the membership form! Mail your membership application to:

Sparrow Lake Association Treasurer Judy Moore Vey
118 O'Connor Crescent,
Richmond Hill, ON
L4C 7R7

2) Send an email transfer from your bank to treasurer@sparrowlakeassociation.com. Follow your bank's standard e-transfer procedures. Please complete the Membership form and scan and email it to the above email address so that we can update your information on file.

3. Property Assessment Notices

On July 11, 2016 MPAC will be mailing Property Assessment Notices to residential property owners. MPAC's Municipal and Stakeholder Relations team is committed to supporting municipalities throughout the 2016 Assessment Update and beyond.

There is a 2016 Assessment Update communications toolkit to help. In addition to general information about MPAC and property assessment, the toolkit includes:

- Residential notice mailing dates & local MPAC contacts
- How to find out more about property assessment through AboutMyProperty.ca
- How to file a Request for Reconsideration
- Information about the Assessment Review Board
- Web tools, including
 - Twitter and Facebook messages and responses
 - A widget providing a direct link to AboutMyProperty.ca and
 - Other helpful links

[Anne Haines](#) (MPAC Account Manager for Muskoka and Parry Sound Districts) can be reached by email or phone: 705-774-4470.

4. SLA Regatta

A very successful 2015 Regatta was hosted at the Sparrow Lake Camp with the help of Rob Crew, his camp volunteers, and many SLA members. After experiencing one Regatta as chair, Jane Bowman invites you to the 2016 Regatta.



Photos courtesy of Emma Bowman

Please join us on **Sunday July 31** for the 2016 SLA Regatta on the sunny shores of **Sparrow Lake Camp**. Registration opens at 9 a.m. You are welcome to join us throughout the day for food, events and whatever else happens...!

- arrive by boat or car
- There is limited parking for boats, but plenty of car parking
- the camp has graciously offered participants the use of their canoes and kayaks
- lifejackets are mandatory
- there is a main hall for registration and other activities such as the silent auction, etc.
- prize donations are always appreciated
- BBQ fare and drinks will be available

New events for 2016 will include the great sandcastle-building contest and the family watermelon race.

Old favourites will include casting, the inner tube and swim races, the mini-marathon, carpentry, pie baking, and the lucky raffle

Many races are done as intergenerational teams.

All family members can earn points for participation and placing in events. These points will be tabulated to determine the winner of the Cottage Cup Award. And don't forget about the Spirit Award, which is also awarded annually.

For more information, contact [Jane Bowman](#) or check for updates on the SLA website.



Photo courtesy of Emma Bowman

5. Fishing Derby

Save the Date: **Saturday, July 9. Please join us!**

All kids 14 years old and younger are welcome to join us in the annual SLA Fishing Derby. This is a low key event with emphasis on Fun. There will be prizes for all participants. The Fishing Derby will be hosted by Paul and Karin Prendergast. Participants are encouraged to bring a picnic lunch to enjoy after the Derby.

This Derby is a great opportunity for younger kids on the Lake to "connect" on the water—no TV or electronics. Let's get the word out to friends and neighbours on the Lake about this great event. Details to follow in our next e-blast.



6. Dates to Remember for 2016

- Saturday, July 9: Fishing Derby
- Sunday, July 31: SLA Regatta
- Saturday, August 6, 9:30 a.m.: Annual General Meeting at Bayview-Wildwood Resort

7. Useful/informative Weblinks

[Climate change in Muskoka](#)

[Gravenhurst Opera House](#): Theatre (Comedy, Classical, Current) and Tribute Bands, including Elvis, Eagles, Led Zeppelin and Abba

[FOCA Spring Seminar](#)

[Benefits of being a member of the SLA and FOCA](#)

[Cottage First Insurance](#): website found in FOCA's 2015 year in review document

Photo courtesy of Judy Moore Vey

Have a fantastic and safe summer!