



June 2019

Executive Report SPRING / SUMMER 2019

Fellow property owners,

We hope this newsletter finds you well. The purpose of this note is to give you an update on news impacting us as cottagers/property owners and to give you some information about what your executive has been working on ahead of our annual meeting.

That annual general meeting of the Tea Lake Property Owners Association will take place on Saturday July 20th from 9:30 to 11:30am at the Severn Falls Chapel. We hope you can make it out as we have again invited the mayor of Severn Township Mike Burkett to attend. The meeting's content is obviously important, but so too is the opportunity to meet neighbours, including the association executive. We want to hear from you. Look for the agenda to be posted on the website www.tealakecottagowners.com

If there is something additional that you want tabled, please let us know, in writing, by Saturday June 29th. This allows us time to prepare and properly respond.

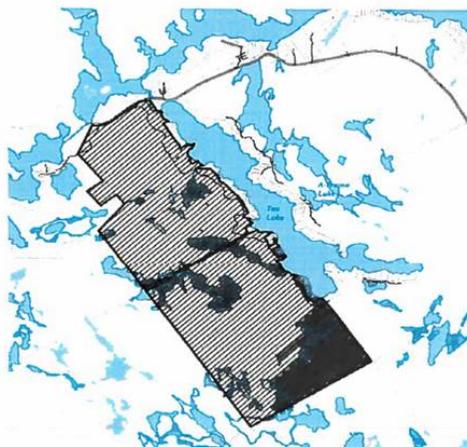
Our Vice President, Don Jackson has resigned as a result of selling his cottage. Don and his wife Linda are going to relocate their cottaging to be closer to their family. We want to thank Don, both in his role of VP and more importantly as president prior to my election. He has been a great advisor and his contribution to our association and the lake has been significant. Don should be credited with re-engaging our relationship with Severn Township and has brought us more insight and use of the Federation of Cottager Associations ("FOCA") which culminated with a grant to conduct an aquatic study of water plant life and health in our lake. Don has been an effective communicator of the importance of lake stewardship and lake etiquette. His contributions to the association will be missed and leaves us with a critical hole on our executive. If you are interested in helping us out, please let us know.

We are saddened to let you know of the passing of Don Lavis. There are many "pioneers" who have transformed the community of cottagers on Tea Lake, but very few had a bigger impact than Don Lavis. The son-in-law of one of the Lake's first cottagers, Don had a vision to drive to his cottage. Along with local farmer Art Silk, "Doc" would drive his car, usually a Cadillac or Lincoln through the bush, running parallel to the shore, with Art following in his equipment. After too many episodes of getting stuck, Doc bought his own bulldozer and over the course of a few summers, saw his dream realized. Long after Don had left the lake, the West Side Tea Lake road committee elected to name the road Lavis Lane. Don was also a township councilor in our area. At that time, it was the Township of Matchedash which was later amalgamated into today's Severn Township. We owe a debt of gratitude to a true Tea Lake pioneer.

Obviously, our biggest news since our last newsletter is the establishment of a complete fire ban in the area surrounding the west side arm. We sent a letter to you about the fire ban on June 14 and will be discussing it at our AGM as well. As a reminder, Severn Township has drawn a very precise area for the ban as illustrated on the next page. The establishment of the fire ban does illustrate what can happen

when we establish and cultivate a relationship with various levels of government to better educate and inform them of issues that affect us, both positively and otherwise. We would like to acknowledge the work of the entire Severn Township council and in particular Mayor Mike Burkett, Deputy Mayor Jane Dunlop & Ward 1 Councilor Mark Taylor. Thanks also to Tim Cranney, Severn Fire chief and Derek Burke, Director of Public Works, for their help in getting this by-law out of committee & passed by council.

This is a complete fire ban but is currently only in effect until 12/31/2019. It does NOT apply to fires on our private property, nor does it exclude us from other fire laws including times when Severn Township issues a temporary township-wide fire ban.



Enforcement of the ban is limited to Severn Fire, Severn Township's fire prevention officer and the OPP via calling 9 1 1. As cottagers, we need to be careful not to provoke situations with campers that might escalate. We have more work to do to coordinate awareness and enforcement with the township, but we now have a by-law in affect that will dissuade some, but not likely all, visitors to our lake from camping irresponsibly.

Another area that is emerging as a concern, is the water level on not only Tea Lake, but the section of the Severn River that we are connected to. The Severn River, between Swift Rapids and Big Chute and by extension Tea Lake are seeing water levels that are pretty consistently 2-4" below historic levels. We have learned a lot about water management in the spring that is needed to drain flood waters from Lake Simcoe down the narrow Severn and out to Georgian Bay. During that time, our water is low as they empty more through Pretty Channel and Big Chute dams than the Swift Rapids dam upriver can send. However, when the spring run-off subsides, we regularly find ourselves with a lake that is a little lower than what we are used to and what we need to safely and easily step on to our docks and to navigate out to the river. We have reached out to the Severn River Association of Property Owners ("SRAPO") to coordinate our efforts in dealing with several institutions including Parks Canada, Orillia Power and Ontario Power Generation, who control water flow and levels. Stu McGill, from Frankland Lane, has volunteered his time to help association executives & SRAPO to try and resolve this with a variety of entities including both federal and provincial governments, Ontario Power Generation and Orillia Power who control water flow and levels.



Through-out last summer and fall, both our Treasurer Doug Roberts and Vice President Don Jackson were in regular communication with Simcoe County regarding the road work done on Upper Big Chute Rd. and its impact on our cottagers. Concessions and changes were implemented as a result of that lobbying. Specifically, we were able to get Simcoe County to reduce the incline to the entrance of Lavis Lane (still pretty steep and sightlines aren't ideal) and to lengthen (make less steep) our boat launch area at the end of the lake. We will have an update on the last phase near Severn Falls at our AGM.

In February, Michael Collins met with our MPP, Jill Dunlop, at her Queen's Park office with Don Jackson joining by phone. Jill has emerged as a strong supporter of our association and has helped us with our fire ban campaign by helping to coordinate the exchange of information between her office, Severn Township and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

In early March, Secretary Robin Priestly attended parts of the annual general meeting of FOCA. There is no doubt that we can learn a lot from what other lakes are doing, especially in the areas of lake stewardship. There are also resources at FOCA that are available to us. One of my goals for this year and next will be to better understand how to leverage this important association partner. Their website is www.foca.on.ca

Your executive has met regularly over the last year and all of those meeting minutes are posted on our website for your review.

I am pleased to report that our annual Tea Lake Regatta is on again this summer on Saturday August 10th. Sobey and Apruva Thomas, the owners of Tea Lake Cottages have once again generously donated their property for this event. Many thanks to Robin Priestly and her team of volunteers for many years of organizing this fun, kid centric affair. After a year off due to "vendor issues" we will once again have our annual fireworks on the lake later that same day. We would like to thank Rod Wright for once again arranging for this fun event. We collected money last year which we are repurposing, but if anyone wants to make a donation, please do so by July 15 by contacting Rod Wright at wright@bbsrealty.com

Some new things we are working include a welcome package that we will be distributing to all new cottagers. It will include some helpful tips, important contact information and some information about the local area. We hope to have this ready to show you at the AGM in July. If you miss that meeting and want a package, please contact our Robin Priestly at robin@priestly.ca. We are also starting a new campaign to gather a history of our lake through the eyes of the cottagers and their families who have been here for decades.

The Tea Lake Property Owners Association executive wishes you a healthy, happy summer on Tea Lake. As always, please use the lake responsibly and be considerate of your fellow neighbours.

Enjoy your summer!

Michael A. Collins

President

Doug Roberts

Treasurer

Robin Priestly

Secretary