

April 20, 2020

## COVID-19 Update

Fellow Tea Lakers,

I hope this letter finds you well and that your family and friends are safe and healthy. On behalf of your association executive, I wanted to give you an update on the COVID-19 as it relates to our lake. The situation with the virus is unprecedented and dealing with it is challenging virtually every societal norm. This is true of cottaging as well. The rural communities across Severn Township and Simcoe County have reduced capacity to accommodate sudden changes in supply demands. Folks are doing their best, but cottage country is not immune from this pandemic.

In listening to other association executives via the Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (FOCA), in reviewing the situation with our own executive and in reading publications from various levels of government, the answer about cottage use is far from simple, but it is clear that cottaging is being impacted, with the goal of restricting spread of the COVID-19 virus. I suppose the good news is that many of us wouldn't ordinarily open the cottage until nearer to the May long weekend. By then, more will be known, given the recent extension of the province's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act until mid-May.

All that said, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic is on vivid display in cottage country, including in and around Tea Lake. All marinas and many local businesses are currently closed. The Ontario government has issued an order that limits short-term rentals, including cottages, to those "who are in need of housing during the emergency period." The Township of Severn, with approval from Simcoe County, has *closed the boat launch* at the head of our lake and has issued a township wide open fire ban. Finally, Parks Canada has suspended the opening of all visitor services, including the Trent Severn Waterway until at least the end of May and further, has suspended the purchase of lock and mooring permits.

Here are several articles and government statements for your information, via the following links:

<https://www.townshipofsevern.com/covid19>

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/voyage-travel/securite-safety/covid-19-info>

[https://files.ontario.ca/solgen-oic-closure-nonessential-business-2020-04-03\\_0.pdf](https://files.ontario.ca/solgen-oic-closure-nonessential-business-2020-04-03_0.pdf)

<https://foca.on.ca/covid-19-update-from-foca/>



**If you do decide to visit the cottage (or are there already), we suggest the following:**

- Rural hospitals & clinics have very limited capacity and resources, and you need to consider where your health needs can best be met, in an emergency.
- Provision yourself with food, drinks, gas, hardware supplies, prescriptions etc. *before* leaving, so that you will not need to make stops along the way. This is not the time for “buy local”.
- As you would do anywhere else, should you urgently need anything from a retailer or pharmacy, call ahead to see if there are options for safe pickup or delivery.
- Continue to follow all the principles of social distancing at the cottage. Although the lake is usually the place for relaxed rules, that cannot be the case as it relates to social distancing now and for the foreseeable future. Gatherings of multiple households in an extended family or with friends places you, your family, your guests and possibly your neighbours and local residents at risk too. The cottage is no different then anywhere else in this regard, despite more room and space.
- Develop an exit plan with family, in case you develop any indications of illness while at the cottage.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact us. In the meantime, if you are here, use the lake responsibly and be considerate of your fellow neighbours and of residents and businesses.

Sincerely,

**Michael Collins**

President

**Doug Roberts**

Treasurer

**Robin Priestly**

Secretary

**Mark McGee**

Vice President