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# RIVER TALK



RIVER SAFETY  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
AWARENESS  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT





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# President's Message

**Peter Fitton**

August officially marks the end of the Dog Days of Summer, but the forecast predicts a hot last full month of summer. No better place to cool off than on the river!

On Saturday July 22, TIA held its 2023 AGM at Gananoque's waterfront Playhouse Theatre. Live music, breakfast, and welcoming remarks entertained a crowd of some 200 attendees. Speakers included Ross Stewart, explaining TIA's role on the IJC's Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management (GLAM) Committee's Public Advisory Group (PAG) Plan 2014 Expedited Review, and Tony David, Director of Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, Environmental Division, and a Member of the US Section of the International Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River Board. Mr. David's message focused on the IJC Plan 2014 and an overview of regulation capabilities, limits and some of the diverse impacts experienced across geographic areas. Understanding these impacts leads to more robust planning and mitigation of impacts of extreme wet and dry weather.

A year ago, TIA alerted the River Community about the Cataraqui Conservation's (CRCA) 5-year update to Guidelines for Implementing Ontario Regulation 148/06: Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses. CRCA hit a pause on the Guidelines update due to a large volume of public and stakeholder feedback and are now preparing revisions and clarifications. CRCA has announced there will be a second round of consultation later in 2023. Monitor [www.CataraquiConservation.ca](http://www.CataraquiConservation.ca) to keep informed and to stay involved.

To advance TIA's Mission on River Safety and Community Support, Board Members are researching contact information and best practices about local emergency procedures. Look for this helpful resource on TIA's website.

TIA is grateful to the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands and the Town of Gananoque for 2023 Grants to help fund the replacement of 31 worn-out rock markers. The force of nature determines the rock marker's life expectancy and the percentage of annual replacement required. This funding is critical to sustain the shoal marking essential service.

The next Trash Free River Clean up event is planned for August 19. Look for further information in upcoming TIA email blasts and social media posts from Grace Mychajlyszyn, TIA's Environmental Co-ordinator. Please sign up as a volunteer, bring a friend, and enjoy the fellowship in making a difference!

Remember to reduce, reuse, and recycle!



## Allison Burchell-Robinson

The two boats raced towards the marina both coming from the same direction, albeit one was closer to the shore line and behind. Suddenly the outer one goosed the throttle a bit more and surged ahead pulling into his slip seconds before his neighbor arrived at his slip. Grinning goodnaturedly, the winner proclaimed "I beat you once again, better luck next time and they slapped a high five.

This time, however, a neighbor and a new one at that spoke up to say "Which one of you had the Right of Way?" The boaters turned in unison both claiming they had the Right of Way. The neighbor observed that neither knew who really had it.

For those of you often out on the River, this is an all too common situation. Sailboats, kayaks, paddleboards, pontoon and bass and big and small boats all intent on arriving at their destinations and

seemingly unaware and/or unconcerned about all the other boats in their vicinity. Who should give to whom is not on their radar.

Yet, everyone has a boating license or is supposed to before taking to the water. So how can this be? The answer is simple, anyone can get the manual and answer the questions, often with the manual on his/her lap. Proficiency in boating is earned not given. How many of you have seen little "river rats" encompassed by their life jackets circling around and around an island, a marina or a dock then coming into dock and then going out again and again? Their parents and the generations before them knew that a large boat does not make you a Captain. Practice and knowledge of safe boating practices, rules and regulations and competency does.

River safety is often spoken about. It is indeed one of the three pillars of the Thousand Islands Association. Unfortunately there are those boaters out there who neither know nor care. They are the ones you read about and usually not in a complimentary way. If you see someone on the water who is not practicing river safety either on his/her or others behalf, speak up. Contact the Coast Guard or the police. They want to hear from you.

By the way who had the right of way coming into the marina and which boat takes precedence?



# In Case You Were Wondering...

*...about your PCL?*

**Dave McWilliam & Alec Turner**

Remember those numbers/letters on the bow! The ON, QC or NY is your Pleasure Craft Licence (PCL). The PCL can expire, and their renewal may not be as simple as you think! The guidelines for how this is done and what kind of watercraft must be registered are dictated by your province, state, or country where your boat operates.

In Canada, if your PCL was issued or updated after 2010 it's valid for 10 years, you will likely be notified by Transport Canada 90 days before expiry. After that, you could be fined for operating a vessel without a valid licence.

We thought you might like a few helpful ideas on renewing:

- Click here for the Online application \*\* Note: link on official TC letter may be different.
- Gather all existing info about your vessel and a copy of the previous PCL, you have to input your information as if it's a new application
- Scan/photocopy a piece of government issued ID
- Grabbing a photo of your vessel Compliance Notice may be useful. This metal notice plate is located near the helm.
- A copy of your original bill of sales may be helpful
- A recent full side-view colour photograph of the vessel...out of the water on a trailer or cradles.

The application is straight forward if you have gathered all the info before you begin. Whether you apply on-line or by post the information you need to provide is the same. In the USA, here are some basic steps to follow when registering a boat:

- Research the boat registration requirements in your state.
- All documents are available through your state's DMV
- Complete the appropriate state registration form
- Provide proof of ownership—including a title and/or bill of sale
- Pay the registration fee, which varies by state and vessel size.
- Be aware of the expiry date and apply for renewal. You'll receive a registration sticker that must be displayed beside the numbers on your bow.

How to Register a Boat -USA & Canada

Federal Regulations

In the USA, state registration is similar to Cdn. licensing, be aware there are also federal registrations available in both countries. If your boat has a marine mortgage, or you are travelling outside territorial waters you must register the boat with federal authorities.



# Getting Into the Green Scene

Composting is nature's way of recycling. It is one of the most powerful actions we can take to reduce waste, address climate change, and build healthy soil. By turning our food scraps and yard trimmings into compost, we transform our waste streams into a beneficial, value-added soil amendment and use it to protect the environment and create resilient communities (or in this case, islands).

Each island stands alone and holds the footprint of a small community upon it. The islands come equipped with plumbing systems, water and shelter, but now it's time to take a closer look at how we have been dealing with food waste on "thousands of islands."

On remote islands, on-site composting wields immense power, bestowing a multitude of environmental benefits.

**Tree Seedling Growth:** Combining local compost with soil boosts tree seedling survival by 75% compared to using soil alone, aiding in reforestation efforts and protecting fragile ecosystems.

**Prevents Soil Erosion:** Compost fortifies soil structure, reducing erosion caused by wind and water, safeguarding island landscapes.

**Assists in Wetland Reclamation:** Compost aids in reclaiming wetlands,

fostering vital habitats for unique island flora and fauna.

**Assists in Stormwater Management:** Compost regulates water flow, proving vital in managing stormwater and preventing flooding.

**Promotes Healthier Plant Growth:** Compost nourishes plants, promoting robust growth and resisting diseases, fostering thriving flora. These are just a few examples of some of the many benefits associated with composting.

**Overcoming Composting Hurdles:** Composting has the potential to reduce household curbside waste by up to 25%, but land requirements pose a challenge. Luckily, the majority of the 1000 Islands provide the perfect solution to the hurdle of overcoming spatial issues.

As stewards of remote island paradises, adopting composting practices is our responsibility. The composting revolution brings a brighter future - curbing waste, nurturing resilient communities and islands), and combating climate change. Let us embrace this green movement, preserving the unspoiled allure of the 1000 Islands for our future generations to inherit. These islands hold a special place in our hearts, having been cherished by our families for generations. As a part of our family, let's nourish them with love and care.

If you are interested in learning more about composting, [click here](#) for a great resource.



# Wildlife Corridor:

## *The Great Blue Heron (Ardea Herodias)*

**Janet Smith-Staples**

They stand at about 4 feet tall and have a wingspan of up to 6 feet. I'm sure you've seen them quietly hunting along the river's edge or gracefully flying by with their neck tucked close to their chest and their wings stretched way out to the side.

These elegant birds have always struck me as very solitary, and territorial creatures and it turns out they are – but only after breeding season is over. Like many species there are elaborate rituals during courtship to attract a mate. This includes aerial displays along with plenty of neck stretching and more loud calls to help seal the deal. Once they've made their match the nesting begins. They typically nest in colonies called rookeries, more specifically a heronry, and their large nests are made up of big coarse sticks situated high up in dead trees – often directly over the water or overlooking wetlands. On average there are 2-6 eggs per nest and while some rookeries can have as many as 40 or 50 nests others can have less than 10.

They are monogamous during mating season (but will date others the following year) and both parents share in the incubation process, which takes about 25-30 days. Once hatched both parents continue to care for the chicks who grow quickly and fledge around 60-90 days.

There are Great Blue Heron populations that are migratory (like the ones we see along the river) and they have quite a bit of variation in how far they travel. Some may only travel a few hundred miles from the northern edges of their breeding grounds to warmer regions of the United States. Other blue heron populations, however, migrate more than 3,000 miles between northern ranges in Canada to wintering grounds in southern Mexico or northern South America. When they do migrate, they do it alone or in a small group of 3 to 12.

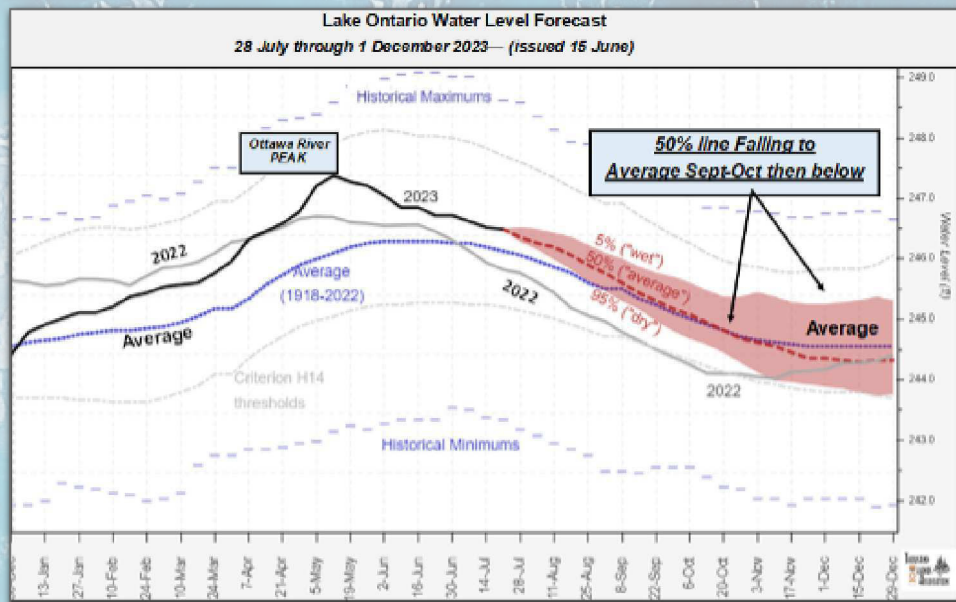
I think they are beautiful and I love to watch them "Stay Calm and Carry On."





# Water Level Updates:

Remaining Just Above Average Until October



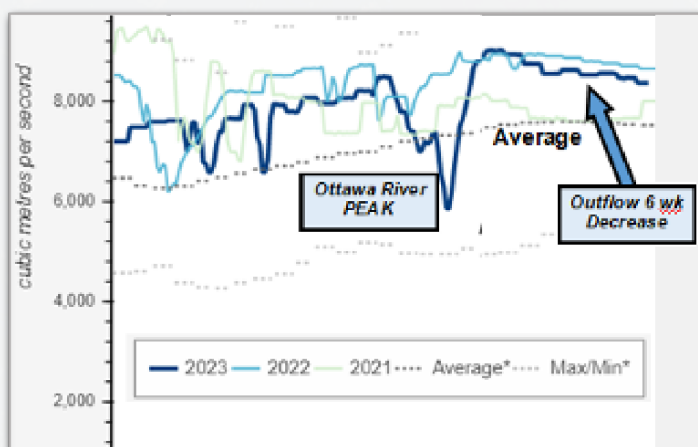
Lake Ontario Water Level Forecast

Edits by TIA

**Vince Barton, Ken White, Ross Stewart**

We're now a cell phone width above average. November may be that width below!

Since the flow peak of 8,880 m<sup>3</sup>/s on May 27th, outflows have been slowly reduced by about 500 m<sup>3</sup>/s to the current 8,360 m<sup>3</sup>/s (as of July 22nd). How does that compare to last year? On July 22nd, 2022, outflows were 8,660 m<sup>3</sup>/s, despite Lake Ontario being ~20cm / 8 inches lower than on July 22nd, 2023. This year's lower outflows improve the chances that 2023 won't be a low-water repeat of 2022's painful fall lows. What's different this year? We believe the key factor is the 52-



week lookback. component (total water supply into Lake Ontario) of the Plan 2014 calculation. That factor caused much higher outflows in 2022, even as Lake Ontario and 1000 Islands water levels fell below average. Hopefully, the GLAM process will unearth a better way to account for water supplies and make necessary improvements.

Reminder: Were YOU impacted by high or low water levels? The International Joint Committee (IJC) is now seeking public input on how water levels impact you! Have your say, TIA!

2022 Water Level Impacts Survey

2023 Water Level Impacts Survey

Click [HERE](#) for the latest FULL Article News Updates!



# Spotlight: Ontario Provincial Police

Allison Burchell-Robinson



There are three men, along with untold others, out there right now on the St. Lawrence River or the various lakes in the region who could one day turn out to be among the best friends you will ever have. Many/most of you will probably never meet them and that is a good thing. For those who do, it could be for a routine boat check, a minor infraction, going too fast 30 meters from shore or they could save your life and those in the craft with you.

Constable Brian Johnson, his partner and an Auxiliary Staff Sergeant Ryan Lefebvrz are part of the 1000 Islands OPP who receive special marine training enabling them to spend the boating season on the river and the lakes patrolling an area from Wolf Island to Brockville. Somedays they are out on the water during the day, sometimes they patrol at night. They do not work to a clock as once on a call their day does not end until the call is completed.

Abuse of alcohol and the non-wearing of life jackets are among their biggest concerns followed by illegal smuggling of weapons, drugs and human cargo. A valid boating and or fishing license is a must and the lack of

a boating license can lead to a \$305.00 fine plus the cost of towing your boat to shore. One lamentable fact is that boat rentals do not require having a valid boating license. Your rental contract is considered sufficient.

While they try to schedule an average day in sections, i.e., Rockport to the Gananoque Narrows, calls can and do take them from one end of their territory to the other end. And, they always must be ready, day or night. Consider the cost of not having sufficient gas while on duty at night. Where is gas readily available then?

These officers respond to all calls as needed and average between 200 to 300 calls a season. They rely heavily on the eyes and the ears of the public as there are generally three to five boats to cover the entire territory. Axillary boats can be brought in for special events like the Poker Runs.

You may not see the OPP. What is important is that those in need do! So please wear your personal flotation device and leave your beer on the pier. Sober last words from one of them "I've never met an unconscious person who could swim".



# Noteworthy

## **Medical emergency services in the 1000 Islands: A cautionary tale**

**Jim Cote**

Imagine the following scenario: You are at your island cottage and suffer a heart attack or some other debilitating medical condition. You are alone and unable to drive your boat. Fortunately, you have a telephone within reach and are able to make a call for help. What is the best way to make sure that EMS can get to your island in time to help you?

This situation was faced by one of our members a few years ago. Fortunately, he was very lucky that the EMS found their way to his island. After his heart attack, he had managed to make it to his phone, but the 911 dispatcher was unfamiliar with "the islands" and therefore about the need for a rescue boat. He indicated that Gananoque Municipal Marina was a good pickup point for paramedics to be transported by a rescue boat, but there was lingering confusion about the island name. Luckily, his wife also arrived at the Marina and clarified the island name for the rescue boat operator, a Fire and Rescue volunteer, who knew the exact location of the island.

Lessons learned: When calling 911 from an island, it is imperative that you specify you are calling about a marine emergency. This will trigger local protocols to arrange the nearest Fire Rescue boat to take paramedics to your island. But you also need to be able to tell the 911 operator EXACTLY where your cottage is, so that information can be efficiently transmitted to EMS personnel.

Ideally, you should have a copy of the following information on hand: (1) island name and civic number that is on the blade of your main dock, (2) island group (e.g., Admiralty Group), and (3) GPS coordinates pinpointing the dock at which emergency personnel should land.

Smart phones are especially useful: 911 dispatchers are typically able to determine general location using the phone's GPS locator; these devices can make SOS emergency calls in which the phone's location is shared; and they have apps like Google Maps and Compass that provide GPS coordinates for your current location.

For a more detailed version of this article, and answers to FAQs about emergency procedures, visit TIA's website [page here](#).





Thank you to all our members and sponsors for your continued support!  
This year's AGM was a big success complete with a delicious breakfast, engaging  
& informative speakers and of course all of you who attended! **THANK YOU!**

*Photos courtesy of Peter and Jan Medcalf*



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## Our Mission: River Safety - Environmental Awareness - Community Support

Business Sponsorship support helps TIA to fulfill its mission to the river community and its flagship program of maintaining 200 shoal markers essential to the safety of boating and our local and seasonal residents.

[www.thousandislandsassociation.com/sponsor](http://www.thousandislandsassociation.com/sponsor)



# Thousand Islands Association (TIA)

Due to seasonality, varying water levels, vandalism and equipment failure, the Thousand Islands Association (TIA) disclaims any liability for the absence of any of its shoal markers from time to time.

The Thousand Islands Association (TIA) is a not for profit organization that is proactive in addressing safety on the river, promoting environmental preservation and supporting the interests of the Community for the benefit of the 1000 Islands region of the St. Lawrence River.

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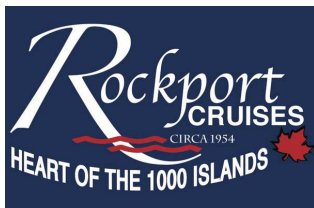
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