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RIVER TALK

RIVER SAFETY

ENVIRONMENTAL
AWARENESS

COMMUNITY SUPPORT





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reminder!

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corresponding website!



President's Message

Peter Fitton

Out with the old, in with the new ... bring it on 2023!

What was your transition into the new year? The Irish partakes in a Christmas Day swim in the Irish Sea, one being at the Forty Foot – a promontory on the southern tip of Dublin Bay, and a UNESCO Biosphere. [Click here to see!](#)



My thinking is with global warming our river community, as an international destination and home of the UNESCO Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, has all the ingredients to foster a Canada/USA sister Christmas Day river swim experience. At least for the local Irish!

Have you made time for self-reflection and committed to some resolutions? Supporting family and promoting friendships are always at the top of my list and now, as I get older, more attention to diet and exercise to create the energy we all need to live better. Albert Einstein is quoted saying “Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow”.

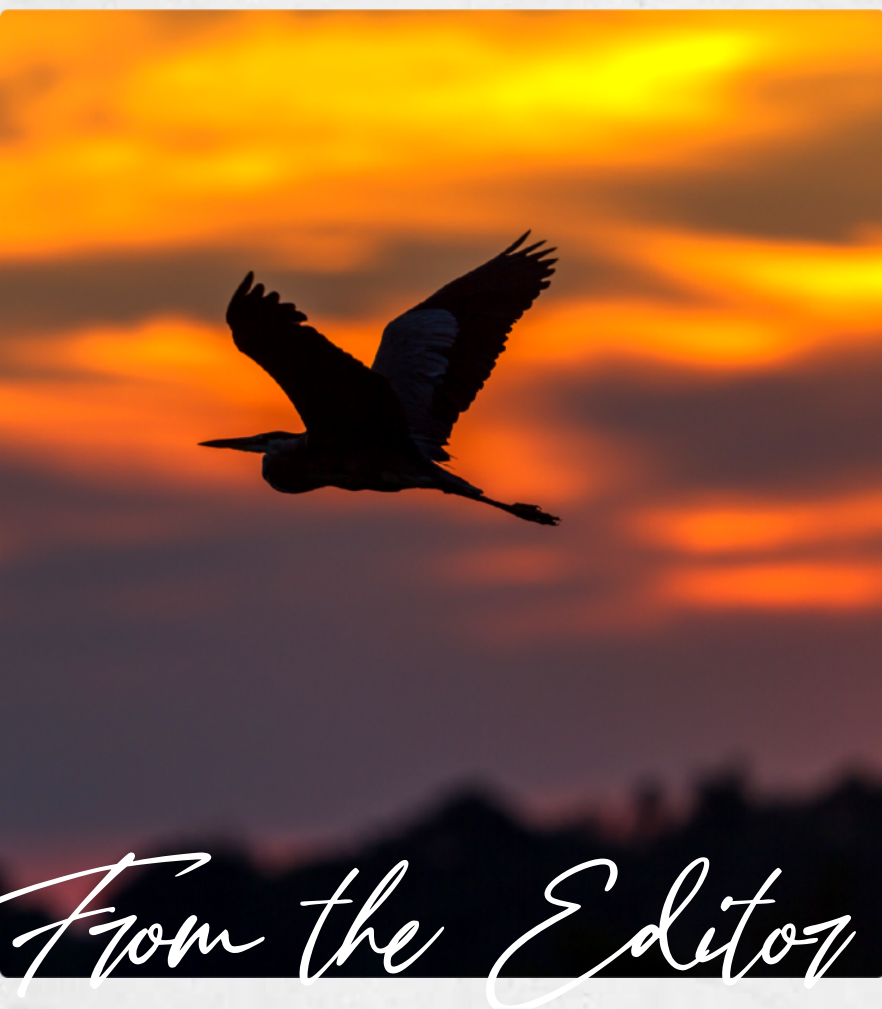
Last year, TIA witnessed a return to more normal times with Canadians and Americans coming back to the river under relaxed COVID travel restrictions. We enjoyed, once again, a memorable AGM and waterfront breakfast event at the Gananoque Playhouse Theatre, and the rekindling of river fellowship!

TIA is grateful for the 2022 support received from its Canadian and American membership, local business sponsors, and grant partners. We could not have delivered all our programs and remained sustainable without you, and we look forward to a repeat endorsement for 2023. Please renew your membership support today and receive an online tax receipt by [clicking here](#).

Your Board is back at the table discussing organization plans and events soon to be announced. Part of this will be hiring a Summer Student again for the period May 1 to August 25, 2023. [Click here](#) to view the position offering of Environmental Awareness Co-Ordinator.

Another part of growing TIA with a proper governance and base of volunteer support is our Members-At-Large Advisory Group initiative. Your Board understands the importance of engaging its membership with representative voices – from Kingston to Brockville and from Cape Vincent to Ogdensburg. Read more in this issue and please consider participating.

May 2023 bring new happiness and a lot of new inspiration for your life and our river community.



Allison Burchell-Robinson

We have talked about Neighborhood Watch more than once in this column and many of you have responded favorably to incorporating the concept in to the tenets of TIA and some of have even volunteered to be one. To be honest, I have embellished the story a bit (it reads better) but the basics remain true.

It began with a snow storm that turned into a wind storm that turned into an ice storm. When calmer weather finally prevailed and the sunshine returned, a boat tour commenced with a caretaker finally able to get out on the water to check his properties. One by one all were checked off as having survived, somewhat miraculously, the potential damage. There was a limb resting on the roof of one cottage and there was apparent damage to the door of a boathouse. All in all, however, everything was ok and the dire predictions of many once more thankfully did not come to fruition.

Before turning for home, he decided to take one final check. And then he saw it, on a small island, almost tucked in behind a larger one was a small cottage dominated by a large picture window, almost a picture perfect postcard. There was one big problem with the picture, the window was shattered and bits of glass were scattered here and there. After docking his boat, the caretaker discovered that damage had already been done by the snow and ice. As best as he could, he boarded up the window.

Once home he checked his maps to discover the island's name. It was so small that he had barely, if ever, noticed it. He didn't know who owned it but he did know that no one should have to return to their cottage in the late spring to discover that damage.

And so the word went out. One person thought she knew someone who might know someone who contacted someone who did know the owner's name. Another remembered where the owner lived and someone knew a neighbor. Before long, the owner's phone was ringing and a complete stranger was identifying herself as someone from TIA calling to tell him about his broken window.

All in all a day's good work for TIA.

Getting Into the Green Scene:

Bill 23 - What is it?

Annabel Cowan

Over the last couple months, you may have seen many conversations about something called Bill 23. It is a new Bill announced as part of Premier Ford's promise to build 1.5 million new homes across the province within 10 years, with a focus on the GTA and the Greenbelt (a protected area of over 8000 km of forests, wetlands and watersheds). Generally, the goal of this Bill is to reduce barriers to the housing development process so that homes can be built faster.

Bill 23 was first announced on October 25, 2022 and was officially passed a quick 34 days later on November 28th, becoming the More Homes Built Faster Act. While the Bill did receive official approval, many of its changes will not come into effect until later dates.

One of the changes of most interest to members is that Bill 23 introduced a series of legislative and proposed regulatory changes that affect conservation authorities with the stated goal of accelerating housing development approvals. These changes will consolidate the individual regulations of conservation authorities into a single regulation and limit their role in granting development permissions. The full effect of the changes will be known later when regulations are made to implement the new legislation. However, there are some important changes now:

•**The removal of conservation authorities' ability to review development applications:** Before Bill 23, a developer would require a permit from their local conservation authority before building on a floodplain, wetland, or other potential natural hazard. Now, the decision to approve a development in any given area falls on municipalities and there are some concerns that municipalities typically do not have the same level of environmental expertise. These changes leave many confused about conservation authorities' role, particularly following the conversations many of our members participated in with the Cataraqui Conservation Authority at the end of this last summer.

•**Changes to Site Plan Control, the framework used to review proposed developments:** This process may now only be used to review developments of more than 10 units. Municipalities will not be able to require regulation of issues such as the quantity or quality of surface runoff coming from new developments or review flooding and erosion impacts from new buildings.

There are very different views on the value and jurisdiction of local conservation authorities as we discovered with the CRCA's recent proposed changes to policy. The TIA is acutely aware that these issues are of critical importance to our members regardless of where members stand on the issues. The TIA will be following these developments closely for our membership and will update members as the legal framework unfolds. In the meantime, there are some links below for more reading on this subject:

[Legislative Assembly of Ontario Website](#)
[Dentons Article](#)
[Watersheds Canada Article](#)
[Cottage Life Article](#)

Noteworthy

Allison Burchell-Robinson

You Need to Know How the Underused Housing Tax Affects You

The Federal Underused Housing Tax requires foreign owners of cottages or homes to file an annual tax by April 30 of each year starting April 30, 2023. There are exemptions, seasonal included, but a filing must still be made and penalties are harsh.

Click [here](#) to visit the “Underused Housing Tax” Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) site.

The forms are online now too - click [here](#) to view them.

For more information, contact the Canada Revenue Agency and/or consult with a Canadian accountant.



Noteworthy

W. Ormond Murphy

December Storm

A blizzard hit the 1000 Islands area on December 24th, 2022. The 401 was closed from Maitland to Kingston. The winds gusted to above 80 kph from the southwest. The wind chill was -20 degrees Celsius.

The water level rose more than a metre causing extensive damage to docks and shoreline. The waves were said to be 2 to 3 metres, coating everything in a thick coating of ice.

In the Admiralty Group, large trees on Tremont Island brought down power and telephone wires. This means that substantial repairs are required which Hydro One has said that they will repair soon but realistically probably not until Spring.

I think it is likely that other islands will be without power so it will be necessary to confirm the status of your cottage before arriving in the Spring.

If you have any information or photos, please let us know so we can share with our readers.



Wildlife Corridor:

Coyotes: The Truths vs. The Myths

Stuart Arnett



As Spring approaches; and it is approaching, you will start to see numerous articles and social media posts about how dangerous and threatening Coyotes can be.

There is a lot of misinformation based on fears and rumours and not on actual facts. This article will attempt to clarify some of the most common myths surrounding Coyotes.

Myth 1: Coyotes lure your pet dog away from your yard to be ambushed and killed by the pack. There is absolutely no evidence of this type of skilled hunting behaviour where an individual coyote tricks a dog out of its yard to be ambushed. It may look like this to us, however our domestic dogs are curious and will follow or chase another canine. The coyote who feels threatened by another canine chasing it will head home to its den where it can protect itself and its pack. The majority of interactions like this occur between dogs that are off leash and have been allowed to wander. The reality is that dogs are following/chasing coyotes.

Myth 2: Coyotes celebrate a fresh kill. Coyotes do make a lot of noise and this is their way of communicating; however, this is not done when they have made a kill.

Their yipping and high pitched whines or squeals are forms of communication between pack members. There are very few predators, except humans that actually celebrate a kill. Coyotes and other wild predators tend to conceal their kill as they do not want to attract other predators to their hard earned food source. If you listen carefully the next time you hear coyotes, you will be able to tell that they are moving and the sound fades in and out as they travel through the woods or nearby fields. The sounds are not stationary as they would be if the coyotes were at a kill site.

Myth 3: Coyote mating season means your pets are at higher risk. I've heard this one myself, that coyotes are more aggressive during the mating season and this aggression is transferred into more attacks on pets. Coyotes similar to wolves and dogs have an Alpha male in their pack and he is part of the breeding pair within the pack. Only the alpha pair will breed and all other subordinates help with raising the pups. The male will be more protective of his mate and the den area during the mating season but do not take this aggression outside of the pack.

So the next time you hear a coyote pack yipping and howling, enjoy their unique vocalizations and rest assured that they are not coming after your pets. Keep your dog on a leash especially in the evening if you live near a forested area where you believe coyotes inhabit. This way they won't run off and get into danger.

An aerial photograph of a small, white, cabin-style boat on a body of water. Two people are visible inside the boat. The boat appears to be a small motorboat or a fishing vessel. The water is dark and the background is a blurred green, suggesting a shoreline.

In Case You Were Wondering:

What is an ADV?

Dave McWilliam & Alec Turner

Nothing like a good acronym to describe an unsightly and dangerous mess!

An ADV or abandoned or derelict vessel describes those vessels we occasionally but recently more commonly find left in the water to rot and sink. Over the past few seasons many have seen what appear to be vessels that have been left in or about the St. Lawrence River. Recently on Global News there was a report about a Kingston man lobbying for removal of derelict boats. It was not as easy a task as one would think!! [Click here to read the story.](#)

Sometimes what appears to the casual observer to be a neglected boat may not be and the owner may indeed care about his vessel but may lack good moorage and storage. What they do remind us all about is vessels we have seen sinking at moorage or left a drift and/or grounded off-shore.

What to do if you find an abandoned boat or wreck?

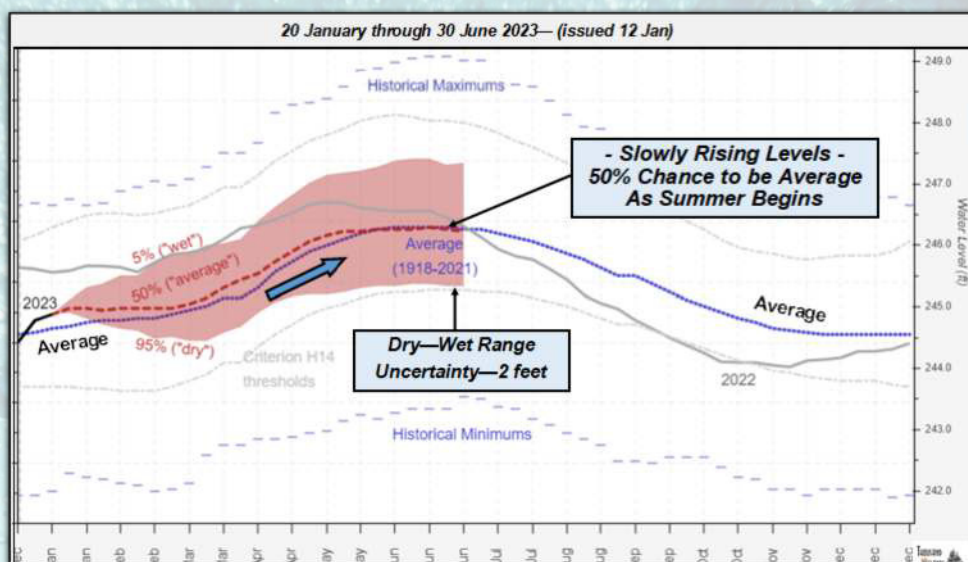
In Canada on the St. Lawrence this falls within the purview of Transport Canada, and we suggest you visit them for more info and their process. Do advise caution before you visit any ADV.

[Click here to visit: Transport Canada: What to do if you find and Abandoned Boat or Wreck](#)

In the United States, although New York State does not have a formal program for removing and disposing of ADVs or any laws that specifically address ADVs nor any funding to pay for the removal and disposal, they can act. Those vessels that are considered “wrecks” by the state are governed by the disposition of wrecked property under the state’s navigation laws under Article 10, Wrecks. The county sheriff has the authority to take possession of wrecked property in the name of the state. This Article 10 also addresses notification requirements, salvage claims and disposal (sale) but are primarily directed at the property that is found within a wreck and not the wreck. For more info, please visit their site by clicking here: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration: NOAA Marine Debris Program.

Water Level Updates:

Going UP Just Above Average for the Next 6 Months



Lake Ontario Water Level Forecast

Edits by TIA

Ken White

UPDATE SUMMARY – Fall 2022 Levels Finally Crossed Above Average to Start 2023

- For a 'mild' winter so far, we've definitely seen some extreme wind, snow, water level seiche and ice events. The River is 1.4 ft above chart datum.
- Water levels are now almost 4" above late January's average
- The ILOSLR Board is still draining Lake Ontario at a significant rate of 7,620 m³/s
- No mention so far of any ice formation activity in the Beauharnois Canal
- The Upper St. Lawrence is essentially without ice, a rarity for this time of year
- For the Lake Ontario basin, January precipitation has been close to average
- December was pretty wet (4.06" of precipitation vs. an average of 3.03")
- The last 10 days of December were REALLY wet - with 2.61" of precipitation (Almost a full month's average in just those last 10 days)
- That kicked off the level rise over the last few weeks, as runoff from a lot of the precipitation wasn't felt until early January, taking levels to above average

Full Article's Feature – The BIG Christmas Blow – Click [HERE](#) for photos & graphs

- Over 3 ft level rise along Gananoque shore. 4+ ft waves. Big shore ice buildup
- Waves tore up bottom off Halsteads Bay rest stop, piling up dirt & bottom debris 80 yards offshore! Phenomenon never seen before by locals. See the photos...
- There was a major seiche for River water levels but minor compared to Lake Erie
- **Levels rose an amazing +8 FEET in Buffalo and -8 FEET in Akron, OH Wow!**

What's Happening:

Update on the Members-at-Large Advisory Group: A Volunteer Opportunity Available to TIA Members

Peter Fitton & Jim Cote

As part of our ongoing effort to improve TIA's governance model, last year the Board launched an initiative to further engage its membership in more aspects of TIA's three pillars of River Safety, Environmental Awareness, and Community Support. Along the 85 km stretch of the 1000 Islands, there are many mainland and island-group neighborhoods on both sides of the border that have common interests in promoting these pillars. Yet, in the past, this vast purview has been overseen by a Board comprising only a handful of volunteer Directors who have often been spread thin.

To bridge this gap, the Board created a Members-at-Large Advisory Group of volunteer members who reside in these neighborhoods and a number of people stepped up. We thank the following people who lent their name to this initiative and offered their time and knowledge to help manage various aspects of the three pillars: Stuart Arnett, Barrie (Huck) Kay, and Dave McWilliams (Environmental Awareness); Ross Stewart (Water Levels); and Mark Yehle (Shoal Marking). Check out their interesting statements of interest on the TIA website.



This year, we are looking to appoint more Members at Large to further bridge the gap, so please consider the following:

- This volunteer position is intended to provide an enjoyable experience among friends in the community who wish to share their love for the river.
- A Member at Large need not attend Board meetings or have any regular scheduled participation in TIA affairs.
- There is no fixed term minimum or maximum for this volunteer position.
- Members at Large may determine their own time commitment as it suits them in pursuing their interests and applying their skills to the operations of TIA that are designed to improve everyone's experience of the 1000 Islands.

If this sounds like an interesting opportunity for you and you would like to become more engaged in the TIA river community, please click this link for more details and contact us at thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com.

Spotlight:

A DAY OF LEARNING



34th Annual Winter Environmental Conference

Annabel Cowan

The snow is falling, river rats are bundled up, and the tell-tale creaks of a freezing river replace the 'putt-putt' of a boat motor. It's the time of year when the St. Lawrence appears to be fast asleep, but in the background, the local organizations that focus on the river are still hard at work. In January, TIA board members attended Save the River's 34th Winter Environmental Conference which highlighted the work these organizations have been doing while the River sleeps.

STR's John Peach, welcomed everyone and gave a general update that included many shout-outs to TIA and the various projects our two organizations work on together; including Shoal Marking, Fishing Line Recycling Stations and Shoreline Clean Ups. Later, Lauren Eggleston and Robin Hall of STR introduced the 'Floating Classroom', an exciting new day camp program that will give local high schoolers an opportunity to engage with their local environment, history, and culture.

Another highlight was Tony David, Director of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Environmental Division and U.S Member of the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board which works to ensure Lake Ontario's outflows meet the IJC's requirements. Regis gave an enlightening talk on the IJC's decision making processes, the importance of communicating these processes and having an open and positive dialogue around water levels.

Ending the day was a discussion on the status of Blind Bay, an ecologically important waterfront area threatened by U.S border services. As of January, Thousand Islands Land Trust is now the owner of two Blind Bay properties and aims to keep these areas in their natural state. Eminent domain remains a threat, meaning we must all stay vigilant and proactive.

"You protect what you know and what you love" was my favourite line of the day. It came from the River Institute's Stephany Hildebrand who spoke about the benefits of communicating environmental information by emotionally appealing to readers through art and storytelling.

It was a great day of making new connections, re-kindling old ones and meeting people in 3D (i.e. not behind a screen) for the first time. The TIA representatives in attendance left inspired to continue working to keep our river a safe and healthy place that future generations can enjoy.



Parkway Pest Control

Parkway Pest Control (PPC) provides residential Pest control services to clients located on the Canadian side of the St. Lawrence river in the 1000 Islands. Centrally located in Ivy Lea, PPC is a structural Pest control operator servicing cottages, boathouse and other residential buildings on island and mainland properties. Licensed by the Ontario Ministry of the environment, PPC specializes in rodent, spider and insect control including wasps, cluster flies and cockroaches.

PPC incorporates modern environmentally friendly methods with specialized operator equipment. In certain situations, in order to eliminate rodent activity on property premises, a clean up of debris and junk is in order. Crawl spaces under cottages are popular locations to store old and /or discarded items providing an ideal environment for rodents to take up residence. In response to rodent problems, PPC expanded to provide a barge service and debris removal services to customers.

Over the last few years PPC has removed large amounts of unused household items and taken them to the proper disposal sites in accordance with the required environmental disposal processes.

In my experience we have removed household debris and junk items which have remained on Islands for numerous years prior to PPC providing these much needed disposal services. I take pride in PPC offering a solution to help clean up our river and surrounding environment. With two barges available this service has now been expanded into material delivery. All of which is done in a safe manner as PPC is a Transport Canada licensed operator including Transport Canada marine safety training.

I look forward to serving your requirements. - Dan Logan

Update: **Ban/Tax on Non-Resident Buyers**

In the last edition of TIA's River Talk I wrote an article summarizing some of the main events that had transpired on the river in the last 20 years. The last item was about a new Federal Government Act affecting non-resident buyers. The regulations are now out.

Federal Prohibition on The Purchase Of Residential Properties By Non-Canadians Act (Foreign Buyer Ban)

The aim of this new law is to help make homes more affordable for people living in Canada and to prevent non-Canadians and corporations controlled by non-Canadians from purchasing residential property in Canada for 2 years. Yesterday, the Government issued the supporting regulations for this act. I am happy to tell you that the Government has included a section in this act called Excluded Residential Properties. These are properties that are located outside of a Census Agglomeration (CA) or Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) area. Without going into detail, it appears that The Thousand Islands fall under this exemption and that non-resident buyers will continue to be allowed to buy our properties. [Click here for Act highlights.](#) [Click here for the Act.](#)

Ontario Non-resident Speculation Tax Act

Last April the Ontario Government instituted a Non-Resident Speculation Tax (NRST). The NRST is a 25% tax on residential property purchased anywhere in the province. The tax applies to non-citizens and non-permanent residents of Canada who are buying a house, anywhere, in Ontario including our island and waterfront properties. There are some exemptions, the most notable for us is that the sale of vacant land. [Click here for the Act.](#)

Over simplified, pursuant to the Federal regulation, a non-Canadian can buy property in Canada if it is outside of a CA or CMA (as above) designated area. But, pursuant to the Ontario regulation, if that property is in Ontario, they will have to pay a tax of 25% of the purchase price.

As the majority of River Talk readers are probably sellers not buyers, this is good information for you to know. For those who are thinking of buying, I strongly recommend that you discuss these Acts with your lawyer as regulations can change.



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Heather Caird

Certified Financial Planner with IG Wealth Management in Gananoque, where she has spent the past 14 years providing retirement, tax and estate planning services to families in the 1000 Islands area

Vacation Property Succession Planning

For many families, it is much more important to preserve the family cottage. Those who want to leave the cottage to their children must plan for the tax consequences and any disputes.

Planning with Insurance

If you know that your estate will have to pay a substantial capital gains tax and you do not have any other way to minimize it, you will need to find a way to fund this liability, or risk the sale of the vacation property in order to pay the tax bill. If your estate has sufficient liquid assets, this may not be a problem, but it is sometimes difficult to guarantee that there will be a sufficient amount left in the estate. Life insurance is usually the solution used to ensure that there will be sufficient funds to pay the tax liability.

Succession Issues

There are also non-tax issues to consider. Do you even know which of your children wants the vacation property? Your children may be interested in coming to the property as long as you are there, but if they live in another province, or are not interested in maintaining the property themselves, you may be surprised to learn that they do not want to keep the property after you are gone.

Planning for Multiple Owners

If several children want the vacation property, then you need to consider a co-ownership agreement. There should be something in writing setting out how the vacation property will be used, who will pay for it, and who will be responsible for its upkeep. One idea may be to have the children sign a co-ownership agreement as a condition to inheriting a part of the vacation property. In that way, the agreement will be there long before there are any arguments. Once the parties start to disagree, negotiating a co-ownership agreement will become next to impossible.

The co-ownership agreement should also specify how the parties can be bought out in case of disagreement and what happens upon the death of one of the siblings. It is important to plan for how the vacation property will be passed to the next generation long before it actually happens.

Editor's Note: There are several more topics not covered in this article. Please refer to Heather Caird at IG Wealth Management for more information and education.



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.

thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com

P.O. Box 616
Clayton, NY 13624
United States of America

P.O. Box 274
Gananoque, ON K7G 2T8
Canada





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