

jan / feb 2024

# RIVER TALK



RIVER SAFETY

ENVIRONMENTAL  
AWARENESS

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



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In Memoriam  
Douglas Macintosh  
March 7, 1931-January 14, 2024





**Peter Fitton**

# President's Message

Welcome to 2024, and a year to celebrate the 90th anniversary of TIA!

How do you kick start the new year? For those of you procrastinating on making 2024 resolutions, it is not too late. Let me give you another prompt – click here for 20 Goal Ideas to make your list and a better year ahead. Mark Twain said, “Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection”!

In 1934 a protective association of officials was formed for policing the islands during the winter. Shortly thereafter Summer Visitors organized a task force to mark dangerous shoals that were “a menace to navigation”! Today TIA is 90 years young with a Mission of River Safety, Environmental Awareness, and Community Support. The Board is making plans to celebrate, so stay tuned and be ready to participate!

In the meantime, let us all reflect about our own history on the river and share our stories. How many generations ago did your family arrive and who were they? What is the oldest picture you have of your camp? Who was the builder? What kind of watercraft did the family enjoy? TIA is interested in hearing from the membership and assembling a commemorative storyboard. Please email copies of your oldest photos with an identifying caption, and any anecdote you care to share to [thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com) with a subject line: “Our History on the River”.

Our Friends at Save The River (STR) in Clayton held their 35th Annual Winter Environmental Conference. Go to the STR website and click under News & Events to view videos presentations. STR is a strategic partner assisting TIA with the development of its Environmental Awareness programs.

TIA is advertising for another Summer Intern. This is an opportunity starting in May for a local undergraduate University or College student enrolled in science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics (STEAM) or business. Responsibilities include online research, report writing and managing program activity. Click here for the Job Description and Application.

Time again to join or renew your 2024 MEMBERSHIP. Remember memberships and donations both receive Canadian or American tax receipts. We are a volunteer based not-for profit organization and without your annual support we cannot exist.

Wishing everyone another memorable year on the river!



**Allison Burchell-Robinson**

## *From the Editor*

Ninety years is a long time no matter how you measure them. Years and years ago, people were old when in their thirties; today living to be a hundred has become commonplace. Still, anyone or anything making it to the nineties deserves recognition and so we recognize the Thousand Islands Association this year turning ninety years young. Young because it remains a vibrant and effective organization. Over the years TIA has espoused many causes and fought many battles, a bathroom at the Gananoque Municipal Dock among them. It has engaged in multi conversations over docking/parking and services-winning some and losing others.

One cause that remains as important as the day it began is the marking of the shoals. Over the years, the markers have changed in their design, durability and effectiveness, but the need has never changed. Today, TIA puts out 200 markers on the Canadian side and supplies the 100 markers put out on the US side by Save the River. Our Sponsor a Shoal Marker Program is ongoing and growing. Check it out on our website at [www.thousandislandsassociation.com](http://www.thousandislandsassociation.com) and sponsor one of your own!

Environmentally, TIA has always been in the forefront. Years earlier, TIA expressed concern that garbage was being dumped directly into the St. Lawrence River by cottage owners and boaters alike—maybe more. Three years ago, TIA launched a highly successful drive to Clean Up the River. Join us on one of those days. It is hard not to smile when you realize the effect of your contribution to a clean River. Community wise TIA has always been an effective conduit for members and non members to express their ideas, concerns, ask questions and share knowledge via networking, the AGM and the TIA newsletter. Today's social media has expanded our reach and become an important and effective pillar.

In honor of our 90th year, we are introducing a new column in River Talk. "Then and Now". We are reaching out to our senior audience and asking them to contribute their memories, reminiscences and stories handed down through the generations. George Ray of Wyoming Island, in his ninetieth decade, has written the inaugural piece. We hope that many of you will join with him to share your stories of this incredible region and majestic River.



# In Case You Were Wondering...

*...why didn't the turtles hatch?*

So, you put the turtle nest protector in place over where you think the turtle laid its eggs... and NOTHING!

Don't be discouraged, know you did a good thing to protect and encourage our small amphibians. The truth is that science on turtle incubation is not as definitive as we would like. Generally speaking, the incubation period for North American turtles is 15 to 60 to 90 days. But, some eggs/hatchlings, notably the painted turtle (Ojibwe: "miskwaadesi"), though others can also exhibit this behaviour, can overwinter and appear in the spring (perhaps as late as the following June).

One 2010 study conducted in Algonquin Park found that 2 nests emerged in the fall, while 23 overwintered. Yet the following year, 16 emerged in the fall and 20 overwintered. It appears the factors influencing when the emergence takes place are not completely understood. It is suggested the more exposed the nest is to the sun (south-facing, little vegetation, softer soils) the more likely you'll see a fall emergence. The question remains: What should we do after installing a nest protector?

1. Monitor the nest daily. Most vulnerable period is first 10- 21 days, especially the first 24 hours.
2. Watch for predation! ...the raccoon!
3. Mask the nest scent from predators. As the turtle digs its nest hole, it excretes fluid from its body to aid in digging and provide a nest cap. This fluid highlights where the nest is to predators.
4. If there has been no rain. Mist the area around the nest using a mix of water & vinegar to help deter predators. Do not use lawn sprinklers or buckets of water as this will likely drown the eggs.
5. Other deterrents such as placing rocks around the perimeter, sprinkle coffee grounds or cayenne pepper may help.
6. Keep the nest area tidy. Reduce vegetation, remove fallen debris, and if egg shells are noted on the ground remove them and gently cover in the hole and re-secure the nest protector to help protect any remaining eggs.

TIA will be making turtle nest protectors available to members early this spring. Watch River Talk for further information.



# Getting Into the Green Scene

It is a common misconception that River-related groups go into hibernation over winter, however there is still tons of hard work happening this time of year to support and inform the River community. In January, a group of representatives from TIA attended Save the River's 35th Winter Environmental Conference which highlighted the important environmental research and initiatives happening across the St. Lawrence.

To kick off the day, STR's Lauren Eggleston, welcomed everyone and gave a general update of STR's work in 2023, including successfully advocating for changes in the excessive lighting from the Wellesley Island customs facility which were negatively affecting the humans, plants and animals who lived nearby.

A highlight of the day was Kelly Hunter Foster, a Senior Attorney at Waterkeeper Alliance who gave an enlightening talk on the negative environmental effects of large scale Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs). Across the United States there are nearly 500,000 AFOs/CAFOs which are estimated to collectively produce 1.1 billion tons of waste annually that is released into soil and water systems without sufficient regulation.

In response to lawsuits from Waterkeeper Alliance and other groups, the EPA has agreed to review the standards regulating this industry. As a part of this process, there is a comment period where the public can voice their concerns. You can learn more about the petition by clicking [here](#). Ending the day was a discussion on the status of Blind Bay, an ecologically important waterfront area being threatened by U.S border services (CBP). As of January 2023, Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) owns two Blind Bay properties and aims to keep these areas in their natural state. However, CBP is still actively considering this site which could be acquired through eminent domain. The next phase of TILT's campaign is to advocate for a new site, the Bonnie Castle Recreation Center, to be considered as a more appropriate option for the proposed CBP facility.

To learn more and support this campaign, click [here](#). There were many more informative talks given that are not mentioned here, we encourage you to learn about the individuals working to protect and advocate for the River. Thank you to the team at Save the River for all of their hard work in putting on another successful Winter Environmental Conference!



# Wildlife Corridor

## *Fish Under the Ice*

**Stuart Arnett**

You may ask yourselves how our fish survive these crazy freezing cold winters. Well, fish in the one thousand Islands are cold-blooded. This allows them to survive our cold winters and often our frozen ice-covered river. Cold-blooded means that the body temperature of the fish matches that of the surrounding waters. As the water temperature drops, the metabolism of the fish slows dramatically and their need for food and energy is also greatly reduced. So for the fishermen/ women out there this is why it is much more difficult to catch fish in the winter. The fish just don't have the need nor the energy to chase their food source.

Our active surface jumping Bass that we love to catch will migrate for the winter into sheltered bays and areas with rocky shorelines as the rocks retain their warmth longer than vegetation-based shorelines. Northern Pike are sought after by the avid ice-fishing enthusiast as they are somewhat easier to catch through the ice. They typically stay in flat areas between 8 and 12 feet of water. Pike also spawn just as the ice breaks up in shallow weed-filled bays. These are great locations to try your skill at ice-fishing. Pike will start to "stage" in front of their desired spawning grounds and begin to feed more regularly as they prepare for the spawn. Pike will spawn when the water reaches 40°F just shortly after the ice is out. Muskie are similar to pike but spawn when the temperature reaches 55°F more so in April.

Perch will stay in their schools and move regularly throughout the winter which makes them much more difficult to catch. Sometimes they can be as deep as 50 feet in the dead of winter but as the water starts to warm they will also move into their spawning grounds.

If you are heading out to ice fish, first and foremost know your ice conditions and take a buddy, but also decide what species of fish you are planning to catch. You can then pick your location and depth of water accordingly.

# Water Level Updates:

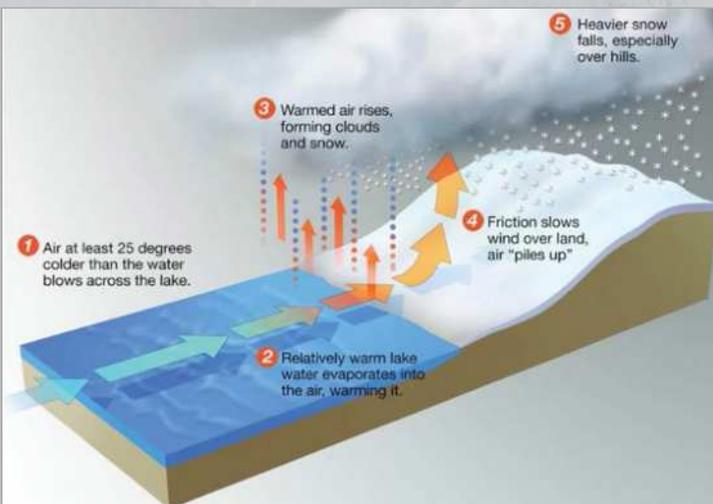
Great Lakes Snow-Making Machines Play Hardball, NOT Football

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

It's only in the last half-century that ski resorts have learned how to make snow and deliver it to the side of a hill for skiing. Snowmaking is an "old hat" to our Great Lakes region, with many sweet spots if conditions are right as follows:

- Called 'Lake Effect', it requires a large body of water, oriented with a long 'reach' aligned with a strong or prevailing wind...
- Water temperature must be warmer than the air, unfrozen, and aimed at...
- A target deposition zone, which through elevation rise and friction, turns the warmer air, with entrained and chilled moisture, into fluffy precipitation.

The forecast for Highmark Stadium and the Bills-Pittsburgh Steelers NFL AFC Wild Card Playoff game on Sunday, January 14th was for howling winds and direct deposition of 1-3 feet! Lake Erie was ready to fill Highmark Stadium before the fans arrived to fill their seats! To ensure the game could be played, NY State postponed Sunday's game to 4:30 pm Monday.



Saturday, January 13th – The Storm over Lake Erie Builds

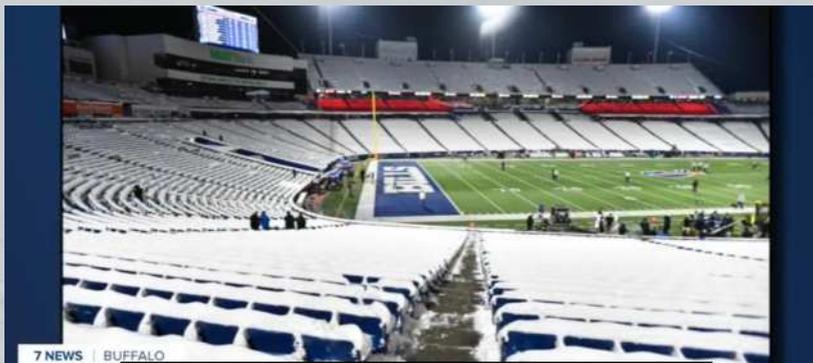


A similar Lake Effect scenario played out on Lake Ontario as noted by the 'seiche' which produced a 1.75-foot level swing seen in Alexandria Bay, NY on the 13th and 14th of January. Ontario's greatest snowfall stayed just south of the border with the largest deposition near Watertown where no football was being played.



Before & After Highmark Stadium- [click here.](#)

This storm had great similarities to a November 2022 storm a year earlier for both Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. The difference this year was the timing when Lake Erie is typically 35% ice-covered. Strong Lake Effect NWS 221119 (12p Sat Nov 19, 2022)



Early Monday when the snow finally stopped, fans responded mostly on foot to an offer of cash, food and breaks to shovel snow in the stands, especially to ensure the aisles were passable. Most attending fans stood on snow at their seats for the entire game! [Click here to read more.](#)

**St Lawrence River Ice Formation Update:** “The outflow target for the week of January 27 through February 2 is the applicable Rule Curve flow of 7,580 m<sup>3</sup>/s.”

“However, the outflow will continue to be operationally adjusted in accordance with the Plan 2014 I Limit. On January 18, the outflow was temporarily reduced to 6,800 m<sup>3</sup>/s when ice started accumulating in the Beauharnois Canal. Ice formation has since paused with milder temperatures, allowing the outflow to be gradually increased again on January 22 and 23. As of today (January 25), a 5 km ice cover remains in the Beauharnois Canal. It is anticipated that the outflow will have to be reduced again when colder temperatures return.” [Click here for the outflow interactive curve.](#)



Peter Fitton

# Noteworthy

**Thank you Gananoque for preserving the Blue Water Trail of TIA Rock Shoal Marking for Local Tourism and Community Recreation**

The Town of Gananoque is a world class tourist destination and the “Canadian Gateway to the Thousand Islands”. Once an industrial village and port, the Town has developed its tourist industry with its waterfront location, recreational boating, and sightseeing opportunities that the 1000 Islands offer.

Contributing to Gananoque’s waterfront destination is TIA’s Rock Shoal Marking essential service to attract and encourage local tourism and residents to enjoy safe navigation for recreational boating.

Did you know that TIA places and maintains 110 Rock Shoal Markers in the immediate waters fronting Gananoque in the areas known as the Admiralty Group and the Lake Fleet Group in the Thousand Islands?

The Thousand Islands Association (TIA), founded in 1934 and a not-for-profit organization, thanks the Town of Gananoque for their 2023 financial support for the replacement of eleven (11) Rock Shoal Markers that had reached their life span due to fluctuating water levels and the forces of nature.

TIA’s Rock Shoal Marking affects the well-being of the Gananoque’s greater river community (tourism, visiting boaters, property owners, service providers, emergency response) and has become part of the waterway’s infrastructure, just like roadway signage on the mainland.

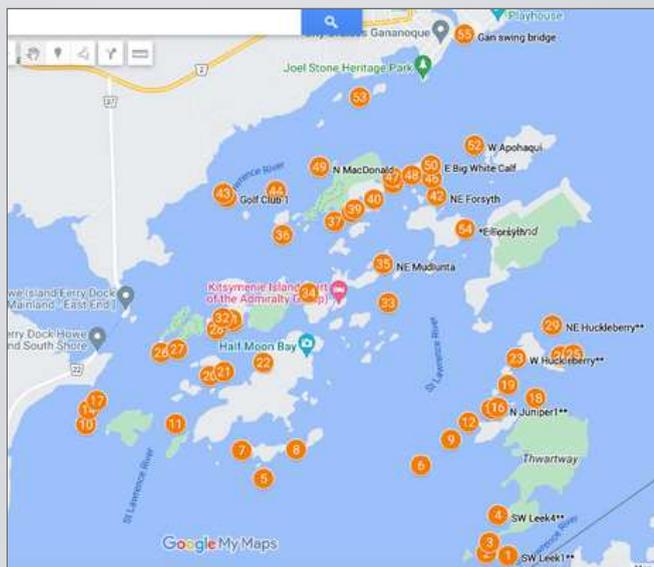


Photo of a new marker proudly marking a shoal in front of the Gananoque Inn. Mapping shows dangerous shoals marked by TIA in the Admiralty Group off Gananoque.

# Spotlight

It stands there as a welcome and a warning. It is the first thing boaters see when entering and the last when exiting. It is the lighthouse located in the Joel Stone Heritage Park and standing tall at the entrance to the Gananoque Municipal Marina.

It is not a lighthouse manned by a keeper responsible for manning the light and the bell, rather its flashing light is completely solar powered as it stands sentinel twenty-four seven as it has for years exposed to all elements of the weather.

And now it's time to give the lady some tender loving care or as Jeff Johnston, Manager of Parks and Recreation for the town of Gananoque, would say "a fresh coat of paint and a little bit of love". It's been a number of years since the lighthouse received some sprucing up but this spring Jeff has hired local contractor, Mitchell & Son Contracting and before the 2024 boating season arrives, the newly refinished lighthouse will be ready and waiting for the first influx of seasonal boaters.

Jeff who is overseeing the refinishing has been in his new position for approximately seven months but he is no stranger to Gananoque. He has been involved with the town for the past four and a half years in various capacities from finance and payroll to human resources but his background is property management and that's exactly what he is back to in his new position dealing with people and not figures. He is a boater spending time on the St. Lawrence and lake Ontario.

The Gananoque Municipal Marina has 384 boat slips making it the largest municipal marina in the area. In addition to the slips, the marina offers pump outs, electrical service, laundry facilities, showers, ice and parking. The lighthouse is not the only target for refurbishing and maintenance. The marina washrooms and shower floors along with the doors are on that agenda to be replaced as well. Last year, the 900 series floating docks were repaired after being severely damaged by the blizzard storm and high winds on Christmas Eve 2022.

The boating season runs from April 15 to the end of October. Applications for a slip are available online by [clicking here](#), but there is a waiting list for new applicants.



# Then & Now

## **Power Shifts on the River: From Kerosene to Hydro**

Considering how much cottage life has changed since my Methodist ancestors settled Wyoming Island in the first decade of the twentieth century, a major change agent has been the evolving fuel sources, from wood and kerosene, through the propane age to Hydro today.

On Wyoming Island, we no longer face the hardships my pioneering ancestors endured when they built a one-room cabin that was later enlarged to the present-day footprint of 1000 square feet. Creature comforts such as a kitchen and indoor plumbing were only dreamed of then. Cooking outdoors on a wood-burning cast-iron stove or using the “two-holer” outhouse behind our camp, euphemistically referred to by my grandmother Nicholson as “the House of Parliament” were their only options.

Although my initial voyage to Wyoming occurred in 1933 at the tender age of nine months, regular summer stays for my family did not begin until my parents reopened our camp after World War II in 1946. In our primitive galley-style kitchen, we relied on a four-burner kerosene stove, and kerosene lamps that functioned well so long as we kept the wicks trimmed and the globes clean. Eventually, kerosene gave way to propane in the 1960s. The gas lights hissed constantly but produced brighter light.

A propane refrigerator replaced the lead-lined icebox that held the blocks of ice we lugged from the icehouse. Each winter, Joe Pullaw and his crew would cut the blocks and store them under sawdust for communal use the next summer.

By the 70s, most islanders had made the transition from propane tanks to underwater Hydro cable lines but since Wyoming was at the end of the line that came from Brockville, we held out until 1991 when an unsettling event prompted our abrupt conversion. On the night of July 14, our propane refrigerator suddenly blew up. That fall, Pat Funnel of Lansdowne wired our camp, and Hydro has served us well ever since.

Occasional outages, however, still force us to return to the ways of our forebears as we haul pails of water, cook outdoors, and trim lamp wicks once again. Doing so is tedious, yet instructive. as we gain a new respect for the hardiness of Wyoming’s first island people and their magnificent legacy.

**George Ray, resident of 67 Wyoming Island**



**MARINE  
CONSTRUCTION**

# **OPEN HOUSE**

**Drop-in information session  
with Ken & Sarah Kehoe.**

**Topic: Zoning Bylaw Amendment  
application D14-2023-07**

**Thursday Feb 8, 2024. 3pm-6pm**

**Saturday Feb 10, 2024. 10am-noon**

**Kehoe Marine Construction office.**

**507 - 1000 Islands Parkway, Lansdowne Ontario K0E1L0**



## 2023 BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES

SPONSORSHIP RUNS FROM MAY 1 TO APRIL 30



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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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