

RIVER TALK

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AGM RECAP

**TIA's NEIGHBOURHOOD
NETWORK PROGRAM**

OSPREY RECOVERY

THE SERVICEBERRY



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

From the Editor

Earlier this summer, at a small social event, I listened intently to the local folklore. Stories of local boaters and cottagers and some of the notable moments of the last few years. The stories, as entertaining and remarkable as they were, reminded me of so many other stories I've heard from other parts of the River over my years here.

While not every story is the same, a main theme seems present: river people helping one another. Whether its someone towing a boater in need, someone pulling ashore in flip flops to investigate a fire or someone lending a meaningful hand in another way. They are stories are of River people, community kindness and the importance of TIA.

My revelation was that the more we talk about these acts of kindness and support, around the campfire or over a glass of wine, the more they become local custom. Unwritten rules to live by. River culture. They are the kind of stories we should be sharing regularly to perpetuate a river culture we can be proud of.

Stephanie Scott.
Editor

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.



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President's Message

Peter Fitton



Rain or Shine, Our Mission Moves Forward

TIA held its AGM at the Thousand Islands Playhouse on Saturday, July 18, 2026.

As the meeting began, it appeared that powerful forces might conspire against us. In Greek mythology, Zeus, the King of the Gods, ruled the skies with thunder, lightning, and rain. Closer to home, many Indigenous traditions of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River speak of the mighty Thunderbird, whose beating wings bring thunder and whose flashing eyes create lightning. Whether Zeus, the Thunderbird, or simply Mother Nature was in charge, the weather certainly added drama to the day.

Thanks to careful contingency planning, display tables were setup inside the Playhouse lobby. Exhibitors included Parks Canada, the TIA Environmental Committee, 4-Ever (TLWLT) & TIARA, the RCMP Border Integrity Unit, and TIA Merchandise, featuring apparel for those aspiring to be the "best dressed on the river." Meanwhile, traditional island music welcomed guests from the covered front porch as more than 200 hearty breakfasts were enjoyed by members and friends.

TIA was honoured to receive welcoming remarks from several local dignitaries, including MP Michael Barrett, TLT Mayor Corinna Smith-Gatcke, Gananoque Mayor John Beddows, and Brockville

Acting Mayor Katherine Hobbs. We are grateful for the continued support of our municipal partners and were pleased to acknowledge a \$8,580 grant from the TLTI and a \$2,860 grant from the Town of Gananoque. These contributions will help fund the ongoing replacement of aging rock shoal hazard markers throughout their respective waterfront areas, an important investment in river safety.

Our AGM featured an outstanding presentation by Doug Richardson, Fire Prevention Officer for the TLTI. His presentation, *When the Road Ends...*, provided insight into the extensive planning, communications, and coordination required to deliver emergency response services throughout the Thousand Islands. We encourage you to watch the presentation through the Township website. ([YouTube Link here](#))

Unfortunately, our Dock, Deck & Den Tour fundraising event has been postponed until 2027, as we were unable to secure enough volunteer host properties this year. We hope many members will consider opening their cottage docks next year from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on the second Saturday in August. It is a wonderful opportunity to promote river fellowship, meet new friends, and share the unique stories and history that make our island community so special.

If you have not yet renewed your 2026 tax-deductible TIA membership, we encourage you to do so. Your continued support makes our mission objectives and program initiatives possible. Time to celebrate the peak of summer with family and friends on the river.

Stay off the rocks—and practise fire prevention!



The River Community Triumphs Over Adverse Weather at TIA's AGM

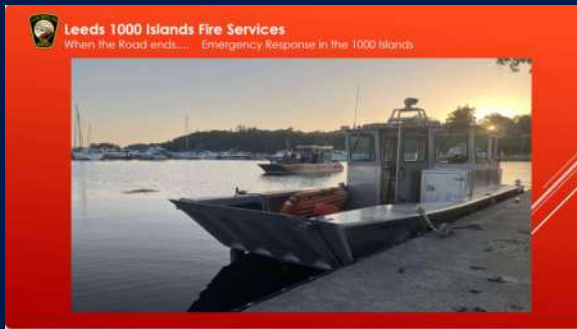
Many thanks to the TIA members that attended this year's AGM. We genuinely loved seeing the community rally despite the weather. Your support is incredibly important for the continued success of TIA.



We truly appreciate the volunteers that worked long hours to coordinate the event and the presenters that gave their time to share valuable information to our members. Your efforts to enhance the community are meaningful!



Missed us this year?



Watch FPO, Doug Richardson's presentation on river safety now on YouTube.



Read about the event in The Brockvilleist

TIA Raffle Winners

2nd Runner Up

Received a TIA T-Shirt & Hat, plus a Book titled "Being a Bird in North America" donated by author Robert Alvo

Congrats to: Guy & Maureen Norman, Mainlanders on the Bateau Channel

1st Runner Up

Received a TIA Burgee & TIA Hat, plus a Book titled "Being a Bird in North America" donated by author Robert Alvo

Congrats to: Amy Taylor & Chris Stevens, Tremont Island

Grand Prize Winner

Received a 16 x 16 signed stretched canvas print by local artist Debbi Burns Morrison – this piece of artwork is called "The SKIFF"; also a throw pillow, a set of 4 coasters and a coffee mug all sharing the print image

Congrats to Miles & Ellen Wheeler, Tremont Island

**50/50 Winner
Haine won \$300**





TIA Supporter Hucks Marine & Resort

For more than 135 years, Hucks Marine & Resort has been part of the story of the St. Lawrence River. Founded in 1889 in Rockport, Ontario, what began as a small boat-building business has grown into one of Canada's premier full-service marinas while remaining firmly rooted in family values, hospitality, and a deep connection to the 1000 Islands.

Today, four generations after Fred Huck first welcomed customers to the riverfront, Hucks continues to help families and friends create memories on the water. Some around the marina might even suggest a sixth generation is already underway, after Fred's great-great-great-grandson (aged 5) enthusiastically joined his grandfather for an early-season boat delivery!

From first-time boaters to lifelong enthusiasts, generations have trusted Hucks to guide their boating journeys. Hucks is an authorized dealer for Boston Whaler, Tiara Yachts, Regal, and Stanley Boats, alongside a carefully curated selection of quality pre-owned boats.

The marina is home to a vibrant dockage community of 160 slips and is supported by Certified Professional Yacht Brokers with cross-border sales expertise to serve both Canadian and American boaters, 10 Certified Marine Technicians, Commercial ACZ Licensed Drivers, and an experienced delivery captain. Just 1 km east of the marina, ParkStor offers indoor heated storage and year-round service support.

Visitors quickly discover that boating is only part of the experience. Whether it's enjoying lunch at Cassie's Café, shopping at Centre Stage, exploring the newest boats in our 5,000 sq. ft. indoor showroom, or watching boats pass along the charming Rockport waterfront, there is something memorable for everyone.

Under the leadership of Scott MacCrimmon, the Crew of nearly 40 embraces the philosophy of Beyond Boating to create meaningful experiences and ensure customers feel supported every step of the way.

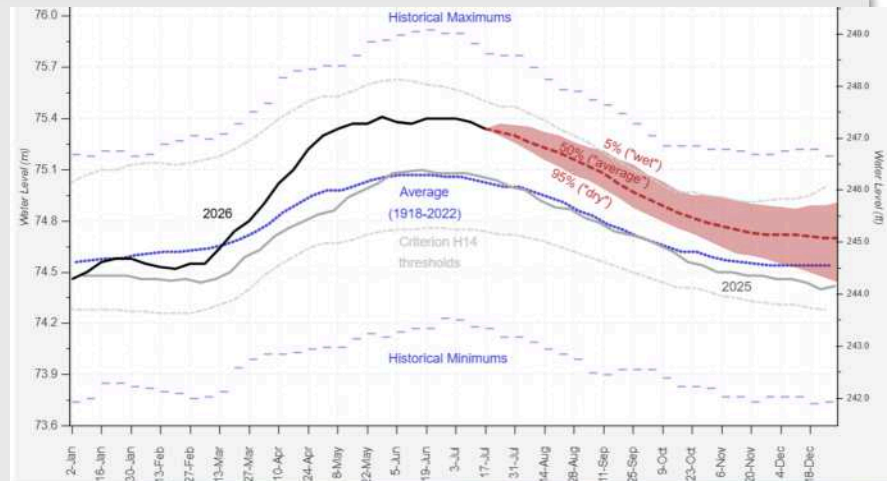
While much has changed since 1889, one thing remains the same: Hucks continues to welcome visitors with the same spirit of hospitality that has defined it for generations. Scott invites you to visit Hucks in person or explore the Hucks experience online at hucks.ca.

Levels Heading Down While Tracking Above Average for 2026

By: TIA Water Levels Committee, Barton, Stewart & White

Water Level Forecast

July is the month in which summer really kicks into gear, while levels recede from their annual peak. As usual, we've reached seasonal peak and the annual decline has begun. Your Water Levels Committee's predicted a leveling in July, with **No 2017/2019 High Water FEARS!**



There was no net change from the beginning of June to the beginning of July. Several strong wind driven seiches pushed levels past 4 foot above chart datum, but then the ripples settled down 3 or 4 inches. The June Lake Ontario level was the 14th highest on record. July began the as 13th highest. We have had a “water rich” season which will continue. We're grateful.

The range from “dry” to “wet” remains consistent until the last two months of 2026 when the uncertainty widens a bit.



On June 18th, the ramp between the stationary dock (on the right) and floating dock (on the left) emphasized the arrival of a strong seiche, which raised levels in A Bay to 52.3" over datum, and even higher at Hambly Island in the Navy Group.

IJC Wrapping Up Plan 2014 Expedited Review (slowly)

By: Ross Stewart (PAG & TIA Member-at-Large)

The International Joint Commission (IJC) and the International Lake Ontario–St. Lawrence River Board (the Board) are finalizing their recommendations on Plan 2014 following a multi-year review of the plan's operational procedures and regulatory performance. The Expedited Review was commissioned by the United States and Canadian federal governments to assess the regulation plan that governs outflows from Lake Ontario and, in turn, regional water levels. This work was initiated in response to the significant flooding events of 2017 and 2019.

TIA members will recall the 2023 TIA AGM, where guest speakers, Tony David (the ILOSLR Board) and David Fay (IJC) outlined the purpose, scope, and methodology of the review. The Thousand Islands region was well represented throughout the process, with TIA contributing directly through its appointed member on the binational 18-member Public Advisory Group (PAG–Ross Stewart).

All findings, commitments, and recommendations will be released publicly in late September. The Board will then undertake a **60 day public consultation period** following the official launch, before final recommendations are submitted to the IJC.

This launch will introduce a dedicated website featuring detailed reports, online feedback tools, FAQs, and fact sheets. In addition, a series of virtual webinars and inperson meetings will be held across affected regions to inform the public, answer questions, and gather feedback.

Water levels have a significant impact on our region. TIA strongly encourages all members to review the press releases, documents, and website once available, and to participate actively in the public consultation phase this fall. TIA will provide more details in the September version of River Talk. **IJC Press Release**

TIA's 2026 Neighbourhood Network Program (NNP) for Fire Containment

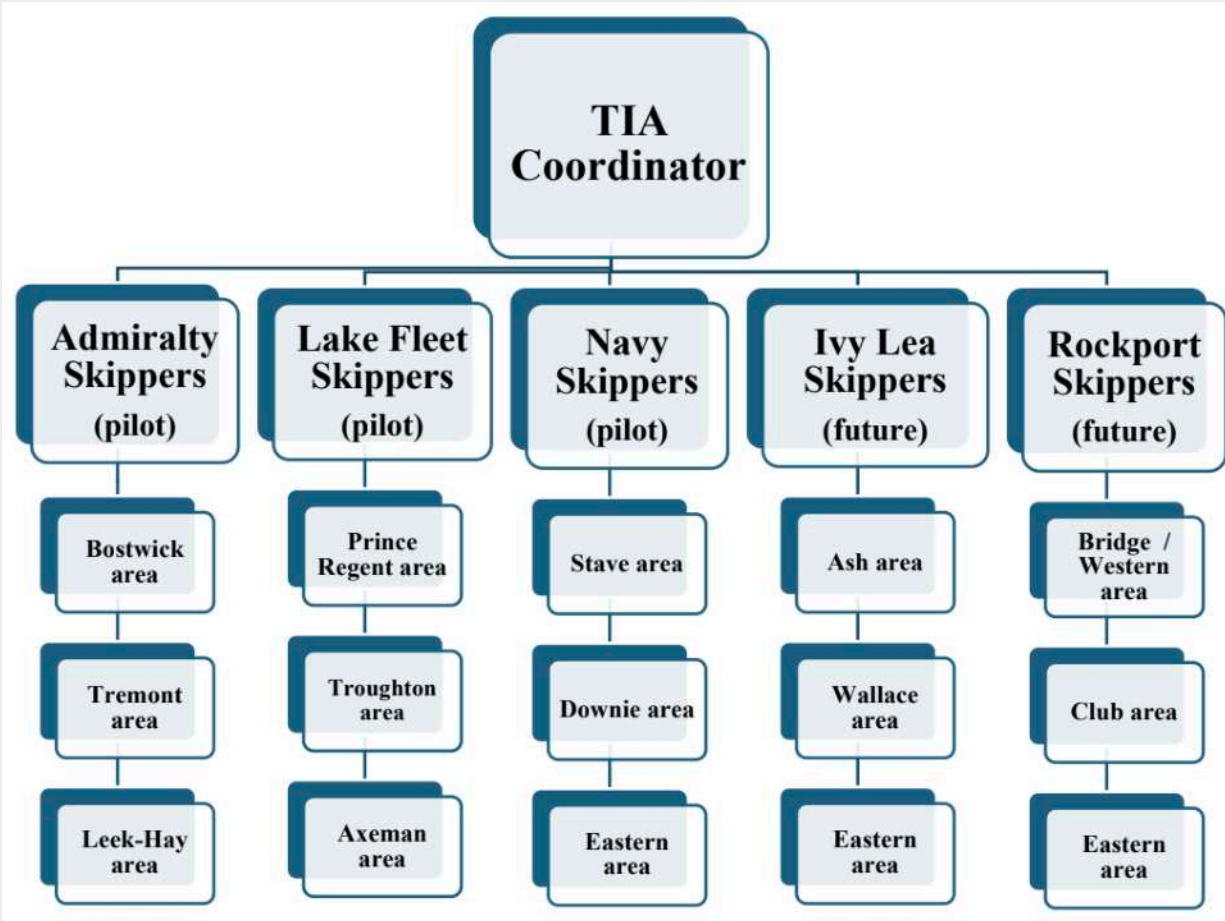
By: Jim Côté,
Chair, River Safety



FPO Doug Richardson's presentation at the August 22, 2025, clinic at the Ivy Lea Government Dock

As mentioned in the previous issue, the Neighbourhood Network Program (NNP) is being launched as a pilot study this summer in three island groups (Admiralty, Lake Fleet, Navy). This program is designed to establish a system for mapping the locations of all portable water pumps that can be used to fight local island fires until Fire Services arrive in their fire-fighting boats. Several people have volunteered in each island group to be “skippers.” These skippers will canvass their neighbours, distributing this pamphlet, to determine who already owns a pump but also to emphasize the importance of having (well-maintained) portable fire pumps for emergency preparation on islands. If you have a cottage in one of these three island groups, you can look forward to being contacted by your local skipper, who will explain the program and its benefits in greater detail. Based on lessons learned, this program will be expanded to more island groups in the future.

Here is the org chart for this program thus far:



If you any questions, or want to know more, email me at markerwatchers@gmail.com

The next clinic is on Aug. 8, 2026, Juniper Island

From the CBC's coverage of the August 22, 2025, clinic at the Ivy lea Government Dock



By: Jean Dabros

Let's Get the Lead Out Petition

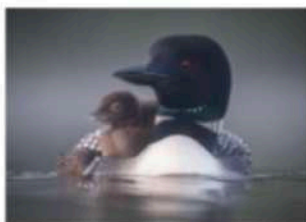


For many years Canada has banned and regulated the use of lead in pencils, paint, gasoline, children's toys, plumbing, cosmetics, jewelry and other household items. So why is lead not banned in fishing tackle? Each year the equivalent of forty-four dump trucks of lead in the form of fishing tackle is dropped into our lakes and rivers. Did you know that lead poisoning is the leading cause of mortality in adult loons? Once the loon has died and its remains have decomposed, the lead is left to continue its destructive path through the food chain – picked up by a fish – fish eaten by an Osprey or Eagle or another Loon.

“Lets Get The Lead Out” has started a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the sale and use of lead sinkers, weights & jigs under 50 grams (1.75 oz) in weight, and any lead-headed tackle under 6.5cm (2.5”) in length. Similar bans have been effective in New Hampshire, New York, and Maine, where lead-related deaths in loons and other animals began to decline after their bans were implemented. At the TIA AGM we again brought forward the idea of fishing lead free to prevent the loss of lead sinkers and jigs into the environment and urged members sign the petition. Petitioners must be residents of Ontario, including seasonal residents at the time of signing (whether Canadian or American or other non-Canadian, residents who own property in Ontario at the time of signing can record their Ontario address and postal code).

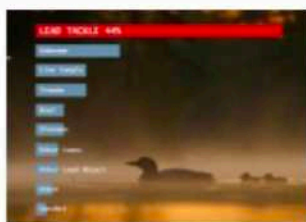
You can help by downloading a petition sheet and getting signatures. Return signed petitions to "Let's Get The Lead Out" C/O 9 Garland Lane, Godfrey Ontario K0H 1T0.

Loons and Lead Fishing Tackle: *The Facts*



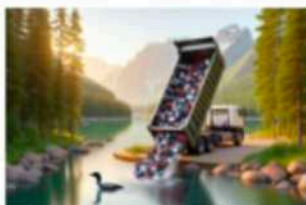
Ontario's official bird, the Common Loon, is in trouble.

Yes, this iconic beauty, whose haunting call graces so many Ontario lakes and rivers, is in serious decline across our province, and most of Canada. A recent study has shown that breeding success has declined by over 30% since the early 90's in Ontario, and is now critically close to the minimum level needed to sustain the species (0.48 chicks per mated pair per year).^{1,9}



Lead poisoning is the #1 cause of death in adult loons.

While several factors are contributing to the decline and vulnerability of the species, studies in Ontario and across North America have identified lead poisoning from ingested fishing tackle as the leading cause of death in adult loons.^{2,3,4,9} (And, at least 78 other species are documented as suffering from lead poisoning, including bald eagles, great blue herons, trumpeter swans, ospreys, mallards, and mergansers.)



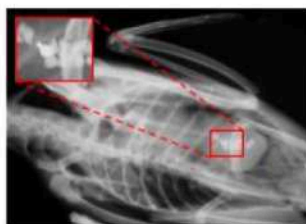
The lead equivalent of 20,000 car batteries enters our lakes and rivers annually from lost fishing gear.

An estimated 180 metric tonnes of lead from sinkers, jigs and other tackle is lost in Ontario's fresh waters every year.^{5,6} That's about 20,000 car batteries worth, or 44 fully loaded dump trucks worth, of lead dumped in our lakes and rivers every year.



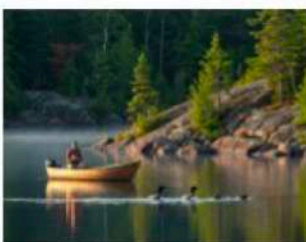
Lead is invisible to loons as they forage for food.

Loons ingest small pebbles from lake bottoms to help grind food in their gizzards. In this image of an Ontario lakebed, 7 pieces of lead tackle were added to show how a loon might inadvertently mistake them for a pebble. And because loons swallow their prey whole, including fish 12" or more, they are susceptible to consuming fish with tackle embedded, such as when fish break the line or anglers cut the line. Loons are also known to grab at fish and baits as they are being reeled in. In all these cases, loons can literally swallow "hook, line, and sinker," leading to lead poisoning.



A loon dies painfully within 2-4 weeks of ingesting lead.

Lead is a soft and toxic heavy metal. Once ingested, the grinding action of a loon's gizzard reduces the lead to fine particles which then pass into the bloodstream, poisoning the loon's tissues and organs. The lead from just one small lead split shot sinker is enough to poison a loon, killing it within 2-4 weeks of ingestion.^{7,8}



Tungsten simply outperforms lead and is safe for loons.

Tungsten is more dense and durable than lead, giving anglers several advantages, e.g.:

- Superior transmission of subtle bites
- Sinks faster with less water resistance & fewer snags
- 70% higher density = smaller size for same weight
- Better return on sonar electronics

And tungsten does not poison loons like lead does. Other safe alternatives include steel, tin, bismuth, ceramic and glass. While alternatives can cost more, when an angler's overall expenses are considered, the cost of switching to lead-free tackle has been estimated at a modest 0.3% to 3.6% for an assortment of sinkers and jigs.³

¹ "Canadian lakes loon survey", 40 year report, birds.canada.org, 2021.

² "Population-level effects of lead fishing tackle on common loons", Tiffany Grady, Journal of Wildlife Management, 2017.

³ "Lead fishing sinkers and jigs in Canada - review of their use patterns and toxic impacts on wildlife", A.M. Schuchman et al., Canadian Wildlife Service, 2003.

⁴ "Maine loon mortality", Susan Gallo, Maine Audubon 2013.

⁵ "Study to gather use pattern information on lead sinkers and jigs and their non-lead alternatives in Canada", Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2018.

⁶ "Survey of recreational fishing in Canada 2015", Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2015.

⁷ "Lead poisoning in loons", U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

⁸ X-ray photo credit: Adam Haven.

⁹ Loon family photos by Matt Muras.

Visit fishleadfree.ca for more information.

TIA Supporter City Cruises



For generations, the Thousand Islands has been one of Canada's most iconic waterfront destinations, and City Cruises Gananoque is proud to have played a role in helping visitors experience the beauty, history, and spirit of the region from the water.

Operating from the heart of Gananoque, City Cruises Gananoque has welcomed millions of guests to explore the breathtaking 1000 Islands aboard sightseeing cruises that showcase the natural scenery, historic landmarks, and unique island culture that make this region so special. From views of Boldt Castle and Singer Castle to Millionaire's Row and the picturesque St. Lawrence River shoreline, our cruises offer guests an unforgettable perspective of the Islands.

As part of the Hornblower Group, City Cruises Gananoque continues a longstanding tradition of connecting visitors with the water while supporting tourism growth throughout the Thousand Islands region. Our operation serves a wide range of guests, including families, couples, group tours, international travelers, school groups, and motorcoach operators looking to experience one of Ontario's premier tourism destinations.

Our cruises depart from both Gananoque and Ivy Lea, offering a variety of sightseeing experiences ranging from shorter introductory cruises to longer in-depth explorations of the 1000 Islands. Guests can also enjoy the Upper Deck Patio at Ivy Lea, a fully licensed riverside patio offering spectacular waterfront views before or after their cruise.

Beyond showcasing the beauty of the region, City Cruises Gananoque is proud to support the local tourism community through partnerships with hotels, attractions, tourism organizations, and community stakeholders. We recognize that the success of the Thousand Islands region is built on collaboration, and we are honored to be part of an industry that continues to welcome visitors from across Canada and around the world.

As we look ahead to another exciting season on the water, we invite both first-time visitors and returning guests to rediscover the magic of the Thousand Islands with City Cruises Gananoque.

For more information or to book tickets, visit: citycruises.com/Gananoque

Renew Your TIA Membership Today

Welcome to another year and a new beginning on the river! Founded in 1934, and now more than 90 years and 5 generations later, our roots are deep in traditions and memories with friends and family in our world-renowned beautiful Thousand Islands of the upper St. Lawrence River.

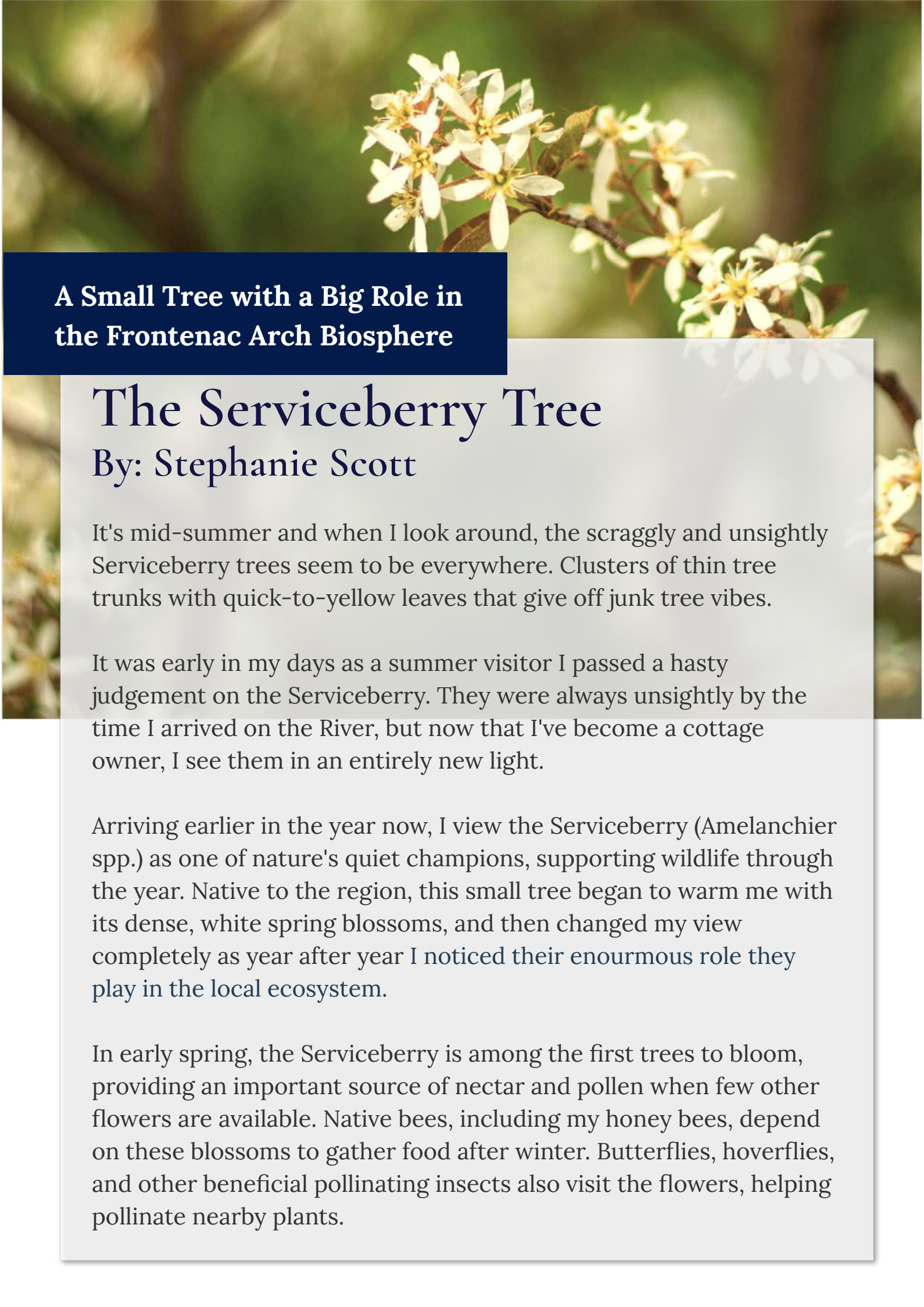
Today we share the responsibility of its stewardship as we deliver on our Missions of River Safety, Environmental Awareness, and Community Support. Your renewed membership ensures the safety and support of residents and boaters alike.

- Purchase & maintenance of 200+ shoal markers
- News and information on the river & its community
- Support of emergency response equipment & services
- Fellowship opportunities
- Environmental awareness programs
- Information on water levels & a unified voice for local regulatory agencies and proposed legislation

RENEW NOW



TIA is an international registered not-for-profit organization, which issues tax receipts for all Canadian and American memberships and donations.



A Small Tree with a Big Role in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere

The Serviceberry Tree

By: Stephanie Scott

It's mid-summer and when I look around, the scraggly and unsightly Serviceberry trees seem to be everywhere. Clusters of thin tree trunks with quick-to-yellow leaves that give off junk tree vibes.

It was early in my days as a summer visitor I passed a hasty judgement on the Serviceberry. They were always unsightly by the time I arrived on the River, but now that I've become a cottage owner, I see them in an entirely new light.

Arriving earlier in the year now, I view the Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.) as one of nature's quiet champions, supporting wildlife through the year. Native to the region, this small tree began to warm me with its dense, white spring blossoms, and then changed my view completely as year after year I noticed their enormous role they play in the local ecosystem.

In early spring, the Serviceberry is among the first trees to bloom, providing an important source of nectar and pollen when few other flowers are available. Native bees, including my honey bees, depend on these blossoms to gather food after winter. Butterflies, hoverflies, and other beneficial pollinating insects also visit the flowers, helping pollinate nearby plants.



As summer arrives, I watch the trees produce sweet, purple berries that are enjoyed by a variety of migrating birds. American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, Northern Cardinals, Eastern Bluebirds, Gray Catbirds, Baltimore Orioles, and several species of thrushes that eagerly feed on the fruit. I've also seen squirrels and chipmunks, enjoy the nutritious berries while helping disperse the seeds.



Beyond its flowers and fruit, I've read the Serviceberry serves as a host plant for many native insects. Caterpillars of several moths and butterflies feed on its leaves, creating an important food source for nesting birds raising their young. Songbirds rely heavily on these protein-rich insects to feed their chicks during the breeding season.

With my change of heart on the Serviceberry, I've defended their existence during times of 'property pruning' as a simple yet meaningful way to support the local ecosystem. There is so much more to these trees than meets the eye.



CPR & AED Training Graduation Class of 2026

TIA hosted its 3rd annual CPR & AED Certification Training Course on July 9 at the 1000 Islands History Museum. There were 15 attendees who graduated and received their Certification and wallet cards.

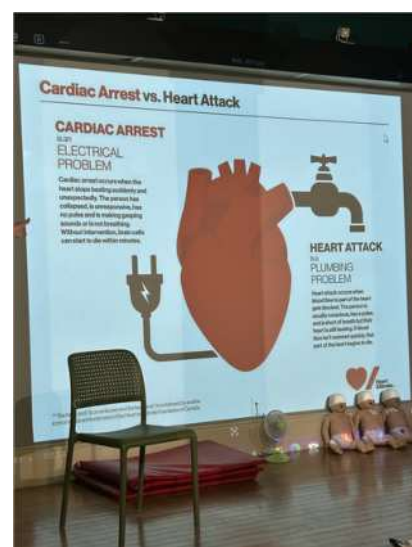
The professional training was provided by ACTIONFIRSTAID.CA and was a rewarding learning experience for those attending.

Highlights of the course included:

- < Common Questions About First Aid
- < Emergency Scene Management ... Assess, Call, Treat (ACT)
- < Vital Signs and Levels of Responsiveness
- < Signs and Symptoms of Shock
- < Choking and Airway Obstruction
- < How to apply Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
- < How to use a Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

Click Here for the ACTION FIRST AID First Aid CPR and AED Manual. Better yet, consider attending next years' training session planned for Thursday, July 8, 2027, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm for a hands-on group learning experience. Bring family, neighbours and friends. Class size is limited to 20 participants.

Become empowered to TAKE ACTION ... Training is for Life!



Did you know...



If you or your spouse own or rent property other than your home address in Ontario, you may be eligible to vote in more than one municipal, district social services administration board and/or school board election.



VOTE



**Register
to Vote**

**This is your sign to get on
the list for the October 26
municipal election.**

Check, update or add yourself to the voters list with our online tool until **August 12**, or directly with your municipality after this date.

Register now





Osprey Recovery

By: Jean Dabros

Photo credit www.allaboutbirds.org

Moving to the Landon's Bay area in 2011, I often sat and marvelled at the diving and fishing abilities of the Osprey in the bay. August meant the piercing cries of this year's nestlings as they worked on their mastery of flight. Bald Eagles, who thought they saw an easy way to obtain dinner, would chase down a fish laden Osprey and amazing arial combats would begin. Who needed electronic devices? And hadn't it always been this way? When a TIA member approached the environmental team with a question about who should repair her collapsing Osprey nesting platform it started a quest.

Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) were one of the most widespread and abundant hawks in North America during the 1950s. Few rivers, lakes or ocean shorelines lacked a nesting pair. But the advent of chemical pesticides and a loss of habitat marked a tragic turn of circumstances. By the mid 1960s Osprey numbers on the Eastern coast had dropped by 90% and it is estimated numbers in Canada had dropped by up to two thirds. The Osprey was on the brink of extinction.

In the 1970s the indiscriminate spraying, and the most lethal pesticides, were banned. The Osprey (as well as Bald Eagle and Peregrin Falcon amongst other birds of prey) were saved, and a slow recovery began.

In 1992 an aerial survey undertaken by Parks Canada and Environment Canada in the Thousand Islands region found there were only two nesting pairs from Kingston to Mallorytown Landing.

“ One nesting pair of ospreys was found on the US side of the River in the old derelict Third Brother Shoal navigation tower below Ironsides Island, and another pair were observed foraging along the Thousand Islands Parkway below Rockport.” Bud Andress

The loss of suitable nesting sites was thought to be one the reasons for the lack of recovery of the population and so a coalition of Parks Canada, Environment Canada, landowners and sponsors erected 6 nesting platforms, 5 of which were fully occupied by 1994 (one had to be taken down due to a conflict with a tern nesting site). In 1999 a pair of bald eagles took over one of the original six osprey platforms. The Thousand Islands now had its first bald eagle nest since 1937.

As Osprey numbers began to climb the Ospreys began to find nest sites in not so convenient locations, such as cottage chimney/roof-line crotches or chimney tops, and River navigation towers. Canadian Coast Guard and Leeds County Stewardship Council (LCSC) joined the team to erect nesting platforms out in the river (LCSC also erected nest boxes throughout Leeds County as well as along the River).

Did you know that Osprey have reversible outer toes can point forward or backward for a stronger grasp?

A 2011 census found 50 nests on the Canadian side of the river and by 2025 it was estimated that there were over 200 nests on both sides of the St. Lawrence. What a wonderful recovery story as well as a warning to do as much as we can to protect the health of this vibrant and beautiful ecosystem. (Osprey are susceptible to lead ingested from fish.)

“This successful return of the osprey and other species and their successful reproduction comes after a greater Great Lakes basin crash from the use of DDT and other organochlorine pesticides. There are always new pressures on a healthy Thousand Islands ecosystem and we who love this area, who live or vacation here, need to stay vigilant and aware of significant changes we may be making. A healthy, diverse ecosystem is good for plant life, wildlife, and for us.” Bud Andress (retired Parks Canada employee and "2008 Keeper of the Islands") (<https://thousandislandslife.com/the-osprey-pandion-haliaetus-recovery-how-it-came-about/>)



Navigation tower and offset osprey platform. [Photo by Dave Amberley]



Fellow supporters Jacey Marie and daughter

TIA's Environmental Awareness Crew in Action

Above: Participation in the Save the River/TIA Trash Free River event at Potters Beach. (July 25)

Right: Attendance at the invasive species presentation by Emily Fell of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation hosted by Grindstone Island Research and Heritage Center (July 24)



Presenter: Emily Fell, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Island Fire Preparedness: Lessons Learned the Hard Way

By Britton Bedford-Jones



On an island, fire can move faster than help can arrive.

My family learned that lesson on Mudlunta Island in April 1985, when a wind-driven fire destroyed three of five cottages. Friends, neighbours, and emergency services responded quickly, but gale-force winds carried the flames faster than anyone could control.

Insurance helped rebuild, but it can't replace family photographs, keepsakes, great oaks, or the memory of my great-aunt waving and crying from the porch as we left at summer's end.

Championed by David Orr, TIA responded by helping members access gas-powered fire pumps and improve property identification from the water.

Forty years later, that preparation mattered. Our TIA supplied self-priming pump is tested every year, including weeks before August 9, 2025, when a frayed power cable at the island transformer pole began sparking during a hot, dry spell.

That morning, I was having coffee on the verandah with my sister's family when a boat raced into the bay. Two fishermen were waving and shouting, "Your island's on fire!"

My nephew and I alerted my cousin John, loaded the pump and hoses, and raced to the point where others formed a bucket brigade.

The pump started on the first pull and we had high-pressure water on the fire which was consuming dried grass and cedar trees starved by a month-long drought and moving rapidly towards the cottages. By the time firefighters arrived, we had contained it; they finished the job and checked for hot spots.

Today, there is no trace of the fire. That was not luck alone; it was preparedness, working equipment, alert neighbours, and an island family that remembered the past.

Prevention is simple. Can you get water on a fire quickly? Does everyone know where the equipment is and how to use it? Can emergency services find us? Are flammables safely stored? The best time to answer is not when smoke is in the air.

In island life, prevention can make the difference between a close call and devastating loss. Check your pump, hoses, dock flag, alarms, extinguishers, and emergency plan. Make sure everyone using the cottage knows what to do.

Thank you to the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands Fire Service for their fast, professional response. All of us on Mudlunta are grateful.



Excerpts from “Among the Thousand Islands” (1887)

By Karen Wand

**Another snippet from the life
of Agnes Maule Machar**



Grant Allen (1849-1899) was Canada's first professional crime writer. He was born on Wolfe Island and was the brother of Carolyn, who married John Maule Machar. Allen celebrated the beauty of the area in an essay he titled "Among the Thousand Islands" which was published in Popular Science Monthly/Volume 31 in July 1887. A small window from that story from 139 years ago is shared with you here. Agnes Maule Machar extended an invitation to the Allen family to join her at her cottage. "The hummingbird has now laid its eggs in the nest by the veranda," our friend wrote us from Gananoque; "come soon if you want to see them. And Miss Sinclair has tamed a chipmunk, which eats almost from her hand, by the big tree. I'm sure your boy would like to have a peep at him. Also, the Indian pipe plant is beginning to flower in the wood behind the house. It doesn't last long; you must make haste, or you will be too late for it."

"The very next day saw us safely packed on board the Princess Louise river-steamer as it steams down the Canadian Channel, past Wolfe Island, where I spent a rustic boyhood, and on through endless groups of other wooded islets, with cedars sweeping low to the water's edge, till, after a couple of hours aboard, two white wooden

lighthouses, guarding the entrance to the little harbor, announce our approach to Gananoque.”

“The Princess Louise drew up at the rough log wharf, choked with immense piles of white-pine planks, and even as we reached the tiny quay we saw our hostess in her rowboat, already pulling round a granite bluff from her retreat to meet us.”

“By private arrangement with the captain, the engineer "scooted," or blew, his whistle three times as he passed the lighthouse whenever he had visitors onboard for our friends' chalet. The moment the "scoot" is heard on the cliff, the chalet folks put out their boat at once, and row round to the landing- place to take up their visitors without delay on arrival.”

“We disembarked from the Princess Louise and took our seats in the chalet rowboat. Our hostess pulled; and while Allen offered to row, Miss Machar firmly declined to surrender the oars. He described a secret twinge of satisfaction as it's quite a thing to pull a heavy hen-coop against the big waves of the full St. Lawrence on a windy evening.”

“The chalet stands a little removed from Gananoque village, in wild grounds all of its own, raised high among the woods, on top of a sheer cliff. With doors and windows flung wide open, and roses and honeysuckles peeping in from the richly festooned pillars of the veranda, can one imagine a more delightful spot in which to spend a cloudless summer?”

If you'd like to go back in time and read more about the Thousand Islands and the lifestyle of that time, including more details about Miss Machar's chalet and property, you can find Grant Allen's essay "The Thousand Islands" online.

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Popular_Science_Monthly/Volume_31/July_1887/Among_the_Thousand_Islands/tench/

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