



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2021

RIVER TALK



RIVER SAFETY . ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS . COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Our thanks to TIA member and friend, John N. Street,
for providing some of the images used in River Talk each month.

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER RIVER TALK





Winter officially arrives on Tuesday,
December 21st at 10:59am and with
it will come river days like this.

Photos from 2020.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Peter Fitton



The end of Daylight savings time confirmed the end to fall was near and the soon to come December weather of rain, snow, and cold temperatures. But this change in season also brings with it important and special times of the year.

Remembrance Day (also known as Poppy or Veterans Day) serves to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty. As I watched the Nov 11 ceremonial proceedings, I thought about the invisible world war we have all been engaged in with COVID-19 and how grateful we need to be for scientists and health care front-line workers saving our lives.

Thanksgiving is a time to celebrate with family and friends. Aside from the origin stories, the difference in timing between American and Canadian Thanksgiving is explained by some due to the later harvest further south. In any case it is a day to be thankful and to enjoy eating turkey and pumpkin pie.

TIA is thankful for the support it has received this year from its membership, business sponsors and charitable foundations providing grant monies to remain sustainable. TIA is also thankful for the border opening and the return of Americans and Canadians to their properties. The season was short for them, but the river was there providing a warm welcome.

December brings the annual Christian festival of Christmas and is also celebrated by non-Christians as a seasonal holiday with traditions of gift-giving. One icon is the Christmas Tree, and its origin was long before the beginning of Christianity. The practice of decorating a tree or using plants and trees that were green year-round was important for people in winter climates. Some cultures believed evergreens would keep witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and even illness at bay. This works for me.

Now get ready for the New Year - ring out the old and ring in the new with a New Year tradition. From singing "Auld Lang Syne" to eating lucky food, discover different ways to celebrate the start of 2022. Visit <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/parenting/g25360543/new-year-traditions/> to find good luck traditions from around the world and go to <https://www.almanac.com/content/blog-how-make-new-years-resolutions> to learn more about the history of making a New Year's Resolution.

On behalf of our Board, I wish you all Seasons Greetings and a healthy New Year!





FROM THE EDITOR

Allison Burchell-Robinson

Well there is no longer any doubt that summer has gone and fall is fast behind it. Snow has already fallen somewhere and December has arrived. The freighters are still on the River and traffic appears to be increasing before the Seaway closes December 31st. The River looks grey, not exactly the sparkling blue some of us were jumping into not that long ago. In the spirit of Christmas and Yes, there is a Santa Claus, Yes we will again all be jumping in again...soon.

There are those who look with glee to the winter sports and being outdoors whether it be skiing, snowboarding, ice skating, tobogganing, sailing on an ice boat even ice fishing. Then there are those who prefer a good book, a cozy fire and a glass of wine, a mug of warm cocoa or a nice cup of tea.

Either one, you should all take the opportunity to go to [TIA's website and the Resource page](#). It contains an incredibly large amount of information ranging from water levels to information on safe boating, power and sailing squadrons to the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway System (how do those large freighters get from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie). You might want to know the schedule at the local theatres; a rainy day could include a visit to one of the local museums-check the displays and a sunny day could include a visit to one of the parks in Ontario or New York.

If you missed one of TIA's River Talks, they are all available from this page as is the delightful Thousand Islands Life listed under Publications. For those fishermen/women who want to be updated about the rules and regulations, look no further. Conservationists can visit the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve and then move onto the two land trusts on either side of the border. Is Ontario at risk with invading species, you can find out here. The all-important information on both Coast Guards is available along with the Thousand Islands Emergency Rescue Service.

Everything listed on the Resource page is linked to allow you to visit and learn more in depth about the resource. Sit down and spend some time on this page. It's time well spent!



THE LAND TRUST ENABLED THIS COTTAGER'S SUCCESSION PLAN



Bob Street

My family has owned a beautiful piece of property in the 1000 Islands for over 100 years. My wife and I were searching for a succession plan that would preserve that legacy and also address the large tax liability on capital gains that had accumulated over the years.



Developing a preservation plan with the **Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust (TIWLT)** achieved both our goals — ensuring that our children could continue to enjoy the same natural beauty that we've cherished and also significantly reducing the amount of tax by receiving a credit for the plans implemented with TIWLT. A conversation with TIWLT might give you some ideas about creating a succession plan that benefits your family's unique goals and circumstances (613-659-4590).

Our property included a cottage on 5 acres and an additional 8 acres facing a beautiful marsh. All of it severable & subdividable. We've seen the ever-encroaching march of humanity, severing, subdividing and developing throughout North America and right here in the 1000 Islands. That is not what we wanted for the future of our property and we realized that if no explicit preservation plan were in place, it is not a question of whether it would be subdivided & developed in the future, it's a question of when.

Working against our hope of preservation was the large "capital gain" that had accumulated on our property during the decades of ownership. With just a few exceptions, transfers of property among family members is subject to taxes on those gains. The initial tax estimates were staggering. Our initial reaction was to sever and sell enough property to raise the funds to pay the tax... a move entirely opposite of the preservation goal we sought. The realtor we contacted asked us to first call TIWLT.



THE LAND TRUST ENABLED THIS COTTAGER'S SUCCESSION PLAN

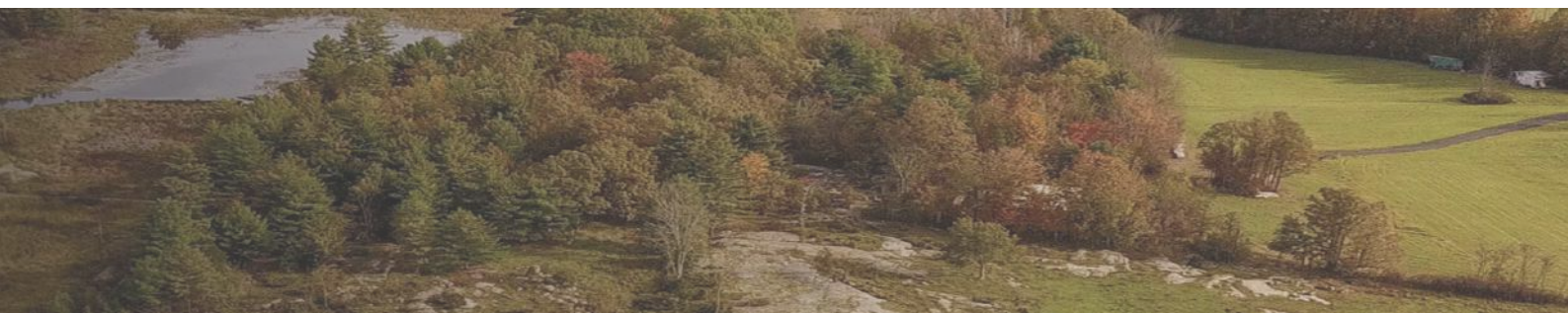


The Land Trust to the rescue: TIWLT mapped out alternative approaches to allow us to preserve what we have known in an affordable way. One approach allowed us to continue our ownership & traditional usage of our marsh property but to relinquish future development rights on it. Two major financial advantages... an undevelopable lot is valued much lower than a developable lot, providing a significant tax receipt to contribute to the tax due on transferring our other cottage property within the family. Secondly, real estate taxes would be significantly reduced forever. Yet we would keep the property and walk to our viewpoints as we had always done. Another approach was an outright gift of the marsh land to TIWLT with slightly stronger preservation and financial advantages, an alternative we chose. TIWLT has a basket-full of alternatives not just these two. As with many properties in our area, ours qualified for Canada's generous Ecological Gifts Program allowing capital gains write-offs much larger than the value of the donated property. <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/ecological-gifts-program/overview.html>.

Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust (TIWLT) is situated at what is likely the most important migratory crossroads in all of North America. With the advance of climate change and disappearing wilderness, we need to protect land, life and legacies, and help people learn how they can help.



However, a comparison of "sell for development" vs. "pay the tax out-of-pocket for preservation" can bias decisions toward sell. For us, the land trust programs brought the net cost of preservation within our reach and the entire family agreed to preserve our little piece of the 1000 Islands. Perhaps TIWLT could help tilt your succession plan in the same direction.





Noteworthy News

Photo Supplied by Ken White

TIA Border Taskforce Update: Lots is Happening on the US-Canada Border!

The Long Awaited Report from the Canada Institute of The Wilson Center was FINALLY ready for publication launch, just 7 months later than we had hoped. Their October 29th Webinar **"The U.S.-Canadian Border: Recovery from COVID-19"** summarized 'Lessons To Be Learned'

- Use a Categorical Approach versus Zero Risk rules, "listening to all the voices"
- "Lessons must be learned together as partners" continuously communicating
- "When we don't unite our two countries, [it] breeds distrust and confusion"
- Utilize "made to measure solutions versus broad based [decisions for our] long border with [many] different circumstances". "Political will" was low to do so.

Click the above Webinar link to hear the 4 well-known experts who developed this report for presentation to both governments. OR read the excellent Globe and Mail reaction **"Next pandemic, manage risk instead of closing border, task forces urges Canada, U.S."**

On November 8th, the **U.S. side of the Canadian border reopened to vaccinated Canadians**, about 3 months after Canada did the same for U.S. non-essential travelers. The difference is Canadians will not need a PCR test within 72 hours of an arrival in the U.S., while Canada still required US travelers to have a negative Covid-19 test for entry.

A week later, Canada announced a major step forward to encourage quick round trip travel with no requirements for a PCR test if returning within a 72 hour time window! **(CTV News, updated Nov 19th). "Canada plans to phase out PCR test travel requirements for fully vaccinated travelers in three phases..."** Nov 18th **CTV video reports**, are airing as of Nov 22nd. **Begins on November 30th (Canadians only).**

In this developing story, Canada dumps PCR testing requirements in 3 phases: for Canadians 1st (Nov 30th), US 2nd, other countries 3rd based on discussions between NY Congressman Brian Higgins (Buffalo region & Northern Border Caucus) and Prime Minister Trudeau.[Search: us-canada border news]

Note: Canadians returning from longer US trips **'Super easy': How Canadian travelers are getting free COVID-19 tests to return home from U.S.**



Did you know that TIA will issue you a tax receipt for any donation over \$10? We also issue both Canadian and US Tax receipts. Learn More by **CLICKING HERE**

WHAT IS A SHOAL?

Jim Côté

Chair TIA River Safety Committee

To some readers this may sound like an obvious question, but to others it is something they have often wondered. Shoals often surprise people, but a shoal is not something you want on your Christmas list and not something you want to unexpectedly encounter while boating.

Metaphorically, shoals refer to hidden dangers or difficulties. Literally, when boating, shoals are areas of shallow water. What makes the water shallow can vary from sand bars to rock upcroppings. In the 1000 Islands, shoals are made of rock—usually hard granite, against which boats do not stand a chance.

Shoals in the 1000 Islands are also distinctive in the wide variations of their shapes and sizes. Some are easily seen from a distance just below the water surface to spread out over a large area. Others are small and difficult to see because they suddenly jut up from a depth of several fathoms. The reason for this variability lies in the geological history of the area. The rocks forming these shoals, and the islands, are over a billion years old and were once the tops of a massive mountain chain. The area is now known as the Frontenac Arch, which links the Canadian Shield with the Adirondacks in the US.

TIA currently marks about 200 of the most hazardous shoals, but placements can vary from year to year. Some shoals protrude above the water, so normally do not need to be marked. However, when water levels are high, some of these shoals are covered by water and hard to see. In contrast, when levels are low, rocks that previously were not a hazard can become a problem. It is also difficult to securely anchor markers on some shoals due to the often high winds and strong currents, so these markers can break loose leaving the shoal temporarily unmarked.

TIA strongly encourages boaters to use navigation charts or apps (such as **Wavve**, which shows all of the shoals), and to be mindful that many shoals are not marked by TIA. To help our efforts, if you are Christmas shopping for someone who seems to have everything, why not buy them a tax-deductible marker placement through the link [**Sponsor a Shoal Marker**](#)



Friends of TIA



THOUSAND ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK – RARE Program Helping Reptiles and Amphibians in the Thousand Islands

As the first national park established east of the Rockies (1904), Thousand Islands National Park has been protecting natural areas and welcoming visitors to the St. Lawrence River for over 100 years. Although one of Canada's smaller national parks, it is one of the most biologically diverse! This incredible diversity includes 31 species of reptiles and amphibians, 10 of which are species at risk. This biodiversity was recognized by the Canadian Herpetological Society in 2020, with the Thousand Islands Ecosystem being declared a nationally Important Amphibian and Reptile Area.

In order to help these amazing creatures for generations to come, Thousand Islands National Park started the Reptile and Amphibian Recovery and Education (RARE) project in 2019.

Turtle Incubation – 161 turtles were released back to their home wetlands this summer following incubation at Thousand Islands National Park, in collaboration with our new partners at the Aquatarium in Brockville. Laid in areas with less than a 1% chance of survival due to threats from predation and roads, by carefully collecting and incubating these eggs, Parks Canada is giving a new generation of turtles a chance to hatch and grow. This summer, we incubated Common Snapping Turtles, Midland Painted Turtles, and for the first time, Eastern Musk (Stinkpot) Turtles. Since 2019, 414 turtles have been incubated and released back to their home wetlands.



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Friends of TIA



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Turtle Nest Boxes – Since 2019, Thousand Islands National Park has distributed over 150 turtle nest boxes to local residents who have protected thousands of turtle eggs! All 5 turtle species found in the Thousand Islands are species at risk. A simple turtle nest box can make a big difference in protecting eggs from being dug up and eaten by predators, such as raccoons and skunks. If turtles nest on your property, help protect the next generation. We have turtle nest protector boxes that you can use to safeguard nests.

These programs are just two examples of the many Parks Canada initiatives that are helping reptiles and amphibians, and inspiring others to do the same. Stay tuned for these programs to return in 2022, and for new projects that will help other threatened species like the Gray Ratsnake and Western Chorus Frog!

Want to learn more? Visit: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn np/on/1000/nature/conservation/rare> or contact rare@pc.gc.ca



RARE

Reptile & Amphibian Recovery & Education
Reptiles et amphibiens : recouvrement et éducation

Thousand Islands National Park
Parc national des Mille-Îles



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Environmental Awareness

Is this our next Invasive Species?

Stuart Arnett

There has been a lot of talk about wild or feral pigs. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, some Canadian farmers imported wild boars from Europe to raise for meat. At the time, there were no requirements for secure containment and over the years, some escaped and established several feral/wild populations.

Feral pigs are one of the most devastating invasive species because of the amount of damage that they can do to a wide variety of native species and different environments.



They can damage property, ruin & consume agricultural crops, pastures and the environment, including through rooting (digging), endanger people and animals, harass livestock and consume their feed. They also prey on young livestock and wildlife as well as they can spread diseases that could be transmitted to wildlife, livestock and pets. Through their wallowing they can contaminate water supplies, promote erosion and destroy fish habitat all while competing with native wildlife

Another problem with feral pigs is that they reproduce very quickly. They become sexually mature at 6 months and can have two litters per year with 4-10 piglets each time. This is one of the reasons that feral pigs have spread from their original farms in Alberta to now being spread throughout Saskatchewan and Manitoba and are now making their way into Ontario with sightings as close as Pickering in November of this year!

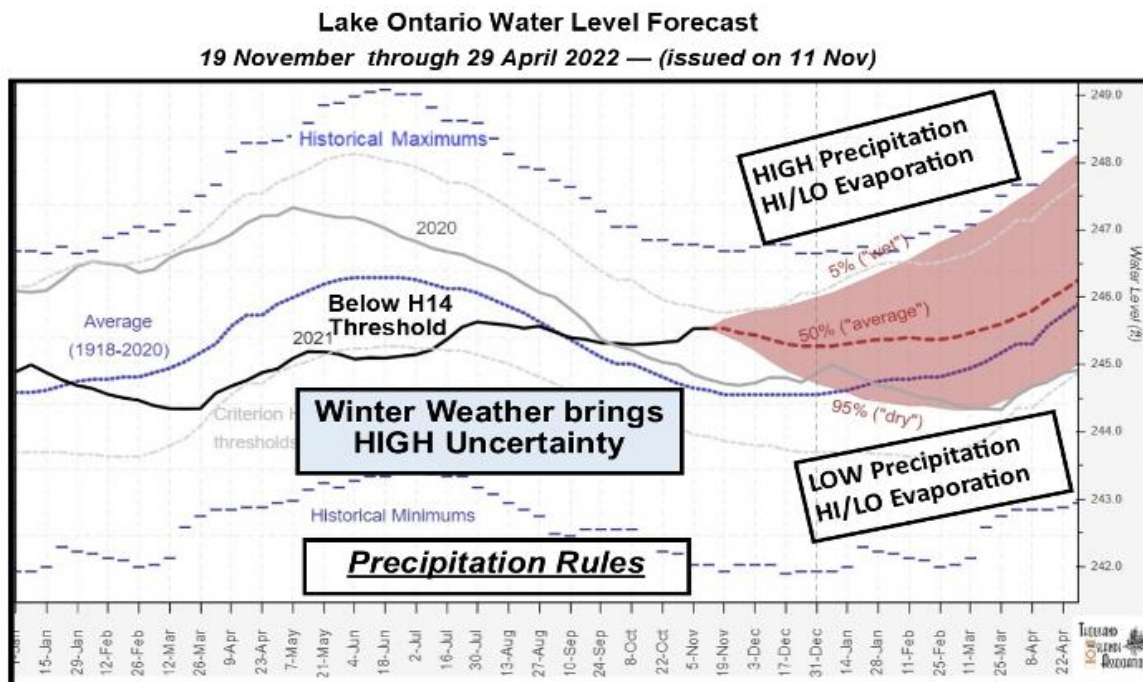
So as much as we do not want invasive species, these WILL be the next one to invade Ontario. To do your part in protecting our native wildlife and our environment please report any sightings through either email at wildpigs@ontario.ca, phone at 1-833-933-2355 or the Invasive Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711.



2021 Water Level Reflections and 2022 Winter-Spring Uncertainties

TIA Water Levels Committee (11/22/21)

We have high levels this fall, yet 2021 will be remembered as a 'Low Water Year'. Levels for 6 of the first 7 months were below the historical average, but by late August crossed above 'average' and will likely remain there for the rest of 2021.



<https://ijc.org/en/loslr/watershed/forecasts>

- DYK (Did You Know) we are only 0.3 inches below the July 28th 2021 peak
- DYK current water level is a full foot above the historical average (Nov 22nd)
- A pattern shift at the end of June turned to 'wet' and has persisted since levels jumped in July, ending an 18-month run of dry conditions for the Lake Ontario basin
- Spring level forecast shows high variability, with a range of 3 ft between 'wet' & 'dry'
- If the 2022 winter-spring has very high precipitation levels ('wet')... water levels could approach Historical Maximums! (less than 5% probability)
- DYK Lake Ontario's outflow was temporarily decreased to allow Hydro Quebec to safely draw down their reservoirs and relocate stranded fish prior to winter

Deviation Paybacks: Twice this year, flows were reduced, and water held back in Lake Ontario (LO). To mitigate these, the [Board will remove the excess water](#):

- 1) May 29 – July 16 when levels were very low: 1.6" of water was added to LO
- 2) October 8 – 11 flows were decreased to raise Lake St. Lawrence for long weekend boat hauling: 0.3" of water was added to LO

➤ To mitigate these, the Board removes the "added" water: Increased outflows from mid-October through mid-December will remove the total 1.9" (4.8 cm) of water that was maintained on Lake Ontario. [\[Click HERE for FULL Article\]](#)



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

The entire Board of **The Thousand Islands Association** hopes this holiday season brings peace, love and joy to you and your Family. Thank you to our members, donors, sponsors and grant partners for your continued support and encouragement in **2021**. Best wishes for a safe and happy New Year.



Give the Gift of
Membership this year.

CLICK HERE to
purchase a 2022 TIA
Membership for the
River Rat on your list



The Thousand Islands Association (TIA) is a not-for-profit organization that was founded in 1934. Our efforts in River Safety, Environmental Awareness and Community support is funded through membership, donations, business sponsorship and grants. Our Annual Appeal is an integral part of our fundraising. **Please donate today.**

TIA'S 2021 ANNUAL APPEAL

PLEASE SUPPORT THE WORK WE DO DURING OUR ANNUAL APPEAL

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LEARN MORE**





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HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

*A TIA Member
came across this
beautiful Buck in
early November on
Howe Island.*

*He seemed quite
pleased that
someone was
taking his picture.*



*Got a favourite
photo? Please
email it to TIA*

thousandislandsassociation@gmail.com

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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TIA's Three Pillars

River Safety

Environmental Awareness

Community Support

