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Copied below is a slightly modified version of the letter the LMAA executive have sent to the OMNRF. It is in response to the many concerns Lake Manitou Area residents have expressed at Association meetings and through the online LMAA web site forum. The main emphasis is on the operation of the Sandfield dam and related level and water quality issues .

**November 15, 2019**

**Mr. Ross Hart**

**Sudbury District Manager**

**Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry**

**Dear Mr. Hart,**

**"Let's Keep Our Lake Great"**

**We are writing on behalf of the 235 members of the Lake Manitou Area Association (LMAA) in regard to two pressing areas of concern to our membership: water levels causing land erosion, and health of the lake/river and fish.**

**Please be assured that we want to be proactive and reasonable in our requests and suggestions. We understand that climate change is real and is something that cannot be controlled, but that there are ways in which we can mitigate the damage. Some of that damage control is up to each home/cottage owner, by trying to maintain or return to as natural a shoreline as possible. To that end, the LMAA is looking into various shoreline assessment programs, in conjunction with Manitoulin Streams, that would be available to our members with the possibility of some aid. We are still in the process of working out the details; however, we have started by donating \$3,000 to Manitoulin Streams towards this project.**

**There is however one area which is out of our control and in the control of the MNRF, and that is management of the dam. This was brought to the attention of the Ministry in a letter of April 18, 2016 (appended) and a subsequent meeting. It has been a major topic of concern at our AGMs. Following our July 13, 2019 AGM, we provided a discussion forum on our website with an October 31st deadline, wherein members could submit their particular issues of concern and outline their shoreline damage due to water levels. These submissions were collated. The majority of posts came from people on the east basin of the lake, that is, the dam side where fluctuations were, it would seem, more severe. Most of the damage is due to flooding, erosion causing trees and shrubs to be uprooted or the roots exposed, and the degradation of water due to clay silt. In almost every case where the issue of DRASTIC fluctuations was cited, those drastic changes were usually at times when stop logs in the dam were increased or decreased in a severe, rather than a gradual, way. We understand that severe weather can also cause these drastic fluctuations.**

**The dam guidelines outline, in table 2, the average water level and stop log settings up to 1986. The guidelines also point out that in 1990 there was a flooding problem which “resulted from an attempt to hold back water to supplement flows in the Manitou River for fall spawning salmon”. The recommendation was “that the manipulation of stop logs on the lake return to its historical operation pattern.” The guidelines then provide, in table 3, a new guideline to be used to set stop logs and water levels on Lake Manitou. This guideline clearly outlines eight times in a year when stop logs would be manipulated ... sometimes only 1- ½ logs. It is our understanding that this has not been followed for some time and fewer, more drastic numbers of logs have been manipulated at a time. Is this correct? We understand that someone from**

Blue Jay Creek Fish Hatchery did the manipulations up until a little over a year ago but now someone is dispatched from Sudbury. Is this also correct?

If that is the case, we would like to recommend that the MNRF hire someone local again who can keep an eye on the situation and make the changes to the stop logs as per the guidelines, up to eight times a year, to mitigate drastic increases/decreases in water flow. This will certainly help the lake and the river.

Again, we understand clearly that no one can control Mother Nature and unforeseen situations may arise.

Our second concern is the health of Lake Manitou, the Manitou River, fish and other aquatic life, as well as our drinking water. The big issue appears to be the clay silt which is a result of erosion. On our forum members talked about “a river of silt” or “the bay was completely clouded by clay silt”.

The following excerpt from the Government of Canada website completely sums up our concerns.

***Why Is Sediment Important? Sediment carried in water has a variety of effects: what are they and why are they important?***

**Toxic chemicals** *Sediment plays a major role in the transport and fate of pollutants and so is clearly a concern in water quality management. Toxic chemicals can become attached, or adsorbed, to sediment particles and then transported to and deposited in other areas. These pollutants may later be released into the environment. By studying the quantity, quality, and characteristics of sediment in the stream, scientists and engineers can determine the sources and evaluate the impact of the pollutants on the aquatic environment. Once the sources and impact are known, action can be taken to reduce the pollutants. The association of toxic chemicals with sediment is an issue of national importance.*

**Fisheries/Aquatic habitat**

*Stream borne sediment directly affects fish populations in several ways:*

- *Suspended sediment decreases the penetration of light into the water. This affects fish feeding and schooling practices and can lead to reduced survival.*
- *Suspended sediment in high concentrations irritates the gills of fish, and can cause death.*
- *Sediment can destroy the protective mucous covering the eyes and scales of fish, making them more susceptible to infection and disease.*
- *Sediment particles absorb warmth from the sun and thus increase water temperature. This can stress some species of fish.*
- *Suspended sediment in high concentrations can dislodge plants, invertebrates, and insects in the stream bed.*  
*This affects the food source of fish, and can result in smaller and fewer fish.*
- *Settling sediments can bury and suffocate fish eggs.*
- *Sediment particles can carry toxic agricultural and industrial compounds. If these are released in the habitat, they can cause abnormalities or death in the fish.*

We hope that the Ministry will take our suggestion seriously. If this works, it will be a win-win situation at a minimal cost. If it doesn't, at least something was tried that was not a huge cost to taxpayers and would give our members re-assurance that the MNRF listened and was willing to work with us to attempt to mitigate these problems.

We are open to discussion and would welcome a meeting

Sincerely,

Steve Mann, President LMAA

Sharon Cooper, Vice President LMAA

cc: Mr. Grant Ritchie, Regional Director, MNRF

Mr. Paul Leale, Resource Management Supervisor, MNRF

### **Working to Keep Lake Manitou Great**

Thank you to all who participated in the LMAA WEBSITE FORUM and expressed your concerns about the operation of the Sandfield Dam and water quality issues in Lake Manitou

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*Summer*



*Spring*

Above photos (copied from the Manitoulin Expositor) show the drastic seasonal differences in water levels in the Manitou River just below the Sandfield dam.

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## Did You Know That?

The large orange buoys that are set out on Lake Manitou each spring and brought back in each fall are owned and operated by the LMMA. Volunteers set the buoys using anchors to keep them in place. The buoys are essential to help make boat travel safe on the lake. While boating and an orange buoy is observed on Lake Manitou stay clear of that area. There are likely rocks lurking just below the surface that could easily damage your boat or motor if you approach too close.

For more information on shoal marker buoys as it may apply to the LMAA check this web site <https://foca.on.ca/boating-safety-post-1/>



## CULINARY DELIGHT



### Lake Manitou Bread Soup

YIELD: MAKES 5 CUPS

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 large garlic cloves, (mashed to a paste with 1 teaspoon coarse salt opt)

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- 2 cups bite-size pieces stale crusty bread (4 ounces)
- 5 cups homemade or low-sodium store-bought chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 3 large eggs, beaten
- Flat-leaf parsley leaves, for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-low heat until hot but not smoking. Add garlic, cook, stirring occasionally, until very fragrant but not browned, about 10 minutes.
2. Add bread and stir to coat. Stir in stock and bay leaf; season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes.
3. Discard bay leaf. Stir in beaten eggs. Cook, stirring occasionally to break up eggs, about 10 minutes. Serve soup garnished with parsley leaves.

Note: this is a great recipe for using up bread heels.    Receipt submitted by Jennifer Harvey

## **News From FOCA**

Residents of Lake Manitou are not alone in their concerns over lake water levels and what may be an outdated "Water Management Plan" or similar type of document that is being used to assist in water level management on Lake Manitou.

The following article is copied from a Federation of Ontario Cottager's Association bulletin. Issues concerning the operation of dams that impact lake levels are common across the province. The province has recently appointed a new special advisor Mr. Doug McNeil to study dams, flooding ,lake levels and related issues.

**Dam Problems From 2016**    The announcement of a \$900 million class-action lawsuit against the Ontario government is a part of ongoing efforts of the communities in Ontario's Muskoka region to keep up with the impacts of a changing climate.

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Residents of the area argue that their concerns have been overlooked by the province when it comes to managing the natural resources in the Muskoka River watershed. Specifically, the lawsuit takes aim at damage from flood waters around Lake Muskoka, Lake Joseph, and Lake Rosseau.

Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry regulates that level via ministry controlled dams, but the Ministry is clear that "While we do lower water levels in dams, which may provide limited relief from flooding, **[OMNR] dams were not designed to be flood control structures** and don't have the capacity to store or hold back flood waters."

Residents argue that the Ministry failed to act in accordance with its own [Muskoka River Water Management Plan](#) (MRWMP), which is designed to manage seasonal changes in the water level, spring freshet flooding, and major storm events.

The ministry has defended its practices citing that, "over 170 mm of precipitation fell over a very short period of time, combining with high winds and ice flows to cause severe spring flooding." This accounts for 16 per cent of the average annual precipitation in the area and this during the Muskoka region's driest season, which runs Feb-April. In other words, about a month's worth of rain in three days

### Times Change

Muskoka District councillor, Phil Harding, pointed out that the MRWMP is outdated. Harding said, "The plan—created 10 years ago now—was based on historical data from a 10 or 20 year historical average prior to 1996 [....] This means data used on weather patterns could be as old as 1976." And when the ministry failed to meet the flood control goals as determined by the MRWMP, Mr. Harding said the water levels exceeded the normal operating parameters and that "in [his] review of the data, not once in four years has it bounced 'below'."

While it's common for water infrastructure planning to stretch for cycles of 10 years, the Ministry pushed back plans to update the MRWMP to 2021, which leaves the region inadequately prepared to deal with the increasingly rapid changes in local climate. Further,

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in 2013 the province ceased a cycle of automatic reviews for plans such as the MRWMP. While the intention was to avoid unnecessary bureaucratic activity, the result has been a dissolution of a public review process; the ministry has offered no alternatives for the public to voice concerns.

Such public feedback on shared resources is something that Terry Rees, the executive director of the [Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations](#) (FOCA), and his team have petitioned the ministry for consultation on. Mr. Rees said that for rural areas to develop resilient communities in the face of climate change the “primary tool is the land-use planning process,” and the ministry’s failure to provide an adequate public feedback mechanism is “curious and disturbing.”

### **Contested Infrastructure**

Nonetheless, the 2006 MRWMP does account for the fact that, “although extensive flood damage has not occurred in the Muskoka River watershed, flood control remains an important element of water management and local problem areas do exist.” The report goes on to state that, “The primary concern of Lake Muskoka residents was high water levels during ice break up and the spring freshet, which result in property damage (i.e., to docks and boathouses).” So, the problems are not new, but the urgency of dealing with stressed infrastructure, both governmental and private, is.

The ministry has stated, “we are sympathetic to those who’ve had damage to their homes and property as a result of spring flooding. However, despite our best efforts to forecast and prepare for flooding, it’s important to remember these events are caused by severe weather conditions out of our control.”

Thank you to **FOCA** for providing the above information bulletin

### **The LMAA WebSite (Administrator Stan Salisbury)**

Please refer to the following information and instructions for LMAA members to use when accessing the LMAA web site. This is a portion of the same set of instructions sent out in the Spring 2019 copy of Wind Swept. There have been changes made to the website over the last year. The website has been

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improved. Everyone is urged to log onto it and enjoy the content. This will help our LMAA members keep current with Lake Manitou neighbours, events and issues. As an example, the Forum that Sharon Cooper and Stan set up on the website following the 2019 summer LMAA AGM. It was very useful when drafting the above letter to Mr. Ross Hart of the OMNRF Sudbury District.

Our web address, [lakemanitouarea.ca](http://lakemanitouarea.ca), has not changed. Some of the new features are:

Online payments by credit card. Note: mailed check payments or cash payments at events are still options.

- An easy-to-search membership directory viewable only by LMAA members after logging in with their email address and password.
- Members having full control over what personal information they are willing to share with other members.
- More site content, including a separate page to access the member-only pages of the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA).
- A news blog for posting announcements.
- Personal photo albums with options for posting and sharing your photos with other members and/or non-member visitors to the LMAA website.
- Dynamic screen and page formatting for viewing the website on mobile phones and tablets.
- A downloadable Wild Apricot mobile App for site access with Apple cell phones or Android cell phones.
- The possibility of RSVP registration for upcoming meetings and events.
- A means for members to maintain their own personal profile data such as address changes, email addresses, phone numbers, and privacy settings.
- Board member access to the email blast system for direct email announcements to all LMAA members. A future online store option for the purchase of LMAA clothing, 911 signs, maps and books.

How to Log onto the LMAA Website

1. Enter the website address: <https://lakemanitouarea.ca>.
2. Click the green icon.
3. Enter your LMAA email address.
4. Select "Forgot password."
5. Open the email received from: Lake Manitou Area Association.
6. Click the link in the email message to reset your password.
7. Click the green icon again and select "View profile."
8. Review and revise your profile if needed.
9. Go to the home page and explore the site.
10. Questions? Submit them on the "Contact Us" form.

StanSalisbury LMAA Website Admin     [salisbury@cox.net](mailto:salisbury@cox.net)

## Information Night

The 2019 information night was held at the Sandfield School on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was very well attended. This evening featured 3 guest speakers

The first speaker was Professor Alison Derry who gave an overview of Aquatic Ecosystems in Lake Manitou. Thankyou to Alison for participating in the LMAA Information Night.

The second Speaker was a presentation by the Central Manitoulin Fire Station on Fire Safety at the Cottage. Thankyou to John Reid for coming to our Information Night.

The Third Speaker was Tim Lynman. The focus of his talk was fire ecology in Pine Forests. The title of his talk was "Its Hard to Keep a Good Pine Stand Down".



Guest speaker Tim Lynman at the LMAA summer 2019 Information Night with education committee chair Sharon Cooper (also vice president of the LMAA). Tim's presentation focused on the forest fire adaptive properties of our Provincial Tree the eastern white pine.

## Member's Notice Board

**Paul Moffat** has served as board member and LMAA **vice president** for many years. Most recently he served a one year term as LMAA president. Currently Paul is serving as past president on the LMAA board of directors. Thank you to Paul for his many years of dedicated service to the association.

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**Pat Costigan** was given the **Ward 3 Citizen of the Year** award by the Big Lake Women's Institute at an event held June 15th at the Old School in Sandfield. Pictured with Pat Costigan, centre, are Women's Institute members Shirley Baldelli and Ward 3 Councillor Linda Farquhar. Photo by Betty Bardswich copied with permission from the Manitoulin Expositor.





*Bridal Veil Falls, Kagawong*



Directors' Roster	Winter Address	Summer Address
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# WIND SWEPT

FALL 2019

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Merry Christmas  
Mark & Jennifer