



## Sinclair / Finlayson Ward Township of Lake of Bays Councillor Rick Brooks

### Victoria Day Weekend Report - 2023

*We have transitioned quickly from the sweetness of maple syrup season to the Trilliums and Leaks and now the maples are all leafing out nicely.... Spring is well underway. I have some guarded optimism that life is somewhat returning to Muskoka... the extent of black fly season is just getting started, having said that, with a bit of moist weather, they, just like a pandemic, could be back with a vengeance!*

#### Fire Status & Fireworks:



***Not to sound repetitive but for those of us who call this home, the potential of fire is always at the top of our minds when we mix dry conditions with fireworks.***

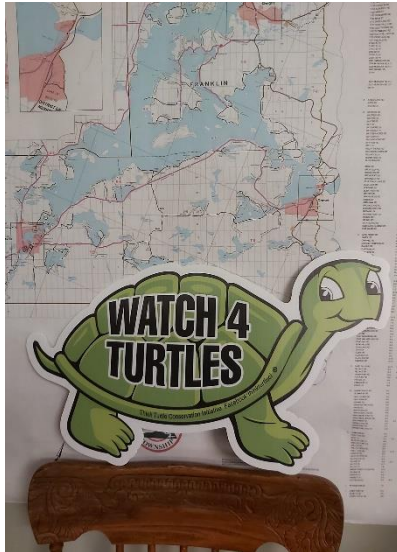
In a discussion with Deputy Fire Chief **Paul Calleja** the rating has been kept at high throughout the district of Muskoka. We have been experiencing steady winds which can dry out the terrain but cooler temps (frost last night) have kept conditions consistent. We are also expected to have rain for both Friday and Saturday (sorry). We get updated from the MNR regarding soil/ground conditions and yesterday's report had us with a Fire Weather Index (FWI) of 15 which indicates High. Extreme starts at 23. ***As for fireworks, our residents and visitors need to be aware the current bylaw allows for them only on July 1 and statutory holidays between "dusk and 11pm".....which means Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday, July 1<sup>st</sup> are acceptable, subject to weather conditions.*** Any other time must be requested. Hopefully those choosing to indulge will do so responsibly. We are ready for any event if it should happen.

It's imperative for the public and all residents to be more educated on the By Law, what is permitted and when. To that end, the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Fire Services has created a new position, 'Public Educator', this is Steve Markham. His role will be laid out in more detail but look forward to Steve being available to attend an upcoming Sinclair/Finlayson Residents Meeting, or even attending lake association meetings, if requested.

**Roads:** Superintendent **Steve Peace** and his crew have just got us safely through one of the worst winters in recent memory and deserve a huge THANK YOU. Yes, they were just doing their jobs, but this winter took that to a new level. We are now into spring, the roads dried up nicely, half loads are now off and the grading has started, followed by the sweeping of the winter sand, so please be patient, as they have been dealing with another anomaly...falling trees. The number of softwood trees that have just fell over, with no apparent cause has been staggering. This takes a crew away from a scheduled project to address the need for roads to be cleared, which creates delays, so again, please be patient with our crews.

## Spring....means 'Turtle Season' in Muskoka:

This may not be the most relevant issue around your house these days, I get that, but perhaps it should be one of them. The future of turtles in Ontario starts with conservation and an awareness of the dangers **we** as people present to the turtle population.



Turtles are on the move as soon as the weather starts to warm up in the spring. Usually, the males are the first out and about – on their way to find mates, to find their 'hangout' spots for the spring and their favorite wetlands. As many males as females are found crossing roads, but their movement patterns tend to be spread out over the whole warm season. On the other hand, females are most frequently observed in June, during the height of their nesting season, crossing roads to reach traditional nesting sites or laying eggs in the gravel along roads. Turtle nests are laid in soil that is easy to dig and provides the correct amount of moisture so the eggs do not get too dry or too moist during incubation.



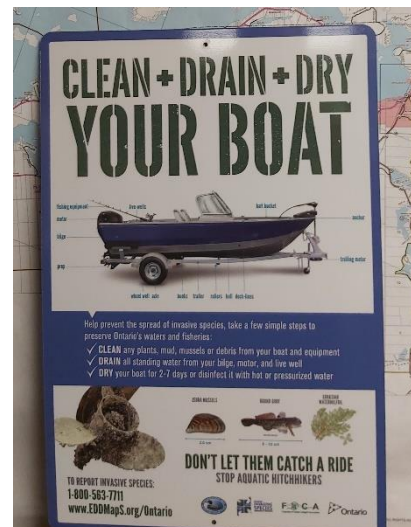
Turtles are nature's custodian's and our wetlands rely on them as much as they do humans....in fact WE rely on them more.

Check out this local site: <https://ontarioturtle.ca/turtles/>

For more information on Ontario's turtles, visit the [Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's](#) site, or [Ontario Nature](#).

## Hitting the water in 2023:

We can not stress this enough; those who transport their boats between lakes, please **heed the need** and wash them off **BEFORE** launching it in the next body of water.



**The ASHMuskoka Project:** The ASHMuskoka ash collection program is finished for this season, a BIG Thank You to all who continue to support their work. It continues to be a HUGE success, having yet another banner year! *Check it out on their website* [www.ashmuskoka.ca](http://www.ashmuskoka.ca)

### Council approves 2023 Municipal Budget:

I share this especially for those who perhaps have not been around over the past couple of months and should have a better understanding of how we have been able to not only maintain service levels but begin to play catch up with some. We have been especially successful with our inclusions for Parks and Fire services.

On March 14, 2023, our Township's Council approved the 2023 municipal budget. This budget includes a 6 per cent increase in the tax levy to address inflationary pressures. This increase will result in an additional \$32.88 in taxes for a property assessed at \$300,000 in Lake of Bays. As shared already, this reflects the commitment and will of this Council to help to maintain and enhance the quality of life in our community.

#### Quick Facts:

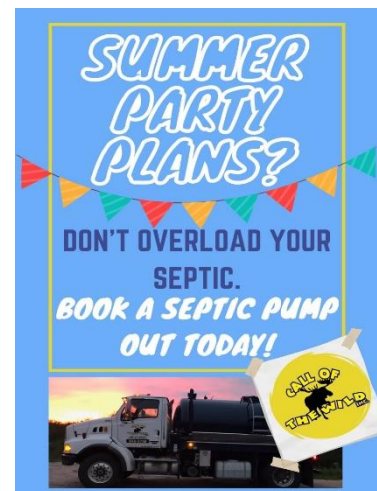
- The Township of Lake of Bays has the second-lowest residential tax rate in the municipality.
- The District of Muskoka has the second-lowest commercial tax rate and the lowest industrial tax rate in Ontario.
- Parks and Facilities Dept. will see various shelters, docks and park facilities restored, as well as a new hybrid truck and facility renovations at the Baysville arena providing better use s and needed office space.
- Fire Services will see the greatest improvements; installation of exhaust extractors at all stations, additional self-contained breathing Apparatus, replacement of their 18yr. old Hillside Rescue vehicle and additional sets of bunker gear, all to be better prepared for the ever-increasing staffing of our stations here in the Township of Lake of Bays.

Questions on the Municipal Budget should be directed to Patricia Allen, Director of Finance/Treasurer

### Short Term Rentals:

This is not intended as an advertisement for any one company, however is a real issue that you may wish to consider addressing. Those who insist on opening their doors to a short term rental or STR, firstly we trust they have secured a license. Having done so, we hope they have a good experience, however they can open themselves for those to abuse their system with larger than normal crowds and that can lead to septic issues.

I have also attached a document created to assist residents in the event of concerns pertaining to the operation of a STR.



All the best,

**Rick Brooks,**

*Councillor Sinclair / Finlayson Ward*

**Township of Lake of Bays**

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