



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

### Spring Report 2022

We have transitioned quickly from the sweetness of maple syrup season to the Trilliums and Leaks and now the early maples are all leafing out nicely.... Spring is well underway. I have some guarded optimism that the concerns of covid and the ongoing pandemic are in our rear-view mirror and life is somewhat returning to Muskoka... and if that was the extent of black fly season, I'll take that any time! Having said that, with a bit of moist weather, they, just like a pandemic, could be back with a vengeance!



### Here's a couple of things to share with you at this time;

Are you registered to vote? Click [mpac](#) logo below to add yourself to the voters' list!



***Residents (permanent and cottagers alike) need to be aware that the information used for a provincial election is gathered by Elections Ontario, whereas Municipal elections comes from MPAC. Having said that, just because you received a form for June 2<sup>nd</sup> Provincial election does not automatically mean you are registered to vote municipally....please check yourself, be sure to be able to vote.***

### Update from the District on Transfer Stations;

For those who have visited the Sinclair Transfer Station of late you will know some changes have occurred and yet more are coming. We now have composting of organics and that has been getting some big thumbs up from residents.



Given the influx of new and seasonal residents and visitors utilizing the station, we need to revisit some station etiquette;

- Upon entering the site, please obey the signage, it is a requirement that all vehicles WAIT at the stop sign to be hailed forward and advise the attendant what you are there for, including if you wish to be dropping off anything at the re-use building. It's an MOE requirement.
- Do NOT skip the scales, everyone is required to go over the scales.
- Cardboard is required to be broken down and ideally not larger than 24" x 24".

The Re-Use building is OPEN, albeit over to the west side at the lower level which is not ideal but residents could help by following the directions of advising the attendant upon entry that you are going there and what you wish to drop off as well as upon leaving cross the scales and share what it is that you have picked up, if anything. Please do not be trying to leave environmental waste or food products, this may seem obvious, but that has been an issue.

The bag limit has gone from 3 bags per week to 2, but that should be no real issue, especially if you are practicing composting. As for the recycling, we are about to be going to single source, so all recycling will be going into one compactor and separated off-site. The date for that was to be June 6<sup>th</sup> but await further direction on that actual date here in Muskoka.

### **Our Roads & Driving to the conditions;**



For those who ‘weathered’ the winter here, the above picture need not remind you of our generational ice storm we were dealt. We all need to heed the concerns when shared about impending storms, if they do not come to pass, that’s a bonus, but most times they came through with a vengeance and some unfortunately got caught.

Our Public Works truly did an excellent job throughout this winter and for every negative call received we had 10 positive calls so kudos to Superintendent Steve Peace and his crew.

Now that its spring, everybody is awaiting spring maintenance on “their” road and we get that. I can share that most of our roads have now had their first spring grading and the sweeping will follow shortly. As with other years the sweeping is contracted to start in the North or South end of the Township, and this year it was the south. Its my understanding that we will be seeing them on our roads, subject to weather conditions, very soon.

Keeping the roads and highways safe is a shared responsibility between police, emergency response providers, and drivers, so always drive to the conditions of the roads.

### **Sinclair Residents Committee Update;**

For those residents engaged with the committee, or wishing to be, our next meeting is 1PM, Friday, June 3rd at Muskoka on the Rocks, but please let me know you intend to attend, space is limited. Regardless, both **DC Peppard** and I are here and working for you. I will continue to provide e blasts when there are issues to share and welcome all to consider sitting in on our Council meetings and/or Planning Matter meetings as we continue to do those now via hybrid format utilizing the Township’s Facebook Live.

I continue to encourage residents to visit the Township's website [www.Lakeofbays.on.ca](http://www.Lakeofbays.on.ca) as well as [mylakeofbays.ca](http://mylakeofbays.ca) for business information and employment opportunities.

## The ASHMuskoka ash collection program had a banner year!



*“AshMuskoka” is an off-shoot of “Friends of the Muskoka Watershed”, to collect fireplace, wood stove and wood boiler ashes, which are 30% calcium, from hundreds of people in Muskoka and return these ashes to local sugar bushes to help solve the calcium decline problem. Dr. Norman Yan is the ‘architect’ of this citizen-based forest restoration project – the first of its kind in Canada – and provide initial results proving that ash additions work. Check it out on their website [www.ashmuskoka.ca](http://www.ashmuskoka.ca)*

### News from the Township Office;

We are blessed with a super corporate office nucleus led by **Carrie Sykes**, Director of Corporate services and we continue to be making major strides despite the remnants of covid protocols. The addition of **CAO Bryan Brown** has been a huge relief, his experience and work ethic since his arrival last November has continued to make a huge impact on staff and the proof is in the details that everyone will be better able to see and appreciate as we go through 2022. We addressed a retirement with the addition of **Patricia Allen** as the new **Director of Finance/Treasurer**, who joined the team in January.

The department with the most upheaval has been Planning. This is an ongoing issue, but the pieces are about to come together to remedy that situation with the recent closing of two separate searches, so I am confident all will be fine.

We have such a fantastic staff and as Councillors, we all work extremely well together. Having said that, we continue to be working on even more announcements, so watch out in 2022!

### 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](#).



## **Brooks Lake Mailbox Project;**

A project that may be of interest only to the residents utilizing the mailboxes at Brooks Lake Road & Billie Bear Road is the awareness that Phase 1 & 2 of the new Community Mailbox enclosure was completed before Christmas, with the addition of the Community Message Board. The project has been generously funded by residents, while the bulk of the work done courtesy of John Paterson, Rick & Susan Brooks. **I am now accepting donations for Phase 3 which is the addition of a “Little Library” to be mounted inside the enclosure.**

## **Healthy Shorelines, Healthy Lakes;**

I am sharing this update from **Watersheds Canada** about their upcoming “**Healthy Shorelines**” workshop/webinar. This workshop is aimed at Municipal councillors, planners, and **waterfront associations** and will discuss the scientific benefits of natural shorelines and different policy tools available to municipalities. It might be of interest to a lake association as well as our planners and Councillors. **Join in on June 14<sup>th</sup>** from 9:00am to 12:00pm, for **Healthy Shorelines, Healthy Lakes: Municipal Policy Tools to Protect our Freshwater**. This special workshop aimed at Municipal councillors, planners, and **waterfront associations** will discuss the scientific benefits of natural shorelines and different policy tools available to municipalities.

**Registration is now open [here!](#)**

## **Foxes;**

I will share with you that we have discovered three separate dead foxes lately in the Billie Bear Road area, who otherwise looked relatively healthy. This was reported to the Ministry to ensure they were aware and if there was a pattern in other locations. My contact was extremely helpful, appreciative of the information and although she did not think our situation was mange, shared the supporting information for future reference shown below.

**Kate Reinhart**, IRM Technical Specialist at the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (Parry Sound District);

**What is Mange;** Many people who have heard of mange don't know exactly what it is. It appears as hair loss and clearly affected skin, but what is the underlying problem of mange? This irritating infection is created by little mites called 'Sarcoptes scabiei.' These mites burrow into the skin, which forms many small tunnels. They then fill these tunnels with a variety of different materials, including pieces of their shells that have shed, feces, eggs, and digestive secretions. All of these materials cause incredible irritation and itchiness, as well as visible marks.

## **How Does Mange Affect Fox Populations?**

When mange hits a group of foxes, it spreads rapidly, like wildfire. Nearly the entire population of foxes will be infected before long. A bad bout of mange can truly decimate fox populations. There have been several massive mange outbreaks across the world, and we've been able to study their effects on foxes. One of the worst infections in recent history occurred in Bristol, UK, in the early 90s. Once the mange hit, fox populations declined by about 95% over just two years, nearly wiping foxes out in the area entirely.

**All the best,**

**Rick Brooks, Councillor Sinclair / Finlayson Ward**

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