

## Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association

A community focused on protecting, nurturing and cultivating the natural, physical and social characteristics of Leonard Lake



### Signs of Spring and from the Hatton Bird Yard, West Side, Leonard Lake

pictures and comments courtesy of Michael Hatton

In 2014 Michael began contributing LL bird sighting information to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology through ebird.org and maintains a record of bird sightings on the family LL property.

*'I started birding when I turned 10 and my mother gave me a backyard feeder and a copy of Peterson's iconic "Field Guide to the Birds" as a birthday present. For years she and I bonded as we watched backyard birds and partnered to look through the field guide and expand our knowledge of what we were seeing. Kudos to mothers everywhere. Birding: a safe way for kids and adults to spend time building physical, practical, social and intellectual skills that lead to better grades, increased self-confidence and stronger social grounding (for youngsters) while staving off the effects of growing old (for those of us at the other end of the spectrum). Why wouldn't ever lake house have a feeder or a bird house?' MH*



A pair of Blue Jays sharing food. This is a typical "getting to know you and maybe we can build a nest together" behaviour. The pic was taken a couple of weeks ago.

Pine Siskins continue to drop by my place often hanging out on the deck railing. I get as many as 25 at a time, though the last week or so the numbers have eased off. This pic was taken less than two weeks ago.



This particular Mourning Dove on the left stayed the winter at Leonard Lake. This shot shows him looking at me from behind one of the last big snowfalls. I continue to hear him every morning with his low cooing. These birds are early nesters so they are likely close to laying a first batch of eggs.

Picture on the right was taken two weeks ago near the shore of Outlet Bay on the west side of Leonard Lake. This male Purple Finch is showing off his breeding plumage while hanging out with a nearby female.

**In This BLAST:**

"The Natural Edge" comes to Road 2

MLA Seedling Day is soon - order now

Leonard Lake winter photos and one spring surprise!

**"The Natural Edge" Restoring the Ribbon of Life**  
(by Bill Heatlie)

Last spring, (it's on its way!), you were introduced, via our EBLAST, to this program. I'd like to share my experience with the program in an effort to encourage greater participation, but first a bit of background.

[The Natural Edge](#) is a nationwide program under the direction of Watersheds Canada, a federally incorporated non-profit organization and registered Canadian charity, that is committed to providing programs in communities across the country to engage and help shoreline owners enhance and protect the health of lakes and rivers. Their partner in our area is the Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC), a volunteer based non-profit organization supported by the District of Muskoka.

If protecting the natural environment isn't enough motivation, try on this quote from the MWC brochure entitled *Protect your Waterfront Investment* - "Reduced water clarity can result in an 8.25% decrease in your property value!" I have heard Realtors say that lakes suffering from recurring algae blooms can have property values reduce by as much as 30%.

Phosphorus has long been recognized as a nutrient for plant life, including algae. Rain and snow contain much more phosphorus than our lake water and are a real threat to our lake. We can't control rain and snow volumes, but we can control the buffer zone around the lake. A healthy buffer zone assures that phosphorus is taken up by the plant life in the buffer zone preventing it from getting to the lake. Our roads, driveways, and pathways to the lake create paths of direct access for the rain and melting snow. Granted our roads, driveways, and pathways have been there for a long time, as has the annual rain and snow events, but now their impact is magnified by climate change. Climate change has reduced the amount of time our lakes are ice covered, or if you wish, lengthened the algae growing season which of course equals more algae. To sum this up, the amount of phosphorus that entered the lake a few years ago is now a much greater threat and will be a greater threat every year. We can defend against this by developing our buffer zones, and [The Natural Edge](#) program is out there to help.

### The Project

Last spring, I registered with the MWC for a free site visit, at [The Natural Edge](#). A representative contacted us, and we set up a mutually convenient time to meet at the property. We worked together to identify four compartments along our waterfront that could be developed. Pictures were taken of the compartments, and we discussed a variety of plants that would be suitable. Shortly after our meet, we got a 22-page Planting Plan. The Planting Plan had the four compartments mapped out with plant suggestions for each and the planting location for each plant. In the report was detailed plant information on each plant species that had been suggested. There wasn't going to be any surprises.



Once we agreed on the plan, we took our representatives advice and ordered up the Starter Kit. The Kit contained 50 of the plants we had agreed on plus a few coco mats and a bag of cedar mulch to protect the young plants and get them off to a good start. All this for \$250. Just a reminder these are all native plants, and few can be found at any of our local nurseries. If you could locate them, the price would be much higher. Take your petunia and marigold money and invest it in your lake.



Compartment A before



Compartment A Finished

It can't be all fun. We had to plant these and digging even a small hole in Muskoka soil is indeed a challenge. Fortunately, our grandson was enthusiastic about helping with the project. We bought some garden soil and more mulch to help the plants get established.



Compartment B in the making



Compartment B Finished

We had to water them some, not hard when you are right beside the lake. As the snow came, we had lost only one plant even after defending against the gypsy months.

Come spring we'll see if winter took any toll. Even if we do lose a couple, it won't be any big deal because we plan to register again and continue to build a better buffer zone.

Bill Heatlie

*Leonard Lake property owner and water team volunteer*

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**MLA Seedling Day**  
Saturday May 21, 2022



**MLA**  
Muskoka Lakes Association  
Preserving Muskoka for Future Generations

[www.mla.on.ca](http://www.mla.on.ca) 705.765.5723

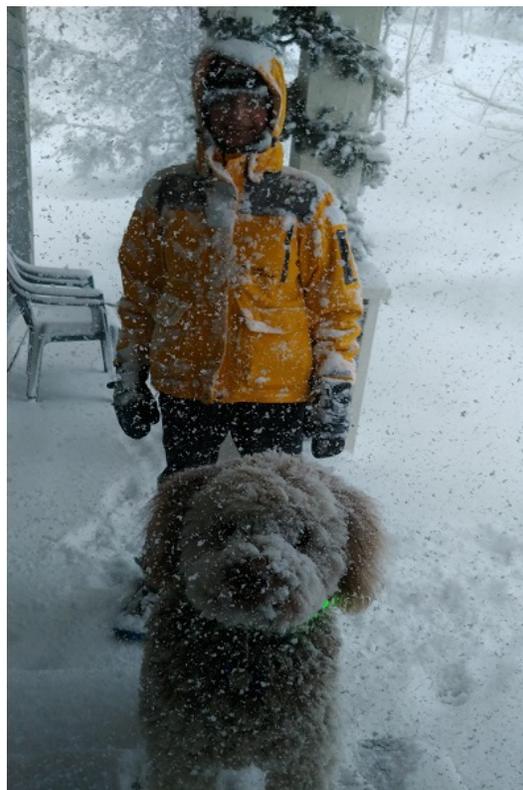


**FORESTS ONTARIO**

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**LEONARD LAKE PHOTOS (spring pictures wanted!)**

Thanks to those who have taken the time to share pictures and memories - and we'd like to post your pictures too - people, scenery, times gone by, local flora and fauna, activities, etc. Any season will do! Send your favourites and comments to [leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com](mailto:leonardlakemuskoka@gmail.com)



February 2022 LL walks - top left Katie Sokalsky and Rio in the nifty sweater, top right Pam Scarrow and Axel having the best snow day ever!



February 2022 pictures courtesy of Nancy Braun - Road 2 view from the deck; Nancy and Jamie Sokalsky on the lake; winter scenes





April 1, 2022 sunset. Picture courtesy of Gord Roberts

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