

Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association

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



The *Doppler Online* March 30, 2025 reports on the District of Muskoka "State of Emergency" with "Safety Reminders" and "Helpful Resources" including links to road closures, water levels and hydro outages.

The District of Muskoka reports that residents are encouraged to *check the District website* for the most up-to-date service status and reopening details.



LEONARD LAKE PROPERTIES WITH SEWAGE SYSTEMS CLASSIFIED AS 'HIGH RISK' ARE SCHEDULED FOR A PHASE II SEWAGE SYSTEM MAINTENANCE INSPECTION IN 2025

The Township of Muskoka Lakes (**TML or the Township**) has sent notification by surface mail to all Area 2 owners (as identified on the TML Septic Inspection Map), including many, and perhaps all of the Leonard Lake property owners requiring a Phase II sewage system inspection in 2025, outlining specific requirements, deadlines, fees and potential additional charges for all scheduled property owners.

The purpose of this note is to highlight key deadlines for the program (one of which is less than two weeks away), and to share some pertinent questions and answers regarding the 2025 Phase II Inspections on Leonard Lake.

TML has engaged EnVision Consultants Ltd. to conduct Phase II inspections for all required Leonard Lake properties/sewage systems during the 2025 inspection season.

Property owners can opt to retain the services of an alternate third-party sewage system inspector, however, as noted in the notification letter from the Township, TML must be notified of such by April 11, 2025; the third-party must meet specific certification requirements; and, the certificate and final inspection report must be received by the Township, by the end of July 2025.

If a property owner chooses to have the Phase II inspection conducted by the TML contractor (EnVision), there is no immediate action to be taken by the property owner. A secondary letter will be sent directly to the property owner from EnVision sometime between April and August prior to inspection and will include the inspection date and time, cost and how to prepare. Questions regarding the inspection time and date or other details regarding the inspection should be directed to EnVision.

ESSENTIAL KEY DATES

April 11, 2025

Property owners must notify the Township in writing on or before this date to advise the Township if they intend to use an alternate third-party sewage system inspector as a substitution to Envision Consultants Ltd. Owners that miss this deadline and retain a third-party inspector after April 11th will incur additional charges.

MAY 13, 2025 4:30 PM - Public Information Session

This session can be attended in person, or *viewed through live stream*. The session will also be recorded and made available after the event through a link provided at *EngageMuskokaLakes*.

July 31, 2025

By this date, an alternate third-party inspector contracted by a property owner, must submit to the Township, the completed Phase II sewage system inspection report and the third-party proof of qualifications, (i.e., the MMAH Certificate).

Q's and A's

Q1. My sewage system is less than 30 years old, my system is registered with the Township, and I don't have a steel tank. Why are all sewage systems on Leonard Lake less than 30 years old scheduled for a Phase II inspection this year?

A1. Leonard Lake is confirmed as having a water quality indicator (i.e., blue-green algae) in accordance with the policies of the Muskoka Official Plan. As a result, all sewage systems greater than 10 years old on Leonard Lake properties abutting the lake are classified as "High Risk".

Q2. I have a backlot property – will I be scheduled for a Phase II inspection this year?

A2. (waiting for response from the Township due to ice storm closure)

Q3. My system is an aerobic treatment plant and has inspections twice yearly. Will the most recent inspection report be satisfactory to the TML as proof of inspection, or is it essential that the TML contractor completes their own inspection?

A3. The Township has advised that it would constitute a conflict of interest for the property owner's "regular" maintenance contractor to inspect the treatment units as outlined in Division C, Section 3.7.2.1(3) of the Ontario Building Code. The Township will require a Phase II inspection, plus evidence of the service contract. The TML testing protocol includes a "flow test" that is not part of the service contracts for these types of systems.

Q4. Is the TML contractor familiar with aerobic treatment systems?

A4. EnVision is more than qualified to conduct a Phase II inspection on all types of systems, including aerobic treatment units. For those utilizing the services of a third party, it is up to the third party whether they feel comfortable conducting the inspection as it is their Building Code Identification Number (BCIN) the inspection will be certified under.

Q5. The notification letter states that if a property owner opts to use an alternate third party, the Phase II report and MMAH Certificate requirements sent by the third party must be received on or before July 31st, 2025 by the Township. What happens if there is a delay in meeting this requirement, or if the report is deemed not satisfactory?

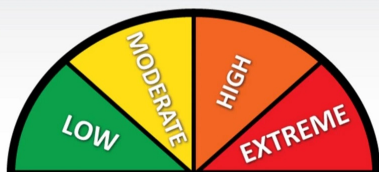
A5. The requirements noted in Q5 must all be met to avoid further fees and possible scheduling of a Phase II inspection with EnVision.

Additional information

As noted, the Area 2 *2025 TML Public Information Session - Sewage System Maintenance Inspections Phase II* is planned for May 13th at 4:30 p.m.

The 2024 Public Information Session - Sewage System Maintenance Inspections Phase II held approximately a year ago was recorded and *a link posted at EngageMuskokaLakes*. 2024 was the first year of the Phase II inspections in Area 1 that included Three Mile Lake and the surrounding area and lakes.

The Township of Muskoka Lakes *"Septic Inspection Program"* home page provides a map of the Township inspection Areas by year, the risk assessment criteria and (below the Area Map) a number of *"frequently asked questions"*



The fire season starts on April 1 and goes through until October 31 each year. During this period, daytime burning is not permitted without a valid fire permit. *Check the up-to-date Fire Rating or apply for a burn permit.*

MICHAEL'S CORNER

Sandhill Cranes (*Antigone canadensis*) are large, lanky birds known for their distinctive features, including long legs, elongated necks, and sharp, pointed bills. Adult Sandhill Cranes are typically brownish-grey and have a red patch on their foreheads, which is one of their most notable features. They stand more than one metre in height, making them one of the tallest bird species in North America, and have wingspans of about two metres.



Adult Sandhill Crane foraging in a Muskoka field where a matter of a few days prior to this photo being taken snow covered everything. As with most migrating birds, the early cranes get the best nesting sites.

Sandhill Cranes have calls that are loud, trumpeting and heard in both wetlands and open fields. In Muskoka, particularly in early spring and through into early summer, they are often heard trumpeting as they fly overhead during migration as well as when they are moving about in search of food while on nesting grounds. For the past few years, at least one pair has nested and successfully raised young just to the west of Leonard Lake. From my deck I regularly hear them calling early in the morning before the wind picks up.

Sandhill Cranes are native to North America, and their range stretches broadly from

northern Canada and Alaska to the southern United States, including Mexico. They are considered to be highly migratory, travelling thousands of miles between breeding and wintering grounds. Further, they often congregate in very large numbers during migration, forming impressive flocks that can be seen flying in V-shaped formations.

Sandhill Cranes are known for their intricate mating dances, where their routines include bowing, high-stepping, jumping and calling. These dances are part of the courtship ritual and it's thought they help strengthen pair bonding. These are also highly social birds, often foraging in groups and feeding on grains, seeds, small insects, and amphibians. Lifespan in the wild is from 20 to 30 years.



Adult Sandhill Cranes with a pair of colts. Photo taken not more than 2 kilometres from Leonard Lake

Sandhill cranes mate for life, with duos staying together year after year and often returning to the same breeding territories. They are also known for having a complex system of vocalizations, which include a range of calls used for communication within flocks and between mates. If you need a Sandhill Crane fix, try driving slowly north on Butter and Egg Road in the latter part of April, or early May with a pair of binoculars and ears at the ready.

M. Hatton, LL Road 2

Would you like to hear a Sandhill Crane bird call?

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