

Leonard Lake Stakeholders Association

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



Spring 2026

March 20th marked the first day of spring...winter recedes...ice out is just around the corner...trilliums and lady slippers are planning their entrances....a new season begins.

ANNUAL
LEONARD LAKE
REGATTA

reEst:



2025

JULY 25, 2026
12-3PM

- LOCATION: FINKBEINER'S COTTAGE -

Rain date July 26th

Leonard Lake Spring Conditions

I asked Bill Heatley, Rd2 for a comment on the current lake ice and snow cover. Bill who is a year round resident and water team member offered the following note and sent along a few photos below

"According to a quick Google search we have had 12' of snow...seemed like more. We didn't get a lot of winter rain and no ice storm. The roads have been well maintained. Frost is coming out of many sections of the road so they are pretty mushy in places. I might also report the lake water level is high with about 6" flowing over the dam.



Leonard Lake April 4, 2026

View across the main body of the lake...ice is far from out

Leonard Lake April 4, 2026

View looking across west bay, to give readers a feel for what remains in their yards.



...the LL NOPower Skating Team making the best of winter!



The Team



On the skate trail at Arrowhead Provincial Park.

Laurence Jay and I (*Bill Heatlie*) doing the last sonde drop of the soft water season to confirm the lake had completely turned over. It was November 18 and as you can see it was nice and sunny, but -5C. We took the boat out right after this, breaking ice at the boat launch. If we waited one more day we wouldn't have gotten it out.



The Annual Muskoka Conservancy Native Plant Sale Now On!

[click for more details - see what's available and place your order - plants sell out quickly every year!](#)

Pick-up day is Saturday, May 9, 2026, 9 am until noon. (Alternate pick up may be possible.)



Why Choose Native Plants?

Planting native species can have beneficial effects for the surrounding areas and allows for a large diversity of species to utilize the area. Native species include: adapt to the environmental growing conditions of Muskoka, require less water, are low maintenance and cost-effective, and provide habitat for local species.



Muskoka Lakes wildfire season is here and runs from April 1st to October 31st. Check the fire rating on the road or [online](#) regularly, [check your Burning Regulations](#) and [Fireworks Restrictions](#). Help Keep Leonard Lake Safe.

Are you interested in receiving Township Planning notices? To be automatically notified of planning applications and public meetings once they are posted online, subscribe to the Planning Notices category on the [Township's News Subscription](#) webpage and/or to [EngageMuskokaLakes](#). The Township has discontinued the surface mailing of Planning Notices.

The Township of Muskoka Lakes has launched two new tools to support the Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA) licensing program including a dedicated local hotline and online form for reporting concerns, along with an interactive map identifying short-term rental properties in Muskoka Lakes. Both tools are available on the [Township Short Term Rentals Accommodation page](#).

The Township of Muskoka Lakes Official Plan (TML OP) approved by the Township in late 2022 remains under appeal. The Leonard Lake Plan, as part of the TML OP, also remains under appeal.

The LLSA in early 2024 partnered with the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) and Friends of Muskoka (FOM), which has since merged with the MLA, to defend our Lake Plan which was included in a larger appeal of the Township of Muskoka Lakes

Official Plan (TML OP) to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT).

Since that time the OLT has held 2 hearings on a motion brought by the MLA/LLSA to have the appeal dismissed based on deficiencies in the appellants' Notice of Appeal. In both cases, the OLT dismissed the appeal in full with the most recent OLT decision being issued on March 13, 2026.

The appellant is now seeking leave to appeal the OLT decision to Divisional Court. There is a process by which the court will assess the request prior to granting a hearing. This process could take up to six months and if a hearing is granted, it would not likely occur until 2027.

To date the MLA/FOM has paid all OLT legal and planning costs. The LLSA will continue to work with the MLA and our legal counsel as the request for leave to appeal is assessed by the Divisional Court.

Have questions? Please send us a note by responding to this email.

MICHAEL'S CORNER

The Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) is one of our most striking sparrows, recognized by its reddish-brown plumage that gives it a fox-like appearance, its boldly streaked breast with spots that sometimes merge into a central blotch, and its conical bill. It is a large sparrow with a long tail that it often flicks while foraging.

Fox Sparrows are known for their ground-scratching behaviour — they use a hopping motion to uncover insects, seeds, and berries beneath leaf litter. Their song is a series of whistles and trills that are heard in the spring and fall. The one pictured here was photographed hopping and scratching under my deck at Leonard Lake this past year. In my experience, the Fox Sparrow is a species that rarely sits still.



Preferred habitats include dense underbrush, forest edges, and thickets — places where they can scratch away and hide with ease. During migration, they often show up in backyards, fencerows, and forest edges. Sometimes they can confuse observers with their size, grey faces and heavily streaked breasts. However, that long tail gives them away. Some years I don't see a Fox Sparrow, and other years I see several. This past year was a banner year as I saw the species in multiple locations and as many as four at one time. Also notable is that they are often early migrants, and April is a great month to see them, as well as May, October and November. M. Hatton Rd2

Click to hear Fox Sparrow Song 🎵🎵

A tip from a Rd2 resident to help keep your pets safe at this time of year...

"This morning I put out my husky in back and a pack of 6 to 8 coywolves tried to sneak up on him. Me and my 3 dogs chased them back - they were not afraid of me and the husky alone. Suggest you keep your eyes and ears open when tying out your dog in the morning till the snow thaws." Steve Watkins Rd2

A coywolf is a canid hybrid descended from coyotes (*Canis latrans*), eastern wolves (*Canis lycaon*), gray wolves (*Canis lupus*), and dogs (*Canis familiaris*). All of these species are members of the genus Canis with 78 chromosomes; therefore, the species can interbreed. Wikipedia

COMMERCIAL TRAVEL OPTIONS TO AND FROM MUSKOKA EXPAND THIS YEAR

Beginning June 15, 2026 Air Canada will offer its landline luxury motorcoach service from Muskoka Airport (YQA) between Muskoka and Toronto International Airport (YYZ).

Regarding the Northland Train that will run from Toronto Union Station to Cochrane, there is no firm launch date yet, however, if progress continues as planned, the Northlander could be in full operation by mid- to late 2026.

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