CHARLESTON LAKE ASSOCIATION est 1890 PRESERVE & ENHANCE
est. 1890

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2026

We're dedicated to keeping Charleston Lake beautiful in every way!

www.charlestonlakeassociation.ca

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear CLA Members,

The potential addition of 2,273 acres (about 920 hectares) of Crown Lands into the Charleston Lake Provincial Park (CLPP) is an important issue for our beloved lake. After significant investigation and deliberation, the CLA and CLEA have taken a position of support for the addition, subject to some conditions.

Given the amount of information circulating about this topic—both true and false—I will take this President's message to explain the process that we followed and the rationale for our position, and the resulting motion that the Boards adopted.

Before I begin let me say that we as CLA/CLEA were not consulted as this project was coming together. We learned of it almost as a fait accompli when the public consultation period opened. And we have since insisted to our MPP, Steve Clark, that our Associations be involved in future consultation processes from the beginning.

The first thing CLA/CLEA did was seek to get the facts about the addition. Not from hearsay or social media, but from first sources. We organized a series of off-cycle Board meetings where we heard from key protagonists, including: CLPP Superintendent Tim Truesdale; Don Ross, leader of the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust; and Katherine Macklem, the Executive Director of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. The Boards also received input and perspectives directly from key user groups of the existing Crown Lands: namely, a group representing several families that have hunted on the land for decades; the Athens Snowmobile Club which maintains trails on and around the lands: and the Thousand Islands ATV Club, which has a trail network on the subject properties.

We also sought input from our 650+ members by sending an e-mail (to those members for whom we had valid e-mail addresses), and also posting on our social media channels and website that we were seeking member input.

After all of this input and information, the Boards held another off-cycle meeting where we decided to vote in a two-step fashion. The first step was to decide whether or not the CLA/CLEA should in fact take a position on the matter, or rather just remain "neutral". Given the importance of this issue, and our 136-year history of involvement in all important activities around the lake, the Board concluded that neutrality was not an option.

But what position to take? Factors we considered were:

- As Crown Lands, these hectares would always face the risk of being sold or leased to economic interests
- While putting the lands into the Park would protect against economic uses, would CLPP have the resources and funds necessary to properly manage the lands?
- We were sympathetic to the existing user groups, and wanted to ensure that their "acquired rights' would be respected – even though for many of these groups it is hard to argue that their activities actually "Preserve and Enhance" Charleston Lake
- We wanted to land a message that if we were to support this initiative, it would not be to give a carte Blache going forward, and that CLA/CLEA would need to have a voice in plans for these lands going forward.

On that basis, a motion responding to these points was prepared and brought to the Board. It was adopted according to our Governance Rules. The motion has been posted on our website and social media channels, and communicated directly to the relevant authorities. For easy reference, we are printing it in this Newsletter.

As always, we are open to comments – in this case either on the substance or the process we followed to arrive at our position of conditional support of the addition of these Crown Lands into CLPP.

Yours in preserving and enhancing Charleston Lake,

Michael McAdoo
President
Charleston Lake Association

Motion of the Charleston Lake Association
and Charleston Lake Environmental Association

The Charleston Lake Association and Charleston Lake Environmental Association support the inclusion of additional Crown Lands into Charleston Lake Provincial Park, under the Ontario Government's proposal known as **ERO number 025-0031.**

Our support is based on the following points:

1. We note the commitments to maintain existing uses of these lands for outdoor recreation, and our support is conditional upon these uses being maintained, but not expanded.

2. We call upon individual users and user groups to work constructively with CLPP authorities to ensure that their continued use is consistent with Preserving and Enhancing our beloved Charleston Lake.

3. We insist that the Ontario government provide sufficient incremental funding for CLPP to properly maintain and manage these additional lands as part of the Park

4. We would have preferred to have been involved in the consultation process to date, and respectfully request to be included in Ontario government consultation processes going forward.

The above Motion was passed at a vote of the CLA and CLEA Boards on 8 April 2026, according to the procedures established by their respective governing documents.

Mary Mansworth, Secretary

Michael R. McAdoo, President

Let's Keep Charleston Lake Beautiful After Dark

For generations, families have been drawn to the rugged shores and pristine waters of **Charleston Lake** for a distinct reason: the chance to escape the city and immerse themselves in the quiet magic of nature. Part of that magic is looking up from a dock or deck at a brilliant, unpolluted night sky.

Lately, however, a different kind of visibility is rising. The trend of installing high-wattage, unshielded LED floodlights, bright white dock illumination, and continuous shoreline "security" lighting is fundamentally altering our night environment.

While a well-lit property may feel safer, improper outdoor lighting creates serious issues across our lake community:

- The Mirror Effect: Because water acts as a giant mirror, unshielded shoreline lights bounce glare directly into the eyes of passing boaters and neighbors across the bay, ruining their night vision and creating navigation hazards.
- The Ecological Toll: Artificial light at night (ALAN) severely disrupts our aquatic food web. It alters the behavior of zooplankton, stresses fish populations, and interferes with the natural mating and hunting habits of native wildlife.
- Property Enjoyment: Excessive lighting can instantly compromise a neighbor's privacy, shining directly into living rooms and bedrooms and turning a peaceful evening under the stars into a brightly lit annoyance.

Respecting the Shoreline (and the Rules)

Minimizing our light footprint isn't just a matter of cottage etiquette—it is aligned with local standards. Under Section 3.25 of the **Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands Zoning By-law,** properties are required to ensure that the potential for light spillover or glare onto adjacent light-sensitive areas or the night sky is minimized, mandating that any installed lighting be downward directed.

Four Simple Steps to Protect Our Night Sky

Restoring the dark skies over Charleston Lake doesn't mean living in total darkness. It means using light responsibly by following a few simple adjustments:

1. Aim it Down: Ensure all outdoor fixtures are fully shielded or "full cut-off." The bulb should be recessed so that light is forced directly onto pathways or deck surfaces where it is needed, rather than bleeding sideways onto the water or up into the sky.
2. Switch to Amber: Replace bright, harsh white LED bulbs with warmer amber tones (ideally 2,700 Kelvins or less). Amber light causes significantly less glare, is gentler on the eyes of navigation boaters, and attracts fewer bugs.
3. Lower the Wattage: You need far less light to safely navigate a cottage pathway at night once your eyes adapt to the dark. Opt for lower-wattage bulbs.
4. Use Sensors and Timers: Instead of leaving dock and exterior lights burning 24/7, hook them up to motion sensors or timers. They will illuminate when you actually need them and keep the lake dark when you don't.

Let's lead by example. Take a walk down to your shoreline tonight, look back at your property, and see what your neighbors (and the local wildlife) see. By shielding our fixtures and turning off unnecessary lights, we can keep the focus where it belongs: on the beauty of the stars reflecting off Charleston Lake.

Fisheries Research on Charleston Lake

Early season angling continues to be problematic, with respect to removal of parental male bass from nests. This results in the subsequent loss of young to predation, when other fish are free to raid the unguarded nests. Removing a male, even via catch-and-release, often leads to total nest destruction by predators in minutes. In 2022-2023, CLA, in cooperation with scientists from Carleton University, University of Illinois, and the Fisheries Conservation Foundation collected baseline data on bass nesting, reproductive success and juvenile production. Based on this research, in 2024 and 2025, the MNR facilitated a pilot study (called "Bass Spawning Sanctuary"; BaSS) - to support long-term bass nesting and population research. The results indicate that the reproductive success inside the BaSS areas were almost **five-fold** greater than outside them, and the difference of the annual recruitment (the



number of 1 year old juveniles counted the year after spawning) was even greater, with an almost **ten-fold** difference between inside and outside the BaSS areas. This short-duration proof of concept study has clearly documented the effectiveness of BaSS in mitigating the chronic recruitment overfishing that has occurred as a result of decades of angling nesting bass. The research team will continue to swim this season and collect data on nesting bass. Given there is no official sanctuary this season and the late spring and colder water temps, we encourage bass anglers to considering delaying targeting bass for another week or two after the season opens as it is unlikely that the male bass will be done guarding their fry when the season opens on June 20th.

Tagging of Fish

In 2024, the research team caught and implanted acoustic tags in 120 small-mouth and largemouth Bass whose movements continue to be tracked by listening stations distributed throughout the lake.



Photo of a lake trout that has the external tag already inserted beside the dorsal fin. The researchers are also taking a small clip from the tail of the lake trout for stable isotope analysis which will be used to help to understand their diet.

Continued on page 4

Fisheries Research on Charleston Lake

Continued from page 3



Photo of a male bowfin having an internal transmitter inserted. The gloves shown provide a low voltage that temporarily relaxes the fish so it can be safely operated on and stitched back up all while a water pump provides fresh water in the cradle to ensure it remains healthy to be released back where it was caught.

You may see submerged buoys in parts of the lake, in both shallow and deep water, these buoys are attached to an anchored listening station; these should not be interfered with. In 2024 and 2025, the team also started to tag Bowfin and Lake Trout. These data will be used to understand the seasonal movements and habitat use of each species. Furthermore, the data will help assess the diet of SMB and LMB, Northern Pike, Bowfin and Lake Trout. Tagging has continued in 2026 for Lake Trout, Bowfin, Northern Pike. The fish have an external tag near their dorsal fin; this tag has a unique number on it. If a tagged fish is caught this number should be reported to Dr. Cooke's lab at Carleton University, and the fish should be released. The tagged fish also have an internal transmitter in their belly that emits a signal every time it swims near a listening station. This spring these listening stations were pulled and then re-deployed so the data could be analyzed.

The research team has several boats that you likely will see on the lake, they should have at least one high visibility (yellow) vest on.

Broad-scale Monitoring (BsM) Program

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is conducting fisheries monitoring activities on Charleston Lake June 8-11, 2026. MNR science field crews are setting nets on this lake to collect information on fish species. The field crews also take water samples and check for invasive species.

All MNR nets are clearly marked with yellow or orange buoys and the Ontario logo. Nets are checked and moved to a new location every day. Please do not lift the nets or buoys and avoid recreational activities between and around the buoys.

It is important for your safety and for the integrity of the data that these nets are not disturbed.

The biological data collected provide MNR with valuable information about fish abundance, size, age structure, mortality, and maturity of the types of fish in the lake. This information is used to evaluate the health of fish populations in the lake and make fisheries management decisions.

The number of fish caught and sampled represents a very small percentage of the total population in the lake.

Fish netting results for individual lakes are summarized as lake bulletins and are available at Fish ON-Line (www.ontario.ca/page/fishing).













Stocking history of lake trout in Charleston Lake

Did you know that the MNR stocked lake trout on Charleston Lake for over 100 years but stopped after 2011. The MNR would go out and collect gametes (reproductive cells) from spawning lake trout in November on Charleston, and then the MNR Fish Culture Section would rear these fish to various sizes, and they would stock them back into the lake. Recognizing the importance of maintaining the lake specific genetics of lake trout, MNR's focus in the early 2000's was on stocking only native fish.



The right pectoral (RP) fin is clipped on this 23 inch lake trout that was 16 years old.

Unfortunately, there was a time in MNR's past when fish genetics were not considered to any great degree when stocking fish and a lot of lakes in Ontario received strains of fish they should never have received. Charleston Lake also had the "Lake Manitou" strain stocked most recently in 2004 and 2002. This lack of consideration for preserving the genetic integrity of locally adapted populations likely contributed to already declining populations.

Although there has been no stocking of lake trout since 2011, the odd stocked lake trout is still caught from time to time. This spring local angler Cédric McNamee noticed two of the lakers he caught had clipped fins. With the help of the MNR he was able to cross reference their historical fin clipping schedule to determine the age of these fish.



The right pectoral (RP) fin and adipose (AD) fin is clipped on this 24-inch-laker that is approximately 22 years old! This fish was released to swim another day!

Next time you catch a lake trout, take note if any of their fins are clipped and measure its length and e-mail the CLA and we can confirm for you the age of the fish. MNR recommends you release fish with NO fin clips to maintain the native stock.

Did you know the MNR experimented in the past and stocked **brown trout, rainbow trout and atlantic salmon** in Charleston estimated to be circa 1920 – 1940. Imagine catching one of these species today!

If you have any interesting fishing stories or photos you want to share, please e-mail the CLA or tag us on our social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook!

Tight lines!
Brent McNamee
CLA Fish & Wildlife Director

Charleston Lake Association &
Charleston Lake Environmental Association
Comparative Combined Financial Report
Statement of Revenue & Expense

Revenue	**2025**	**2024**
Membership Dues	$25,880	$24,760
Club $100 Donations	$24,531	$17,350
Golf Tournament	$7,248	$5,642
Other Donations	$2,025	$2,149
Interest and Other Income	$4,501	$5,393
Total Revenue	**$64,185**	**$55,294**
Expenses		
General Administration	$13,793	$13,838
Information Center	$5,590	$10,037
Youth & Social Programs	$4,116	$4,357
Safety	$3,262	$12,780
Miscellaneous	$4,013	$8,405
Total Expenses	**$30,774**	**$49,417**
Total Environmental Project Costs	**$28,677**	**$3,855**
Total Expense & Project Costs	**$59,451**	**$53,272**
Unexpended Funds Current Year	**$4,734**	**$2,022**
Unexpended Funds Prior Years	**$133,103**	**$131,081**
Unexpended Funds at Dec. 31st	**$137,837**	**$133,103**

Balance Sheet at Dec. 31st

	2025	**2024**
Cash & Cash Invested	$134,126	$128,197
Accounts Receivable	$3,711	$5,699
Total Assets	**$137,837**	**$133,896**
Accounts Payable	$0	$793
Unexpended Funds	$137,837	$133,103
Total Liabilities & Unexpended Funds	**$137,837**	**$133,896**

Prepared by: Wayne Gill
Secretary Treasurer

Charleston Lake Water Testing 2025 Results

In 2025 Gary Nielsen and John Willson continued the water sampling that has been done annually for over 25 years. During the summer, forty-two phosphorus samples and water clarity recordings were collected over the period May 27th to October 26th inclusive; six samples from each of seven basins in the lake.

The 2025 total phosphorus from the MOECP Lake Partner Program showed a mean average of 9.40 ug/L compared to the average of the previous 5 test periods (2019-2024) of 9.12 ug/L. These levels are below (better) than the Provincial Water Quality Objective of 10 ug/L, and have been for over 10 years. The period of 2000-2004 had a whole lake mean value of 14.027 ug/L, so the last 10 years have shown a remarkable improvement. A big part of the initial improvement was the result of the zebra mussel colonization of the lake, but that appears to have been stable and/or declining for a number of years. The mean values (2025) for the various basins are 8.41 Donaldson Bay, 9.63 Goose Island, 9.60 Eastern Water, 9.17 Webster Bay, 8.92 Big Water, 10.15 Deep Water (Runnings Bay), 9.90 Southern Water.

The overall phosphorus levels are showing signs of sneaking up again. Compared to the average of the last 5 test periods most basins have had increases. We will continue to monitor this trend. Charleston Lake is still overall in the oligotrophic category for this parameter.

Charleston Lake experienced good water clarity (Average Secchi depth 7.78m); this value is much clearer than last year's 6.55m. 2024 was an unusual year where the ice went off in early March as opposed to 2025 ice off in early April. 2025 also had very few rains or intense storms, and much lower water levels and fewer algae blooms. 2025 levels are more comparable to ones around 2010. When compared to the first five years (2000 to 2004 4.30m) the improvement is remarkable. The largest part of that improvement in clarity was the result of the zebra mussel colonization of the lake. In 2025 Donaldson Bay had the highest average clarity at 8.55m, ranging to Goose Island at 7.40m average.

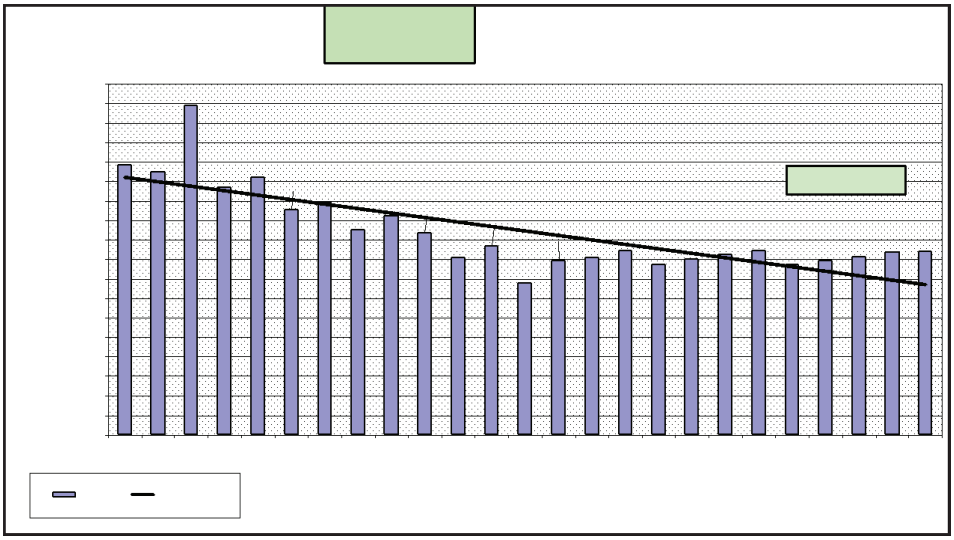
Water clarity mean value for the 25-year period of record (6.33m) places Charleston Lake in the oligotrophic category for the entire time frame, despite the fact that for the first five years of that period (2000 to 2004 inclusive) the water clarity averaged only 4.30 m. Oligotrophic lakes have a water clarity > 5.0 metres.

For comparison to other shield lakes and some local lakes, the Lake Partner Program has produced a report with data up to 2023 which is on our website under Water Testing, Charleston Lake Data Report. We expect to have an update of this report in July.

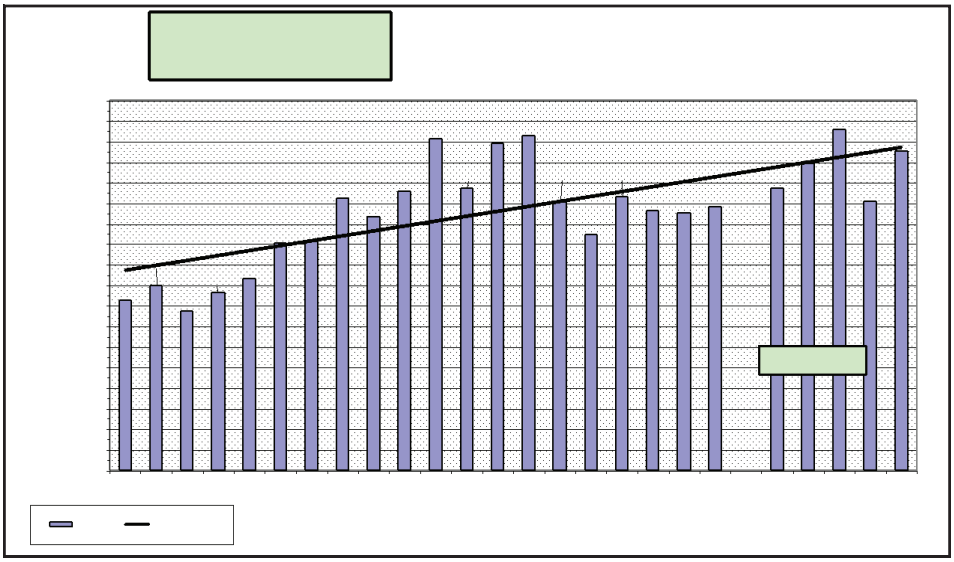
Charleston Lake is improved from where it was a generation ago, but we are seeing signs for phosphorus levels creeping up again. Climate change is having impacts, so we need to look at what we can control, which is further reducing the nutrient load by focussing on healthy, runoff-absorbing shorelines, reduced fertilizer near the water, good functioning septic systems, and minimizing boat wake impacts.

John Willson and Gary Nielsen

2025 Charleston Lake Phosphorus Results



2025 Charleston Lake Water Clarity Results



Let's Get the Lead Out of Charleston Lake!

Summer 2026 Update

There are now 50 lake associations (and counting) across Ontario that are working to tackle the problem of **lead pollution tainting the lakes of this beautiful land.** To date, over 225 kg of toxic lead fishing tackle has been collected and safely recycled. (To safely dispose of your lead tackle, simply drop it off at our CLA Information Centre - 109 County Road 40, Athens). Yet the sad reality is that every year, over 170 metric tonnes of lead still end up in Ontario lakes from lost fishing tackle, polluting the pristine waters we all love so much.

Lead is a highly dangerous neurotoxin, which makes swimming in or drinking polluted water dangerous to the health of wildlife, such as endangered loons and eagles, game fish, otters, turtles, and even humans.

The good news is, you can help make a difference for yourself, for future generations, and for the planet.

How do you do that? Just sign the petition included with this letter (also available for download on **fishleadfree.ca)** and mail it to us at the address below. This petition "asks the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to **ban the sale and use of lead sinkers, weights & jigs under 50 grams (1.75 oz) in weight, and any lead-headed tackle under 6.5 cm (2.5") in length" (fishleadfree.ca).** This change would bring legislation in line with Parks Canada regulations to help preserve our environment and our wildlife. **Encourage your community to add their signatures as well.** Let's work together to get the lead out, Charleston!

For more information, you can check out the "Let's Get the Lead Out, Charleston!" in our Winter 2025 Newsletter, visit **fishleadfree.ca**, or watch the informational videos at **https://www.youtube.com/@letsgettheleadout**.

Please mail signed petitions to:
"Let's Get the Lead Out"
c/o 9 Garland Lane, Godfrey, Ontario, K0H 1T0.

Thank you for choosing to make the planet a better place for all!

—The Charleston Lake Association



Shoal Markers

Shoal markers were installed by two teams at the North and South ends of the lake.

North end:	**South end:**
- Robbie Gibson	- Danny Gray
- Martin Rukavina	- Clayton Gray
- Justin Carley	- Dexter Gray
- Brent Moulton	- Bruce Johnston
- Nathan Hudson	- Luke Severson

We installed 50 new solar lights and 12 new anchors and chains. And we are purchasing 20 new buoys. The markers are in good shape and enable safe boating.

Thanks once again to George Belisle for the use of his pontoon boat. Unfortunately, Faith Belisle passed away in February of this year. We are grateful for the use of their boat over a number of years. Also thank you to Kelsey's Marina for the use of their work barge.

Robbie Gibson - Law Enforcement and Safety

From The Lake

After a slow start to the season, we hope it's time for some Spring and Summer weather. The clarity of the water is incredible this Spring.

Just a reminder to observe the fish limits, based on which license you obtain.

- **Sports Fishing License:** 6 bass, 6 pike and 2 lake trout in your possession (and this means in your boat, your freezer or your pan!).
  Conservation License: 2 bass , 2 pike and I trout.
  Our lake is Zone 18 in the fishing regulations online.
  Bass season opens on June 20th.
- Charleston Lake Fireworks and Poker Run are on June 27th. For Poker Run updates and information, visit Charleston Lake FX on Facebook.
- LakeLine is hosting Lakeside Live Music, Harps BBQ and bar on July 4th and August 1st. Tickets will be on sale at the beginning of June.
- The Township of Athens did a beautiful job resurfacing the first half of the main dock.
- And an AED is now available at Lakeline at the North end of the lake and at Whispering Pines at the South end.
- A Portapotty will be available at the dock from June 1-Labour Day. The AED and Portapotty are courtesy of the Charleston Lake Association.

Please pay attention to Burn Bans when posted and remember that BBQs and bonfires count. Remind visitors that this applies to everyone!

Here's to a safe boating summer at Charleston Lake with lots of sunshine and sparkling water and enjoyment of our beautiful natural surroundings.

Kristin Ireland Director at Large / Information Centre

DOUG HALE MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT 2026

The Charleston Lake Association will hold its Annual Golf Tournament on

Saturday, August 8th

at Cedar Valley Golf Club

It is a significant fundraiser for the Lake Association and a great way to see your friends and neighbours. It is a four person scramble so grab your foursome and register at charlestonlakeassociation.on/2026-golf-tournament-registration-form/

The cost is $75 which includes 9 holes of golf and a lasagna lunch. If you need a golf cart , please book directly at the golf club.

Register early as it sold out last year.

Sue Willson- Tournament Convenor

SUMMER CAMPS

Summer Camps filled up quickly and our camp Director, Denbeigh Whitmarsh and her team of Counsellors, Paige Buma, Lexie Watson, Remi Fortier, Paige Earl, and Lifeguard Norah Cook are looking forward to welcoming campers to Sand Bay on July 6th.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026

SATURDAY, JULY 25, 9:30 A.M.

Holy Trinity Church, Oak Leaf Road

Speakers: Dr. Shelley Ball FRCGS
- Ticks and how to live with them.
AED presentation.

All Welcome!

Keynote Speaker - Dr. Shelley Ball FRCGS
Founder and President of BIOSPHERE Environmental Education.

Dr. Ball is a biologist, educator, photographer and a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. She was a participant in the inaugural Homeward Bound Women in Science Leadership expedition to Antarctica in 2016. That same year, she created her environmental education organization, BIOSPHERE Environmental Education.

Her love of nature and career as a biologist meant spending much of her life outdoors. In 2019 Shelley was bitten by a tick - a seemingly small incident which turned her life upside down. She was infected with 4 tick borne infections from that bite.

Her experience with Lyme Disease led her to publishing a book about tick borne diseases in 2021. She will speak about how we can still enjoy the outdoors safely, as well as what information is critical if you are bitten or think you might have Lyme or other tick infections.

CHARLESTON LAKE INFORMATION CENTRE

109 County Road 40, Athens K0E 1B0

The Information Centre is open on weekends until the end of June.

During July and August, the centre is open from 9.a.m. -3 .p.m daily, except Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Hats are available at the Centre along with environmental products.

CHARLESTON LAKE ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS

Michael McAdoo - *President*
pres@charlestonlakeassociation.ca

Wayne Gill - *Treasurer*

Bill Hallam - *V.P. South*

Fred Milko - *V.P. North*

Robbie Gibson - *Safety and Law Enforcement*

*__Brent McNamee__ - *Fish and Wildlife*

Sue Willson - *Website and Golf Tournament*

Mary Mansworth - *Secretary, Newsletter and Youth Programs*

CHARLESTON LAKE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS

Roy Angelow - *Municipal and Government Liaison*

Katie Baker - *Fish and Wildlife*

Linda Whitmarsh - *Director at Large and "Get the Lead Out" program*

*__Dwayne Struthers__ - *Director at Large**

Clayton Gray - *Director at Large*

Kristin Ireland - *Director at Large and Information Centre*

Mike Ferris - *Director at Large*

**Effective July 25, 2026*

Check out our website for updated information about our Association and the work we do.

charlestonlakeassociation.ca

Printed by Henderson Digital Marketing & Printing