



WEST CARLING ASSOCIATION

9 Christie Street,

R.R. #1 Nobel, Ontario, P0G 1G0

Since 1921

Incorporated 1992

Georgian Bay Shoreline Concerns

FALL 2011 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by Jeremy Gawen

As I left the cottage after closing up for the winter last October 12, I was struck by how low the water levels in Georgian Bay were - not quite at the all time low but not that far off! I had to push the boat out a long way before I could put the motor down! This last summer was forecast to have water levels 8 - 10 inches below those of 2010 but, thanks to unusually heavy rains in the spring, they were actually only an inch or two lower. However, after such a beautiful, long, hot and dry summer, down go the levels again; unless we have above average precipitation this fall and winter, I would expect the levels to be even lower next spring.

This leads me to give you an update on what has been happening with the studies of the St Clair River being carried out under the auspices of the International Joint Commission (IJC) by the International Upper Great Lakes Study Board (IUGLSB). You may remember that some years ago, GBA funded a study by Baird Associates, a well known consulting firm, specializing in river flows, to determine if there had been significant changes to the St Clair River to increase its flow and hence lower the level of Lake Huron. Baird concluded that erosion had indeed increased the conveyance capacity of the St Clair by a factor of about 10% resulting in about a 10 inch drop in the lake level. This report persuaded the IJC to commission their own report on the St Clair by the IUGLSB. From the very beginning, we were unhappy with the approach taken by the IUGLSB which was far from open and seemed determined to prove Baird wrong. Last year, in their first report on the St Clair, the Board did acknowledge some increase in the conveyance of the River (5.8%) but concluded that any erosion had magically stopped and that nothing should be done about it. However, the IJC was obviously not convinced and directed the IUGLSB to report on what mitigation steps would be required to raise Lake Huron by a range of levels from 10 inches to 20 inches.

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WEST CARLING ASSOCIATION LIST OF OFFICERS

Jeremy Gawen, President & GBA Rep
e-mail: j.gawen@aympatico.ca
Cottage: 705 705 342-9192 (254)
Toronto: 416 481-7538

Marc Cooper, Vice-President & Membership
e-mail: mcooper@agency59.ca
Cottage: 705 342-7470

Alex Davidson, Treasurer
email: alex@jcclark.com
Cottage: 705 342-5129 (I-257)
Toronto: 416 484-9480

Sheila Tierney, Secretary
e-mail: tierneyes@gmail.com
Cottage: 705 342-1653 (099)
Home: 905 468-2200

Phyllis Ortved, Newsletter
e-mail: phyllis.ortved@sympatico.ca
Cottage: 647 808-6163 (I-263)
Toronto: 416 920-6163

LIST OF DIRECTORS

(365) Christina Caap
e-mail: sofiefred@yahoo.se

342-7301

(261) Bill Bialkowski 342-7354
Home: 905 884-7330
e-mail: bialkowski@rogers.com

Ian Hunt
e-mail: ian1hunt@aol.com

705 342-1358

(367) John Rohr 342-7781
e-mail: jandprohr@yahoo.ca

(101) Dave Turner
Home: 905 823-1778
jandprohr@yahoo.ca

342-7211

(122) Doug Malvern 342-9102
Home: 519 759-7717 e-mail:
e-mail: doug.malvern@sympatico.ca

(177) Dick Biggins
Home: 828-299-9128
e-mail: rgbiggins@aol.com

342-7187

(I-257) Bruce Davidson 342-1034
Toronto: 416 932-0030
e-mail: dbdavidson@rogers.com

(I-254) David Hume
Home: 905 815-0060
e-mail: davidhume@cogeco.ca

905 466-2877

(I-229) Ken James
Home: 416 485-8400
e-mail: kenj587@gmail.com

416 587-5000

The IUGLSB completed this report earlier this year and held public meetings around the Great Lakes (including 3 meetings in Georgian Bay) during the summer before completing the report for the IJC late this year. Some of the highlights of their report are as follows:

- To raise the level of Lake Huron, they concentrated almost entirely on the use of fixed weirs in the St Clair River whereas common sense dictates that flexible barriers should be used (to lower water levels should they get too high). They dismissed flexible barriers as too risky or unproven and too expensive.
- They claimed that, even if water levels were raised only gradually (which makes sense), there would be major drops in the levels of the downstream lakes (St Clair, Erie, Ontario and at the Port of Montreal) before returning to equilibrium many years later. Against all common sense, they stated that the further you go downstream, the worse the affect until Montreal was projected to drop an astounding 10 inches.
- In their earlier report, they had stated that their models indicated that Great Lakes water levels could drop by as much as 3 ft over the next decades due to climate change. Miraculously, they have now concluded that their models were wrong and that now there should be very little change!
- They estimated that the cost of putting weirs in the rivers and of remediating the Port of Montreal would be about \$6 billion. However, the cost of the weirs was only \$500 million. The rest was never explained.
- Finally, they concluded that nothing should be done anyway, costs too high and really not a problem to start with! However, as a sop to Georgian Bay, they would recommend that our major wetlands be diked and water continuously pumped into them! They haven't said how they expect fish to climb over the dikes to spawn.
- Changes to the Lake Superior outflow recommended, could have a negative affect on levels in Lake Huron.

We are very fortunate that in Carling we have a well known control engineer, Bill Bialkowski (who is also a Director of WCA). Under the auspices of first GBA and now Sierra Club Ontario, Bill has done some amazing modeling work on the St Clair and has been able to repeat both Baird's earlier work and that of the IUGLSB. Earlier this year, Bill discovered that the IUGLSB had made an error in their first report in the flow of the St Clair River by about 200 cubic metres/ second i.e. 200 tons/ second. This largely explains the difference between Baird's 10% increase in the conveyance capability and

the IUGLSB's 5.8 %. The IUGLSB has never acknowledged this error even though Bill was provided with the raw data by one of their key members. Bill also concluded that while erosion in the river may have slowed down, it is still ongoing.

On reviewing the latest IUGLSB report on mitigation in the St Clair River, Bill rapidly realized that the downstream affects of mitigation were clearly incorrect because the graphical data from which the conclusions had been reported were incorrectly transcribed. The IUGLSB has acknowledged the error by email but has made no formal acknowledgement. When the correct data is used, the downstream affects are very small, negligible in Montreal - as you would expect!

The next step is for the IUGLSB to finalize its report and present it to the IJC. We are reliably told that they will recommend nothing be done. Next year, the IJC will hold hearings at which the public will have their chance to respond to the reports. Both GBA and SCO will be making presentations. It is clear that the study has now reached the political stage. GBA has formed a working committee to develop a strategy and I am a member of that committee. SCO also has a committee of which I am a member. We are going to have to start active lobbying with our politicians if we want to see any control of levels in Lake Huron. We would like to see a Control Board appointed for Lakes Huron/Michigan and flexible structures placed in the St Clair River which would enable the new Control Board to manage the levels.

In Canada, we are fortunate that GBA has a good relationship with our Parry Sound M.P., Minister Tony Clement so we hope this relationship will be influential. Unfortunately, it is likely that any major decisions will be made in the US where we have less influence though I would hope that our US members would actively lobby. Mary Muter, who now leads the SCO efforts, when at GBF, contracted with a well known Washington lobby group (Holland and Knight) which she found extremely good but quite expensive. SCO does not yet have the funds to continue this association, though it would be invaluable to re-instate it. (Please contact me if you have any thoughts on how we might fund this activity). Mary has begun the process of coordinating support from other US Great Lakes chapters of Sierra Club but this takes time.

I will update you as more information becomes available, either in the next Newsletter or via email. We most certainly will be looking for your support in dealing with the IJC.

A view from Carling Council – Fall 2011

By Michael Gordon

Since my last report in June, the major issues that we have focused on have been:

- Updating the Zoning ByLaw – we held 2 workshops over the summer and 2 public meetings in September and October to obtain input and comments on the draft zoning ByLaw published in June. We received a substantial amount of helpful input and feedback from both associations and individual property owners. At this point we are expecting to pass the new Zoning ByLaw at our November Council meeting.

- Executing a plan to update our Municipal Buildings. Following the Public meeting on the new municipal buildings in June, Council has continued to work with an architect (Duncan Ross) to move the forward a plan for renewing the municipal office and public works building on the present site. Council decided to break the project into 2 phases beginning with a new municipal administration building that will be built where the playground is. We retained Duncan Ross to manage a “design-build” tender process and have now selected Greystone Construction to build the building and associated works (e.g. well, septic, parking, etc) at a price of \$1 million (well below the figures shared at the public meeting). The work should commence soon.

- Working with the MTO on issues surrounding the new Hwy 400 – Council has had discussions with the MTO concerning the evolution of the old Hwy 559/69 section through Nobel (to be called Nobel Road from 559 once open). As a township we will be responsible for maintaining the new bridge on Nobel Rd (just north of where 559 used to come off of 69) and the road will have a 1.5m paved shoulder for cycling. The snake fences on that section of road will not become our responsibility.

I am always happy to speak with anyone who has questions or concerns about anything relating to Carling Council. You can reach me at mgordon003@sympatico.ca



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CARLING TOWNSHIP – NEW ZONING BYLAW

by Jeremy Gawen

Last year, after a long period of review and debate, the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) finally approved the new Carling Township Official Plan (OP). The next step is to implement that plan by preparing a comprehensive Zoning Bylaw which reflects the provisions of the OP and provides details on issues such as use of land, lot and building sizes, setbacks and frontage. Council started this process last winter and has managed the development of the bylaws in a very consultative and transparent way with open houses, public meetings and given the Associations and the public plenty of opportunity for input. The last public meeting prior to approval of the bylaw, was held on October 11; it was well attended and there were very few concerns registered other than about saunas on docks (more, later). Several WCA Board members attended.

WCA, along with Pengally Bay and Deep Bay Associations, worked closely together from the outset of the process to comment on the various drafts and we received detailed, written responses back from the Township. Overall, we have been pleased with the process that Council adopted. There are not that many major changes to the existing Bylaw; some of the key ones are as follows:

- In general, where a situation already exists under the old or earlier bylaws but the new Bylaw would no longer allow it, the existing situation can remain unchanged as it will be grandfathered. For example, if your cottage is too close to the water according to the new rules i.e. less than 20 metres from the high water mark, you won't have to move it back!
- In fact, the New Bylaw will make it easier to expand a non-conforming cottage which is too close to the water as are many of the older ones:

Distance from water (m)	Max allowable increase (sq m)
5	0
5 - <10	50
10 - <15	75
15 - <20	100

provided all other applicable zone regulations are met. Up until now, the only way to expand a non-conforming cottage was to request a minor variance at the Committee of Adjustment which can be quite a tedious process.

- New Boathouses will no longer be allowed.
- Permanent structures such as Saunas and Gazebos will no longer be allowed on docks. There were impassioned pleas from some cottagers to allow this but I understand that Council is unlikely to accede to these requests. On the other hand, you will be allowed to place Saunas and Gazebos in your front yard, close to the water.
- There are new, Provincially-mandated, rules that apply to Provincially Significant Wetlands. As you may know, last year the Province designated some 2000 hectares of wetlands right across Carling as Provincially Significant. This provides a high level of protection to these lands (for example, we believe that it will no longer be practical for a developer to build a wind farm such as was proposed for Snug Harbour some years ago). However, like all good things, there are some negative consequences to this change for property owners immediately adjacent to these wetlands. The Province requires some form of setback from the edge of the wetlands in which no construction may take place without an **environmental assessment** (which is expensive and time consuming). Council has been debating this issue as to the size of the setback which can be a maximum of 120m or as little as zero. I understand that 5 metres has been agreed. One of our Directors, Ian Hunt, is personally affected by the new rules and would be happy to try to answer questions at 705 342 1358 or at Ian1hunt@aol.com

There are a number of other, lesser changes which may be found by accessing the entire Draft Zoning Bylaw at the Carling Township website (www.carlingtownship.ca).



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2011 FALL FISHERY REPORT

by Bill Davis

FISH EATING BIRD DIE-OFF

On Oct. 12 & 13 there was a story about dead birds (gulls, loons, cormorants, etc.) washing up from Parry Sound to Wasaga Beach. As it happens my wife and I had just made a tour of some islands to admire the fall colours and probably the last of that beautiful streak of calm, warm days. We saw a dead loon near Boiler Bay, Hertzberg Is. Until last year I cannot remember when I last saw a dead loon. MNR suspected botulism is the cause of this die-off, but have not really explain why, or how, it was happening. I may have included this issue in previous reports, but will explain it once again.

In my view, cormorants have eaten the intermediate predators, such as perch, rock bass, bullheads, sunfish, etc. that would eat or compete with the invasive species, Round Goby. This greatly facilitated the goby invasion of our waters and their population has exploded. Gobys include zebra mussels in their diet, and they pick up botulism from the mussels. The large increase in the numbers of gobys has increased the chance that a fish eating bird will eat a contaminated goby. Also, the fact that cormorants have very greatly reduced any other small fish in our waters, also increases the chance that a bird will eat a bad goby. In some places there is not much else. Although cormorants may also die of botulism, goby are their least preferred prey, and cormorants have good powers of reproduction. They can double their population in 3 years. Loons, on the other hand, have much lower powers of reproduction. Is the call of the loon under duress? Also, we need to be concerned for the Bald Eagles that are finally returning to this area after their bout with DDT. Eagles are primarily scavengers and if they scavenge a bird killed by botulism, they might go too.

FISHING

I heard of, and experienced, some pretty good bass fishing last summer. My boys said the best in thirty years. Part of this was the very warm summer, but there was also some good pike fishing reported. This may be the result of the 5 year cormorant management experiment, (2000 - 2005) and also, for a while, I chased any very large flocks of cormorants away that tried to feed in Sand Bay and other nearby waters. The large sizes of bass reported would fit that time scale, as would the increased numbers of pike and walleye.

I managed to find some large (10 -11") perch this fall. I troll a couple of

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places with my steel line and a proprietary lure set up. I caught 4 and a couple of small walleye one afternoon and 7 perch another day. I have a couple of photos from 1980 showing 3 resort guests with 6 or 7' long strings of big perch, plus a collapsible basket full. We were able to catch perch like that for decades, before cormorants.

MNR BUDGET

This summer I learned that the Lake Huron fisheries management team has suffered about a 60% drop in operations funding over the last few years. I do not see how the fisheries unit can afford to get the data they need, to know what is going on in the most of the near-shore fishery of eastern Georgian Bay. In my opinion, money spent on resource management is not a cost, it is an investment. My son, a fishery manager in Alberta, is spending not more than \$300,000 per year to restore a fishery that he estimates should be worth about \$12,000,000 a year. The most important component of his plan is cormorant management.

By the way, the perch were delicious.

Reinventing Your Old (or New) Rowboat with Your Best Friend

by Lea B. Hansen

Summer in Georgian Bay provides many and varied opportunities to enjoy water activities – especially this last summer with the water temperature above 70 degrees. I have found a new activity with my 2 Portuguese Water Dogs (“PWD”) and an old rowboat: Water Work.

I found that Water Work achieved three things:

- A strong bond between my dog and me,
- Obedience reinforcement, and
- Sheer joy for my dog and me

The specific exercises I used focused on any dog’s ability to perform a task and its willingness to do so on command. Since my dogs – Navi and Fergie - are PWD I was also interested in the “working” aspect of the breed. The PWD was a contributing crew member on Portuguese fishing vessels, retrieving overboard articles, carrying messages, swimming fishing boats into place and guarding the boats, nets and catch when in port. In addition PWD’s would sight schools of fish and chase a fish that got free from the net. Wouldn’t siting fish in Georgian Bay be an asset.

So if you and your dog want to go beyond the fetching of a stick or a ball in the water, pull out the old rowboat, clean out the cobwebs, grab an old piece of wood that fits

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across the stern of the boat and is about 2-3 feet deep: large enough for you and your dog to sit on. You lose the back seat in the boat, but gain a marvelous platform that is safe and comfortable for the dog. Tack on a carpet to the platform so it is non slippery and either screw in or clamp down the platform to the boat. (See photo below.) Your dog now has its own perch from which to perform the various exercises....or just go for a quiet row with you.

Water work is a dog sport that aims to train you and your dog to achieve specific test exercises within four different progressive categories. (If you get really serious and have a PWD, you can enter the water trials hosted by the PWD Club of Ontario for a potential title for your dog.) While you can have fun tossing a bumper and having the dog retrieve and bring it back to you, these exercises add more complexities and structure to challenge you and your dog.

Let me describe a few exercises and then direct you to the water trial manual for further ideas and detail:

- Retrieve a bumper after it is thrown and bring it back to you. The dog must be trained to “give” the bumper or any item to you rather than drop it at your feet as dropping would not work in water! Most dogs have to be retrained for the give command from the drop command. As well, most dogs when they come out of the water will shake and drop the bumper. Don’t despair, with a little work, you can train your dog to pick it up and give to you. I use three commands for this exercise, “fetch,” “bring” and “give.”
- Your dog walks by your side to the rowboat, holding the bumper in its mouth, then gives the bumper to you before jumping up on the platform on command. You join the dog by sitting on the platform and another “best friend” rows the boat for you. Your dog sits calmly on the platform. When you return to shallow water, your dog waits on the platform while you walk to shore and then call your dog.
- Retrieving an object under water deep enough that the water is over their



eyes. Training of this is very gradual with food that sinks in a bucket.

- Swimming side by side with your dog for a certain distance. You can begin this exercise by commanding your dog to stay on the beach/rock until you have entered the water and call the dog to come and then you both go for a swim. Certainly beats your dog practically drowning you as it attempts to save you while you are trying to swim.
- Retrieving from the boat platform in deep water. What a sight when you see your dog leap off the platform (much like we learned in lifesaving with the stride jump) to retrieve the bumper and bring it back to the boat. Always best to train for this leap with a lifejacket so that the first few leaps into deep water do not result in the dog diving deeply which can be frightening for the dog the first time. But what next with your dog by the boat and you on the boat???
- I am sure you all have faced the task of having to get your dog onto a boat out of deep water and it simply becomes a struggle...well one of the best lessons learned from water training is getting your dog out of deep water back onto the platform. Briefly -like any sport- it is about timing and balance. As the dog approaches the stern of the boat and goes between your legs dangling off the stern, grab the top of the skull and with the other hand grab under the jaw (there is a hollow part under the jaw that is easy to hold onto), make sure their front paws are firmly on the boat, get your legs under the belly of the dog and lean back almost as if rocking. If timing and balance are just right the dog literally pops out of the water. As well, the dog tends to use the transom with its hind legs to help push up. What joy for both, your canine friend is now beside you and you have just achieved a major accomplishment. Feels like hitting the sweet spot in tennis or the perfect effortless shot in golf. Practicing on your “dusted off” windsurfer is a good strategy as well as easier when the boat is lower to the water.
- More advanced levels have the dogs retrieving multiple items in the water and couriering articles from boat to boat.

As with all dog training, breaking the exercises down and practicing the parts is helpful.

Oh, I forgot the important part – rewards and treats - work magnificently to reinforce exercises completed properly.

Enjoy your canine friends with a different twist next summer!

Detail and further ideas can be found at www.pwdcc.org and the actual water trial manual at www.pwdcc.org/PWDCC/index.php/waterwork.

Perform Surgery at the Cottage Without Anesthetics

By Bruce Davidson

When I was a kid around ten years old, I committed the unforgiveable sin of telling my Great Uncle that I was bored. Well, did I ever get an earful! The gruff septuagenarian informed me in no uncertain terms that he had never been bored a day in his life. And how could I, a mere boy, with all the advantages of youth, be so dull, lazy and unimaginative as to fail to find a practical outlet for the gift of available spare time that had been bestowed upon me?

What I had failed to appreciate was that Uncle Nelson built his cottage all by himself in 1923, before the era of outboard motors, never mind the fact that he would wait another 35 years for electricity. So I guess he bought whatever supplies that were available from the lumber town that was Parry Sound, loaded them into his Model 'T' Ford and drove over the rock and dirt logging road to a place called Snug Harbour. Thereupon he loaded them into his trusty rowing skiff and ferried them over to the island. Lumber was painstakingly cut by handsaw, of course. A hammer and chisel were always close at hand for the framing. He scrounged the local islands for flat stones to make the foundations and pathways. He drained swamps with a pickaxe and shovel. He dug up sand from beaches in the area and rowed it back to make cement. Uncle Nelson had to search far and wide for hardwood, fell the tree by axe, tow it home and split it with a sledgehammer and wedges in order to heat the cottage and cook each meal. Water was hauled from the Bay by pail straight up a 30 foot cliff. Small wonder that Uncle Nelson was irritated by a kid saying he was bored.

Now then, fast forward 88 years to the era of microwave ovens, televisions, chainsaws, cordless tools, gps navigation, cellphones, computers and personal watercraft to name a few conveniences that we cottagers generally have at our disposal. What on earth is there to occupy ourselves with when everything is either done for us, or is so easy to do? After all, we must never, I repeat never, admit to being bored.

One possibility, that some of us may have overlooked is to perform surgery! Why it is easy, practical, rewarding and exceptionally worthwhile. And it doesn't take a whole lot of learning.

Oh, did I forget to mention that the type of surgery I have in mind is of the arboreal variety i.e. think trees. Look around you at the shore of our glorious

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Georgian Bay. Everywhere you look there are ancient weather beaten pines and oaks just crying for a helping hand.

The enemy is rot. Cut off a bough carelessly leaving a stump, and rot will set in and over time work its way into the central heartwood. Gravity takes over from there, and pretty soon you have a hollow shell unable to withstand the November gales.

What to do? With great surgical precision, take the nose of your chainsaw and cut out all the rotten and punky wood. Notch the lower part of the wound to allow for drainage. Go into the toolshed and find Uncle Nelson's old hammer and chisel and clean up areas that were impossible to get at with the chainsaw. Now thoroughly spray the exposed heartwood with a pruning paint from any good garden centre (or use roofing tar if your wife is not looking). Finally, cement up the orifice and wait for the tree to heal itself by growing right over the wound in a few years. One word of caution: If you outlive the tree, don't forget when you go to take it down that the centre is full of cement.

See. You too can be just like Uncle Nelson and never be bored a day in your life!

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Don Christie's Big Fish Story (Continued)

By Bruce Davidson

You may recall in the last newsletter that I was recounting a big fish story that Don told me at his 90th birthday party in Fitzgerald Bay this summer, when we ran out of space. We left the action at the point where Don had managed to haul over the side of the rowing punt a musky worthy of starring in the movie *Jaws*, just at the unfortunate time when the the boat was half full of water.

So Don and his buddy (let's call him Jim) now had to deal with a huge thrashing savage beast with needle sharp teeth seriously looking for soft pink flesh in which to exact his vengeance. While neither side was taking prisoners, the musky clearly had the upper hand owing to the considerable water in the boat. In a flash Don and Jim, throwing their otherwise huge machismos to the wind, jumped up onto the rowing seats in an effort to save their bare legs from a mauling.

It was at this point that Don yelled out "Whack him with the butt of your oar, Jim", probably accompanied by profanity that need not be repeated here. Jim dutifully turned the oar butt side down, took careful aim and fired the missile down with full force at the musky's head. Yup, you guessed it; the oar glanced off the beast's solid bone head harmlessly and drove straight down through the bottom of the boat and into the deep blue sea.

So now our heroes had really got themselves in the soup. But those of you who know Don Christie as an older man will likely not appreciate his vigour and athleticism as a youngster. Quick as a flash, Don leaped upon the slimy torpedo as it paused to assess its options (with a new fount of fresh water offering freedom), and thrust his fingers into the eye sockets, rendering Mr. *Jaws Jr.* immobile. Moreover, in a truly inspirational act, Don simultaneously plunked his backside squarely down on the newly gaping hole, thus killing two birds with one stone.

Jim, thereupon jumped over the side and swam the whole works to shore, with Don's bum plugging the hole with the beast paralysed in his grasp. After the punt duly drained on shore, the boys had their trophy.

Congratulations on your 90th Don. You have given so much to the Bay over so many years. Thank you. You remain an inspiration to us all. Happy Birthday!!

Georgian Bay Land Trust News

by Laura Gibson

Our 20th anniversary year finds us working more closely with landowners and their transitions with generational ownership. We are presently communicating with 53 families from Port Severn to the North Channel to explore the potential for working with them to protect their property. Stay tuned for announcements on the successful completion of new properties in your region.

We recently successfully completed the first ever transfer of land through American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts, a U.S. based charity, that works in partnership with Canadian land trusts, like GBLT, to allow American landowners to donate land and interests in land in Canada and receive the same tax benefits as Canadians. Ingersoll is a 50 acre island that is essentially part of Sandy Island and the landowners have donated 47 of those 50 acres, retaining a small parcel that includes two cottages. This is a wonderful achievement for the GBLT. More information can be found on our website at www.gblt.org

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Make sure you have renewed your 2011 Membership

Ask a neighbour who is not one, to become a member

Our area is under increasing development pressure, especially with the new highway . Your participation is essential - together we need to ensure our properties and shorelines are protected.

All members of the West Carling Association receive:

- a map of the West Carling Association territory with each property numbered
- a directory of West Carling Association members with names, property locations, and phone numbers (updated annually)
- a subscription to the West Carling Association Newsletter, published three times a year addressing local issues of concern to our members
- a subscription to the GBA Update magazine, published three times a year covering issues of broader concern to property owners on the eastern coast of Georgian Bay
- membership in the Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association, which provides access to its services and seminars

Please continue to add your voice and opinions by maintaining a membership in the West Carling Association.

Without strong participation, neither our association nor our parent body, the Georgian Bay Association, will be able to succeed with our mandate to protect and preserve the natural beauty and ecology of our Georgian Bay shores.

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