

A Brief History of the Temagami Lakes Association

The Temagami Lakes Association (TLA) was founded in 1931 by a group of concerned cottage owners who were interested in the environmental preservation and future of the Lake. After more than 90 years, the TLA has 500+ members – most of whom are cottage owners from all corners of the Lake – as well as commercial members and people who support the mission of the Association (but do not own property).

The TLA provides many important services to members, including: property patrols (up to four times per year); annual publications (*Temagami Times* – published three times per year, and the TLA Membership Directory); merchandise (e.g., shoal/navigation maps, TLA history books, environmentally-friendly soap products); and, Headquarters Building services (e.g., VHF radio announcements and monitoring, incoming and outgoing mail, WiFi, desktop computers, lending library, outdoor privy, household-battery disposal).

In addition to these important services, the TLA plays an invaluable role in monitoring and addressing municipal policy and planning initiatives to ensure the ongoing environmental and aesthetic protection of the “Temagami Experience”. The TLA communicates regularly with the Municipal government and represents the interests of cottage owners on Lake Temagami – especially regarding matters of planning, zoning, the Access Road, and taxation.

The Association was responsible for developing the “Tenets for Temagami” – agreed to by the former Township of Temagami, the Lake Temagami Permanent Residents’ Association, and the TLA on March 8, 1994. The “Tenets” safeguard the preservation of the Lake’s “Skyline Reserve”, promote island-only development, and support limited road access. As a condition of amalgamation, they were incorporated into the Municipality of Temagami’s Official Plan and are also reflected in its zoning by-laws.

As the largest representative group of property owners in the Temagami area, the TLA also communicates on behalf of members with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP) about fish, wildlife, and other resources of importance to the Lake’s ecosystems. It also articulates concerns about lake water levels to Ontario Power Generation.

More than simply a stakeholder group engaged in the discussion, the TLA believes that actions also speak louder than words. In 2010, the TLA initiated and invested in a lake-wide, water-quality monitoring program which conducted water sampling and created records so that results could be compared from year to year. The water-testing program has now been taken over by Temagami Environmental Research and Stewardship (TERAS), which is a charitable organization that is supported by volunteers who are also TLA members.

Other initiatives organized and implemented in the past by the TLA have included: tap-water testing for TLA members (in association with the Timiskaming Health Unit); campsite monitoring (to report on campsite conditions and clean up garbage); a lead fishing-tackle exchange (allowing members to swap harmful lead tackle for eco-friendly equipment); and, a privy project (where new box privies were installed, and existing privies repaired, on various Lake campsites).

Typically, the TLA hosts social gatherings on the Lake each summer, including the “Welcome Back BBQ” and “Annual General Meeting”. We also support local initiatives and organizations, such as the Friends of Temagami, Nastawgan Trails, Living Temagami Arts and Culture, the Temagami Area Fish Involvement Program, and the Temagami Lions Club “Seniors’ Christmas Dinner”.

In many ways, the TLA serves as the voice, eyes, and ears for cottage owners and others on the Lake who value the “Temagami Experience”. An investment in a TLA membership is akin to purchasing an insurance policy that protects the Lake.

If you are not already a member, please consider joining the TLA. Further details can be found by e-mailing sla@onlink.net.