

TIARA's 2019 Annual Meeting

Saturday, July 13
Rockport Recreation Hall
115 Escott/Rockport Road

9:00 am Coffee and refreshments
9:30 am Speaker:

Dr. Jeff Ridal,
Executive Director of The River Institute, Cornwall
"Below the Water Line"

Plus: **Special Event!**
CD release of "Take Me Back to the River",
an album of songs about our beloved place,
written and performed by TIARA members **Mike
Bell, Brian Reynolds,** and their friends and families.

What's going on below the water line?

You won't want to miss **TIARA's 2019 AGM on July 13.** We are delighted that **Dr. Jeff Ridal,** the Executive Director and Chief Research Scientist of **The River Institute** in Cornwall, will be speaking about what goes on below the water level. He'll explore the geological and natural history of the St. Lawrence River, the man-made alterations to the river and their ecological consequences, and current initiatives at The River Institute to address some of these issues.

The Ongoing Adventures of our Official Plan

Well, our Official Plan was just adopted in September, but it didn't take long before TIARA was writing to contest challenges.

TIARA has submitted letters to Council supporting restrictions within the **1000 Islands Special Policy Area** (islands and mainland south of the 401). Specifically, the issues were that in the Special Policy Area, the number of dwellings should be limited to one per hectare, and also that the size of a dock should be in proportion to the size of the waterfront lot on which it is situated. Both these measures are designed to prevent overcrowding, especially along shorelines.

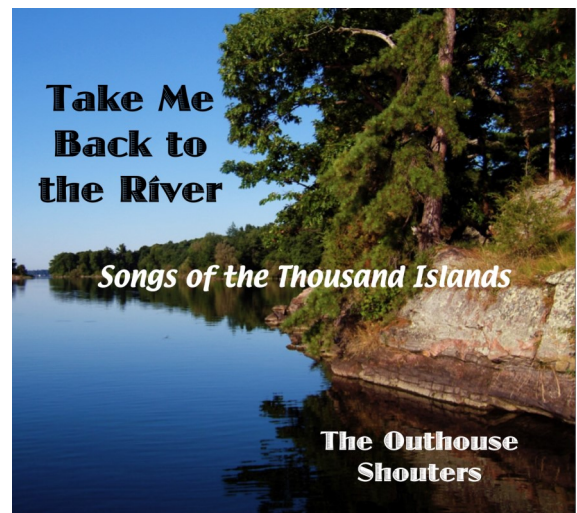
There was also a threat at the provincial level to our local planning. In mid-January, the Ontario government's **Bill 66** announced that the province was **"Open for Business"**. That was fine, but some of the implementation details were alarming, particularly the bill's radical **Schedule 10.**

All across Ontario, organizations (including TIARA), professional planners and individuals objected that Schedule 10 would allow developers to over-ride municipal bylaws and even provincial policy, without having to notify or consult the public.

The government listened, and on January 23 it announced that Schedule 10 would be withdrawn.

Release of Mike Bell's new CD !

For several years, Mike and his cousin Brian Reynolds have enlivened our AGMs with their music, and this July **"Take Me Back to the River"** will be available: an album of songs that Mike, Brian and their families have co-written about the 1000 Islands, performed by him and Brian, their friends and families. Mike has generously donated hours of his time to produce this CD for TIARA to sell as a fund-raiser.



Every summer, the stretch of water between Tar and Grenadier echoes with these songs, sung at many a "music night" in local cottages. Mike and Brian are both 7th generation descendants of the Roots, one of the original Rockport families. Music has long been a part of their family tradition, with many singers and players in the family band "The Outhouse Shouters". With this CD, the great family of all who love the River can join in.

Starting at the AGM, the CD will be available for \$10 from any TIARA board member, on our website www.tiaraweb.org or from many local stores. It will also be digitally distributed on Bandcamp and CD Baby, as well as available on music streaming services.

Time to renew your membership

Our membership year starts on May 1, so now is the time to renew. A form is enclosed, or you can do it online from our website www.tiaraweb.org. Individual membership is still \$40 and a family is \$50. A "family membership" includes you, your spouse/partner and your own children. (Grown-up children? Encourage them to take out memberships of their own!)

Flooding

Devastating flooding has been in the news again this spring. Many homes in Muskoka and western Quebec which had barely recovered from the high water in 2017 were inundated once again. Levels which had been considered a "once in a hundred year high" were surpassed. *(cont'd next page)*

Flooding (cont'd)

How could flood plain maps have been so wrong?

“Without question, climate change is a serious factor in all this,” wrote Les Stanfield of Ecohealth Solutions in *The Globe & Mail* on April 29, “But it is not the only one.”

Looking at each watershed as a whole, he points to the crucial role of wetlands and penetrable soils to store, purify and release water at a manageable rate to streams and then down on to rivers. Each little “capillary of the land” is small, but taken together, they can help to slow down the flow of water during a heavy downpour or when the snow melts.

There is a cumulative impact. Over the years, in hundreds of small ways, the land’s capacity to absorb water has been reduced because wetlands have been drained, and penetrable soil has been hardened, paved over or built upon. Mr. Stanfield writes that flood forecasting hasn’t caught up with the impact of all these largely undocumented actions.

He is advocating for a “comprehensive strategy to manage these small waterbodies which we’ve been altering for a long time.” The first step is to acknowledge and understand what has been happening and continues to happen.

Meanwhile, on the International Joint Commission’s website, the International St. Lawrence Lake Ontario River Board is forecasting that lake and river levels this June could be high once again. See: <https://www.ijc.org/en/loslr/watershed/forecasts>.

Planning appeals can be scary

What happens when ordinary citizens object to a local planning decision? In the past, they could appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) although it was often seen as being too much in favour of development. In April 2018, the OMB was replaced by the new Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT), but with the new Bill 108, just introduced on May 2, rules of appeal and procedure might change once again or even revert back to be more like those under the old OMB.

With all these changes in legislation, no wonder ordinary citizens and volunteer associations like TIARA hesitate before launching appeals! Professional help is certainly advised. But hiring a lawyer and a planner to plead the case can cost tens of thousands of dollars. To help, the LPAT “Support Centre” was established to provide advice and even representation to “the little guy”. The bad news, however, is that this Support Centre has now been cancelled and as of June, “the little guys” are once more on their own.

Bald Eagles

It’s becoming a familiar summer sight in the 1000 Islands. The majestic white-feathered head, the wings spread out wide (as much as 6-8 feet) as the birds settle onto a big tree-top nest. But for decades Bald Eagles were rare, virtually wiped out here. There were two reasons: habitat loss, as big water-front trees were being cut down for development, and poisoning.

In 1962, Rachel Carson’s ground-breaking book *Silent Spring* warned that widespread DDT spraying was killing birds. Water run-off was carrying the insecticide through the earth down into streams and rivers, where it contaminated the fish that made up the bulk of the Bald Eagles’ diet. The DDT altered the birds’ calcium metabolism, resulting in thin eggshells, and the heavy birds broke their eggs as they incubated them.

DDT was finally banned in 1972 but it took until the early 1980s for the Bald Eagle populations to start to recover. In 1999, for the first time in 62 years, a pair successfully nested on the St. Lawrence, to the great delight of U.S. and Canadian wildlife agencies.



Bud Andress, retired Parks Canada warden, was Co-Chair of the St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group, which conducted research and monitoring of birds’ come-back. Artificial nest platforms were constructed to assist eagle nesting. Movements of several fledglings from 1000 Islands nests were tracked with satellite transmitters made possible by the funding generosity of local citizens and other corporate donors.

Unlike the overwhelming success of osprey nesting, numbering in the hundreds of nests (a recovery effort Bud was also involved in), bald eagle nesting has grown recently to a respectable 5 to 7 nests in the 1000 Islands in any given year.

But why “bald”? The big birds’ heads have a thick covering of white feathers. It’s one of those convoluted word derivations. “Bald” has been shortened from “piebald”, denoting a patchy pattern of black and white.

TIARA

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