

2024 Annual General Meeting

We had a wonderful gathering of TIARA members at the Rockport Recreation Centre, with a moving tribute to TIARA founder Douglas Mackintosh who passed away earlier in the year. Mary Lou Perron gave an excellent presentation on the River Institute's wetlands research (summarized below), and Kathleen Burtch provided some wonderful vignettes of River history.

Then and now: The ever-changing wetlands of the St. Lawrence River

Coastal wetlands of the Upper St. Lawrence River are culturally significant environments. They are important for the conservation of biodiversity, they also play a role in mitigating floods and improving water quality. However, they face several challenges related to changes in land use, alteration in the river's hydrological regime, climate change, the proliferation of invasive species and the geopolitical governance of wetland systems. Despite the urgency of these challenges, our understanding of the current state of wetlands and how best to protect these invaluable ecosystems across the watershed remains unclear, which has raised concerns with local communities. Dr. Perron presented how her team is mapping out wetland cover in the watershed as a part of the Great River Rapport project, an ecosystem health report for the Upper St. Lawrence River. This project uses remote sensing technologies to reconstruct the history of wetlands in the watershed. The St. Lawrence River Institute of Environmental Sciences will use the findings to help identify best practices in terms of wetland-related policy for the conservation of these important ecosystems.

Mary Ann Perron

Partnerships

In late October several TIARA board members attended the St. Lawrence River Institute Symposium. Symposium sessions covered a spectrum of topics from children's books about the St Lawrence River to the impacts of climate change on lakes and freshwater ecology to hands-on outdoor learning activities. You can learn more about the Symposium content at <https://riversymposium.riverinstitute.ca/2024/>

In January 2025 Save the River's Winter Environmental Conference will offer another great opportunity to hear from experts on topics such as loon conservation and Northern Pike and Muskie populations. People can attend the conference in person, or virtually from their computers. For more information see <https://www.savetheriver.org>.



View of Rockport circa 1930, from Gilbert Family Movies, <https://tiarchives.ca>

TIARA organizational update

TIARA has been working to update our organizational status to comply with new provincial laws governing non-profits. We are also working on transitioning to charitable status, as the new law allows charitable organizations to engage in advocacy related to their charitable mission, as long as the organization does not support candidates or political parties

Advocacy update

Last June the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands town council amended the township's zoning law to change an area previously zoned Shoreline, Residential, Tourist, Commercial, Open Space, and Provincially Significant Wetland to the category Rural Industrial zoning. This change allowed the continued expansion of a major construction business within the township's Special Policy Area, created more than 40 years ago to preserve the pristine attractiveness and environmental and biological integrity of this unique geographical region.

TIARA has consistently urged the Township to maintain zoning by-laws and plan amendments that respect the integrity of the Official Plan, answer the concerns of the local community, and support the aesthetic, environmental, and tourism goals so vital to the economy of the Thousand Islands and the UNESCO Frontenac Arch Biosphere. TIARA is deeply disappointed that the Township did not consider actions to reduce the negative impact of the expanded manufacturing facility, such as siting it away from sensitive waterfront. While construction and manufacturing businesses provide critical jobs and important services to residents, doing this work in a way that minimizes damage to the environment would benefit all in the long run.

Please renew your membership

Thank you to everyone who has already renewed their membership for this year! Our membership year runs from May 1 to April 30, so if you did not renew earlier this year, there is still time to renew for the 2024-25 year. The cost is \$40 for individuals and \$50 for a family. You can renew, join, or make an additional donation with PayPal on our website www.tiaraweb.org (click on the Membership & Survey button), or send a cheque to TIARA, 120 Cross Cemetery Road, Lansdowne ON K0E 1L0.

TIARA

THOUSAND ISLANDS ALLIANCE of RIVER ADVOCATES
120 Cross Cemetery Road, Lansdowne ON K0E 1L0

www.tiaraweb.org

facebook.com/TIARACANADA

tiara@tiaraweb.org

Directors:

Michael M Bell, Co-President

Mike SG Bell, Co-President

Jennifer Macklem

Marion MacLeod, Treasurer

Diane Mayerfeld

Christina McCarthy

Pierre Mercier

Margot Miller

Normand Pepin, Executive Director

Elisabeth Sterken

