

Boating Safety

BOAT OPERATION

Your boat is designed for enjoyment, so go out and have some fun. Please be safe and respectful.

All boat operators require a Pleasure Craft Operator card.

With no direct supervision, persons aged:

- Under 12 years may operate a boat up to 10 horsepower.
- 12–16 may operate a boat up to 40 horsepower.
- 16 years and older have no horsepower restrictions.

Boat operators must carry the appropriate safety equipment, including approved personal flotation device.

Operating a boat while impaired by alcohol or drugs is a criminal offence.

Keep well away from small boats and people.

- Buzzing or circling around canoes and kayaks poses a safety hazard.

If you must do repetitive doughnuts, please go far away from shore.

Avoid manoeuvres close to other vessels, even if they are friends or relatives.

WATER SPORTS

Your first consideration when towing water skiers, wakeboarders, wake surfers or tubers should be safety—boat operators look ahead, spotters look behind.

It is a criminal offence while towing a water skier, boarder or tuber if:

- There is no spotter.
- There is no spare seat for each person being towed.
- The boat operates before sunrise or one hour after sunset.
- Those towed do not wear an approved personal flotation device.

You can take off from shore at speed but you must drive straight out from shore.

Keep well beyond 30 metres from shore to avoid swimmers and boaters.

Do not swing your riders in front of other people's docks. Drop them outside the 30 metre limit or come in and out perpendicular to your dock.

Keep a safe distance from other tow boats as they may stop and turn unpredictably, or may have a rider unexpectedly fall.

Avoid towing in narrows. You will not be able to follow reduced speed limits without losing your rider.

WAKES

Big wakes are caused by boats cruising with the bow high and the stern deep. Big wakes can damage shorelines and can swamp loon nests, stress the female loon, and wash away the eggs.

Within 30 metres of shore, the speed limit is 10 km/h. Even though there is no speed limit in open water, you must be responsible.

No one shall operate a small vessel in a careless manner, or without reasonable consideration for others. The fine for operating a vessel in a manner that endangers the safety of persons or property or for failure to control wake is \$200.

You are responsible for the cost of repair or restitution for damage and discomfort your boat causes to people, objects, wildlife and shoreline.

Minimizing your boat's wake and wash close to shore will protect the shoreline and wildlife habitat.

Charleston Lake Association

For the improvement and protection and interests of Charleston Lake.

The Charleston Lake Association ("CLA") was originally formed as the Charleston Lake Anglers Association in August, 1890. In 1916, the organization changed its name to the Charleston Lake Association and adopted the motto: "For the improvement and protection and interests of Charleston Lake". It later incorporated as a not-for-profit organization with the primary mandate of protecting the natural, physical, and social values that contribute to the "quality of life" for Charleston Lake residents and visitors of all species.

In 1999, an affiliate organization, the Charleston Lake Environmental Association ("CLEA"), was incorporated as a registered charitable organization, to focus specifically on environmental projects on the lake and within its watershed.

The CLA has accomplished several notable projects over the last 100 years, including the 2016 completion of the "Old Baldy" project, which saw 53ha (130 acres) transferred from a proposed residential development project to permanent conservation with the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Geography & Ecology of Charleston Lake

Charleston Lake is almost central to an hourglass-shaped landform called the Frontenac Arch. This ancient landform is a wildlife corridor of Continental significance—a natural bridge from the Canadian Shield to the Adirondack Mountains and further south. Graced with rich forests and wetlands, Charleston Lake contributes significantly to this continental-scale corridor and is at the heart of the UNESCO Frontenac Arch Biosphere—one of only 18 Biosphere Reserves in Canada.

Charleston Lake's climate is moderated by the Great Lakes, and along with a broad range of soil and rock types and chemistries, a diverse topography of hills, cliffs and valleys, and a range of land uses creates a landscape that hosts an amazingly rich ecology. Here, five forest regions of North America converge with many species at risk finding vital refuge in these habitats.

The lake's cradling basin has the distinction of being two distinct bedrock types: granite and sandstone. For the most part, it lies in glacier-gouged 1.5-billion-year-old granites. The northeast portion is on a sandstones and limestones that are 1 billion years younger. Shaped by its geology and myriad of habitats, Charleston Lake's richness of ecological attributes contributes to the health and well-being of the entire region.

The CLA and CLEA have been working towards implementing the action items identified in the 2006 Charleston Lake Plan, including:

- protecting water quality;
- maintaining healthy fisheries;
- participating in municipal control and planning;
- restoring and protecting the littoral zone of Charleston Lake;
- promoting boating safety;
- protecting healthy ecosystems, including through land conservation;
- participating in the work of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve; and
- partnering with the wider community, including other community agencies and groups.



Green Heron | Héron vert

Photo: Brenda & Ron Evers



Great Blue Heron nests | Nids de Grand héron

Photo: B&R Evers

Trees Around Charleston Lake

In addition to beautifully framing Charleston Lake at sunset, the trees around the lake enhance the health of the environment in a number of ways. Trees help stabilize banks, absorb excess nutrients that feed algae blooms, prevent erosion by slowing down rainfall, and reduce air pollution. They also filter out pesticides and provide shade, privacy for humans, and habitat for wildlife.

Charleston Lake is located in an area where the rich deciduous forest of the Eastern USA meets Canada's Northern Boreal forests. Because of this, we are very fortunate to enjoy wide diversity of tree species around the lake. The varied topography and soil of the lake, from rocky ridges to lower bottomlands, sedges and marshes, also creates varied habitat for shrubs, ferns, wildflowers, insects, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, which are all interdependent parts of a broader ecosystem.

The predominant native deciduous species include Sugar Maple, Beech, Paper Birch, Red Oak and White Pine. Basswood, Red Maple, White Ash, Shagbark Hickory, White Oak, Red Pine and Hophornbeam (aka Ironwood) are quite abundant as well. Although not as common, Black Maple, Silver Maple, Manitoba Maple, Yellow Birch, Bitternut Hickory, Butternut, Bur Oak, Blue Beech, Poplar, Eastern Cottonwood, and Black Walnut can also be found scattered around the lake.

Among coniferous species can be found White Pine, Red Pine, Hemlock, Red Spruce, Balsam Fir, and Eastern White Cedar and Eastern Red Cedar. The three-needled Pitch Pine is only found in Canada around Charleston Lake and the 1000 Islands area.



Common Loon | Plongeon huard

Photo: Estelle Metayer

Wildlife Around Charleston Lake

Charleston Lake is home to many animal and fish species that are native to this area of Eastern Canada.



Peregrine Falcon | Faucon pélerin

Photo: NCC/CNC



Otter | Loutre

Photo: Estelle Metayer

BIRDS

The woodland area surrounding the lake is habitat for a large variety of woodland birds and the lake itself is a healthy home for many waterfowl. Loons have been showing encouraging signs of breeding successfully and volunteers tally the number of loons and chicks living on the lake each season, as well as provide help with nesting locations. There are Mergansers and many other types of ducks, as well as Canada Geese and occasionally, flocks of Trumpeter Swans. Herons are plentiful all over the lake and you will see many standing in the water or on docks and rocky outcrops. The lake also has a number of Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles. Owls are seen at dusk in some areas.



Grey Rat Snake | Couleuvre ratière grise

Photo: B&R Evers

SNAKES

The lake is home to several snake species, including Grey Rat Snakes, Northern Water Snakes, Garter Snakes, and Milk Snakes.

Prominent Places Around the Lake

CHARLESTON VILLAGE [G2]

In the Township of Athens, is the largest settlement on the Lake. It features a main boat ramp and public dock (Ontario MNR), at the end of County Road 40, and a second public boat ramp (Catarauqui Regional Conservation Authority), at the north end of Water Street. Charleston has two marinas, Kelsey's and Lakeline Lodge. Kelsey's offers gasoline, a wide range of marine services, equipment, and supplies. In addition to gasoline and marine services, Lakeline Lodge also offers cabin rentals, ice cream, a convenience store, and souvenir items. The Dockside Restaurant at Charleston has long been a favourite among locals and visitors alike.

THE OUTLET [C11, C12]

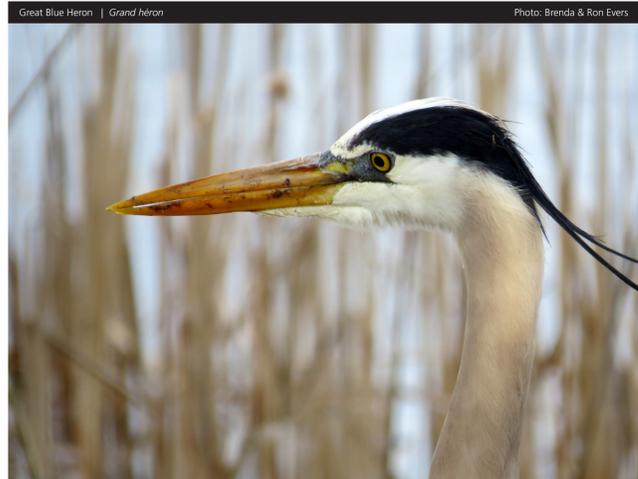
In the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, is a small hamlet around the place where Charleston Lake flows into Wiltse Creek, the Gananoque River system and ultimately the St. Lawrence River. In 1880, the Gananoque Light and Power Co. constructed a dam at the Outlet, which is still in operation today by Portage Power of Ottawa. There is a public boat ramp (Catarauqui Regional Conservation Authority) at the south end of the channel to the Outlet. Across County Road 3 is Twist's Outlet & RV Park, which in addition to campsites and canoe and boat rentals, features a Convenience Store offering ice cream, light snacks, along with gasoline, and a propane tank exchange service.

OLD BALDY [G3]

By far the most iconic symbol of Charleston Lake. High in a 20m sheer granite cliff is a rock formation that resembles a human face—from either side. People have long believed that Old Baldy is the guardian spirit of the lake. Old Baldy is now part of the eponymous Old Baldy Natural Area, which is owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy of Canada for perpetual conservation. You may approach Old Baldy by water, and hear your words echoed back to you. Please show respect for this beautiful place. Do not paint graffiti and, above all, do not try to jump off of Old Baldy—several people have been killed trying this over the years.

ENGLISHMAN'S MONUMENT [F3]

A unique Shoal Marker was built in the summer of 1877 under the direction of Mr. William H. Haig, who rented a room and moored a houseboat at Charleston Lake for many years. He enlisted a crew of men and boys from Charleston Village to create a haystack-shaped cairn of flat rocks to mark a particularly troublesome shoal. It is said that he nailed his felt hat to the top. The structure still stands, having been maintained from time-to-time, and now features a solar-powered beacon to warn boaters.



Great Blue Heron | Grand héron

Photo: Brenda & Ron Evers

SAND BAY COUNTY PARK [H2, H3]

Operated by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. It is accessible by land at the end of County Road 39, and by water via public dock. For swimmers of all ages, it boasts a lovely natural sand beach and demarcated swimming area. There are also several picnic stations with charcoal grilling stands, and a large gazebo structure. The park boasts several Nature Trails through its 21ha (52 acre) area.

BLUE MOUNTAIN HIKING TRAIL [G8–10, H8–10]

Part of the Charleston Lake Provincial Park, and is the highest point of land between Toronto and Montreal. The summit is 194m above sea level, and 86m above the level of Charleston Lake. From water, boaters may access a public dock in Huckleberry Hollow and take a hiking trail up the north side of the mountain. Views at the summit are spectacular in all directions.

PORTAGE TO RED HORSE LAKE [A4, B4]

Located on the west shore of Donaldson's Bay, this portage was used for thousands of years by Indigenous travellers. Now part of the Charleston Lake Provincial Park, canoeist or hikers may use this ~500m route to travel to the eastern shore of Red Horse Lake, which is part of the "Furnace Waters" system, which flows into the Gananoque River and ultimately to the St. Lawrence. There are a few steep places, so watch your step, but the portage route is easy to find and follow.

PORTAGE TO WILTSE CREEK/GANANOQUE RIVER [C12]

Located at the Outlet, this unmarked portage allows canoeists to access Wiltse Creek, which connects to the Gananoque river. Exit Charleston Lake at the Outlet Boat Ramp, and Portage across County Road 3 to Twist's Outlet, where there is a grassy ramp down to the creek just east of Road 3. Please be very careful crossing the road, as vehicle traffic often speeds through the Outlet.

CHARLESTON LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK [A–I]

A favourite camping destination offering swimming, boating, fishing and hiking. Enjoy the campgrounds, backcountry sites or roofed accommodations. Camping season is from mid-May to mid-October. Reservations are recommended for all sites.

Charleston Lake

Official Boating Safety Map

Carte officielle pour la sécurité maritime

Charleston Lake Association

charlestonlakeassociation.ca

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR MARINAS & RETAIL

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PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



THOUSAND ISLANDS WATERSHED LAND TRUST

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