



# MRPOA *River Ripples* Spring 2010

## A Message from The President

Happy spring to those who have spent the winter in Bala and welcome back to those who have been elsewhere!

Winter started with a considerable bang - a very large snowfall in early December. For that reason, it looked as though we were going to have a very tough and challenging winter ahead. However, as we all now realize, that one large snowstorm or snow squall, was the worst the winter would bring to the Moon River.

So, welcome back, let's all enjoy the early spring weather and hope that we can have a great summer of relax'n on The Moon!

Your Board of Directors has been busy over the past months, and, as you'll read further on in this edition of Moon River Ripples, many of the old and proven activities are back this summer. In addition, we've decided to create some new activities and to improve some of the old favorites, all with a view to making the summer of 2010 a great time for our members and the community at large.

## Best Picture Photo Contest

We have all taken some great shots at the cottage—it's time to share! We are launching a photo contest and will include the winning submissions in our first ever MRPOA Calendar, to go on sale at the Labour Day AGM. Submissions in high resolution jpg can be made up until August 9<sup>th</sup> and will be posted online. Our new calendar will feature the top three submissions in each of the following categories:

1. **Moms and Dads**
2. **River Scenes**
3. **Pets and Wildlife**
4. **Open**—whatever you like
5. **Action**

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## Who's Who?

There are lots of new faces on the river and on the Board, and the current wave of warmth is the ideal time to catch up with folks as the cottage season is upon us. Your current Board members are:

President	Sandy Currie
Secretary	Alice Murphy
Treasurer	Deb Ylanko
Membership	Barb MacIntosh
Social	Muriel Hutchinson
Water Testing	Bruno Polewski
Regatta	Bob Bryers
WebMaster	Bill Purkis

## We Want You!

2010 is the Year of the Moon. We encourage existing members to renew their membership, and invite more Moon River property owners (affectionately known as "River Rats") young, old and those in between, to join this great organization. Our cottages are very special, not only to us, but to our families and future generations. The larger our numbers, the louder our voice when tackling issues which affect us all, such as the environment of the river, boat safety, stewardship etc. The social, 'fun-side' on the Moon is also very important with some terrific annual events, for all members to enjoy. If you have a neighbour who may not be familiar with MRPOA, or is new to the Moon, please invite them to attend our June meeting. The updated Membership Application Form is available on our website.

## We Need You!

We all need each other to make our community the best that it can be. Getting involved is both rewarding and SO appreciated. Please let us know if you would like to help out with any of our upcoming events, or perhaps you have some thoughts for a new event! Or, you may want to become a Road Captain—a point person on each street to help with information and coordination. To follow up on getting more involved, please email [Membership@MRPOA.org](mailto:Membership@MRPOA.org)

## Giving Back to The Community

There are many in the community who are having difficult and challenging times. To provide assistance to the local food bank, we will be collecting non-perishable foods at all our events. All foods collected will be donated on your behalf.

## Thank You!

Over the past few years, we have had some AMAZING involvement from key individuals and would like to take the opportunity to say thank you for their commitment and dedication to the River. In particular, a thank you to Anna Mallin, Brian McDonald, Jeff Mole, Pat Arney, David Sculati and John Baird, amongst so many great volunteers.

## Upcoming Social Events

This year's social agenda is being finalized as the warmer summer season is fast approaching. To help keep track of upcoming events, we've added a calendar at the end of the newsletter and marked the key dates for your reference. As well, keep [www.mrpoa.org](http://www.mrpoa.org) bookmarked for any changes.

The annual Muskoka Heritage Foundation ***Native Plant Sale*** is scheduled for May 15th, 2010, with pick-up locations in Bracebridge, Huntsville and Bala. For more information and order forms, visit the [Muskoka Heritage Foundation](http://www.muskokaheritagefoundation.org) website.

The first Saturday in June is marked by the ***First MRPOA meeting*** of the summer, providing updates on a waterfront of issues and events.

Our ***Meet and Greet Social*** is planned for July 10<sup>th</sup>. This is a very informal event at which members can have a glass of wine, some lovely nibbles and socialize with new and old friends.

Next is the double event weekend, with the annual ***Jazz Cruise*** scheduled for July 31<sup>st</sup>, with the ***Regatta*** following the next day on Sunday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. The best ball ***Golf Tournament*** is booked for Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, at Muskoka Woodlands Golf Course and is a fun family day! Registration starts at 8am-with

a shot-gun start at 9. Lunch & prizes follow at the Bass Lake Restaurant. Call Muriel 762-4142 or Glen 762-4386 to book your teams—need at least 1 female! Prize donations are GREATLY appreciated. Please call us in advance to donate.

### **2010 Regatta: August 1<sup>st</sup>, Jaspén Park**

Get ready for the ‘funnest’ day of the summer. Our annual regatta is only a few months away and the planning is under way.

The event will start at 11 am as usual, with the Open Long Distance Swim while everyone not in the water is getting registered. We’ll have the treasure hunt for the kids 10 and under, and the Open Canoe Race around White Birch Island. There will be Swim and Running Races for all ages.

Now is the time to get the kids (under 4 and 5-7) practising the shoe and balloon toss. If you can get to the point where you can toss the water balloon (without it breaking) the combined length of the living room/ dining room, you are sure to be favoured for the big show on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Everyone loves the canoe races and the hurry scurry fours and, of course, the in & out canoe race. Who will be the first to tip the canoe? The racing ends with the very funny Land Ski Race. It’s impossible to pick which team will cross the finish line first or be the first team to be on the ground in a human pile.

The awards presentation closes the day with great prizes donated by local businesses. See you there!!

### **Boating Safety**

The 2010 boating season will soon be upon us. Here are a few tips to help us all have fun and be safe when enjoying our waters. It also would be a good idea to review the boating information page on the MRPOA website. The link is: [http://mrpoa.org/?page\\_id=29](http://mrpoa.org/?page_id=29).

One last reminder – operators of all powered craft are now required to have a pleasure craft operator competency card in their possession while operating their boat.

If you have yet to obtain yours, visit one of the many local groups who can help you improve your knowledge and obtain your PCOC card. **And remember, water on the water, beer on the pier!**

### **Water Quality**

The Moon River is the main outlet of the Muskoka Watershed, flowing from Lake Muskoka to Georgian Bay. The river receives overland drainage from the Town of Bala and its urban area, including many roads and the developed shoreline. As well, approximately 12 creeks outlet into this sampling area, with several draining wetland areas.

Many thanks to the 2009 monitoring team lead by Bill Niess. Team members were: Doug Ball, Carol Ball, Allen Bossin, Jane Bossin, Steve Burdick, Bruce Calder, Nancy Calder, Sandy Currie, Jon Gurr, Peter Hemming, Bob McTavish, Clark Northcott, Bob Phillips, Walt Scott, Carol Sullivan, and Mike Webb.

Our new Aqua Man, Bruno Polewski, and his crew will be out on the Moon this year taking samples for the Muskoka Lakes Association’s water testing program. This year’s water testing team consists of many of last year’s testers plus a new crop of volunteers for 2010. More are welcome and encouraged. The program will start on May 22 and consists of eight weekends of testing, for about an hour every other weekend, at the eight Moon River sites. If you are interested in helping as a volunteer, please contact Bruno at 905-818-5518 or [bruno1694@hotmail.com](mailto:bruno1694@hotmail.com).

The Moon River water quality testing results for 2009 continue to indicate excellent water quality in most of the eight sites on the Moon. However, there was some elevation in total coli forms and e-coli in two of the bays last year and were above the MLA upper limit at Site 4 (Evergreen/Muskoka 38) and Site 6 (Gaunt Bay). We will be taking detailed notes this summer with respect to these two sites, with particular emphasis on stewardship, shoreline use and identifying any ongoing trends and recommendations.

### 2009 Data Results:

Testing Site	Total Coliforms CFU/100 ml	Total E. coli CFU/100 ml
1	51	3
3	76	5
4	72	13
5	44	4
6	109	25
7	48	4
8	38	4
9	45	5

The full Moon River Report can be found at:  
<http://mrpoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/MoonRiver.pdf>

### Can We Feed It?

Spring is finally here and what better time to remind our members “Why We Should NOT Feed the Ducks and Geese”. The age-old practice of feeding ducks and geese can cause significant health problems for these

birds and may actually contribute to starvation among waterfowl.

Lower nutrition and over population allow a more rapid spread of disease particularly at concentrated feeding sites. Canada goose feces contain disease-causing organisms including salmonella and giardia to which some dogs seem particularly at risk. This fecal contamination can be washed into the water by rain and contribute significantly to water pollution in the form of fecal coliform.

Providing food to ducks and geese attracts large concentrations of these birds, thereby reducing water quality and de-vegetating natural areas. Feeding waterfowl, and in particular geese, can quickly cause them to lose their instinctive sense of fear and can lead to aggressive behavior towards humans. Geese are territorial birds and will not hesitate to aggressively protect their nest and eggs from a human or house pet they see as a threat.

### Draft MRPOA Stewardship Plan

The Draft Moon River Stewardship Plan (Draft Plan) funded by a Trillium Grant awarded to MRPOA, has recently been submitted by the Moon River Stewardship Plan Committee to the MRPOA Executive Board for review. The Draft Plan contains over 40 recommendations relating to community stewardship and land use planning with the objective of protecting the special areas and features of the Moon River/Bala Reach (the River) and assuring the sustainability of the River. A summary of the Draft Plan has been prepared by the MRPOA Board and is presented below.

Members are ***strongly encouraged*** to provide feedback to the executive, as soon as possible, to ensure that the Plan appropriately and sufficiently reflects Members’ concerns and views regarding all important issues facing the River, both for today and for future generations.

Broad Concept	Specific Recommendation of Draft Moon River Stewardship Plan
1	Adoption by MRPOA of the Draft Stewardship Plan
	Encourage the Township of Muskoka Lakes (Township) to include the completed Moon River Stewardship Plan (Plan) and background information as a reference in its Official Plan for planning and information in development review. Encourage members to become familiar with the Plan, to be aware of Township by-laws and to pursue the recommendations contained in the Plan.
2	Integration and Co-ordination of Plan with Township and District of Muskoka,
	MRPOA should continue to work with the Township and be prepared to offer specific suggestions for changes to the Official Plan as the opportunity arises. Formally review Township zoning and by-law regulations to determine their appropriateness for our River and if needed, draft specific proposals to retain and enhance the character of the River.
	Work with Township and the MNR to identify & protect eco-sensitive areas from hard built form (crib docks and break walls) or dredging for construction projects.

	Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Ontario Power Generation (OPG)	Encourage Township to recognize the Plan watershed philosophy in promulgating shoreline-specific legislation.
		Protect the clean water streams feeding into the River through a monitoring system and Township by-laws
		Work to protect all River wetland features by enshrining protection measures in Township, District, and Provincial policy.
		MRPOA should continue to work with the MNR and OPG to be sure that lands they own in the area of the Chutes are preserved and maintained into the future.
3	Heritage	Determine/ designate/plaque/protect local buildings & trails of historical interest.
		Work with the MNR, Muskoka Heritage Foundation (MHF), and Township to define, map, and protect our natural heritage areas and features.
4	Proposed Bala Falls Hydro Generating Station	Viewscapes and scenic character should be identified and protected by Township policy. Rock faces and water features are important to our viewscapes and should not be blasted away for construction projects.
		Monitor and inform the MRPOA membership regarding the proposed construction of a hydroelectric generating station at Bala Falls and keep the membership informed as new developments occur.
		Continue to represent the MRPOA membership regarding the significant concerns expressed with respect to this project. This will allow us to emphasize the stewardship issues that are important to all stakeholders.
		Educate members on management and concerns regarding existing water level control agreements (Muskoka Lakes Water Management Plan).
5	Night Sky & Noise	MRPOA should advocate night sky friendly lighting and help educate Stakeholders regarding noise pollution.
6	Walking, Biking and Water Activities	The potential for the development of a multi-use trail around or in the area of the River and possibly a bicycle lane to HWY 38.
		Low impact non-motorized boating activities such as canoeing, kayaking, and rowing should be encouraged on the River.
		MRPOA should work with the Township to develop our "water trail" through signage at boat launch and portage sites, including a large map to identify the main river channel, eco-sensitive areas, and downriver portage points.
		Work with MNR to post signage at the town dock and boat launch regarding fishing regulations including sizes, seasons, and allowances and encouraging a catch and release philosophy.
		Annual regatta could be used for upgrading skills in non-motorized watercraft and to encourage safe, courteous boating practices.
7	Water Quality	MRPOA should encourage residents to implement good Stewardship practices that recognize that water quality is a key indicator of the health of the River's ecosystem and a significant influence on our property values and local tourism.
		MRPOA should continue to monitor water quality in the River and maintain a permanent data bank of test results.
8	Shorelines & Fish Habitat	Provide information to property owners and engage them in best management and stewardship of natural features found on their property and to consider long-term conservation options and incentives.
		Encourage all property owners to maintain at least 75% of their shoreline in a

		<p>natural state by protecting and retaining the existing natural vegetation and planting native species wherever possible. A buffer zone width of 15 – 20 meters should be maintained.</p> <p>Where needed, encourage property owners with undeveloped shorelines to review their shoreline, consider adding in-water microhabitats to protect the natural substrate. Swimming areas should be located adjacent to docks and beaches and confined to minimize the impact on the shoreline and substrate.</p> <p>Protect all fish habitat, including all wetlands and natural shoreline areas via field confirmation, habitat mapping, and government due diligence during permitting and development applications.</p> <p>Encourage replacement of ageing shoreline infrastructure (e.g. failing retaining walls, concrete docks, and creosote piers) with natural features and materials.</p> <p>Actively promote best practices for landowners and fishing enthusiasts to protect fisheries and fisheries habitat.</p> <p>Identify, map and protect important fish habitat, and fish stocking on the River.</p>
9	Streams, Wetlands	<p>Identify and work with abutting owners to rehabilitate any streams as necessary.</p> <p>Work to locate, verify, evaluate, and map all wetland features in the Bala Reach.</p> <p>Promote wider public education about the importance of conserving wetlands.</p> <p>Where appropriate encourage municipal or private trust acquisition of lands to preserve wetland status.</p> <p>Complete a rapid scan assessment on four priority wetland areas: 1) Moon Chute Bay; 2) Mouth of Gaunt Bay (north shore); 3) Echo Bay; 4) Carr's Lake.</p> <p>Revisit 15 shoreline wetlands to confirm the location of sensitive wetland areas and provide location and composition information to Township, District, and MHF to identify Environmental Protection zones and to create landowner contact programs to ensure the continued health of these areas.</p>
10	Wildlife	<p>Encourage residents to observe and report sightings of wildlife, including new to our area species and sensitive habitat to the MNR.</p> <p>Encourage residents and guests to avoid baiting bear with their garbage. Garbage should be stored inside or "bear proof" garbage containers until garbage day.</p>
11	Invasive Species	<p>To help prevent future problems MRPOA should build Township and landowner awareness of concerns about invasive species and encourage the creation of action plans to prevent the introduction, and encourage the removal of invasive species in the watershed.</p>
12	Communications	<p>A Moon River Information Kit should be prepared and distributed by MRPOA to River cottagers and residents to promote neighbourliness and stewardship and would include: (a) The Moon River Code, (b) The Moon river Boating Card, (c) User's and Renter's Guide and (d) Night Sky Lighting.</p> <p>Promote neighbourliness with increased frequency of publication of an enhanced Moon River Ripples, including family &amp; social events, stewardship and public education and (d) researched contributions from guest writers.</p> <p>MRPOA should create and maintain a complete member contact list so that stewardship initiatives can be publicized and promoted</p>
13	Fundraising	<p>MRPOA should support local charities through fundraising events.</p>

### **Bala Falls Project—Still No Decisions Made**

Since last fall, the Board of Directors has been doing its utmost to represent the interests of our membership regarding the Swift River Energy Limited Partnership (SREL) proposal for the North Bala Falls Dam, undertaking the following:

- Written to the Minister of Natural Resources requesting that Burgess Island be designated as a “conservation area”.
- Supplied detailed written comments in response to the Environmental Screening report produced by SREL.
- Requested the Township of Muskoka Lakes designate Burgess Island as a “park”.
- Requested the District of Muskoka amend the “Official Plan” of the Township of Muskoka Lakes to designate Burgess Island as a “park”.
- Invited The Township of Muskoka Lakes to form a joint MRPOA/ Township Committee.
- Invited SREL to meet with the MRPOA Board of Directors and the membership.
- Entered into considerable dialogue with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) concerning the community consultation strategy of SREL.

**Members are encouraged** to follow up with the MOE regarding any correspondence or responses received from SREL. Now is the time to let the Ministry know if any of the questions or concerns that you originally raised during the response period remain unanswered or unmitigated. A more fulsome review can only be achieved if this project is elevated to an Individual Assessment.

### **Mark That Date! Upcoming Calendar of Events:**

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
May	17	18	19	20	21 Water Testing	22	23
	24 Victoria Day	25	26	27	28	29	30
June	31	1	2	3	4 Water Testing	5 MRPOA Mtg 10am Community Centre	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18 Water Testing	19	20 Father's Day
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
July	28	29	30	1 Canada Day	2 Water Testing	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10 Meet & Greet	11
	12	13	14	15	16 Water Testing	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30 Water Testing	31 Jazz Cruise	1 Regatta
August	2 Civic Holiday	3	4	5	6	7 Golf Day	8
	9	10	11	12	13 Water Testing	14	15
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27 Water Testing	28	29
Sept	30	31	1	2	3	4 MRPOA AGM	5
	6 Labour Day	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Oct	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	11 Thanksgiving	12	13	14	15	16	17
						Cranberry Festival	