



## MRPOA River Ripples Spring 2006

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome back to those who do not spend the winters on the Moon in Muskoka!

Your Board met several times over the winter. Many thanks to Christine, David, Jeff, and John for their willingness to come to meetings, often during their too short Muskoka sojourns. Brian has been here working at getting our water testing program ready to ensure the MRPOA team is ready to go on schedule. Special thanks as ever to Anna, our secretary, for keeping us all informed electronically when we couldn't meet and looking after so many things we don't even think about.

Some of you, I know, returned to some pretty depressing flood scenes over the Easter Break. I can only offer that the Muskoka watershed crested April 19 and that things should improve from here on. I, too, believed that this was 'the worst' flooding situation I had experienced in 8 years of permanent, if not in 40 years of seasonal residence and that drove me to explore the reason.

What I learned was that, in fact, there have been 7 freshets in the past 24 years that have matched, or surpassed, that of this year in flows and levels. (I shall share this data at the June meeting.) I did learn that the snow pack had a 55% higher water content this year than is normal and Bala did get more than its share of snow this year. (I did not need any external data to convince me of that!) It is of small comfort, however, as there are no ready solutions.

The Muskoka River Water Management Plan does not address levels and flows in the Bala Reach because it is 'not a lake' and the Chutes have such an overwhelming effect on control of the levels. The Ministry of Natural Resources, primarily, and Ontario Power Generation, secondly, have some mechanical control - the former, controls how fast the water comes in and the latter, to a much lesser extent, how fast it goes out. Once the flows exceed 64 cubic meters per second, however, OPG no longer has control — the Chutes rule. This is not the forum in which to delve into this ongoing problem, but I assure everyone that I will work towards some means of mitigation.

It may be that the MNR will not be MNR in direct control of water flows in the future, although the progress of the Swift River Power development at the Bala North Dam site is on hold at present. The Ministry of Energy has postponed indefinitely its response to the initial RFP process under which Swift River applied for approval of the proposed cost of their power and the results of which were to have been announced this spring. Now Swift River must reapply under the new Standard Offer program established by the MNR. An overview of the Swift River proposal is available at the Muskoka Lakes Chamber of Commerce in Bala, the Township of Muskoka Lakes office in Port Carling, and at the High Falls MNR office in Bracebridge (call ahead). I encourage all to review the proposal in order that MRPOA may have your opinions on the appropriateness of the design and your questions about missing details if this project does begin to move forward.

John Cosgrove, the new Chief Administrative Officer of the Township of Muskoka Lakes, has been hosting budget sessions with various stakeholder groups. Once your assessment is finalized, your tax may be calculated based on multiplying that value by .00067108. I have had an opportunity to attend three of his sessions. John's advice to the Township Council in the budget planning was that the reserves are healthy, so money should be invested in capital expenditures, particularly emergency services. Three new fire trucks are planned with the goal of improving service to the Township to a level which may lower property owners' insurance rates, even in the rural areas, as well as improving roads for them to travel on. There are no Bala roads deemed as requiring upgrading.

Within the budget, there is also \$33,000 for upgrading the River Street boat launch site. Township's goal is to have this completed by July 1. I hope to have an update on the actual plans soon, as there has been some misunderstanding about the extent of the upgrading to be done. At present, things do not seem optimistic for any constructive work to be done on the launch ramp at all.

The Budget also includes significant funding for the urban Bala and Port Carling streetscape designs. One of the primary goals in the urban design of Bala is to improve the

pedestrian connections. There will also be restoration work at Windsor Park to naturalize the waterfront and set an example for us all to do the same. On the issue of Giant Hogweed, the Township will remove this threat by mechanical means from township property when notified of its presence. There is no planned concerted (\$) effort to address the problem.

WRAFT has finally recognized that the waterfront is not the only area of inequity in the property tax system and has joined with, or morphed into, CAPTR (Coalition After Property Tax Reform) with an aim to have the province review the property tax system. I have not had any follow-up from MRPOA members on assessments or appeals.

Over the past years, waterfront property values have escalated to the point that any land around a puddle has an inflated value. This has given rise to increasing condo/timeshare development and some of it on very small water bodies. The property owners, in most case, are anxious about potential pollution impacts and aghast at the prospect of sharing their space. Unfortunately, small associations do not have much chance in a fight with large developers nor has the municipality much cause to legally deny permits to such developers. This is one reason for a serious review of beginning a lake plan for our river area.

Lake Plans are not official plans but municipalities can incorporate the development principles outlined in community based plans, and thereby give them more power in an Ontario Municipal Board hearing. Our Township Council may be comfortable that the Waterfront Density ByLaw will protect the township, but it is a one size fits all approach and not the final solution to Muskoka development issues. It will be interesting to observe the implementation of the Lake of Bays Development Permit system, which is a stronger tool for controlling development.

It will also be of interest to observe the outcome of the Peninsula Lake Association's fight at the OMB over a proposed Quarry development on their lake. As the demand for aggregates and Muskoka rock increases, like the "puddle" phenomenon, aggregates development will escalate and unless there are strong Official Plans in the townships, they may invade more areas where they are not welcome. Peninsula Lake Association [www.penlake.ca](http://www.penlake.ca) is seeking financial support to continue this battle.

**PLEASE** start the season right: do not feed the waterfowl and do not feed the bears. If you do not have a bear-proof garbage bin, take your garbage with you or to the transfer station. Have a Great Summer in Muskoka on the Moon!!

*Patricia Arney, President*

## Assistance to Fire Department Pontoon Boats

Jim Sawkins, the Fire Chief for the Township of Muskoka Lakes, has asked for the help of pontoon boat owners on the Moon River.

On occasion, the Fire Department is asked to respond to medical emergencies at cottages along the Moon River. If an injured person is in the water or on a dock, it may be awkward to get the person to a road for transport to hospital. In such instances, the Fire Department would like to use a pontoon boat to transport an injured person to the public dock for pick up by an ambulance.

The Fire Chief has requested that MRPOA ask its members who own pontoon boats to volunteer to assist the Fire Department in emergencies.

Under the By-Law establishing the Fire Department, the Fire Chief has the power to "commission" the use of privately owned equipment (including the owner/operator) and the owner/operator may be compensated for the use of the equipment at the discretion of the Fire Chief. The Fire Chief informs us that during the time the pontoon boat is commissioned by the Fire Department, it would be insured under the Fire Department's insurances policies.

If you own a pontoon boat and wish further information or are willing to offer emergency assistance to the Fire Department, please telephone the Fire Department Office at 705-765-3156.

### MEETINGS

#### June 10, Bala Legion

9:00 a.m. - Road Captains  
(receive Captain's Kit)

9:15 a.m. - Briefing

*Cottage Protection through Environmental  
Design*

by O.P.P. Constable Ted Smith  
all welcome

10:00 a.m. - General Meeting of  
Members

Water Levels/Testing, Boat Launch  
Ramp, Planning Summer's Activities

## 2005 Water Quality Report

In the summer of 2005 MRPOA's water sampling and analysis program was carried out as a part of the Muskoka Lakes Association's Water Quality Initiative.

Samples from 152 sites on seventeen lakes and rivers including the Moon River were collected by some 80 volunteers on a bi-weekly basis throughout the summer of 2005 (eight samples from each site). The bi-weekly samples were analyzed for several factors then averaged for each test site. The full report for the Muskoka Lakes Association Water Quality Initiative is available at [www.mla.on.ca](http://www.mla.on.ca) (click on "water quality") and copies will be available at the June 10 Members Meeting.

The directors of MRPOA have extracted the Moon River information from the MLA report and it is reproduced on our website [www.mrpoa.org](http://www.mrpoa.org). Moon River water quality and water quality measured on all other lakes and rivers involved in the Initiative are excellent according to Provincial Standards. However, the MLA has established its own targets for water quality which are more stringent than those of the Province. Three Moon River sites (Whitefish Bay, Gaunt Bay, the Moon River to the south of Kimberley Point) exceeded this scale's threshold for acceptable total Coliform levels. High total Coliform levels are attributed to high temperatures observed in 2005; total Coliforms will be closely monitored during the first weeks of the 2006 season to confirm this conclusion. If high levels persist, further action may be warranted.

Many thanks to Brian McDonald and his team for the 2005 Water Sampling. You will see Brian and his team out taking samples again this year, starting on May 29 weekend.

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### Please do not feed the Geese, Ducks, or any other Waterfowl!

Waterfowl not only may contribute to swimmer's itch and the total coliform count in the water, but feeding waterfowl can be bad for their health! For example, bread is low in nutrients, hard to digest, and mold from decaying bread can cause respiratory infections. Feeding causes ducks and geese to be less likely to search for their natural foods and may encourage them to try to spend the winter in Muskoka where they may suffer from the cold and lack of winter food.

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### Insurance and Snow

A member has pointed out that many insurance policies do not cover seasonal residences for snow damage. You may wish to check your policies.

## HOGWEED



The Municipality will use mechanical means to remove Giant Hogweed in the Municipality-owned road allowances. To report Giant Hogweed by the roadside and request its removal, contact Len Troup (who is in charge of roadside maintenance for the Township) at 705-765-3156 or [ltroup@township.muskokalakes.on.ca](mailto:ltroup@township.muskokalakes.on.ca) with a copy to [info@mrpoa.org](mailto:info@mrpoa.org). Please give the exact location (e.g. the 911 address of the nearest residence).

### LAKE STEWARDSHIP SEMINAR

*Protecting our Lakes  
Everyone's Responsibility*

Presented by Mike Logan

Saturday, May 20  
10:00 a.m.

Port Carling Community Centre

*Sponsored by the Muskoka Lakes Association*

### 2006 Summer Events Schedule

- May 29 – Water Sampling Begins
- June 10 - Members' Meeting at the Bala Legion – 10:00 a.m. (membership directories will be available for pick-up)
- July 22 - Sailing Regatta (contact Dave Stoddart 762-3506)
- Aug 6 - Regatta/Corn Roast – Jaspen Park
- Aug 19 - Golf Tournament (contact Glen Wimbush 762-3447)
- Sept 2 - AGM at the Bala Legion – 10:00 a.m.

# 2006 MRPOA Regatta Event Schedule

Sunday, Aug 6, 2006 - Jaspén Park

Event	Time	Contestants	Age	Event	
	11:00 am			Registration	
1	11:00	Open	Any Age	Long Distance Swim	
2	11:30	Boys & Girls	10 & Under	Treasure Hunt	
3	12:00 noon	Open Mixed	Any Age	Canoe Race - White Birch Island	
4	12:05	Boys	7 & Under	Swim & Run (Lifelbelts Allowed)	
5	12:10	Girls	7 & Under	Swim & Run (Lifelbelts Allowed)	
*	6	12:15	Boys	8 To 10	Swim & Run
*	7	12:20	Girls	8 To 10	Swim & Run
*	8	12:25	Boys	11 To 13	Swim & Run
*	9	12:30	Girls	11 To 13	Swim & Run
*	10	12:35	Boys	14 To 16	Swim & Run
*	11	12:40	Girls	14 To 16	Swim & Run
12	12:45	Boys & Girls	4 & Under	Running Race	
13	12:50	Boys	5 To 7	Running Race	
14	12:55	Girls	5 To 7	Running Race	
15	1:00	Boys & Girls	4 & Under	Shoe Toss	
16	1:05	Boys & Girls	5 To 7	Shoe Toss	
*	17	1:10	Boys	8 To 10	Running Race
*	18	1:15	Girls	8 To 10	Running Race
*	19	1:20	Boys	11 To 13	Running Race
*	20	1:25	Girls	11 To 13	Running Race
21	1:30	Boys & Girls	14 To 16	Balloon Toss	
22	1:35	Adults Mixed	17 & Over	Balloon Toss	
23	1:40	Boys & Girls	8 To 13	Balloon Toss	
24	1:45	Boys & Girls	7 & Under	Balloon Toss/Roll	
*	25	1:50	Boys & Girls	8 To 10	Double Canoe
*	26	1:55	Boys & Girls	11 To 13	Double Canoe
*	27	2:00	Boys & Girls	14 To 16	Mixed Double Canoe
28	2:05	Adults Mixed	17 & Over	Canoe Race	
*	29	2:10	Boys & Girls	8 To 10	Hurry Scurry Fours
*	30	2:15	Boys & Girls	11 To 13	Hurry Scurry Fours
*	31	2:20	Boys & Girls	14 To 16	Hurry Scurry Fours
32	2:25	Adults Mixed	17 & Over	Hurry Scurry Fours	
*	33	2:30	Boys & Girls	14 To 16	In & Out Of Canoe
34	2:35	Adults Mixed	17 & Over	In & Out Of Canoe	
35	2:40	Boys & Girls	16 & Under	Land Ski Race	
36	2:45	Adults Mixed	17 & Over	Land Ski Race	
	2:55			Award Presentations	

\*These events contribute points towards the overall winners

The Corn Roast will be held at Jaspén Park at 6:00 pm.