



## Is your property assessment accurate?

On July 11, 2016 municipal property assessments were mailed out to waterfront owners in Muskoka. These assessments are used to determine what your taxes will be for the year. But is the assessed value correct? With the high and damaging water levels in 2013 and this past spring you may have an argument for a reduction in your assessment with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). Damages to docks, buildings or shorelines may be enough to file a Request for Reconsideration (RfR) with MPAC. You may also be eligible for a reduction in your 2016 municipal taxes if you had damage to buildings or structures that were unusable.

Property owners should review their Notice, and ask themselves if they could have sold their property for the assessed value as of January 1, 2016. Next, they should visit [aboutmyproperty.ca](http://aboutmyproperty.ca), to learn how and why their property was assessed the way it was, and to compare their assessment with others in their neighbourhood.

If property owners have questions, they can call MPAC's Customer

Contact Centre at 1-866-296-MPAC (6722), or 1-877-889-MPAC (6722), or visit a local MPAC office.



However, you'll need to act fast. **This year the RfR deadline changed.** Check your assessment notice for the exact date, but it should be 120 days from the date of issue, or **mid November**, instead of the historical March deadline. It's important for property owners to note their unique RfR deadline and to review their notice as soon as received to ensure timely action.

There are two ways to file an RfR:

1. At [aboutmyproperty.ca](http://aboutmyproperty.ca). Property owners will be able to attach documents, pictures and reports to accompany their RfR, as well as check the status of their request. They may also mail or fax their form to MPAC. Forms are available at [mpac.ca](http://mpac.ca).

2. Write a letter to request an RfR. The letter should include the 19-digit Roll Number found on the Property Assessment Notice, the owner's full name, address and phone number, and the reasons why their assessment is incorrect, including any information they have to support their request.

## We're looking for volunteers to fill our ranks!

We need people willing to roll their sleeves up who are passionate about Muskoka along with an enthusiasm or knowledge in any of the following:

- **Social Media** - Are you social savvy? We're looking for people who love sharing online - following the rules of course!
- **Marketing** - We're looking for some marketing smarts to help get the message out about the great work the MLA does on behalf of waterfront property owners.
- **Communications** - Do you have a knack and love for writing, editing or just a great story to tell? We'd love to hear from you!
- Have you been a long time member of the MLA and would like to **help us commemorate our 125**? We're looking to hold a few great events to celebrate!
- **Volunteers for single day events** such as the boat show, seminars and regattas. Maybe you can only give one day a year to help out. No problem, we'd love you to join us for a day!
- **Municipal experience** (land use planning, financial, septic & water systems) - We're looking for anyone who has worked in a municipal office and knows about the red tape and process that needs to be followed.
- **Strategic Planning** - Can you help the MLA plan for the future? We've been around for almost 125 years and we need your help to plan for the next 125 years (probably not at once though!)

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**H**ow time flies! As I write this it's already been 6 weeks since the 2016 AGM at which I was installed as the MLA's latest President; a real honour for me. Now post Labour Day, all our formal summer events are, sadly, behind us. Packed into those six short weeks for MLA and our Members and guests were highly successful sailing and aquatic regattas, and our community oriented biennial Antique Boat Show, which despite persistent rain was a great event for both our antique boat owner participants and the many antique boat admirers whose appetite for beauty was well met. I would like to take this opportunity to give heartfelt thanks to each and every participant who brought their treasured boats for others to enjoy, despite the less than perfect weather. We much appreciate your dedication and commitment!

For the MLA Board, September brings not the end of summer, but the beginning of refreshed planning and execution on existing initiatives. There's a lot going on! Administratively, we're reconstituting our Committees, introducing some new leaders, and beginning the important and challenging budgeting process. We review the summer's activities with a "what could or should we have done differently, and what stood out as a real new success" mindset. We work hard to get it right, but getting it right if you can't get it done doesn't have much value.

That's where Volunteers carry the day – and we are looking for, and need, more capable volunteers. Are you interested in local politics? Concerned about land use and governance in Muskoka? How about the District's new Water Quality Model and its implications for municipal planning, staffing and budgets? We'd love to hear from accountants, particularly if you have a good handle on municipal budgeting. Important stuff! Do not hesitate to contact the MLA office if you have time and energy to contribute!

There's a theme in this piece, as if you hadn't guessed - **Volunteerism**: the giving of one's time and talent for worthwhile and especially community purposes. The MLA has a rich history of volunteerism – we would not exist without it. Currently over 150 volunteers provide the backbone of our delivery of services to members and the community, particularly the water quality samplers, the Aquatic Regatta, and the Antique Boat Show Teams. Of course, the entire MLA Board and our Committee members are also volunteers. It's an amazing and appreciated contribution of time and skills for which there is no substitute. Join us; it's personally enriching!

There are other ways to contribute if time is not on your side. Already the call has gone out to donors and collection partners for the **4th Annual**

**MLA Food Drive** – PLEASE, plan to pack up and drop off left-over food as part of your cottage closing routine, or plan to give one way or the other if you're a permanent resident (cash donations are always very appreciated as well). Visit our website ([mla.on.ca](http://mla.on.ca)) for drop-off-off centres; the Food Drive closes Thanksgiving weekend and a flyer is on the back page of this issue.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the efforts of MLA's Water Level Task Force, which was created in the wake of the 2016 Spring flood in Muskoka that caused so much disruption and damage to shorelines and property. The Task Force has invested hundreds of hours in strategizing, collecting and analyzing data and meeting with local politicians from the District and Municipalities, local Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) staff and senior MNR political staff at Queens Park. The goal is to **find a way to avoid or reduce future floods before they happen again**. Climate Change is here, and it appears to be a two edged sword!

For more on how Climate Change is now and will in the future affect us in Muskoka, watch a video on our website of the MLA's seminar on Climate Change held on Saturday, September 24. Dr. Peter Sale did an excellent job of summarizing the work of the Muskoka Watershed Council.

Give us your feedback! Call (705 645-7393) or visit our Port Carling office, or visit our new and improved Website (still a work in progress) at [www.mla.on.ca](http://www.mla.on.ca).

Enjoy the rest of the boating season in Muskoka!

Bob Ensor - President

## Keep your Advantage Card Close!

Summer may be coming to an end, but many businesses throughout Muskoka continue to offer discounts and other incentives throughout the fall and in some cases, all year round. So keep your card close and your retailer list handy (available at [www.mla.on.ca](http://www.mla.on.ca), by scanning the URL code on your card with your smart phone, or in hard copy at the MLA office in Port Carling).

Support your local community. Stock up in Muskoka!



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# Change is needed NOW to prevent flooding

Since early April the MLA Water Level Task Force (WLTF) has been meeting on a very regular basis (once or twice a week). What have we achieved?

We developed a three part action plan which we have been pursuing relentlessly.

## MLA Water Level Task force Three Point action Plan

1) Lower Lakes Muskoka, Rosseau and Joseph to the lower limits of their respective Normal Operating Zones before spring until a new acceptable Muskoka River Water Management Plan (MRWMP) is implemented.

2) Initiate a process to revise the MRWMP as soon as possible.

3) Allow MLA to be one of the participating parties in the creation of the new MRWMP.

We have reached out to all local municipalities, lake associations and others who share our concerns. We also had a very positive meeting with Norm Miller, MPP, Tony Clement, MP, and have met with senior local Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) staff on several occasions. Our approach has been to try and work with them to implement change now, not threaten them.

We also have been active in developing relationships with MNR at Queens Park. Our first attempt began well, but the Minister and staff changed in June and we could not begin to start rebuilding our relationships and political credibility until late August when all the final appointments took place. However, the WLTF has begun work on a

new Queens Park plan that is promising.

While developing our relationships in the spring, we also conducted a damage survey which had over a thousand responses by the time it closed at the end of May. Over 500 of those responses provided complete information which was "mapable". With the help of the District of Muskoka, we have mapped that information and have graphic representations of that data. It is abundantly clear that damage from the 2016 flood is both significant and well dispersed across the lakes.

The WLTF will be engaging an independent expert technical review of the suitability of our ask to lower the lakes to the lower limits of their respective Normal Operating Zones each year.

The MLA and its WLTF are aware of the class action suit that was launched but feel strongly that an immediate (pre-freshette 2017) solution to avoid or mitigate flooding in Muskoka is desperately needed. This solution needs to be developed NOW and could be

implemented within the current MRWMP.

As happened in the past, even potential lawsuits against MNR tend to shut down information sharing which make finding a short term solution difficult at best. We remain hopeful our efforts will produce positive results.

The Muskoka Lakes Association WLTF will continue to update members as our pursuit of flooding solutions continues.

Lawton Osler - Water Level Task Force Chair



## 4th Annual MLA Bursary

At the Annual Meeting in July, we presented our 4th Bursary to Laiken Pratt. Laiken is from Gravenhurst High School and will be attending Sir Sanford Fleming College in the fall in the Ecosystem Management Technology program. Laiken loves the outdoors and wanted to make a difference working to maintain and protect the health of the environment using sustainable environmental practices and would like to pursue a career that allows her to actively participate in environmental change from within the system. Look for Laiken at MLA events next summer!

Congratulations Laiken.



Toronto Boat Show  
**Captain's CLUB**

**New Later Dates:**  
January 20 - 29 2017

**For more show details**  
**TorontoBoatShow.com**

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## From the Forest – Red Oak – Chip and Dale were on to something



Remember the Walt Disney classic tale of Chip and Dale, two chipmunks forever looking for the best place to store their nuts for winter, usually in all the wrong places and always antagonizing the likes of Mickey, Pluto or Donald Duck along the way? You can see that same determination here in Parry Sound Muskoka with our own local chipmunks and squirrels as they hurry in the fall to collect as many nuts as possible in preparation for the long winter ahead. What tree do you ask are these critters collecting nuts from? In most instances the nuts are acorns from the native Red oak (latin name *Quercus Rubra*).

Red oak is an important species for the production of timber products as well as providing “mast” or seed that wildlife depend on as a food source. The leaves of the Red oak are tapered at the base and usually have 7 lobes that end at a sharp point, while other oak species have rounded tips. You can often distinguish oaks from other hardwood species by simply looking for the presence of dead, very brown leaves that have held on to the branches in winter, even in high winds.

Red oak seldom occurs as pure forests but rather can be found in clumps or scattered individuals in a forest stand. Red oak grow on a variety of sites, from very shallow soils on exposed bedrock to moist lower slopes. Often the drier forest sites have scattered open grown trees or clumps of trees. Red oak do well in these sites since the species is considered “mid tolerant” of light, meaning that while this tree can establish, survive and grow in some shade, it grows best in more open light conditions. These light requirements differ from that of our common Sugar Maple (*Acer Saccharum*), a tree much more adapted to thriving in heavier shade.

Red oak is capable of sprouting from stumps so this species can often regenerate simply by selecting mature trees for harvest. However, a main form of regeneration is through germination of the acorn and the planting of nursery grown stock. Acorn collection to grow seedlings can be a challenge as good Red oak seed crops only occur every 3 to 5 years, with most seed in the years between being eaten by deer and rodents. It is well known that often chipmunks will not return to all their seed collection areas, or “caches”. Seed collectors take advantage of this by searching out these caches during bumper seed crops.

It is important for Westwind forest managers to understand the germination, establishment and growth characteristics of different species of trees as this guides how we manage our forests. Tree markers select trees to be removed in advance of the timber harvest, thereby creating the proper open forest canopy conditions to allow sunlight to reach the forest floor for acorns to germinate, seedlings to be planted or young saplings to be released to greater amounts of light.

Red oak is an important component of the diversity of the forest ecosystems in the Parry Sound Muskoka area. Looking forward, it is thought that Red oak may be a good candidate in the battle against climate change as it is the hearty nature of this tree’s ability to establish, grow and thrive in harsher conditions that could make this species well suited in our forests with ever increasing temperature regimes. It will also be an important species to counteract the devastating impacts of the Beech Bark Disease currently killing our American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) in the Parry Sound/ Muskoka area, as Red oak is considered second to American beech in terms of importance as a mast species for wildlife such as deer and bear.

So let’s be thankful for Chip and Dale’s cousins as they continue their tireless efforts each fall in collecting and storing acorns of the Red oak. Its presence in our forest landscape is an important component of our biodiversity and could very well prove to be a tree species of the future in our efforts address invasive species impacts and combat climate change.

### Michael Henry, R.P.F.

Michael Henry is the Operations Forester for Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc., located in Parry Sound. Westwind is a not-for-profit community based forest management company that provides planning and silvicultural services on Crown land within the Parry Sound District. Westwind is the first large public forester in Canada to have received forest certification under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

## New Members

**Please welcome the following as new members of the MLA!  
From June 1 - September 15, 2016**

Lorna & Ralph ABELL  
John & Lynda  
ANGELUCCI  
John & Sheila  
ARMSTRONG  
Christine BEARD  
Maggie BRAS  
Jean-Louis  
BRENNINKMEIJER  
Dan & Sheila BUTKO  
Michele BUTT  
Robert & Sylvia COOPER  
David COULSON  
Christina & Tim CROWE  
Jim DAVIS

Michael DOBRIJEVIC  
Glenn FORTIN  
Brian GOLDBERG  
Amy HACHEY  
Nancy HILL  
Ted JOHNSON  
Mark JOHNSTONE  
Jeff & Cindi JONES  
Steve KEILHAUER  
Andre KOZAK  
Pete LAURENCE  
Dennis MOAT  
Sanu MOLDER  
Dani MORAWETZ  
Bob MORINE

Alex MURPHY  
Robert NORMAN  
John PANIKKAR  
Gary SILVER  
David SMITH  
Paul SMITH  
Laura STECHER  
Laura STEVENS  
Ann SUTHERLAND  
Tyler SWAN  
Robert TAYLOR  
Jenny (Soden) & Jake  
THOMAS  
Richard TRITT  
Jill WELLMAN



# Volunteers do it all and we need to thank them!

National Volunteer Week was held way back in April, but given Muskoka's busy summer schedule, we thought it would be better served in Fall. Is there a better time to recognize all the volunteers across Muskoka who protect, promote, love and play in Muskoka? This is the time of year when unfortunately, the summer season begins to wind down. People think about going back to school or their permanent home and don't think as much about their summer haven.

Think about what Muskoka would be like, without the thousands of volunteers running countless events all across the region. Sure, there would still be things to do, but how better to get to know your local community then by attending one of the great events held or visiting one of the local

museums or hiking a trail? So many attractions and events are run by volunteers and we appreciate each and every one of them every day for their commitment and passion in Muskoka, whatever that may be.

At the MLA we have a dedicated group of volunteers who do so much to help in our mission and we think it's only appropriate we recognize them. Our volunteers help run events (such as our Antique Boat Show and Regattas), help the association plan for the future and others who collect thousands of water samples to protect Muskoka's most valuable resource, our water. To all the MLA volunteers - THANK YOU! And if you happen to be attending a local event, thank a volunteer, you have no idea what it means to them.

## MLA Volunteers

Karen Abells  
Frida Ardal  
Karen Atkin  
Brian Beatty  
Wesley Begg  
Greg Bertrand  
Roger Bertrand  
Mike Bidwell  
Chris Blaymires  
Rayma Blaymires  
Chris Bodanis  
Joan Booth  
John Bowlby  
Cindy Bridge  
Mark Brosch  
Joanne Brown  
Lawrence Bryan  
Randy Carson  
Susan Carson  
Debbie Catto  
Don Catto  
Gary Clark  
Robinson Clark  
Valerie Clark  
Bob Cleverdon  
Michael Cleverdon  
Sharon Cleverdon  
Meredith Coates  
Greg Coutts  
Laura Coutts  
Lynda Coutts  
Chris Cragg  
Louise Cragg  
Christine Cram  
Roger Crawford  
Bob Crossan  
Sandy Currie  
Harrison Davies  
Jim Davis  
Lynn Day  
Jon Deveith  
Donna Di Lello  
Kellie Dobson  
John Duncan  
Terry Duncan

Rick Durst  
Kim Enns  
Bob Ensor  
Rick Evans  
Jack Fenn  
Robert Fenn  
Mike Finley  
Val Fleck  
Allen Flye  
Jinny Flye  
Anne Fullerton  
Rob Fullerton  
Don Furniss  
Gaye Gemmell  
Gary Getson  
Jan Getson  
Esther Giesbrecht  
Lesley Giles  
Karen Gillies  
Hilary Goldenberg  
Judy Golvin  
Stirling Grant  
Barbara Graydon  
Beth Guy  
Jeff Hall  
Gail Hammond  
Peter Hand  
Sue Hand  
Kelly Hart  
Michael Hart  
Nancy Hart  
Debbie Hastings  
Dunc Hawkins  
Sharie Hawkins  
Cecil Hayhoe  
Marje Henke  
Robb Hindson  
Bob Hogg  
Al Holley  
Paul Hutchinson  
Adam Hutton  
Alan Hutton  
Catharine Inniss  
Betty Isbister  
Peter Joel

Mark Johnstone  
Jayne Jones  
Gayle Kelly  
Pat Kelly  
Jon Kelsey  
Melaney Kerley  
Bari Kerton  
Bob Kerton  
Chloe Kerton  
Azra Khan  
Pam Kraik  
Mike Langdon  
Dave Langford  
Lynn Langford  
Jill Lavine  
Sharon Laviolette  
Tom Laviolette  
Catherine LeBoeuf  
Janet Leenaars  
Rene Leenaars  
Laurie Leiser  
Christine LePage  
Eleanor Lewis  
Jim Lewis  
Ryan Lind  
Alex Loe  
Liz Lundell  
Daryl MacArthur  
Dave MacIntosh  
Alex Magditsch  
Cathy Malcolmson  
Matthew Mammoliti  
Katherine Marr  
Deborah Martin-Downs  
Tony Mathia  
Becky McAlpine  
Anne McCauley  
Walter McCormick  
Brian McElwain  
Diane McEvoy  
Janet McEvoy  
James McFarlane  
Joan McKinnon  
Rob McLeese  
Charlie Moffat

Andrew Mollard  
Al Moran  
John Moses  
Susan Murphy  
Tara Murphy  
Victoria Murphy  
Eliza Nevin  
Charlie Newlands  
Aaron Noonan  
Carrie Noonan  
Brent Norton  
John Offutt  
Lawton Osler  
Tim Owen  
John Patterson  
David Peacock  
Parker Phillips  
Steve Phillips  
Anne Polewski  
Bruno Polewski  
Adam Prowse  
Aidan Prowse  
Dylan Prowse  
Sami Prowse  
Bill Purkis  
Robert G. Purves  
Rob Randall  
Paul Raymond  
Paul Richards  
Gordon Roberts  
Beverlie Robertson  
Charlie Robertson  
Bryan Rowntree  
Brian Ruby  
Shelby Rushton  
Murray Sarafinchin  
Quinn Scarlett  
Linda Schell  
Jayne Schipper  
Janet Selby  
Katherine Seybold  
Peter Seybold  
Stephen Sims  
Sara Slater  
Brian Smith

Linda Soudack  
Dirk Soutendijk  
Judith Stephens-Wells  
Linda Stevens  
Rob Tanner  
Beth Tate  
Doug Tate  
Karen Terry  
Rick Terry  
Rob Thomas  
Robin Thomas  
Greg Thomson  
Laurie Thomson  
Tim Owen  
Jessica Tickler  
Sandy Tozer-Spence  
Barb Triskan  
Oliver Triskan  
Terry Triskan  
Diane Turnbull  
Ian Turnbull  
Bev Turney  
Chris Turney  
Al Vaughan  
Bill Walker  
Sue Walker  
Brenda Walton  
Lloyd Walton  
Al Ward  
Carole Ward  
Andrew Watson  
Karen Weber  
Ross Wells  
John Wesley  
John Wessinger  
Sue Wessinger  
Cindy Williams  
Gord Wilson  
John Wood  
Hannu Ylanko  
Jessica Ylanko  
David Zou



# To Bubble or not to Bubble

Understandably, we all want to protect our docks and boathouses from ice damage and the use of a bubbler can be an effective way to do that. However, there could be serious consequences that may ultimately cost you more than the price of fixing your dock.

Bubblers are meant to keep ice away from the dock so when the water or ice level drops, the ice doesn't pull on the structure tearing boards or causing cribbing to shift. Keeping ice ten feet from your dock is sufficient to avoid damage. Unfortunately, too many bubbler systems create areas of open water that far exceed what is necessary, thereby creating [resulting in] a hazard to people and animals.

It is not widely known that there is legislation governing the use of bubblers that create openings in the natural ice. The *Navigable Waters Protection Act* defines two types of bubblers. Both types of bubblers cause warmer bottom water in the winter to be lifted up to the cooler surface water. The first is a system of pipelines on the bed that inject air or water into the water column and creates turbulent waters rising around the dock

## there is legislation governing the use of bubblers that create openings in the natural ice.

preventing the formation of thick ice. Pipelines resting on the bed of the water or suspended in the water column may need approval under this act. The second type is a fan that is suspended in the water column and circulates the naturally warmer water upwards. Temporary fans that are suspended in the water do not require approval under the act. Property owners should check with Transport Canada before installing any type of bubbler system.

For your information however, the action of safeguarding the ice and the



Photo courtesy of Muskoka Lakes Property Management

open water that is created comes under the *Criminal Code of Canada* (excerpt):

### Duty to safeguard opening in ice

**263.** (1) Every one who makes or causes to be made an opening in ice that is open to or frequented by the public is under a legal duty to guard it in a manner that is adequate to prevent persons from falling in by accident and is adequate to warn them that the opening exists.

(3) Every one who fails to perform a duty imposed by subsection (1) is guilty of

- manslaughter, if the death of any person results therefrom;
- an offence under section 269, if bodily harm to any person results therefrom; or
- an offence punishable on summary conviction.

### Unlawfully causing bodily harm

**269.** Every one who unlawfully causes bodily harm to any person is guilty of

- an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years; or
- an offence punishable on summary conviction and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding eighteen months.

What does this mean?

According to OPP Sergeant Larry Butterfield, it is not a criminal offence to operate a bubbler and there is no law that defines what is "adequate to prevent persons from falling in by accident and is adequate to warn them that the opening exists." This means there is nothing the police can do about excessive bubbling, or lack of cautionary warnings. However, in the event someone is fatally injured a charge of manslaughter may be brought forward if, in the opinion of the investigating officer(s), a charge is warranted.

There is also the question of liability if someone suffers bodily harm. Property owners, contractors and/or property managers who have installed and/or maintain the bubbler system can be equally vulnerable to civil litigation. Conversations with a local insurance provider revealed that any incident would be reviewed independently and liability insurance coverage for damages awarded by a civil court may not apply. However, for the insurance companies, it is a challenging situation. On one hand, the use of bubblers prevents high cost payouts for damage caused by ice (although not all insurance companies provide this coverage). On the other is the potential risk for personal injury claims. The onus is clearly on the property owner to fully understand their insurance policy coverage and use their best judgment when deciding whether or not to install a bubbler system.

Use common sense.

In a past article in *Cottage Life Magazine*, Bob Island, Publisher, *Snowmobile Central Ontario Magazine* suggested there are steps that can be taken by property owners to reduce their liability. Signage that designates "Danger: Open Water" that can be easily read from a distance and an amber flashing light that is visible in the dark. (Some cottagers use red lights to indicate open water; however, in the dark, these lights can be mistaken for the taillight of a snowmobile, so Bob cautions against those). Install timers and thermostats to minimize impact, and reduce costs. And once the water level is lowered in early March, bubblers can be turned off.

The bottom line is this. There is no law against operating a bubbler, there is no law regarding what is adequate warning and there is no legal means to control the interference with lake access that often results from excessive bubbling. However, there could be serious criminal and civil implications if someone gets hurt or dies.

Exercise good judgment, know your coverage and be respectful of everyone who uses or plays on the ice in the winter.



Cottages are special places.  
Let us help you protect them.

David Browne • Cockburn Island  
dbrowne@mmlr.ca • 416-520-7042

Philip Goad • Laurie Island  
pgoad@mmlr.ca • 416-738-4412



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## Inside the MLA – *MLA Political and Land Use Committee (PLUC)*

The Muskoka Lakes Association plays an active role in municipal and district affairs, advocating for the interests of waterfront residents and the broader Muskoka community. We attend council meetings, communicate on issues of importance to elected officials, and work closely with municipal and district staff. When the situation warrants, we roll up our sleeves and get more involved, switching gears from monitoring to action.

PLUC looks at issues of broad importance to the Muskoka community. The Official Plans and Zoning By-Laws of the 4 municipalities we monitor affect all cottagers in Muskoka whether they want to build or renovate their cottage, watch their neighbours doing the same, or appreciating new commercial developments along Muskoka's main streets or at resort properties. The Official Plans and Zoning By-Laws of one municipality influences other municipalities both positively and negatively, so impacts are wide ranging. The recent Zoning By-Law review in Township of Muskoka Lakes resulted in changes that reflected our concerns for the environment and preservation of good water quality, septic setbacks, tree cutting, blasting and boating safety on narrow waterways.

New buildings and renovations of any kind, commercial or residential, are regular topics throughout the District of Muskoka. In fact, requests for information about land use planning and development are among the most common reasons cottagers contact the Muskoka Lakes Association.

PLUC has also been involved in the proposed changes to the District Lake System Health Model, asking questions and proposing improvements to a policy that has been in place for over 10 years protecting Muskoka's lakes and rivers. The model is under review and will have major changes made which will definitely effect all waterfront residents in the future. Both PLUC and the MLA Water Quality & Environment committees are working collaboratively on having waterfront voices heard during this process.

Through our monthly newsletter, NewsBites, we communicate regularly to members about issues that are relevant to them. We attempt to be your eyes and voice in Muskoka while you are away.

### Our position

The MLA advocates for responsible land use planning and thoughtful development that protects water quality and respects the natural beauty of Muskoka.

### What you can do

By understanding the land use planning process and councils actions, you can ensure your voice is heard. It's up to citizens and communities to speak up and protect what they care about. Community engagement and open communication between individuals, organizations, community and government are the basis for sound planning decisions. While the MLA does not get involved in neighbour to neighbour issues, we are here to answer your questions, provide guidance and information to MLA members.

### We care about a number of issues, including:

- Land use planning
- Municipal and district budgeting and spending
- Waterfront property taxation
- Local regulations and their impact on water quality
- Municipal elections

To contact the MLA about an issue please send us an email at [political@mla.on.ca](mailto:political@mla.on.ca)

Committee members include Anne McCauley, John Bowlby, Michael Cleverdon, Jim Davis, Bob Ensor, Peter Hand, Robb Hindson, Deborah Martin-Downs, Walter McCormick, Rob Randall, Stephen Sims, Barb Triskan and Sandy Tozer-Spence.

If you are interested in any of the above issues, or are interested in participating on the committee, we meet monthly. Contact us at [political@mla.on.ca](mailto:political@mla.on.ca) or call us at (705) 765-5723.

Anne McCauley  
Chair, Political & Land Use Committee

## Thank You!

At the MLA Annual Meeting this past July, we said goodbye to 4 board members, who have provided support, passion and leadership for the MLA and our actions on members behalf.

### THANK YOU TO:

#### Lola Bratty

- Joined the board in 2008
- Has done intensive work with regard to Gravenhurst action items over the years
- MLA representative on Greater Gravenhurst Ratepayers Association

#### Hilary Goldenberg

- Joined the board in 2012
- Provided insightful comments on Gravenhurst issues such as Muskoka Regional Center and two story boathouses in Gravenhurst
- Active on the political committee with focus on Gravenhurst



L to R: Bob Ensor, President; Mike Langdon; Hilary Goldenberg; Adam Hutton; Michael Hart, Past President (absent - Lola Bratty)

#### Adam Hutton

- MLA lifer and board member since 2009
- Former MLA Marine Patrol member in 1999
- Membership Ambassador since the age of 12
- Chair of Communications & Membership committee for 4 years with amazing ideas
- Still helping out with communications (he just can't stay away!)

#### Mike Langdon

- Joined the board in 2008; president from 2012-2014
- Chaired Member Relations committee for 2 years
- Re-started the MLA newsletter (formerly *The Burgee*, now *ShoreLines*) in 2012
- Created *NewsBites* in 2013
- Created the MLA Bursary in 2013
- Championed research into flood of 2013

Thank You to all of you for your years of service and dedication to the MLA board.

# 4<sup>th</sup> Annual MLA



in support of the Gravenhurst  
Salvation Army Food Bank  
August 26 to October 10

## Drop-Off Locations:

Oliver's Coffee - Port Carling  
Oliver's Coffee - Bracebridge  
Alport Marina  
Bala Cove Marina  
Campbell's Landing  
Gordon Bay Marine  
Indianhead Harbour Marina  
The Boatworks of Port Carling  
Muskoka Lakes Marine  
MLA Office

Oliver's Coffee - Bala  
Oliver's Coffee - Gravenhurst  
Muskoka Lakes Marine  
Muskoka Lakes Golf & Country Club  
Pride Marine Group (Rosseau & Muskoka)  
Skeleton Lake Marina  
SWS Marine  
Terry Johnson's Hamer Bay Marine  
Walkers Point Marina  
Windermere Marina

Drop-off bins are accessible during open hours only inside the above locations

### Please Note:

1. Canned, tinned and dried foods with a long use-by date are most valued.
2. People don't always have can openers, so cans with pull-tabs are very handy.
3. Other basic products such as cereal, coffee, tea and toiletries (soap, detergent, toilet paper, etc.) are also needed along with highly popular items such as peanut butter and canned meats.
4. Smaller packages are easier to distribute.
5. Unopened/Unexpired products only please.



## Contact Us

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