



Muskoka 2019 Flood: A Post Mortem



The Flood of 2019 shattered the previous 2013 water level record on Lake Muskoka by 0.3m [one foot]! This was enough to reverse the flow at Port Carling, over top of the closed lock doors, spilling Lake Muskoka into Lake Rosseau. River levels were feet higher. States of emergency were declared in Bracebridge, Huntsville, Township of Muskoka Lakes and the District of Muskoka. The military was called in to assist with sandbagging efforts to save flooded residences. While the water was high, wind blown ice floes bulldozed vulnerable shoreline structures and then high winds and waves battered the already weakened structures.

The recipe for a Spring flood is a lot of snow, a rapid melt with some rain thrown in. 2019 met and exceeded this recipe.

It was a cold and snowy winter. Lake ice was thick. Snow levels were above average by early February and got deeper every month until April 1st. The snow depth was among the highest in records dating back to 1965. For purposes of predicting spring runoff, snow pack is translated into water equivalent, meaning the amount of runoff that can be expected when it starts to melt. At this point there was an average 192mm [7.5 inches] of water equivalent on the ground.

The lake levels are controlled by the Muskoka River Water Management Plan (MRWMP) which requires greater drawdown if snow levels exceed trigger levels. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) who are responsible for managing the water levels, activated a greater drawdown, to the bottom of Lake Muskoka Normal Operating Zone [NOZ], earlier than required due to snow levels. While greater drawdown than in 2013 was achieved, lake levels remained about 0.15m [6 inches] above the bottom of NOZ. Thawing temperatures halted the drawdown April 8th. Then four days of rapid thawing when temperatures soared to 10°C / 50°F was accompanied by 58mm [over 2 inches] of rain from April 17 to 20th and a flood was launched. Water levels rose to 2013 levels by April 26th and then we got more rain; 36mm [1.4 inches] of it April 26th and 27th and another 35mm May 1st to 3rd. The flood peaked on May 4th.

At the peak of the flooding 420 cubic meters per second passed through the Bala control dams and then down the Moon [77%] and Musquash [23%] Rivers en route to Georgian Bay. Some 55% of this flow originated from the North Branch of the Muskoka River through

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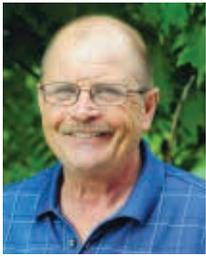
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President's MESSAGE

No Stone Unturned



The July President's message is normally a cheery enjoy the summer chat but recent flooding on our lakes is now the hot topic with members and is receiving high level attention from provincial and municipal leaders. I have spoken to many MLA members who are furious about the third flood in six years, and rightly so. First and foremost, the MLA extends its thanks to the elected officials, military and

legions of volunteers for their emergency actions and recovery support from this disaster.

One of my earlier e-blast communications to members incorporated action steps as to how the MLA was going to work collaboratively with others to help fix the flood or 'Slay the Dragon' as one Board member put it! The MLA cannot solve this problem alone and certainly not in the short term. Below is a brief recap of our actions taken to date.

- Since the start of April, members have been kept advised of developments by 10 weekly Flood Watch newsletters with records of lake levels, evacuations and extensive damage reports.

- The MLA Water Level Task Force (WLTF) has been meeting weekly. On May 13th they sent a letter to The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) asking to be recognized as a stakeholder on the internal task force announced by Premier Ford and MNRF. This letter has been posted on our webpage.

- Our MLA Water Level Task Force has also been in touch with District Chair John Klinck and Bracebridge Mayor Graydon Smith to offer our support.

- The Friends of Muskoka and the MLA have reached out to Muskoka Region News and this was reflected in a write up on muskokaregion.com two weeks ago.

- The MLA has requested representation on the \$5M watershed review that was announced last year by Ontario's Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP).

- One of our past Presidents met with the MNRF District Manager to highlight the perspectives of waterfront property owners and review the events of the 2019 flood.

- As sitting MLA President, I met with Mayor Harding several times to convey MLA views and provide input for him to bring to Premier Ford's internal task force and most importantly, to offer our help. Chris Cragg our chair of the Environment Committee joined me in one of these meetings in May.

- A lakefront property damage survey was developed and released to our membership on June 5th, 2019.

- The WLTF released the following response to litigation queries from membership.

"The MLA is focused on taking action to protect residents from future floods. This requires working with Provincial and Municipal officials to effect meaningful change in river water management. The formation of a government task force is more action on this issue than we have seen for many years. An initial hearing was set Friday May 17th in Muskoka. We are hopeful this leads to needed improvements. Litigation would, in our opinion, be counterproductive to these efforts so is not being considered at this time."

Make no mistake this is a long term problem that requires a long term plan and the two advisory committees I've referred to above are our best bets for change at this time. We must be vigilant in continuing to

rationally and strategically advocate with the many layers of government involved and liaise with other associations and the Muskoka Watershed Council. For additional flood related information please refer to Chris Cragg's well written piece in this newsletter.

A reminder we cannot do this alone! If any of you have a networking connection with any level of Government involved, please let me know!

Lawton Osler - President

New Members

Please welcome the following as new members of the MLA! From April 16, 2019 to June 18, 2019

Nancy C. BOXER

Janet BUTLER

Bill & Jane CAUGHEY

Carol CONLIN

Ximena DAVILA

Christopher DOSSETT

Deborah GESUALDI

Lisa & Bruce
GODIN / CUNNINGHAM

Steven GOLDENBERG

Claudia GRAIL

Anne & Ted GROVE

Har KANG

Grigory KARMY

Cindy KELLER

Isadora (Issy) KELLY

Daphne MACKENZIE

Fred MAMMOLITI

Geof MARSHALL

Peter MARSHALL

Myles MINDHAM

Brent MONTGOMERY

Gerry O'MAHONEY

Benjamin PEELER

Mike ROBINSON

Robert SAYER

Tim SITTLER

David YACH



MERCHANDISE

- S'well Water Bottles (B&W)
- Insulated Dock Tumbler
- Floating Key Fob
- Overboard Dry Pouch
- MLA Flags
- MLA Burgees (S,M,L)
- MLA Ballcaps
- MLA Towels



Muskoka 2019 Flood: A Post Mortem *Continued from page 1*

Huntsville; 40% came from the South Branch through Baysville; the remainder came from the Upper Lakes and lands surrounding Lake Muskoka. The North Muskoka River flow measured at Port Sydney broke a 1928 record. The Bala flows exceeded previous highs from 1951, 1979 and 1985 and resulted in water levels in the river that were 2.4m [7.9 ft] above summer level.

Once again nature exceeded our worst predictions. Even another 0.15m drawdown in Lake Muskoka would not have been enough to avert disaster.

Floods are a normal phenomenon, but the frequency has increased in recent years. The lakes have also seen an increase in investment in shoreline structures that can be damaged by high water levels. The MLA has been advocating with the province for a review and update of the Muskoka River Water Management Plan to ensure that the water level targets reflect current realities. The plan was published in 2006 using data from the late 1990s as the baseline. Our efforts to get action were rebuked several times by the previous provincial government. The Ford government is now ready to take action with our local governments. Two task forces have been announced; an internal task force and a Muskoka Watershed Task Force. The internal task force - composed mostly of politicians - is already meeting. The Muskoka Watershed Initiative task force will guide the use of a \$5 million fund announced last year and is poised to begin shortly, hopefully with MLA representation.

Lawsuits won't help us but action will.

So what do we want? The MLA wants action to address watershed management issues for now and into the future based on best available data, science and models. We want the province to undertake an inquiry into this and previous floods to determine what happened and inform watershed management actions moving forward. The MLA wants a seat at the table with the other watershed stakeholders to determine how the watershed and operations can be modified to limit the impacts of flooding. We need new design standards for shoreline structures so we can build back better and be more resilient. And we need to see action happening rapidly for three floods in six years is three too many.

Astute readers will by now realize that flooding in Muskoka is a very complex matter encompassing many variables - some controllable and some not - and that is even before introducing the possible impact of climate change. The problem encompasses multiple Districts, multiple towns and townships and the provincial government. A solution will only be possible with all of the above groups working collaboratively toward a common goal. The MLA is working hard to gain seats at the various emerging tables of watershed influence to represent all affected Muskokans. We will keep you informed this summer and fall as we learn more.

Chris Cragg - Chair of MLA Environment Committee



Muskoka's Farmers' Markets

Rosseau Fridays, 9am - 2pm June 28 - August 30, 2019 Waterfront on Lake Rosseau	Bracebridge Saturdays, 8:30am - 1pm May 18 - October 12, 2019 Memorial Park
Bala Mondays, 9am - 2pm June 24 - September 2, 2019 Jaspens Park, Bala	Port Carling Thursdays, 9am - 2pm June 27 - August 29, 2019 Hanna Park
	Gravenhurst Wednesdays, 91m - 2pm May 15 - October 30, 2019 Muskoka Wharf

Your contribution matters. Help to preserve the Muskoka you cherish for future generations. If you haven't already done so, please renew your membership at www.mla.on.ca or by calling our office at 705-765-5723.



In the Wake of the Floods



Rivers across Ontario surged over their banks this spring, flooding hundreds of homes, businesses and cottages. The Ottawa, Muskoka, French and Mattagami rivers (and many others) have flooded with the impacts and risks extending to the lakes where we boat, swim and reside. As a fellow cottager, I share and understand the implications of these recent events.

Unfortunately, flooding is nothing new to southern Ontario. In the 1920s and 1930s, flooding was commonplace. Settlers had cleared most of southern and eastern Ontario, leaving a bare-bones forest cover of about nine per cent. The indiscriminate clearing had stripped away some of the key features that absorb rainfall surges, such as swamps and wetlands along creeks.

Deserts spread. Sand dunes engulfed orchards and roads. There was nothing to soak up the rain and flash floods multiplied.

The solution to the problem back then holds true today – plant more trees.

Tree roots hold back riverbanks and prevent the erosion of our shorelines. Trees act as sponges, soaking up rainwater and releasing it back into the atmosphere through transpiration. They also sequester carbon from atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide, further mitigating the impacts of climate change such as flooding.

To this end, I was very pleased that Forests Ontario was able to participate in the Muskoka Lakes Association's annual seedling day this past May, and I want to commend the MLA for its vision.

In addition to the ecosystem services they provide, trees are also an environmentally friendly source of building material for projects around the cottage, such as rebuilding decks or the docks. Wood is the only renewable building material on the market – when we choose wood from well-managed forests, such as those in Ontario, we can have confidence that we are making an environmentally-friendly choice.

As noted above, trees remove carbon from the atmosphere. When trees are converted into wood products, such as lumber for our docks and cottages, most of the stored carbon is retained in that product well beyond the life of the tree, sometimes for centuries. As new trees take root and grow, they absorb even more carbon, starting the cycle over. To this end, governments around the world are increasingly recognizing that building with wood is one of the best things we can do to fight climate change.

Production and processing of wood uses much less energy than other building materials such as concrete or steel, and results in less water and air pollution, giving wood products an additional environmental edge.

In the wake of the recent floods, planting trees and using wood as the building material of choice are two decisions that can have a tremendous impact.

To find out more about the benefits of wood products and forest management in Ontario, we invite you to join the conversation and follow It Takes a Forest on Facebook and Twitter (@ittakesaforest).

Rob Keen is the CEO of Forests Ontario, a registered charity and non-profit organization. Forests Ontario's goal is to ensure healthy forests for healthy communities by providing tree planting and maintenance programs, delivering forest education programs, and engaging the community in learning more about the benefits of forests.

Sailing in Muskoka

Looking for a fun and environmentally friendly sport this summer? Why not try Sailing!

Did you know there are 8 sailing schools in the Muskoka area that make up the MLA Sailing Network?

- Beaumaris Yacht Club
- Kettles Sailing Club
- Sail Go Home Bay
- Lake of Bays Sailing Club
- Lake Joseph Yacht Club
- Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country club (MLGCC)
- Sail Parry Sound
- South Muskoka Sailing Club

The MLA is proud to support this network of sailing clubs in particular by running an annual inter-club youth regatta series called the Aphrodite Cup.

The MLA also runs the annual MLA Open Fleet Sailing Regatta always on Sunday of the August long weekend. This year the location is the Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club (MLGCC) and it is a particularly exciting year as the MLA closes out their 125th year and MLGCC kicks off their 100th year .

We encourage all sailors, young and old, in any boat, beginner or expert to come out and sail with us!



For more information please visit: mla.on.ca/Muskoka Sailing Network
Please check out this awesome summary of the benefits of sailing from the Singapore Sailing Association.

www.sailingscuttlebutt.com/2018/07/05/ten-socio-emotional-benefits-sailing/

Barbara Triskan - Co-Chair of the MLA Sailing Regatta



Hiking in for the Shot!

THE TORRANCE BARRENS DARK SKY PRESERVE



The barrens present multiple hiking and photography opportunities for a personal trip or a family trip. The three trails that are on the premises are lengths of; 4km, 5.8km, 6km. The trails are of an easy-medium level as there are some locations that require jumping over small puddles or open water as well as rises in elevation as the trails take you upon a rock face which overlooks one of the three ponds; Highland Pond. This conservation area is also home to some rare species in Ontario; Eastern bluebird, Cooper's hawk and Ontario's only lizard, the Five-lined skink.

But, the beauty of this property is not limited to the daytime. As the creation of this conservation area was to eliminate the presence of any light pollution within the night sky on a 4,700 acre plot of crown land. The property is perfect for any photographers who are interested in night/astronomic photography. The lack of light within the sky grants some visitors the ability to view the Milky Way Galaxy with a naked eye. If you want to experience the true magnificence of a Muskoka night sky, the Torrance Barrens are for you!

HARDY LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK

Hardy Lake Provincial Park is situated approximately 20 kilometers outside of Gravenhurst. The park is home to two separate trails; one at a length of 3km and another at 8km. The trails range in difficulty strictly because of length. The trails follow alongside Hardy Lake, which at times open up to provide an unobstructed view of the gorgeous lake. Further into the trails, you become immersed within a

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thick forested habitat that provides a sense of togetherness as the large White Pines stretch into the sky. The trails are also scattered with massive glacial erratics, which are large boulder deposits left by the recession of glaciers many years ago. These boulders tell a story as to how large these glacial movements truly were. Photography opportunities within this Provincial Park are not limited to natural elements as there are manmade bridges that stretch between the mainland and an island. These bridges are an interesting location to shoot portrait or landscape photography.

SKELETON LAKE FISH HATCHERY TRAIL



Fish Hatchery Trail is located between Ullswater and Bent River, down Fish Hatchery Road. This unique trail was once home to one of Muskoka's fish hatchery ponds. The operation was closed in 1991 and has since been naturalized to its previous state. This trail follows a river system that bends between shallow pools of water that eventually burst into a very unique waterfall. With caution and the correct time of year, some find themselves swimming in the pool of water beneath the falls. If you're looking for a unique photograph to capture the beauty of nature within Muskoka, this location may be for you.

Article and Images by Sam Flowers

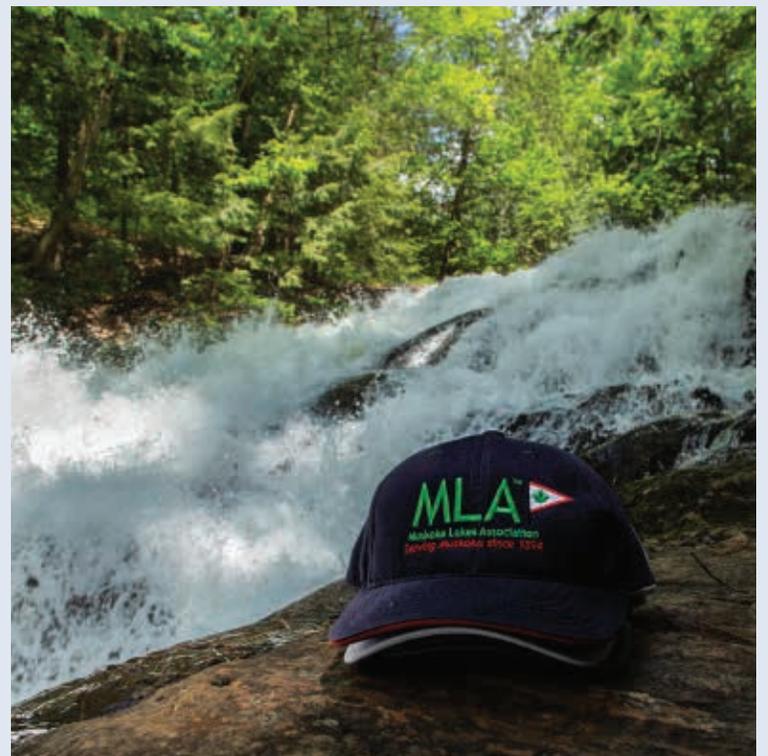
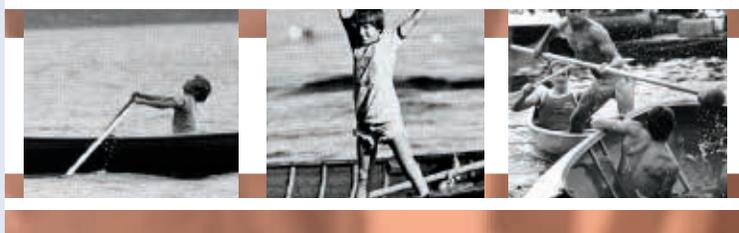
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- SANSIN
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- SWS MARINA
- CHESTNUT PARK
- JAYNE'S COTTAGES
- WALKERS POINT MARINA

Saturday August 3rd, 2019
Muskoka Lakes Golf & Country Club



2019 MLA Bursary Winner



The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) has awarded its 7th Annual MLA Bursary to Laken Hobson of Bracebridge and Muskoka Lakes Secondary School in Bracebridge, Ontario.

Laken is involved in many extra-curricular activities and has multiple certifications. Laken has been on the school's swim team since grade 9 and is a certified National lifeguard, Red Cross lifeguard as well as a water safety instructor. Laken often finds herself volunteering to support her local community; Leadership Council, Rotary Youth Leadership awards camp, Special Olympics Ontario swim coach, Women's advocacy group child care and many more.

Academically, Laken accomplished an outstanding achievement of receiving Honour roll four years in a row. She's also been nominated for the Lieutenant Governor's Volunteer award and the All-Round Student award.

Laken has accepted her offer to York University, Glendon Campus for International Studies.

Congratulations Laken!

Have You Checked Your Water Quality Post Flood ?

The flooding events this spring have turned the attention of many homeowners to their water supplies. Questions such as "Is my well in good shape?", "Did the flood waters contaminate my drinking water?", and "Is my water safe for drinking/showering/cooking?" are being asked, but who is providing the answers?

The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment for the Province of Ontario (2012) identified flooding as one of the factors for severe incidents of drinking water contamination due to floodwaters potentially being impacted by raw sewage, chemicals, or other pollutants.

Having a licensed Hydrogeologist and Well Contractor perform an inspection and a comprehensive water chemistry analysis is a great option to obtain an independent and objective assessment.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit offers free chemistry testing for E.coli and Total Coliforms, and all homeowners should be testing their water at least once per year to ensure there is no immediate health

threat. But what about contaminants such as nitrates and phosphates (from fertilizers and septic systems), metals, anions, and other parameters like pesticides that are health related, but aren't tested for by the Health Unit?

A comprehensive analysis provides a much more detailed assessment of the quality of the water in your home or cottage, and can help to identify short term and long term health concerns. A professional and objective report provides peace of mind, and can help you decide whether you need to repair your well, disinfect your plumbing system, treat your water before using it, or just pour yourself a cold glass and enjoy.

Chris Helmer



Is the well or lake water you use for drinking, cooking, or showering safe?

HCS is bringing comprehensive water quality testing to Muskoka Lakes this summer.

From just \$350 for a 61-parameter potability package.

For information including sampling event dates, package prices, and to-your-door / to-your-dock service, please visit our website:

www.hydrog.ca/muskoka

or contact Chris Helmer:
905.550.0969
chrishelmer@hydrog.ca

APGO Licensed Hydrogeologist
MECP Licensed Well Contractor

WHAT IS IN YOUR WATER?

Hydrogeology Consulting Services (HCS) is bringing comprehensive water quality testing to the Muskoka Lakes this summer to analyze your water supply for contaminants such as nitrates, phosphate, bacteria, metals, and pesticides, with a detailed report comparing your results to the Ontario Drinking Water Standards (ODWS).



Sharing our passion for Muskoka



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Local's Corner

Rieger Contracting

As you drive into Bracebridge on Highway 118W, you may not have noticed Rieger Contracting – unless your eye was caught by the green 1936 Dodge pick up at the entrance to the driveway. Mike Rieger, who started the business in 1986, is at heart a car guy.

His business focuses on everything outside of four walls, which includes excavation, landscaping, septic installations, demolition, driveways and patios. He likes to say he solves people's problems. The tougher the problem, the better he enjoys the challenge.



Hard landscaping includes flagstone patios and stairs, fire pits, boulder retaining walls and the soft landscaping to pull it all together. The flagstone now comes from their own local pit, and custom cut to each landscape design.



Natural landscaping is their specialty while focusing on the natural beauty and environment of Muskoka.

It's become a family business over the years, with his son Alex who is 25 working full time, and his daughter Kelsey who is 22 working part-time while she finishes a business degree. His wife Jane also works part time between her nursing job. Currently Mike has 20 employees across Rieger Contracting and Dockside Welding. Dockside Welding builds steel docks and upper structures for boat houses and ramps up in the winter when digging in Muskoka becomes impossible. He'll tell you he started this by accident. He always wanted a barge, so building the docks became his excuse. He keeps his staff employed year round this way, and builds multiple docks. When he builds a dock, it is built to last and withstand the perils of fluctuating climatic conditions. Mother Nature can throw challenges as we've discovered this year in Muskoka!



It's a tough business, with lots of perils that come with the assignment. In 33 years, Mike has seen equipment fall down steep embankments, boulders escape and the occasional brushes with wildlife. But his strong work ethic and commitment to getting the job done right the first time has won him many loyal customers. And if something does go sideways, he makes it right.

Mike believes in giving back to the community by supporting various charitable initiatives that include Andy's House, Shriner's, the Legion and other local charities.

For more information, visit www.riegercontracting.com

Cathie Mostowyk



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