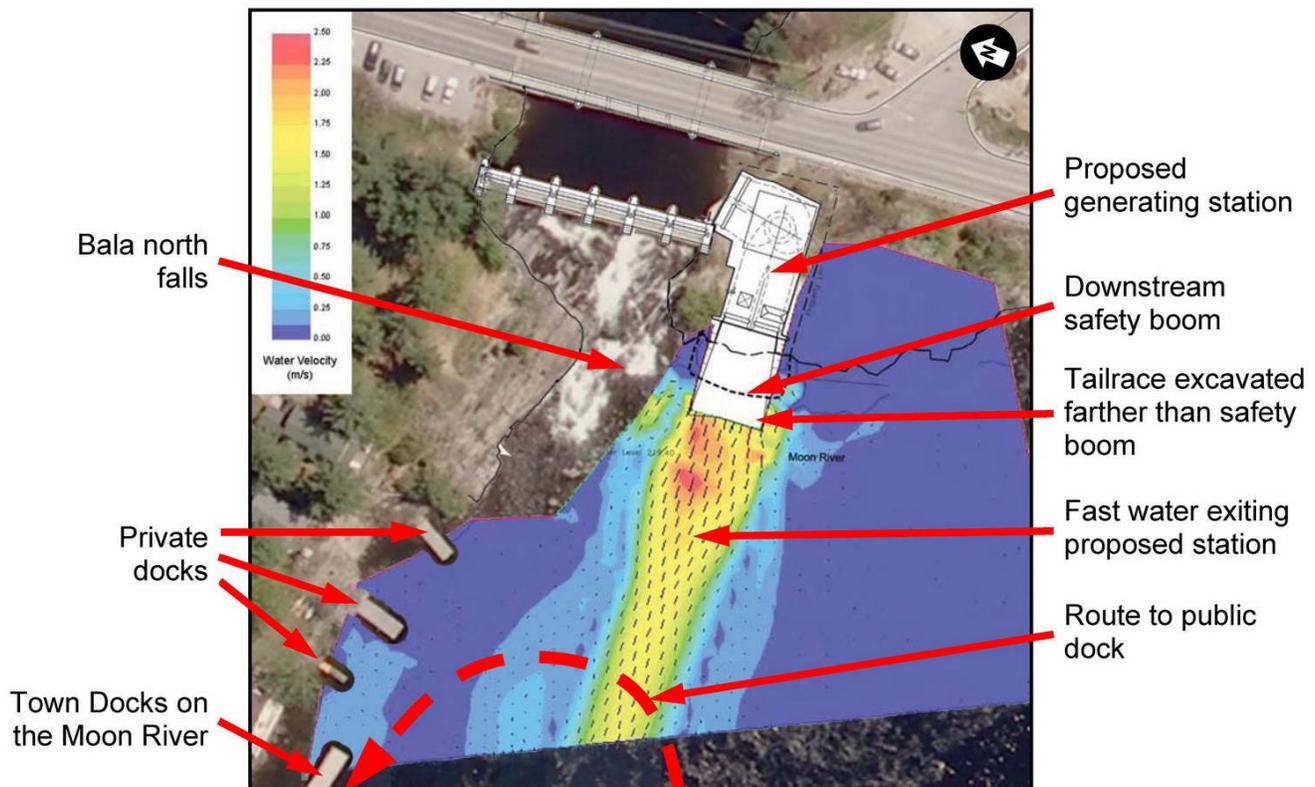


## Important questions and answers for the proposed hydro-electric generating station at the Bala falls

### 1) Would it be safe.

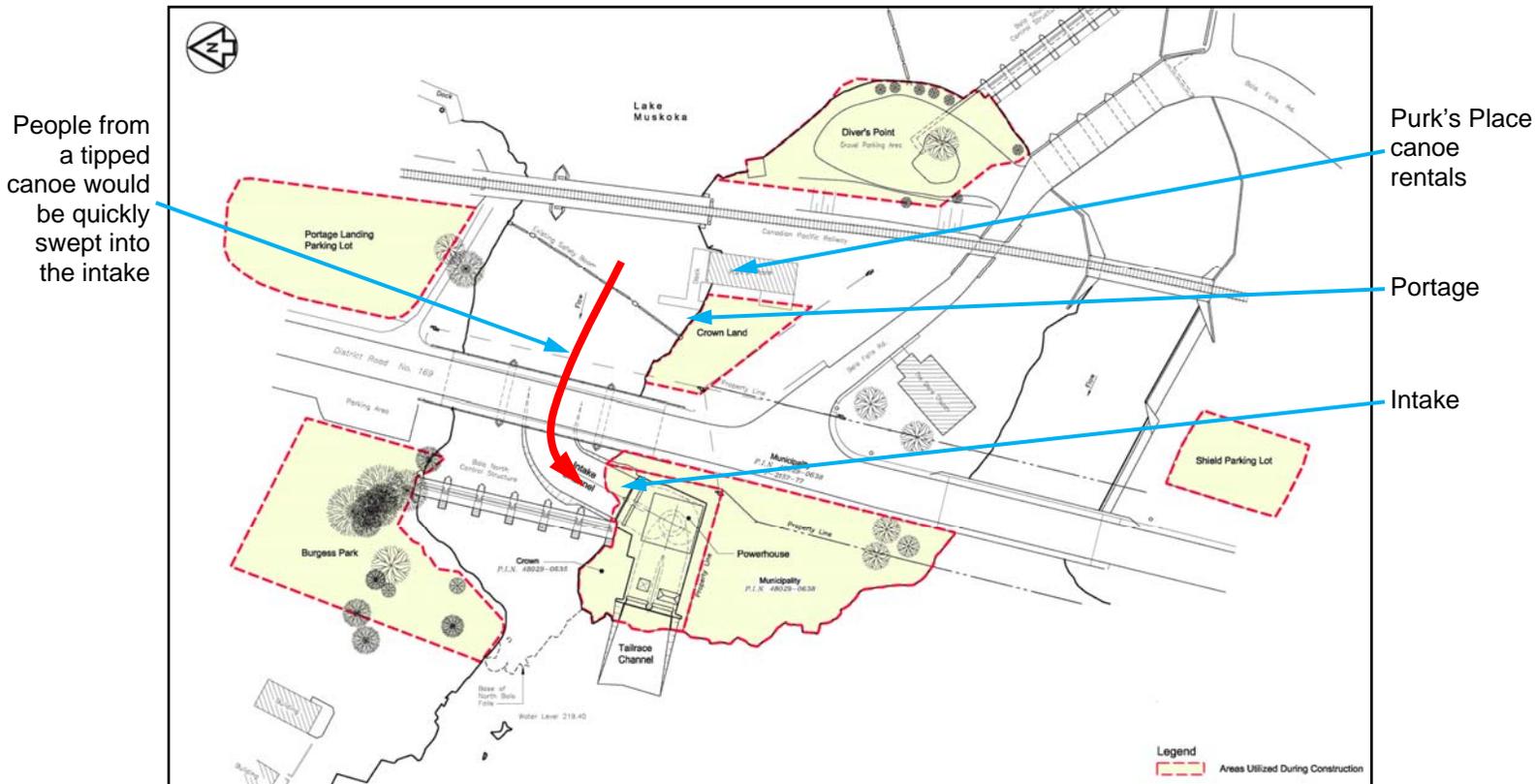
- a) The Ministry of Natural Resources apparently doesn't know or care, sometimes they just say it would be the proponent's responsibility *"to ensure appropriate public safety measures"*. Other times they say that even with the cycling mode of operation (that is, operation would begin without warning at about noon on summer days, just when people would be in the usually-serene water at the base of the Bala north falls) that it *"is not expected to create a safety concern"*.
- b) The proponent's original proposal was a smaller run-of-river station which would operate at a constant rate and which directed the outflow south to the centre of the Moon River. But the proponent's current proposal; is larger, would operate in a cycled mode, would bring the fast water now entering the Moon River through the Bala south channel hundreds of feet closer to the in-water recreational area at the Base of the Bala north channel, and would direct this towards the Town Docks on the Moon River, which are the only public docks on the Moon River.
- c) It would seem the only way to make this safe would be to keep people out of the water, but the proponent just says they have *"no plans for fencing"*. But without asking their lawyers or insurance company what the required safety measures would be, that is a meaningless and misleading statement.



*The fast and turbulent water exiting would be just a few feet from the in-water recreational area at the base of the Bala north falls, and canoes docking at the only public docks on the Moon River would need to go through this fast water.*

- d) For comparison, there is a 110'-long concrete breakwater needed to protect the boats docked at the base of the Bracebridge Falls from the fast water exiting the much smaller generating station there. And given that the proposed Bala generating station would be automatically started without warning when people would be in the water just a few feet away, it is clear that if fencing was not initially installed in Bala, it would not be safe. But eventually fencing would need to be installed to both prevent people from accessing the water and to keep them from dangerous parts of the generating station.
- e) The proposed Bala station's water intake would be a steel grate starting a few feet below water level, and extending down 28', and the intake would be 36' wide. Anything drawn to it would be held underwater by the tons of water rushing into the generating station.

The end of the portage is beside Purk's Place, and this used by children from YMCA Camp Pine Crest. This is just upstream of where the intake would be. The water speed would be increasing near here as the Bala north channel is shallow. If a canoe tipped, the children would need to hold on to the upstream safety boom until someone could contact the proposed plant's operators in Bracebridge to remotely shut it down. Anyone who could not hold on to the upstream safety boom would be pulled underwater and drowned while held against the intake trash rack.



From Figure 5.4 of Proponent's 2012 Addendum. Shaded areas would be used during construction, turning all of Bala into a construction site for two years, with no visitors welcome.

**So no, it would be very dangerous and the only solution would be to fence everything to keep people from getting to the water.**

**2) Would it be beautiful, as the area is.**

a) The proponent's proposal stated they understood the requirement that they "*demonstrate consideration of the extensive aesthetic, recreational, social and economic values in the area*" and as a result, committed that the roof of their proposed generating station would be **below the level of Muskoka Road 169**. Therefore, potential visitors passing through Bala would continue to be able to look down the Moon River and hopefully stop as such tourism is important to the area's economy.

Their proposal also said they would provide "attractive landscaping", "tree plantings" and they would be "creating opportunities for recreation" and would "not generally diminish the public's enjoyment of the area for swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking and hiking."

b) The proponent would not be honouring **any** of these commitments.

■ Initial drawings from the proponent show that their proposed generating station would be **three storeys above Muskoka Road 169**, and would completely fill the 70' x 100' Crown land site with a concrete building, to within inches of the property boundaries.

■ Therefore, there would be no trees, no landscaping, and as above, they would be eliminating the recreation. People come to Bala to touch the water, but would no longer be able to.

c) The proponent claims they would be starting construction in a few months, why have they **still not released any credible drawings showing the appearance and height of their proposed building**. What fencing would there be.

d) As shown by the shaded areas above, the proponent intends to use all the parking and recreational sites for their construction purposes. **Bala would be a construction site for at least two years** regardless of what they claim about it possibly being shorter.

e) All three of the generating stations at and upstream of the Bracebridge Falls generating station have barbed-wire fencing and are operated by the same company the proponent says would operate the proposed Bala station. So barbed-wire fencing would be in Bala's future.

**So no, it would not be beautiful. It would be two years of mess and construction and then their proposed building would be all concrete, three storeys high.** No nature, no landscaping, no trees – this would be terrible for the area's economy.

**3) Would there be enough water over the falls to continue to draw people to Bala.**

a) Other than during spring freshet, the proponent would allow only 6% of the water to go over the Bala falls.

In contrast, by international agreement, at least 50% of the flow of the Niagara River must go over Niagara falls, as it is important to the area's economy. Tourism is important to Bala, why not the same requirement.

b) While the proponent convened a "Flow Distribution Committee", they just used this forum to **tell** the public what they would do. Water over the falls would be lost revenue to this private developer and they have no interest in sharing this public resource. The proponent would apparently allow a **few weekends of slightly increased flow, but this is meaningless given**

**that people visit Bala every day** of the summer and in other seasons as well.

No, the proponent would **not allow enough water down the Bala falls**. Why should this public resource be for a private developer's profit. The water should be shared more fairly.

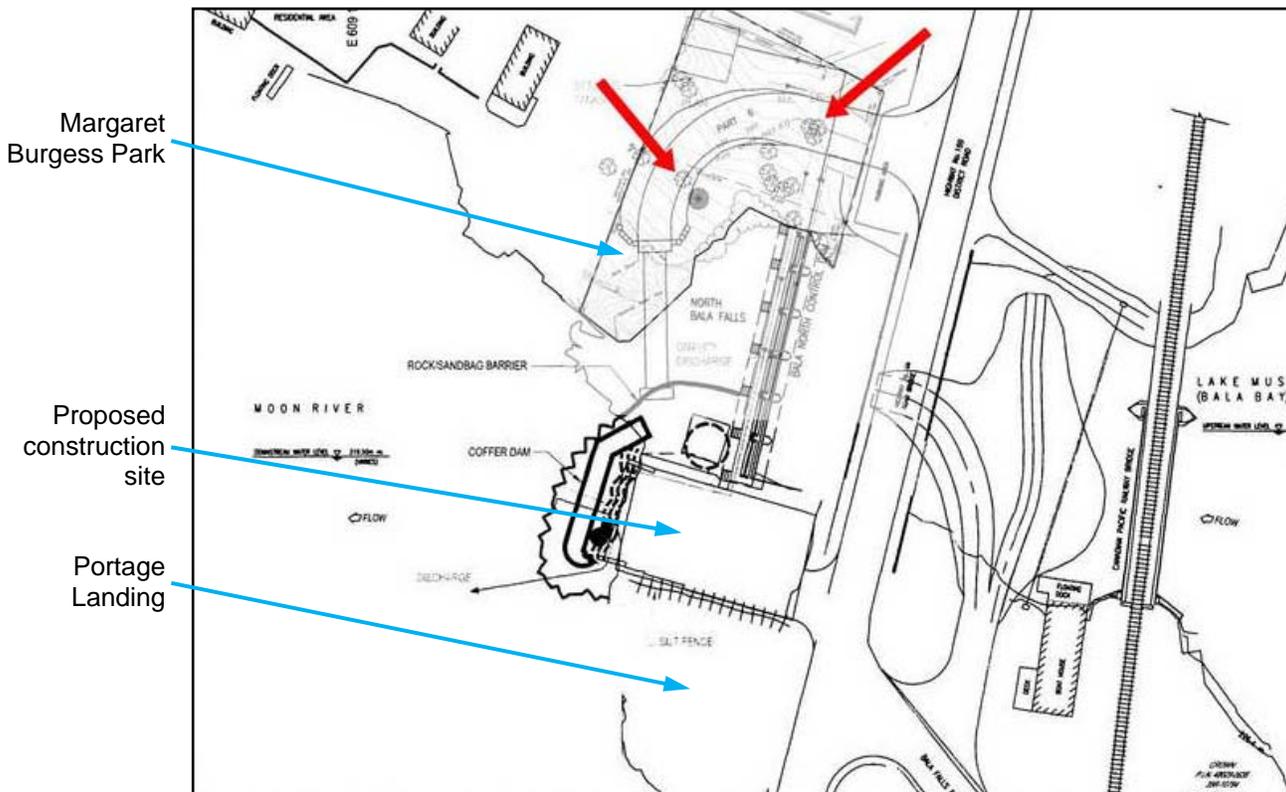
**4) Have the area First Nations been consulted.**

- a) There was some First Nations consultation, but this was for their previous Option 2 proposal which:
  - The proponent has now abandoned.
  - Would not have obstructed the Bala Portage.
- b) The Bala Portage is important to the history and culture of the Wahta Mohawks, so the Wahta must be consulted for any negative impact to it.
  - However, when the proponent changed to their current Alternative 1A proposal they said this change would be a positive impact, when in fact the change would be to permanently obstruct and eliminate the Bala Portage.
  - The proponent continues to provide incorrect information to the First Nations about this. And the province has apparently not responded to the Wahta's request for consultation.

In summary, no, the First Nations have not been consulted for the proponent's **current** proposal.

**5) What is the plan for "saving Margaret Burgess Park".**

The proponent has stated that they would leave Margaret Burgess Park "untouched" if they could instead use the Township's Portage Landing for their construction purposes.



*Proponent would cut down only two trees (highlighted with red arrows) from Margaret Burgess Park, but would cut over 100 from Portage Landing.*



- c) The proponent also does not have environmental approval for the silt curtain, as this would negatively affect the walleye spawning habitat.

In summary, the proponent would **block all flow in the Bala north channel during construction and they would install a silt curtain. They do not have environmental approval for either.**

7) **When would in-water construction work begin.**

- a) The proponent's 2009 Environmental Screening/Review report agreed to the MNR's timing restriction that there be no in-water work from April 1 to July 15, due to warm-water species reproduction requirements.
- b) However, the proponent's has informed Transport Canada and the Ministry of Natural Resources that they would start work on June 1.

The proponent's plans are to **start work before their environmental approval allows.**