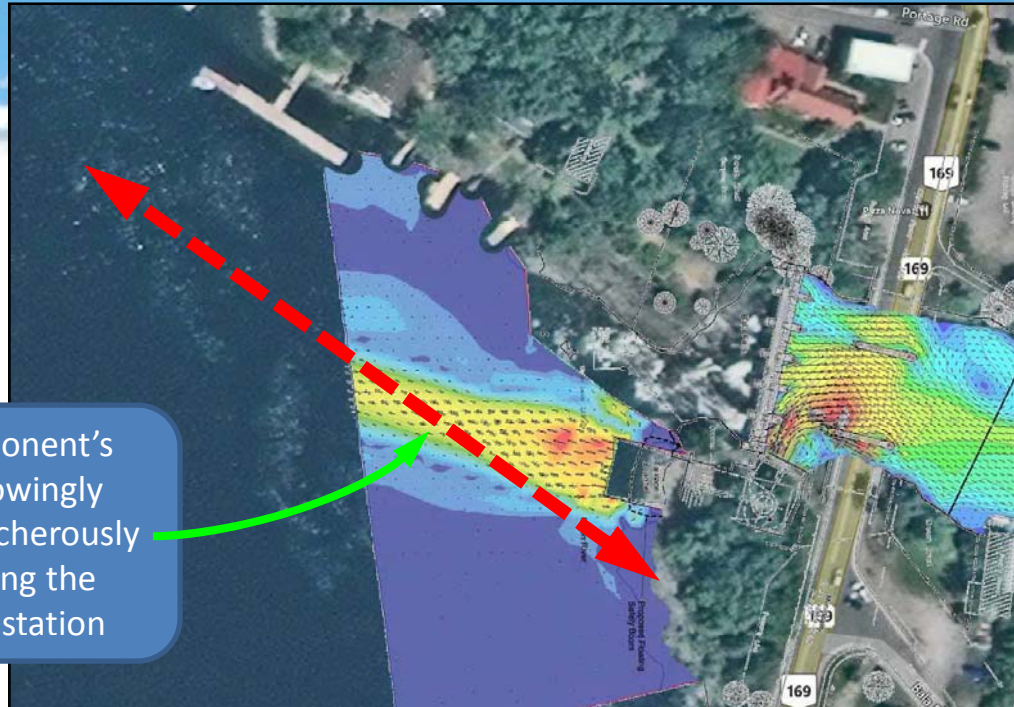


Proposed Hydro-electric Generating Station at the Bala Falls
Where is the Safety Plan

Proponent's proposed portage



People using the proponent's portage would unknowingly canoe through the treacherously turbulent water exiting the proposed generating station

- In 2013 the MNR prohibited public access to the Crown land south of the Bala north falls as they say the water there is too dangerous
 - But proponent's rehabilitation of the Township's land would build a new portage landing directly adjacent to their tailrace
 - This doesn't make sense

More conflicting statements

- Proponent's 2005 proposal stated they would *“not generally diminish the public's enjoyment of the area for swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking and hiking”*
 - But OPG/OPP public safety campaign says: *“Stay Clear, Stay Safe”*
- Which works in Bracebridge
 - But Bala has unprotected public and private docks much closer
 - And “No Swimming” signs could not be posted on the private shores
- So this too doesn't make sense

2008 Drowning due to Wilson's Falls Generating Station



Incident Review

- OPP informed us that there was a group of boys skateboarding in the area.
- They were looking for a place to swim to cool down.
- Local resident gave them directions to a public swimming area. We believe they drove past and ended up at our generation site.
- The oldest was 21, the youngest was 12. Jose was 14 years old. The 21 year old climbed over the rocks, jumped in and swam through the discharge from the tailrace and over to the rocks on the falls.
- The youngest refused to go, thinking it was too unsafe. Jose was coerced by his peers into the water where he attempted to swim though the current but was overcome and didn't make it.

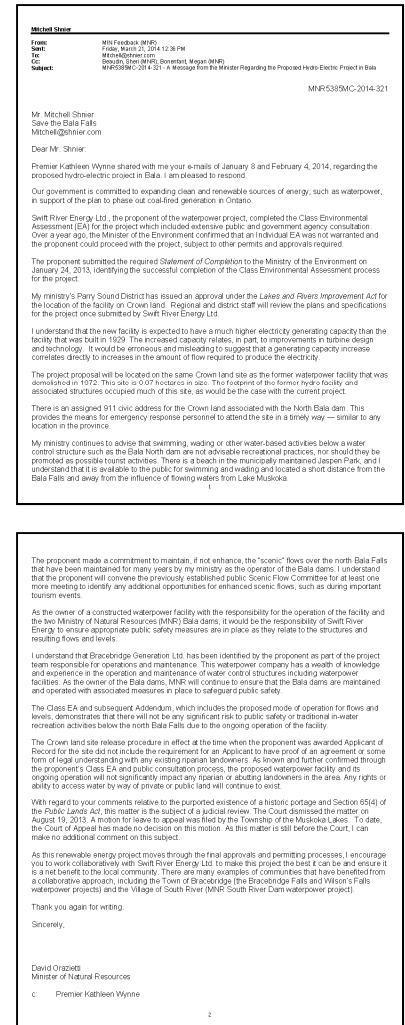
- It is a fact that the 2008 drowning at Wilson's Falls was due to the tailrace flow from the generating station
 - The station owner/operator stated this at an industry conference

Far more dangerous in Bala

- The situation in Bala would be far more dangerous
 - 1) Few people visit Wilson's Falls, but in-water recreation in Bala is extremely popular
 - ▶ The proposed Bala station would
 - 2) Have ten times the tailrace flow
 - 3) Be automatically started at about noon on $\frac{1}{3}$ of summer days
 - ▶ Just when people would be in the water a few feet away, having seen it "safe"
- That is, public safety has not been addressed

Letter from the MNR – just call “911”

- Letter from Minister of Natural Resources, March 21, 2014:
 - “There is an assigned 911 civic address for the Crown land associated with the North Bala dam. This provides the means for emergency response personnel to attend the site in a timely way – similar to any location in the province.”
- The province is making political decisions from Toronto
 - They don’t understand the local situation
- We need to prevent drownings, not help recovering bodies
 - We don’t want Bala to be the drowning capital of Muskoka



Where is the Safety Plan

- Despite strong efforts, the MNR still doesn't understand the public safety problem
 - The Township's support for this proposed project further convinces the MNR that there are no public safety problems
- Bracebridge Examiner, August 13, 2008, reporting on drowning due to the Wilson's Falls generating station:
 - *"The family also wants to ensure other families do not have to go through a similar tragedy."*
- Here is our opportunity to honour the family's wishes
 - We can't assume "someone else" will ensure safety
 - As community-minded people, we all must do what we can

Proposed Resolution

- Our request
 - Would the Township of Muskoka Lakes write a letter to the MNR asking that a safety plan be presented to the public
- Everybody wants this issue to go away
 - But thinking, hoping, and expecting someone else will ensure public safety will just come back to haunt us every time there is a drowning

Township of Muskoka Lakes

COUNCIL Agenda Reference

DATE: January 26, 2016 RESOLUTION NUMBER: _____

MOVED BY: _____

SECONDED BY: _____

Whereas in a letter dated May 16, 2013, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) notified the Township of Muskoka Lakes that public use of the Crown land south of the Bala north falls was prohibited for safety reasons, to protect the public from entering the water there;

And Whereas the water from the generating station proposed for the same site would create even more safety concerns there;

And Whereas for many years Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have sponsored a "Stay Clear, Stay Safe" educational campaign informing people to stay far away from hydro-electric generating stations;

And Whereas the Township is contemplating a lease with the proponent for the proposed Bala generating station, and this would include the proponent rehabilitating the Township land so there would be a new portage landing adjacent to the proposed generating station;

And Whereas in their 2005 proposal to the MNRF for the Bala generating station, the proponent stated their plans would "not generally diminish the public's enjoyment of the area for swimming, boating, fishing, picnicking and hiking";

And Whereas in response to questions about public safety concerns, the MNRF has stated that the proponent would "have the responsibility to ensure appropriate public safety measures are in place as they relate to the structures and resulting flows", but no such public safety measures have been communicated to the public to date;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved That the Township of Muskoka Lakes write a letter to the MNRF requesting that before any further approvals and permits are granted regarding the proposed generating station, that the public be provided with details of the fencing, safety booms, signage, warning sirens and other public safety measures that would be implemented.

<u>RECORDED VOTE:</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	<u>YEAS</u>	
COUNCILLOR BARANIK (Deputy Mayor)	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR BARRICK-SPERN	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR CURRIE	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR EDWARDS	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR HARDING	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR KRUCKEL (Acting Deputy Mayor)	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR LEDGER	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR McTAGGART	_____	_____	
COUNCILLOR NISHIKAWA	_____	_____	MOTION DEFEATED []
MAYOR FURNISS	_____	_____	MOTION CARRIED []
TOTALS	_____	_____	

MAYOR