

# SaveTheBalaFalls.com

Too much we don't know  
Too many mis-statements

## Good morning,

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- ▶ We'd like to show you that the proposal doesn't deserve our "blind faith" that it would be good for our community
  - ▶ Too much is still unknown
  - ▶ Too much abuse of process
- ▶ Our children and their children would be living with our decision
  - ▶ And hopefully not saying "*What were they thinking*"
- ▶ Please consider this information with an open mind
  - ▶ We're also open to receiving **factual information**

# Some want this project

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The few people who want the project have no basis to believe it would be good for Bala

- ▶ We have heard a small number of comments repeatedly:
    - ▶ “*The proposed power station / observation deck would be **good for tourism***”
      - ▶ If this is so, then the Economic Impact Study would have **investigated and reported such a net tourism benefit**
    - ▶ “*Option 2 is preferable to Option 1*”
      - ▶ Let’s address the serious public safety, economic, and tourism concerns first
    - ▶ “*Scenic flow would be the same as currently in the summer*”
      - ▶ They neglect to note the important South Falls would become a trickle
      - ▶ This summer drought flow would be year-round after the freshet
        - ▶ We hope people will continue to come to Bala in the “shoulder months”
  - ▶ There are **too many unknowns** to say “Yes” to anything
  - ▶ Next:
    - ▶ The proponent has been making **bold “mis-statements”**
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# We said the proposed project would take away **500' of the only public shoreline in the area ...**

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## North Bala Falls Small Hydro Project Briefing Notes: August 2010 Update

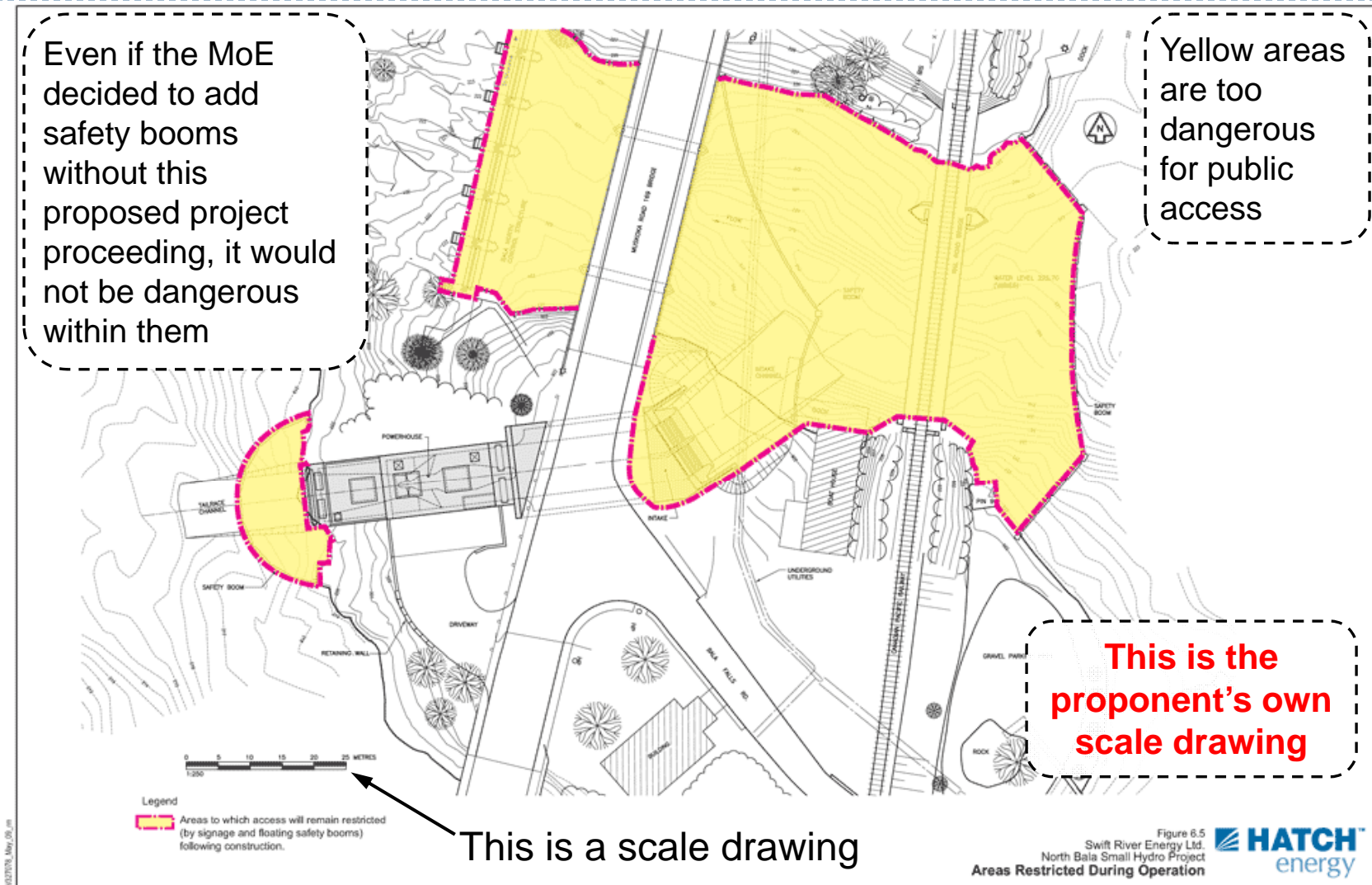
- ▶ “The following addresses some of the more notable fictions disguised as facts ...
- ▶ *FICTION: That the project would shut out public access to hundreds of metres of shoreline.*
- ▶ *FACT: This is simply not true...*

## Environmental Screening Report, October 2009

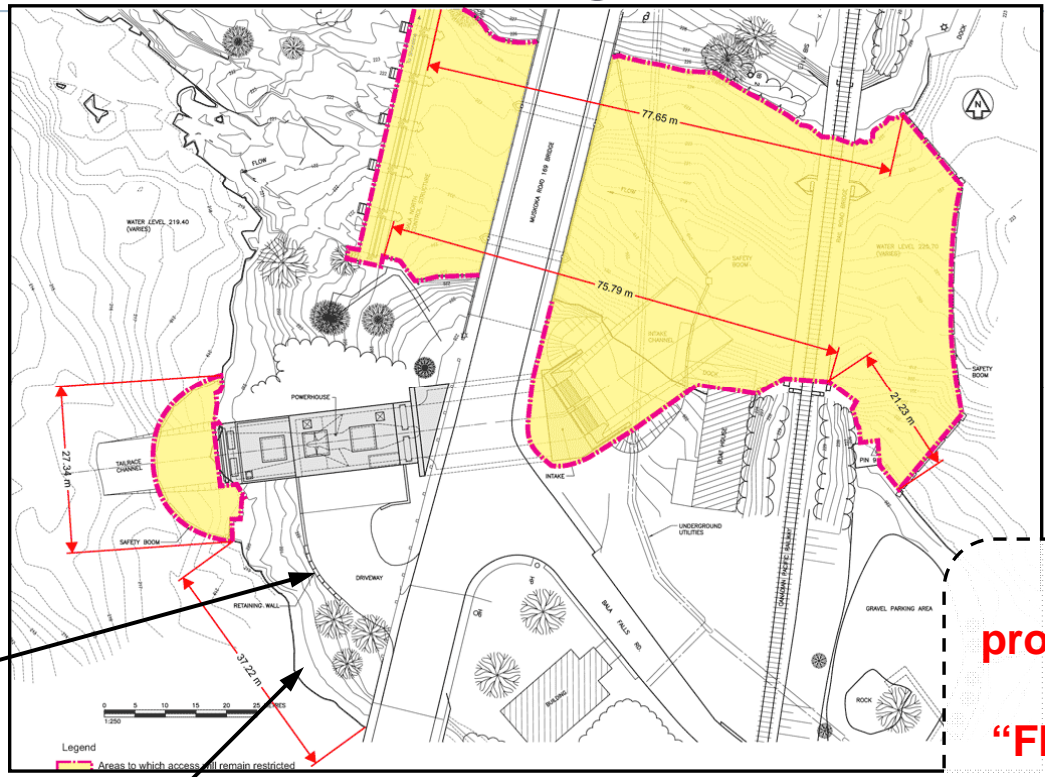
- ▶ Let's look at the proponent's own drawing

**The proponent has been making statements which are less than truthful**

# Environmental Screening Report, Figure 6.5



In fact, **over 600'** of the only public shoreline in the area would be too dangerous for access



10'-high retaining wall

**Why did the proponent say our claim was "FICTION", we've been right all along**

▶ If area south of proposed power station is accessible:

78 m
+ 76 m
+ 21 m
+ 27 m
<hr/>
202 m
= 663 feet

▶ If not:

202 m
+ 37 m
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239 m
= 784 feet

## Proponent says ...

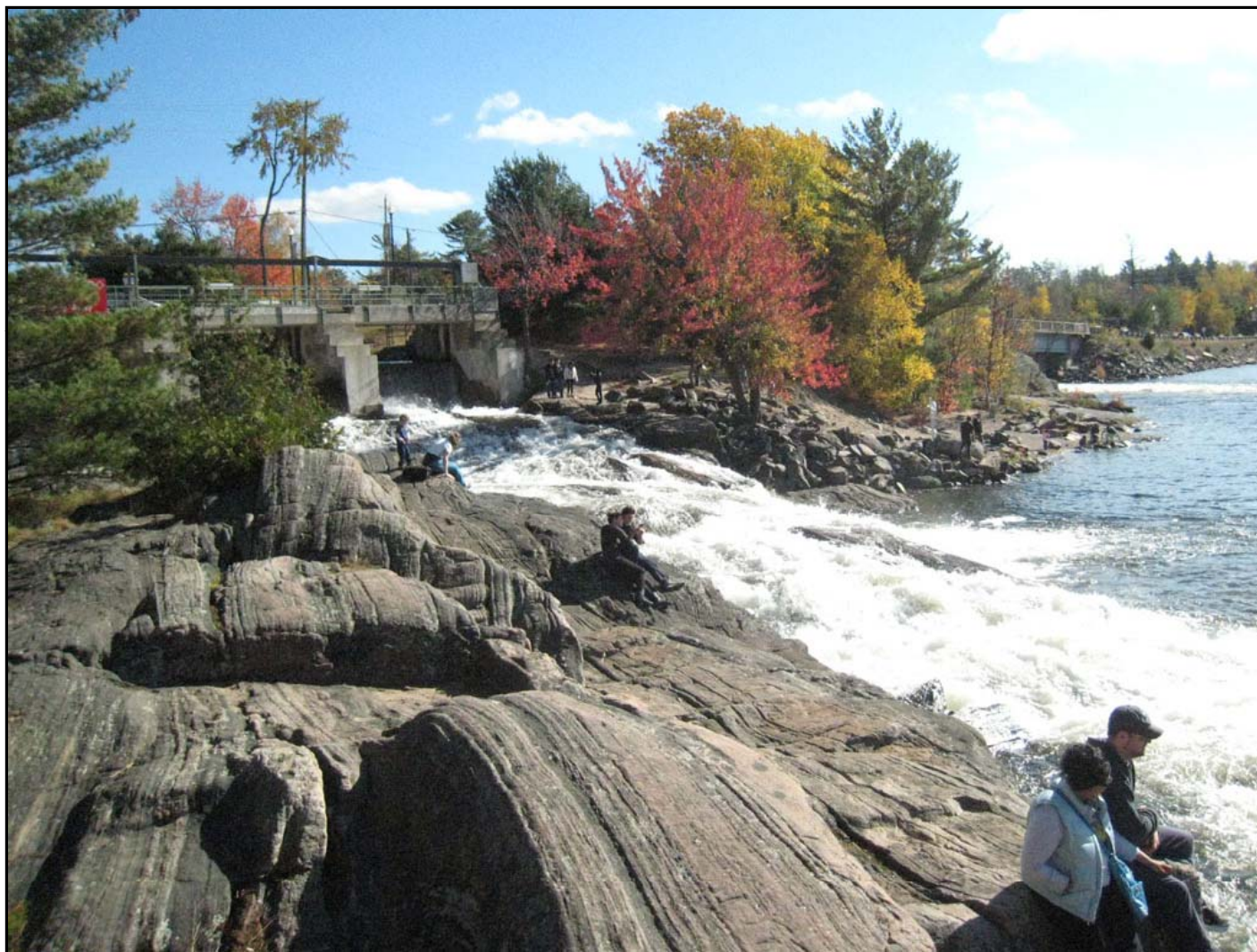
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- ▶ *“an underground facility”*
- ▶ *“tucked into a valley”*
- ▶ *“virtually all station facilities will lie invisibly below grade”*
- ▶ *“the underground powerhouse”*
- ▶ *“our buried option”*

**Proponent repeatedly  
says powerhouse  
would be buried**

- ▶ There's **nothing underground** about a concrete cube, 33'-wide, rising 20' above the Moon River
  - ▶ My house has a basement, that doesn't make it “buried”
  - ▶ That's the size of a two-storey house
    - ▶ The rest of Muskoka can't build a house on the shore

# People look at the North Falls from the North Side





# It would be a disaster even if it was a bit farther

Approximate size and location of proposed power station



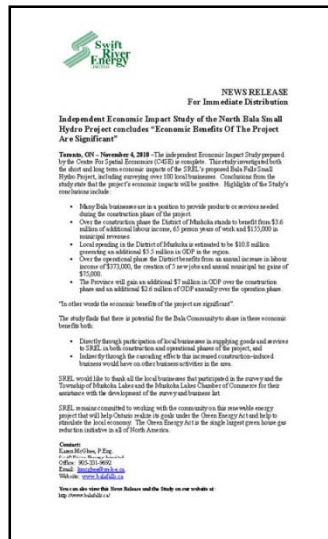
**How can the proponent say their proposed station would be “buried”, it would be huge and hugely visible, and exactly obstructing the most important view**

# Proponent's Economic Impact Study: Garbage In, Garbage Out

November 4, 2010 News Release  
“Independent Economic Impact Study ...

- ▶ *“Conclusions from the study state that the project’s economic impacts will be positive”*

**The proponent’s own report does not justify this bold and pivotal statement – which was the purpose of the entire exercise**



The Economic Impact Study says  
(page 29) ...

- ▶ **“impacts to local business from anticipated disruptions due to road closures, reduced access to the Falls adjacent to the site, and general construction interruptions have not been estimated”**

# Proponent's Economic Impact Study: More Garbage In, Garbage Out

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November 4, 2010 News Release  
“Independent Economic Impact Study...

- ▶ *“In other words the economic benefits of the project are significant”*

**The Ministry of the Environment Required the proponent to provide this Economic Impact Study – which did not ask business owners about negative impacts on their business, and did not talk to tourists to see if this project would affect their desire to visit the Bala Falls**

The Economic Impact Study says  
(page 28) ...

- ▶ *“...there is **no information available** for the Bala Community to indicate how many **tourists** visit each year, how long they stay on average, and how much they spend on average”*

**Without knowing the negative effects of this proposed project, how can the proponent claim any net benefits**

# Public Safety Issue: Proponent says ...

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## Environmental Screening Report

- ▶ *“...operated in a run of river mode...”*
- ▶ *“A run-of-river regime...”*

## Response to SaveTheBalaFalls’ Elevation Request, April 1, 2010

- ▶ *“...It is proposed to operate the project as “run-of-river”, not in a peaking/ponding mode....”*

## Minutes of meeting, October 27, 2010

- ▶ *“...during periods where the flow in the river (from Lake Muskoka) is less than 20 m<sup>3</sup>/s, OPG would require the Bala plant to stop operations for a period of time (likely in the range of **4 to 8 hours**) and then **restart** at a minimum of 20 m<sup>3</sup>/s...”*

**This start / stop  
operation creates huge  
dangers to the public**

# Creating New Dangers

## North Bala Falls Small Hydro Project Briefing Notes: August 2010 Update

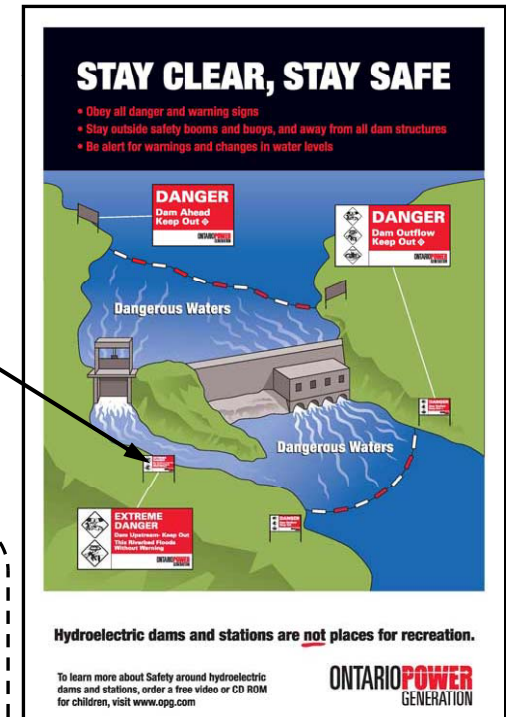
- ▶ *“FICTION: Advertisements are being placed by the OPP and OPG warning the public to stay away from hydro stations and surrounding shorelines and waterways...”*
- ▶ *“FACT: These critics ignore the fact that these warnings pertain to dams, whether or not they have power stations associated with them...”*

## Ontario Power Generation Poster

- ▶ The concern is **changing water flow**

Extreme Danger  
This riverbed  
**floods without warning**

**OPG’s safety campaign is exactly about the dangers specific to the start / stop operation the proponent has now confirmed would in fact be used**



# OPG Brochure: Stay Clear, Stay Safe

**Remotely-operated dam gates ...**

**Our operators can't see you**

Most facilities are **remotely-controlled by operators many kilometers away.**

They open or close dams, to manage river flows, and **start or stop generators** throughout the day and night as demand for electricity rises and falls.

This may result in frequent, rapid and dangerous **changes in water levels and flows**, changes that can harm those who venture too close.

In areas above and below dams, fast-moving water creates dangerous turbulence and **strong undercurrents...**



Remotely-operated dam gates can quickly turn calm waters or dry riverbeds into dangerous flows.

## **STAY CLEAR, STAY SAFE AROUND DAMS, HYDROELECTRIC STATIONS AND SURROUNDING WATERWAYS**

**G**etting too close to dams and hydroelectric stations is always dangerous. A spot that seems calm and safe one moment can turn into a dangerous surge of rising and fast-flowing water – quickly and often without any warning.

### **Our operators can't see you**

Most facilities are remotely-controlled by operators many kilometers away. They open or close dams, to manage river flows, and start or stop generators throughout the day and night as demand for electricity rises and falls.

This may result in frequent, rapid and dangerous changes in water levels and flows, changes that can harm those who venture too close.

Be especially careful when near waters above and below dams and hydroelectric stations. At a generating station water from above the dam runs through the station and then surges out to join the main stream of the river.

In areas above and below dams, fast-moving water creates dangerous turbulence and strong undercurrents which are not always apparent from the calm looking surface waters.

**OPG's safety campaign is exactly about the dangers specific to the start / stop operation the proponent has now confirmed would be used**

# Option 1: Only on Crown Land – **NOT**

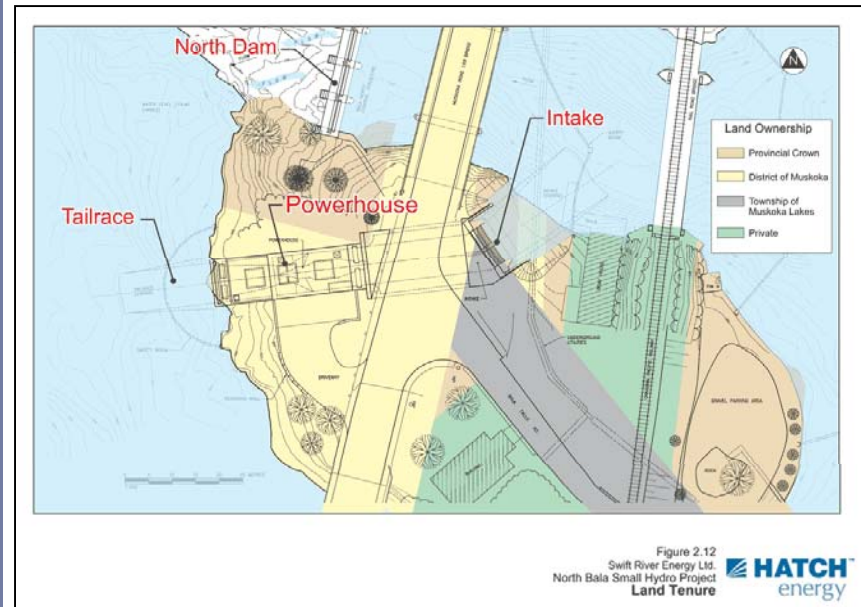
North Bala Falls Small Hydro Project  
Briefing Notes: August 2010 Update

- ▶ *“The Option 1 Plan would not require the use of, or rights to, any adjacent properties....”*

August 18, 2010, Letter to the Editor

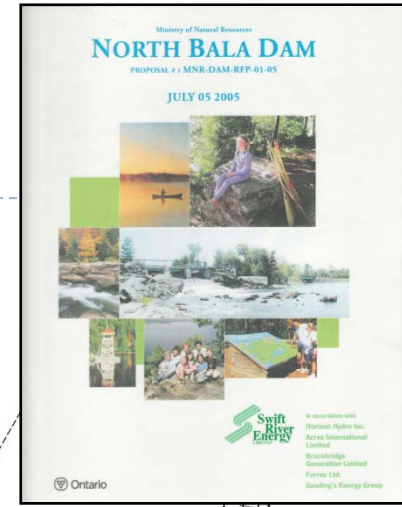
- ▶ *“The FACT is that SREL’s original Option 1 Plan was located entirely on provincial crown land...”*

Environmental Screening Report,  
Figure 2.12



**Proponent’s own land ownership survey shows the Crown Land boundaries**

# Figure 2.1 from proponent's original 2005 proposal



“Crown Land”  
owned by Ministry of  
Natural Resources

Proposed power  
station **didn't fit**

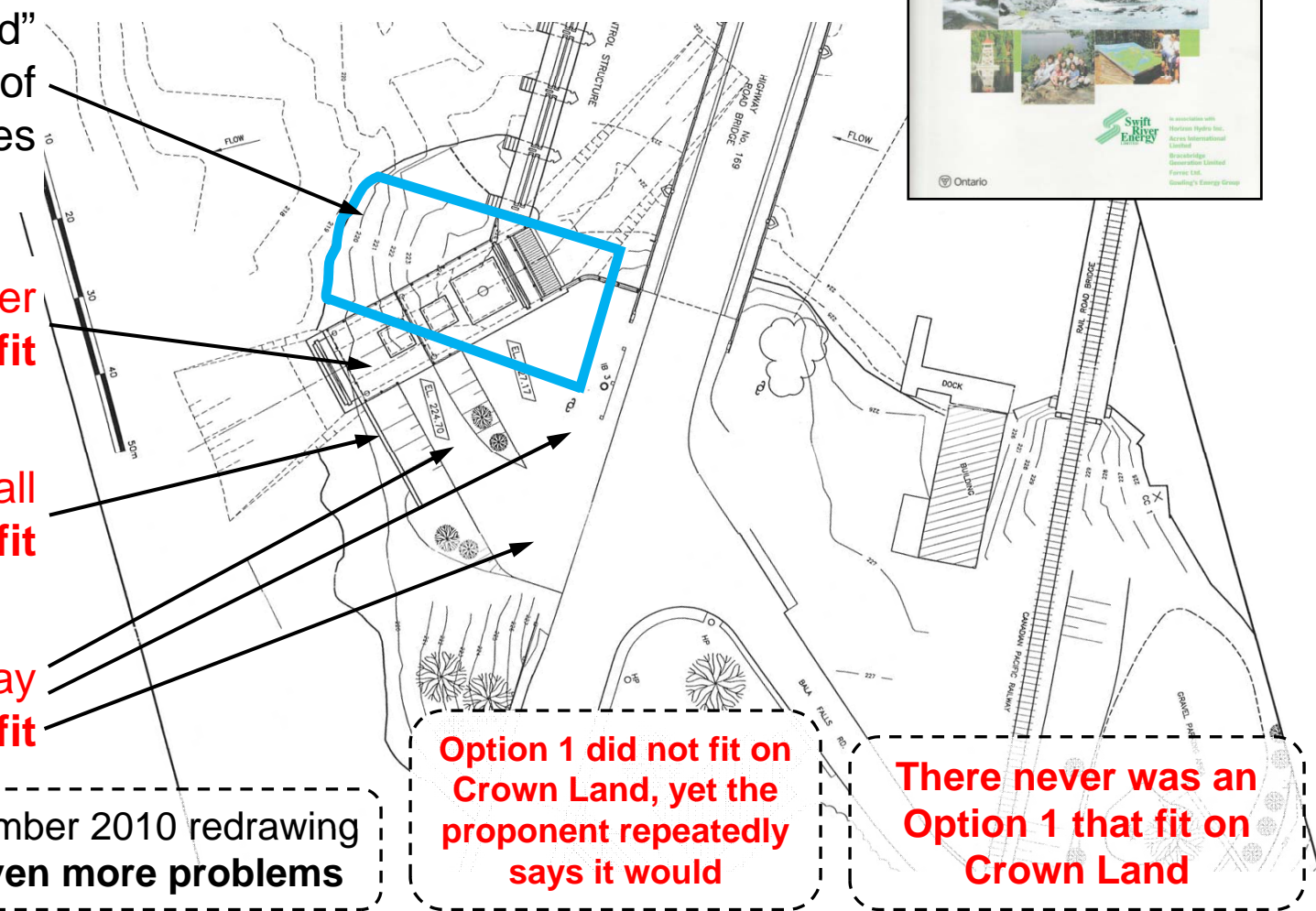
Retaining wall  
**didn't fit**

Service driveway  
**didn't fit**

Subsequent September 2010 redrawing  
of Option 1 has **even more problems**

**Option 1 did not fit on  
Crown Land, yet the  
proponent repeatedly  
says it would**

**There never was an  
Option 1 that fit on  
Crown Land**





# Option 1: Good to go – **NOT**

Gravenhurst Banner,  
September 29, 2010

- ▶ *“McGhee said the company will not have to go through the environmental screening report process again if it decides to move ahead with option one. The Ministry of the Environment may require an addendum to the screening report, but McGhee doesn’t think this would hold up the project.”*

Not quite ...

- ▶ There are significant differences
- ▶ The **MoE** has stated that **more** than an **addendum would be required**

**There are a huge number of new problems created by Option 1 which are not addressed in the proponent’s October 2009 Environmental Screening Report, which only examined Option 2**

# The details are important

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- ▶ Our Technical Report on the proponent's environmental screening report asked **69 questions**
  - ▶ We received only **one** good answer (question 16 about water access adjacent to the proposed power station)
  - ▶ All the others were **evasive responses** which **repeated the vague statements already made**
- ▶ You can't judge a book by its cover
  - ▶ This proposed project may have a nice green cover
    - ▶ But the contents are not good for Bala
- ▶ This would be a long-term relationship
  - ▶ There is no divorce option
    - ▶ This would need to be done right the first time

**The proponent has not actually answered 68 of the 69 questions we asked as part of our November 2009 request that this be elevated to require an Individual Environmental Assessment**

# Many public safety and economic questions (1 of 3)

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- ▶ Questions outstanding include:
  - ▶ Youth and railway bridge
  - ▶ In-water recreation upstream
  - ▶ Rescue procedures, equipment, responsibilities and training
  - ▶ Emergency shut-down method and time
  - ▶ Dangerously fast water speeds would be closer to recreation
  - ▶ Overshooting dock would put one's boat into fast water
  - ▶ Best Management Zone rationale
  - ▶ Upstream safety boom design is known to be dangerous
  - ▶ Confirm operating plan
  - ▶ Proposed portage route is dangerous

# More public safety and economic questions

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- ▶ Provide correct elevation views
- ▶ Long-term tourism and local area economic impact
- ▶ Describe how Regatta and Scuba diving could continue
- ▶ Describe scenic flow
- ▶ Official Plan impact
- ▶ Shadow study
- ▶ Boat rental alternative
- ▶ Itemize and show more construction impact timing
- ▶ Use of parking lots for construction purposes
- ▶ Financial guarantees that site would be restored if not fully completed

## More public safety and economic questions

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- ▶ Utility services disruption details
- ▶ Bailey bridge speed limit
- ▶ Traffic congestion study
- ▶ Noise calculations using more than two of the six noise sources, at the right receptors, using the right data, for the building as it would be constructed
- ▶ Vibration analysis
- ▶ Fish spawning habitat details finalized
- ▶ Wash sink and roof run-off water handling
- ▶ Shoreline and land use business agreement
- ▶ Evaluation of alternative locations

## In Summary

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- ▶ This is a major project
  - ▶ It deserves full **due process** and **public consultation**
- ▶ There are many outstanding technical questions
  - ▶ The proponent has lost our trust
- ▶ Please request an **Individual Environmental Assessment**
  - ▶ There are serious questions of public safety...
- ▶ The public's vote showed a **new direction** is needed
- ▶ We are at your service
  - ▶ Just as the opposition serves democracy

The proponent has not answered our questions, and has been providing deceptive information to the public and the local municipality

NONE of the closely-involved local politicians were re-elected October 25, 2010 – the public has spoken, they demand due process and public consultation

*Thank you for your time and Happy Holidays*

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