



Proposed Bala Falls Power Station

Many Concerns

SaveTheBalaFalls.com

- SaveTheBalaFalls.com incorporated in 2008
 - To represent the interests of permanent and seasonal residents of our community
 - Many people involved, all volunteer
- Mitchell Shnier, P. Eng. (Electrical)
 - Family cottage on Long Lake for 37 years
- Due to a process began in 2004
 - Ministry of Natural Resources initiated a *site release process*
 - To offload responsibility for maintaining dams and managing water levels
 - In return, Applicant gets permission to build a power station
 - ▶ And control of all Crown land in the area



Many Concerns

- Public access to shoreline
- Water levels
- Completion bond / insurance
- ...many more
- Current status

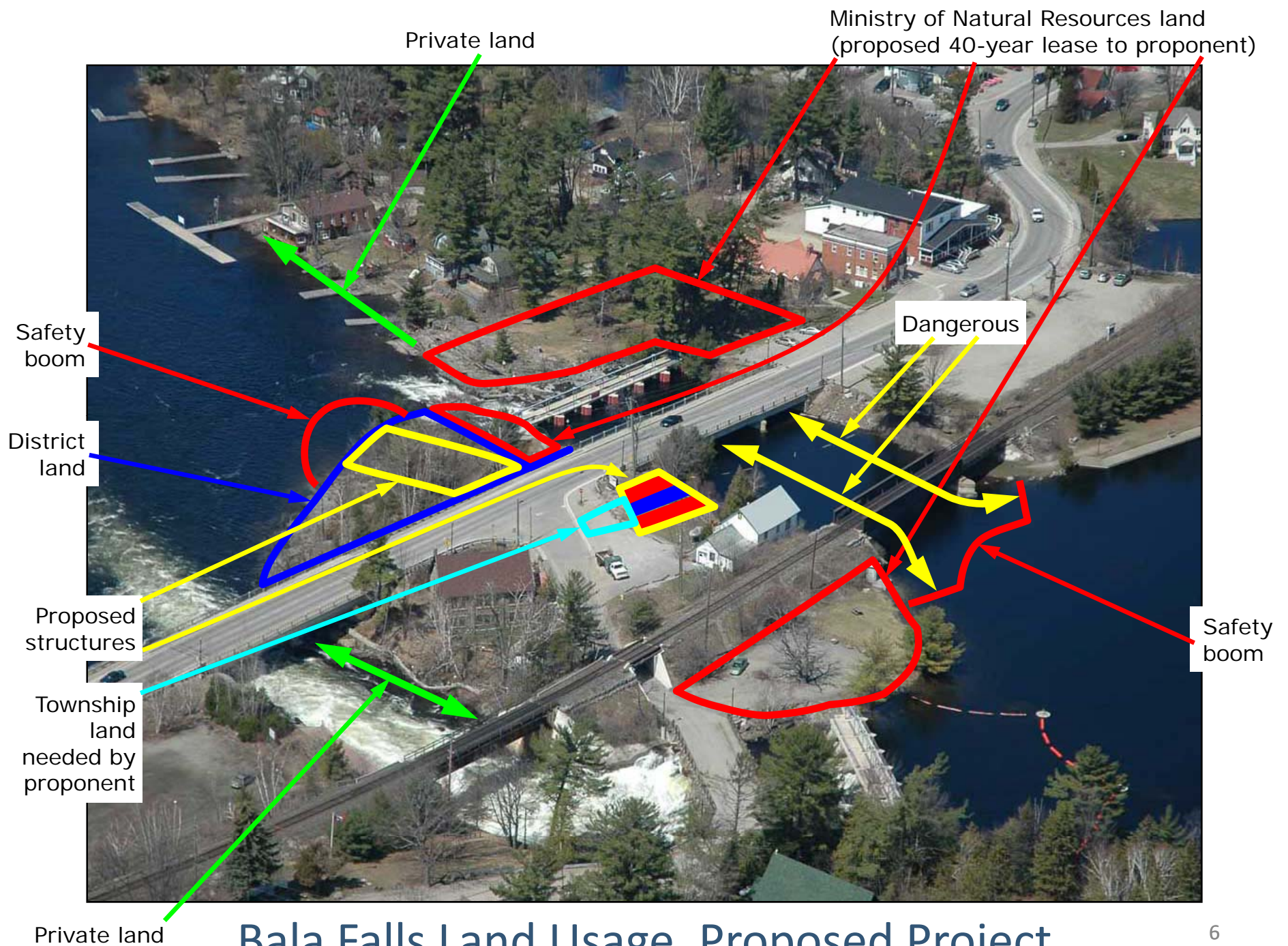


Bala Falls and Area

Public Access to Shoreline

- Proponent would get control of:
 - Crown land south of north falls
 - Margaret Burgess Park (north side of north falls)
 - Diver's Point (adjacent to south falls)
 - Portage west of Purk's Place
- Proponent is requesting to build on District land on Burgess Island
- North side of north channel would be too dangerous for public access

For 40 years



Bala Falls Land Usage, Proposed Project

Publicly Accessible Land?

- When asked if they would develop this land:
 - They would only state they have no plans at this time
 - They still have not provided any assurance they would never apply to develop the land or change the public's access to it
- We don't know what zoning applies as it is Crown land
 - We have asked the Township to determine this

Water Levels – Peaking Operation

- Proponent has always stated proposed hydro-electric power station would use “run-of-river” operation
 - Water out to the Moon River = water in to Lake Muskoka
- But, Ontario would pay them:
 - 11.8 ¢/kW•h at non-peak times
 - 17.7 ¢/kW•h at daily peak periods (5 times more than existing hydro-power stations get, and more than we pay to use it)
- 50% more revenue (!) for peak time power
 - Huge incentive for peaking/ponding/storage/cycling/optimized/modified peaking operation (many names used to disguise this)

Water Levels – Peaking Operation

- Recently proponent signed an agreement with Ontario Power Generation (operators of the downstream facility) requiring cycling operation in the summer
 - Have not told the public about this new cycling operation
 - ▶ Or the impact on water levels
- Huge increase in public safety concerns
 - Don't know if plant is operating
 - ▶ “Ill-advised” youth jumping from railway bridge
 - OPP/OPG “*Stay Clear, Stay Safe*” campaign
 - ▶ Which specifically applies to remotely-controlled dams and stations

Water Levels – Incentive for High Water

- For a given flow, say $50 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$, more power is produced if Lake Muskoka's water level is higher
 - Incentive to run at the higher end of range allowed in the Muskoka River Water Management Plan
 - Less safety margin available for an unexpected storm
- Residents' only recourse for damages is for each to individually go to court against the proponent

Completion Bond

- Proponent has no assets, no employees, and no other operations
- They refuse to provide a completion bond:
 - During construction they would be:
 - ▶ Dumping 300' of rocks into the Moon River
 - ▶ Blocking 40% of the north channel
 - ▶ Blasting a 60'-deep trench across District Road 169
 - What if they ran out of money, encountered a technical problem, damaged the bridge
 - ▶ They could just abandon the project
 - ▶ A similar situation occurred in Port Carling



Dam Failure

- They would be blasting within 65' of the Bala north dam (with is more than 50 years old)
- All the water from Lake Muskoka (and Lake Rosseau and Lake Joseph) flows out to the Moon River through Bala
- What if they damaged the north dam
 - The Moon River is 20' below the level of Lake Muskoka
 - It is a “single point of failure”
- Not addressed in environmental screening report
 - The proponent has not assessed the dam, done any risk analysis, or offered any inspection program during or after construction



Many Other Concerns

- Barbed-wire fencing (it is installed at other sites nearby)
- Sirens and strobe lights (required at similar sites)
- View from their proposed “look-out” would be obstructed by a 5'-high, 25'-wide hoist mechanism
- No credible information on the appearance, retaining wall, driveway, intake, economic impact, traffic
- Noisy fans would blast hot air at people walking down to the water
- Upstream safety boom does not promote self-rescue

The Intake

- The intake is shown as a calm pond surrounded by grass
 - But to prevent erosion, the sides of the intake would need to be concrete all the way to the channel



Where are the required huge red warning signs

Will there need to be barbed-wire fencing – the same proposed operator has installed this at their other sites in the area

Need more room for guy cleaning trash rack and his safety harness anchor

The intake would actually be $\frac{1}{3}$ wider

The sides need to be concrete

Up to 80 tons of water per second into the intake

Maybe more like this ...





Current Status

- Proponent has evasive and overly optimistic responses to most concerns, but:
 - This is a developer and a business, and what's in commitments to agencies is all that is binding (no transparency in this)
- Waiting for the Ministry of the Environment to make a decision on the elevation requests (over 100) for an individual environmental assessment
 - Showing broad public concern is extremely important
 - The new Municipal politicians were a huge step forward in showing this
 - More is needed