

Given the proposed generating station would be cycling off and on the flow daily, at least throughout the summer (storing then releasing the water in Bala Bay and Lake Muskoka), how can you claim to be decreasing water level fluctuations.

No, the key to Muskoka's future is drawing people to Muskoka, as tourism is crucial to the area's economy. Ruining the falls, making both upstream and downstream in-water recreation too dangerous for fun that has been going on for over 100 years, making over 500' of the only publically-accessible shoreline in the area too dangerous to access – the public does not want this to be Muskoka's future.

We don't believe there would be any "working with the community", we have not even had our concerns about appearance, public safety, and scenic flow acknowledged, and certainly not resolved.

In 2010 you already formed a scenic flow committee, and you required and had complete control over the "membership, mandate, agenda ...", yet this committee's work was completely ignored. This has demonstrated that any "advisory committees" would be a waste of everyone's time.

We first need to know whether it would be possible that the proposed structure could be acceptable; where would the ventilation fan openings be exhausting hot air, do the math to show standing on the proposed viewing deck would not feel like a humming factory, could people see over the tailrace gate hoist mechanism, where's the emergency escape hatch, how much noise would be generated, would there would be barbed-wire fencing and sirens sounded daily as is industry practice. After years of asking these questions the public still has no answers.

We look forward to finally seeing evidence of trying to "satisfy the community".

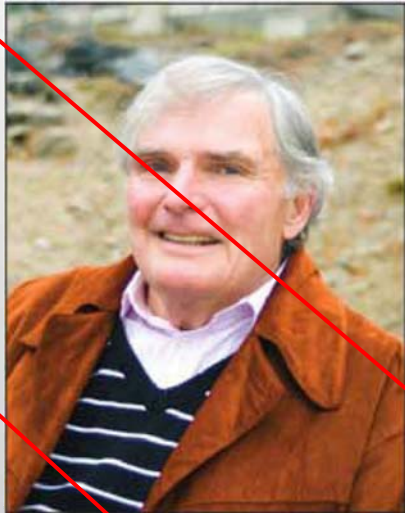
The proposed Option 2 powerhouse would be 33' wide and rise 20' above the Moon River, this could not be called "buried".

No, it was simply uneconomical to run without massive subsidies paid by Ontario taxpayers, as would now be provided by the current Feed-In Tariff program

Your own drawings showed the view downriver from the "scenic lookout" to be completely blocked by a 5'-high, 25'-wide gate hoist mechanism. Why do you continue to repeat that this could be called a lookout.

Your environmental screening report is deficient, as confirmed by the Federal-level environmental assessment. You have not properly examined the ecological impacts to be able to make this statement.

You're a private, for-profit company that would be; eliminating our falls, putting up an ugly concrete building there, and taking most all of the operating profits out of the community. So tell us, how would we "enjoy the economic benefits". You are forgetting that your profit is not ours.



John Wildman

Key to Muskoka's history and future is waterpower

By John Wildman
Swift River Energy Ltd. vice president

Clean, green, renewable energy has recently received a lot of attention in Ontario. Discussion has ranged from the health benefits associated with reducing carbon emissions and our reliance on coal generation, to the economic benefits associated with job creation, and local community business integration.

Muskoka is no stranger to renewable energy. There are currently 10 waterpower sites on the Muskoka River system owned by both public and private companies. Many of these facilities are undergoing upgrades after being in service for well over 50 and in some cases over 100 years.

In the case of Bala, a small plant was developed on the Mill Stream in 1917 and a second one at the North Falls in 1924. The previous north falls facility was ultimately taken down in the 1970s when the former Ontario Hydro's focus moved away from small regional waterpower, in favour of large scale nuclear generation.

Ontario's nuclear fleet is now getting ready for refurbishment (Darlington) and decommissioning (Pickering). In addition, Ontario has committed to eliminating its coal generation by 2014. Renewable energy, and in particular waterpower, will play a very important role in the province's energy make-up as we go forward through yet another energy sector transition in the coming years.

Waterpower was Ontario's first source of electricity and currently sup-

plies over one quarter of the province's total energy supply. Many small local waterpower plants are strategically and cumulatively important to the management of the province's energy mix.

Some people have asked why the province released the Bala site for redevelopment. The North Bala site is an ideal site for redevelopment because:

- * there are already currently two dams controlling the water levels of Lake Muskoka (plus the Burgess plant);
- * these dams have been in place for well over 100 years;
- * a water management plan has already been developed, outlining the parameters by which the community has agreed upstream and downstream levels must be maintained;
- * a waterpower site was previously located at this site in the early 1900s;
- * ecological impacts are minimal since there would be no new flooding or change in water levels. The new facility is expected to actually help decrease water level fluctuations due to the installation of new sophisticated control systems; and
- * there are existing power lines within 100 feet of the proposed powerhouse, so no new power corridors are required.

Swift River understands and accepts that some in the community are opposed to the redevelopment of this site, once again for waterpower. Swift River is nevertheless totally committed to working with the community.

Specifically, we are committed to forming local advisory committees to provide us with input into the overall appearance of the site as well as the scenic flow that will be maintained over the existing dams/falls. Furthermore, we have committed to forming a construction working group with local residents, business and the contractor(s) to provide a forum to deal quickly with construction period issues before they become "issues".

Swift River is now making every effort possible to satisfy the community with respect to the revitalized Option 1 Plan (located on Crown land next to the North Dam). We had previously presented a landscape strategy for Option 2 to bury the powerhouse. This plan minimized aesthetic impacts and incorporated a public park area with scenic lookout for the community atop of the powerhouse. This location included interpretive signage, seating and other improvements suggested by the community.

We were unable to see our plans for this innovative Option 2 plan come to fruition, as the new Township council has revoked its previous support for this option and the leasing of the required municipal lands.

Swift River was founded in 2004 by myself, and my partner Paul Fisher, to fulfill our personal vision to create a

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company to redevelop previously decommissioned waterpower projects, and to contribute to the growing demand for renewable energy in Ontario.

Our focus on this specific subsection of projects was based on the knowledge that the vast majority of the ecological impacts had already occurred at these locations during their initial developments. They were, therefore, viewed to have the least impact on the environment.

We initially pursued both the Bala

project and the Wasdell Falls Waterpower Project in Washago, but ultimately decided to focus our efforts on the Bala project.

Swift River's commitment of being a socially and environmentally responsible member of the Bala community remains as true today as it did in 2004. Its goal remains to ensure that this green energy facility be one in which the Bala and greater Muskoka community can once again be proud of and enjoy the economic benefits of such an enterprise.