



## NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

### Swift River Unveils Final Scenic Flow Plan for Bala Falls

**September 30, 2014** – Swift River Energy is pleased to announce its final Scenic Flow Plan for Bala Falls. This improved plan provides for an increase in scenic flows to maintain both aesthetic and recreational attributes during fluctuating water availability, while balancing the generating efficiency of the new facility.

*“Public input was key to development of this plan to maintain the aesthetics of the falls which are so important to the community during those times when the falls are most viewed”* said Project Manager Karen McGhee.

The final scenic flow plan was developed through consultation with a community based Flow Distribution Committee made up of 9 community members, a Township of Muskoka Lakes representative, and Swift River’s project manager. Also, Steve Taylor of the Ministry of Natural Resources attended meetings as an observer and provided information to the group as required. Community members were chosen from a list prepared by the Township in 2010 and represents a variety of interests including Moon River and Lake Muskoka residents, business owners and a member of the Muskoka River Water Management Plan (MRWMP) Standing Advisory Committee.

#### **Flow Distribution Committee - October 2010 – September 2014**

The committee formed in October 2010 and learned about how flows are currently managed in Bala and what regulatory restrictions were to be imposed on the new waterpower facility. The group then discussed priorities for flow distribution at the two existing dams in Bala, including scenic qualities, recreation, and fisheries. Photographs and video were presented for both the north and south falls under various flow conditions to assess the visual appearance as well as the sound associated with the moving water.

Further meetings were suspended pending Ministry of Environment approval of the project. Approval of the Environmental Assessment was received in January 2013. A subsequent request by Township of Muskoka Lakes for Judicial Review involving the project was dismissed in July 2014.

The most recent meeting was held September 17, 2014 at which time Swift River presented the final scenic flow plan to the committee. The new plan balances committee feedback with financial feasibility of the project. The result was a **significant increase** to scenic flows at the two dams/falls during specific high use times of the year considered important for recreation and tourism in Bala.

Swift River wishes to thank the Flow Distribution Committee members for their time and effort resulting in a better scenic flow plan for this site.

Both Swift River and Committee thank Steve Taylor from the Bracebridge Ministry of Natural Resources office for attending all of our meetings, answering numerous questions, and providing valuable information about the existing Muskoka River Water

Management Plan (WRWMP), current dam operations, and the regulatory process in general. His contributions resolved a number of public misconceptions about processes and policies affecting the project.

The group has agreed to meet one last time after the project is operational to make recommendations on which logs in the dam will be removed to provide the best visual experience.

**About The Plan**

Table 1 represents the minimum base flow to be passed over the two existing dams as approved by the MOE and outlined in the project Environmental Screening Review Report (2009) and subsequent Addendum Report (2012). These are the minimum flows that will be “spilled” over or through the existing North and South Bala Dams for scenic and ecological purposes. These flows will not be used for electrical generation.

**Table 1  
Minimum Base Flow**

Period	Minimum Base Flow (m <sup>3</sup> /s)		
	North Dam	South Dam	Total
Jan 1-Apr 14	1.0	1.0	2.0
Walleye Spawning (approx. Apr 15-Apr 30)	9.5	1.0	10.5
Walleye egg incubation (approx. May 1-May 14)	2.0	1.0	3.0
May 15-Jun 30	1.0	1.0	2.0
Jul 1-Labour Day (approx. Sep 7)	1.0	2.0	3.0
Sep 8 (approx.)-Dec 31	1.0	1.0	2.0

Table 2 provides a summary of the increased flows that will be passed for the specific high use periods listed.

**Table 2  
Increased Scenic Flows During High Use Periods**

Period	North Bala Dam	South Bala Dam	Total
	Min Flow	Min Flow	
Victoria Day w/e*	4.0	4.0	8.0
Canada Day & w/e Associated with Holiday**	2.0	4.0	6.0
Simcoe Day (August Civic Holiday) w/e*	2.0	4.0	6.0
Labour Day Weekend*	2.0	4.0	6.0
Thanksgiving Weekend*	4.0	4.0	8.0
Bala Cranberry Festival Weekend*	4.0	4.0	8.0

Notes for above tables:

1. The values provided above are in addition to the flow required to be provided to the existing Burgess Generating Station located on the Mill Stream in Bala.
2. \* A holiday long weekend is considered to run between Friday at 7:00 p.m. to Monday at 7:00 p.m.
3. \*\* Canada Day holiday is considered to be July 1 from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. plus either the weekend before or after Canada Day from 7:00 p.m. Friday to 7:00 p.m. Sunday.

In addition to the minimum flows provided in the above tables, all flow in excess of what can be used by the facility will also be passed over the existing dams falls.

Photos of the falls under the above conditions are provided in a separate file. Please let me know if you need jpegs of specific images.

**About the North Bala Small Hydro Project**

The North Bala Small Hydro Project is one of the first projects awarded under Ontario's Crown land release program for renewable energy in 2005. In late 2011, Swift River made the difficult decision to abandon its plan to build the project on municipally owned land and pursue a plan to use the adjacent Crown land only. This change resulted in an Addendum (filed in 2012) to the Environmental Screening Review Report (filed in 2009).

The Project will be located at the site of the former Bala #2 Generating Station (1924-1972), adjacent to the existing MNR North Bala Dam in Bala, Ontario. The Project will be operated in accordance with the current Muskoka River Water Management Plan.

The Project was awarded a Feed-in Tariff contract by the Ontario Power Authority in 2010 as part of the Green Energy Act. The Green Energy Act is the largest green house gas reduction initiative in North America.

It is estimated that the Bala project will offset an estimated 20,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year for its 50+ year life span. That is equal to removing 3,800 cars & light trucks from the road each year for the life of the project.

The Project will generate \$10.8 Million in spending in the District of Muskoka over the 16-18 month construction period and many Bala businesses have already indicated they can provide both products and services needed during construction.

### **About Swift River Energy Limited**

Swift River Energy Limited is a 100% Canadian owned company with a mandate to develop small, low-impact, run-of-the-river waterpower facilities. It was selected by the Ministry of Natural Resources in 2005 to design and construct the North Bala Falls Small Hydro Project, which originated from provincial policy aimed at developing new clean, renewable, 'green' sources of power generation. Such projects help reduce Ontario's dependence on dirty, coal-fired sources of electricity production.

### ***For more information, please contact:***

Karen McGhee, P.Eng., Project Manager  
Office: 905-331-9692  
Email: [kmcghee@m-k-e.ca](mailto:kmcghee@m-k-e.ca);  
Website: [www.balafalls.ca](http://www.balafalls.ca)

## North Dam – Base Flow (1 m<sup>3</sup>/s)



The above photos depict the minimum base flow to be passed over the North Bala Dam / Falls. Therefore, the flow passed over the falls will never be less than that shown above. It will, however, be greater than this during high flow times, walleye spawning, and specific high use periods as outlined in Table 2.

# North Dam – With Increase Scenic Flow (4 m<sup>3</sup>/s)



The above photos depict how the North Bala Dam / Falls will look with additional scenic flow (4 m<sup>3</sup>/s). This will occur during specific high use periods as noted in Table 2.

# North Dam – Walleye Spawning Flow (9.5 m<sup>3</sup>/s)



The above photos depict how the North Bala Dam / Falls will look during the walleye spawning period generally occurring in mid to late April. This flow (9.5 m<sup>3</sup>/s) will provide the required fish spawning conditions at the spawning beds located downstream of the North Bala Dam / Falls.

## South Dam – Base Flow (1 m<sup>3</sup>/s)



The above photos depict the minimum base flow (1 m<sup>3</sup>/s) to be passed over the South Bala Dam / Falls. Therefore, the flow passed over the falls will never be less than that shown above. It will, however, be greater than this during high flow times and specific high use periods as outlined in Table 2.



## South Dam – With Increased Scenic Flow (4 m<sup>3</sup>/s)



The above photos depict how the South Bala Dam / Falls will look with additional scenic flow (4 m<sup>3</sup>/s). This will occur during specific high use periods as noted in Table 2