

**1. Meeting Called to Order.**

The meeting was convened by Jeff MacDonald, at 10:05 am, with the introduction of Head Table:

Jeff MacDonald, President  
Chris Bodanis, Past President  
Chris Turney, Vice President  
Enid Wray, Secretary  
Joanne Goodwin, Treasurer

**2. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of last year's AGM were posted on the website last summer. We have received no communications regarding any inaccuracies. Enid Wray "read" highlights from last year's AGM. Minutes will be posted again on the website for interested persons to re-visit.

The minutes for both the 2011 and 2012 AGM will be approved at the 2013 AGM.

**3. Treasurer's Report**

Joanne Goodwin presented the Treasurer's Report. *(N.B. Copies of the Treasurer's Reports are going to be made available for viewing on the Bass Lake Association website <[www.basslakeweb.com](http://www.basslakeweb.com)>. Watch for an AGM button to appear. Copies of the minutes of the AGM's will also be available for viewing.)*

For the current fiscal year the summary is as follows:

Income	\$2 570
Expenses	\$3 458.59
Balance	\$11 063.67 (includes savings)

The two largest expenses, on an ongoing basis, are dealing with the beavers (we went over our budget just a little last year, spending \$1 015.00) and the water testing (\$930.80).

It was noted that we have a clear trend developing over the last few years: our expenses exceed our income in any given year. The basic issue is that membership in the Bass Lake Association is down. Currently we have approx. 40% of cottagers represented as members.

Discussion was had about how to get more pro-active about recruiting/maintaining membership in the Association. While we have savings, they are there in case we have

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a major situation that must be dealt with quickly. We need not wait until we have a problem to get our membership rate up.

- Please encourage people who are not at the meeting. You know if your neighbour is here!
- Please update your personal contact information on the membership list being circulated.
- Publicise the value, and the cost, of the “beaver control” and the water testing.
- Look into the development of a BLA sign that cottagers can put on their mailboxes or sign posts.
- Post URL to website < [www.basslakeweb.com](http://www.basslakeweb.com)> in BIG letters on the BLA notice boards on the cottage roads.
- Consider PayPal for dues payment.
- Send out (another) e-mail reminder... about our meeting and generally about what we do.
- Jeff MacDonald to make an information sheet... will post as PDF to website. Print a copy and drop it to your neighbours.
- Send items for a cottage newsletter (by e-mail to [jeffreymacdonald@sympatico.ca](mailto:jeffreymacdonald@sympatico.ca)).

### **4.    Water Testing and Water Quality**

Jeff MacDonald turned the meeting over to Chris Bodanis to address the data from last summer.

Chris noted that we have been testing the water, in conjunction with the Muskoks Lakes Association initiative, for five years now. Once again, Bass Lake had a very good year last year. In general the lake is in great shape. Phosphorous and, especially, e-coli levels are at or below the threshold levels and the Muskoka average.

This year, Riverstone has recommended that we switch up our test sites.

- We have been testing four (4) sites on the lake: 2 deep water sites for phosphorous and 2 other sites for e-coli.
- The new test sites for this year are intended to get us closer to the source in a number of places:
  - the far point in the NW bay, to get additional information about flow coming from the golf course
  - by Jeff MacDonald’s cottage, to measure the direct impact of the beaver dams

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Chris also noted that the clarity of the water appears to be better this year. Using the secchi disc, on the May long weekend, Chris recorded 4m of clarity, as opposed to a more traditional 3m.

Some discussion ensued as to whether or not this was a good thing or not. Many factors come into play with respect to water clarity, some desirable, some not. John Thompson reminded us that the lake takes 7 years to turn itself over. What we are seeing now is not necessarily anything to do with current events or efforts.

A general discussion - reminder - was had with regards to what we can do to maintain good water quality on Bass Lake. Everyone was reminded to be diligent, and vigilant, with regards to the health of their septic systems. Proper use, and maintenance, is encouraged.

Additional comment was made with respect to water levels. It was recognised that the water level is low for this time of the year. The combination of the (relative) lack of snow, and dry weather are partly to blame. All were reminded to be diligent, watch the water near your cottage - and elsewhere on the lake. If you see anything that looks "suspicious" please report it immediately.

Questions were asked about:

- the "soap bubbles" which appear periodically on the lake. Assurances were given that this is a natural process, and a healthy one.
- whether or not we are testing for Ph levels. There is no report on this as part of our water testing protocols. Apparently the lake has been running at approx. Ph 5.5. We were reminded that Ph 5.0 is a problem. Chris will follow up with Riverstone to see about adding Ph testing to our spectrum.

Discussion also turned on the situation with the beavers. Two years ago we voted to spend \$1 000 per year on the "Beaver Initiative." This was because we had had problems with road being washed out, and because of the potential for devastating impacts upon water quality should the dams break and all of their contents be washed into Bass Lake in one fell swoop.

John Sykes observed that the catchment area for Bass Lake is 6.9 sq km, and that the deepest point in the lake is 34 ft. Between Bass Lake and Long Lake there are 7 beaver dams. The little marsh is held back by a dam which is 8' tall. If we get a severe rain that washed out the top it is possible for everything held back by all of the dams to cascade down into Bass Lake in one shot. It was noted that at least one cottager came down with giardia (beaver fever) over the winter.

Bud Wice and Ben Roberts are point men on this issue. We have been installing beaver baffles as well as removing 5 beavers. This did not prevent the beavers from

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engaging in some “shoreline landscaping” between Ward’s and Freeborough’s cottages this winter, as well as some “building” activity at Ward’s which required removal.

A general discussion was had in which some cottagers expressed the view that ultimately we do more damage to the environment than the beavers, and we need to be sensitive to them, and perhaps we need to be looking at more permanent solutions. At \$1 000 per year we are “managing” the beavers... which begged the further question as to what’s happening to the beaver’s we are removing. Are they being relocated? or is something else happening to them? We believe that they are being “relocated” but no-one was absolutely certain about this. It is something to follow up on.

At the end of the discussion, it was generally agreed that, as much as we like our wildlife, we need to treat “beaver sightings” in the same way we talk about bear sightings... we need to know where they are and what they are up to, so that we may take precautionary action to prevent serious situations from developing.

### **5.    New Cottagers**

Jeff MacDonald invited anyone new to the lake to please stand and introduce themselves.

1109 Kendon Road

Jan Campbell and Wayne Dunkley

It was noted that the Kimberley cottage (the Beaver Lodge) was up for sale.

### **6.    General News Update and Summer Events**

Princess Margaret is building on Bass Lake again. They purchased the Pearl’s cottage and are getting on with the job of this year’s summer lottery cottage. Cottagers on Hallett’s Road and Kendon Road will need to mind the traffic again once the cottage opens for public viewings.

Kelly Shires fundraising has stepped up this year. There is a pink box for liquor store bottles on the Bass Lake Road. Apparently the Port Carling Lion’s club did a similar bottle drive and raised \$10 000. It was suggested that perhaps we should consider this as a supplemental income generator over and above membership dues.

There have been a number of bear sightings at the end of Kendon Road and near 1066 Bass Lake Road. Everyone is reminded to practice best bear etiquette. This includes not having bird feeders out at this time of year. If you must, remember to bring them in at night. Additionally, be sure to rinse all recyclables before putting them out.

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Everything we can do to reduce the attractiveness of a cottage will help keep the bear(s) from wanting to come around.

Notice was also made of the presence of rattlesnakes (on Baldy) and some large snapping turtles (various sightings around the lake). Be mindful.

Our summer events are:

Sat Aug 4th 8am to noon

### **Yard Sale in support of Kelly Shires Breast Cancer Fund**

Tables to be had for \$25 each  
Mary Ann Beaudin at 375-5109 or  
[maga@vianet.ca](mailto:maga@vianet.ca) and Joan Wice at 375-1257 or  
[jwice@muskoka.ca](mailto:jwice@muskoka.ca)

Sat Aug 11th @ 10:00am

**Poker Run** (non-motorised vessels only)  
Starting point: The Turney Cottage (Kendon Bay)  
Register with Enid Wray @ 1157 Kendon Road,  
705-375-4614 or via the link on website  
\$20 per entry

Sat Sept 1st @ 9pm

**Parade of Lights**  
All boats are welcome. Boats should meet up in the middle of the lake at the appointed time  
All non-boating participants are invited to deck out their decks and docks  
Rain date to be Sun Sept 2nd

Discussion was had about the demise of the Corn Roast. Apparently it was due, in part, to liability concerns, but we have changed insurance carriers and this is no longer a concern. Now it is an issue of space. There was no overwhelming demand from the assembled members to pursue this at this time.

## **7.    General Items of Discussion and New Business**

**Noise and water safety concerns.** Again this year the same issues were raised.

- General conflict between motorised and non-motorised vessels. A plea for consideration of the rights of canoes and kayaks.

- Noise and “driving safety” concerns, especially with regards to the operation of PWC’s... and the general increase in the number of PWC’s plying the lake.

**Lighting on property.** Concerns were raised about the impact that cottage lighting has on our ability to enjoy the night sky. Everyone was asked to think about the lighting they have installed, and were encouraged to scale back excess lighting, and to keep lighting night sky friendly. This discussion tied into a concern about...

**Urbanisation of the waterfront.** Concerns were raised about some of the “landscaping” being done around the lake. We were reminded that this was Muskoka, and that rocks and trees are the norm. It was also noted that the shoreline buffer zone is important to the maintenance of our good water quality.

**OPP on the lake.** The OPP are maintaining a “diligent commitment” to monitoring boats and boaters. They have been coming onto the lake in unmarked boats, and as late as 11pm. Be sure to have your appropriate safety equipment on board and absolutely no drinking and boating.

**Barking dogs.** Another item of note was issues relating to barking dogs. If everyone could be sensitive. Dogs bark, but they shouldn’t be barking all the time at all hours of the day and night.

**Floating Debris:** Enid Wray displayed a weight, buoy and line which she hauled from the water a couple of weeks ago. She found the items in question while she was towing a large inflatable, which had gone adrift, back to it’s home. The line was floating, invisible, on the surface. Fortunately she was going very slowly... but it could have been quite a dangerous situation had she run over it as speed. Everyone is reminded to please be mindful of how they anchor and secure objects in the water.

## **8.     Chris Turney, Report from the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA)**

Chris began by remarking upon, and reminding us of, the two different levels of government: Township of Muskoka Lakes, and the Regional Municipality of Muskoka.

The MLA is a very active organisation with approx. 2 500 members, mostly cottagers. It is the oldest lake association, formed in 1894. You can find out more about the MLA at their website <<http://MLA.on.ca>>.

Water testing results for the Muskoka watershed - including Bass Lake - are available on the MLA website. The website also collects - and publishes - information about events in and around Muskoka.

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Discussion was had about some of the political issues which the MLA has been involved in: Hanna's Landing and Bala Fall's in particular.

The MLA focuses on the key issues that define Muskoka: water quality, environment (in general), and controlling big development.

With respect to the "Big Lakes" five areas of concern have been identified, including The Narrows (in Gravenhurst), Indian River, Windermere, and Hamer Bay.

The question was put as to whether or not the Bass Lake Association could (or should) join the MLA. This item was put to "further investigation." Chris did point out that if anyone is interested in joining the MLA individually they do offer an "Advantage" discount card accepted by retailers around Muskoka.

### **9.     Peter Long, Muskoka Ratepayers Association**

Peter pointed out that the ratepayer's association has a different focus than the MLA. As opposed to being a cottager's association, the Ratepayers Association protects and promotes the needs and interests of all property owners. *NB: Learn more at their website, <<http://www.tmlra.on.ca>>.*

The Ratepayers Association focus is on the year round environment and economic vitality. Part and parcel of this is their desire to have more permanent residents on their Board of Directors.

During the last election, the Ratepayers Association sponsored an all candidates meeting. This as their core interests are good governance, fair taxes, responsible development and the environment.

Peter noted that our property taxes are split as follows:

- 14% to the Township
- 50% to Education
- 36% to the District

The Ratepayers Association monitors spending by the two levels of government. An example provided was the \$ 0.5 M in funding to a local hospital. The Ratepayers Association questions this expense... health care is a provincial responsibility. In part, as a result of this questioning, the District is now in the process of conducting a "Services Review" in which this and other issues will be considered.

With regards to governance, Peter elaborated on the situation surrounding the Bala Falls. He noted that there are structures, processes, in place for this kind of decision making. The expectation of the Ratepayers Association is that the process be allowed to play out. First, there is a proposal, followed by opportunities for public comment,

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accompanied by expert opinion. This then should be followed by unbiased decision-making on the part of Council. Through these checks and balances we should be able to trust Councils.

The Bala Falls situation illustrates some concerns with how the process plays out. Peter provided an overview of the back story, for those who are not familiar with the Bala Falls issue.

In 2003-4, Swift River put together a proposal, and entered into an agreement, to develop a small hydro project at the Bala Falls. Following upon this there have been numerous meetings and delegations (37 in total) with regards to the development. Most of the delegations have been opposed. Indeed, the Bala Falls was the touchstone issue in the last Municipal election. Many of the candidates, including the Mayor, ran on a "Save the Bala Falls" platform.

At the end of the day, the Ontario Ministry of Energy has the final say. There were two options on the plate. The options can be viewed on the Swift River website, <<http://balafalls.ca>>.

Option 1, uses crown land and allows for no say on the part of the residents/Township/Municipality. Option 2 includes the development of a snowmobile bridge and scenic lookouts. Option 2 requires the transfer or ownership of a small piece of Township land.

The Ministry has chosen Option 2. To date the Township refuses to cede the necessary land. If the Township does not cede the land, then Option 1 will become the default.

The Ratepayers Association feels that the Council is now not acting in the best interests of the local ratepayers. A decision has been made. This project is going to be a reality. The fight has been fought. Now it is time to make the best decision for everyone, including the Bala Falls themselves.

General discussion ensued. At the end, it was strongly recommended that everyone send a letter to our local Councillor, Jean-Ann Baranik <[jbaranik@muskokalakes.ca](mailto:jbaranik@muskokalakes.ca)>, encouraging the Council work with the MoE and let Option 2 proceed.

Also with regards to taxation, Peter reminded everyone that we are due for new property assessments this year. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) will be issuing updated assessments this fall.

If your assessment increases, your tax increase will be phased in over 4 years. If your assessment decreases you will receive the benefit of the tax reduction immediately.

Peter reminded everyone that those of us with waterfront property pay a premium. Waterfront properties account for 85% of Township revenues.

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Peter invited everyone to attend the Ratepayers Association AGM, at the Port Carling Community Centre, on July 21st. At the meeting John Klink will be giving a talk on "The Real Muskoka." Steve Fahner, the Township Planner, will also be speaking about the new zoning by-laws which will come into place next year.

### **10. Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting was adjourned by Jeff McDonald at 11:43am.

Moved:            Jeff MacDonald  
Seconded:        Bob Currell