



Photo by Brian Paul

**The Perfect Summer...?** — I suspect that there are very few cottagers who would complain about the weather this past summer with its endless days of sun and warm temperatures. So what is there to complain about? A closer look at weather and water patterns over the past six months reveals anything but a normal or usual pattern.

By now many of you are aware of the dramatic events of this past March, especially for Lake Muskoka and their extensive and expensive shoreline structures. In March, throughout cottage country, two months of precipitation was received in two weeks. Our neighbor to the south, Kennisis Lake, reported the highest March lake levels in 100 years! For us, in just a few days, lake levels along with the ice rose one meter! It was "...the highest March water level on record for Kawagama for the period of record from 1970 to 2016." (MNRF)

This was followed by significantly lower than normal precipitation for May and June, resulting in Agriculture Canada reporting moderate drought for cottage country while Toronto experienced a severe drought for the same time period. Drought conditions persisted throughout July causing the Township of Algonquin Highlands to declare a total fire ban.

Conditions changed with rain on the weekend of August 13th, and almost 70 mm of rain on August 16th. No concerns regarding lake levels for boating on Labour Day Weekend this year. In fact, some areas experienced shoreline flooding and erosion for a few days in late August.

The question then arises: is the weather, as experienced over the past few months, one for the record books, not to be repeated for years to come, or are we experiencing a new norm?

FOCA, of which the KLCA is a member, recently produced a publication entitled "[Managing Your Waterfront Property in a Changing Climate](#)". To give you some idea of the content, here are a few section titles: "Climate change is already occurring in Ontario" and "Climate change is projected to accelerate." It's enough to make you wonder.

Eric Millar  
Director of Lake Levels, KLCA

**Kawagama Lake Dam** — Reconfiguration and minor repairs of the dam have been on the "to do list" for the past 10 years. Money is the problem. The MNRF did however announce in August, that some repairs would take place this fall. This work is currently being carried out. No change in lake levels is anticipated. The reconfiguration of the spill wall, which is a much more involved and expensive project, is still on hold pending approval of the necessary financing.

**Shoreline Planting Grant** — One of the two \$2,250 Shoreline Planting grants has been awarded, and a planting project was designed and completed by Julia Sutton. Two hundred and twenty-eight native plants were successfully planted on the September 24th/25th weekend. Fall plantings tend to have higher survival rates due to moisture levels at that time of year and extra time to get established before hot summer weather. For this project, the planting was focused on the upper shoreline of the property, between the cottage and the immediate shoreline. This area was bare soil, and through planting, there will be increased filtration from precipitation, and the plants will slow the runoff coming from the cottage. In addition, there will be more habitat for mammals, birds and pollinators, and the overall plant diversity at the site will be increased. In total, 30 different species were planted. Plants were chosen based on their suitability for different conditions within the site, and they were all native for the region. Plants were sourced from the native plant nursery called, Grow Wild!, in Omeme. Below are one set of before and after photos of the site. Check out *Reflections 2017* for more photos.



**Help Preserve Our Night Sky: Cottage Country at Night** — Imagine you are sitting on a dock on a crystal clear summer night, the water as flat as glass, the dark surface mirroring the sky, the stars shining brightly above, a falling star tracing a path across the heavens. Unfortunately, this precious part of our heritage in cottage country is often obscured by the glare from a distant source of light across the water or by light trespass from a nearby property. But it doesn't have to be this way. In most cases, making a few simple adjustments to existing lights will make them more dark sky-friendly and can easily solve the problem of light trespass that blinds us from our view of the night sky.

Artificial lighting allows us to engage in night-time activities along the waterfront that would be impossible or unsafe under normal night-time conditions. Whether it's for allowing us to get from one point to another, security, or simply making a property more attractive at night, our enjoyment of the night is enhanced by the use of artificial lighting. At the same time, our lakes at night provide a quiet open dark space that gives us privacy and the opportunity to enjoy the heavens. The goal of sensitive waterfront lighting is to balance the ability to see at night with the desire to preserve the beauty of the night.

Sensible waterfront lighting does its intended job well, when there is minimum adverse impact on neighbours and the environment. Consider the following tips:

- Replace those 60-, 100- and 150-watt bulbs with 25- or 40-watt bulbs.
- Kill those double headed mega watt floods. You can still see where you are going with less-intrusive low-watt halogen spots that direct the beam.
- Reduce light intensity with the installation of a dimmer switch on your outdoor lighting.

- If you use flood lighting, don't use the most powerful lamp available. Ask about 35- to 45-watt incandescent exterior flood or spot lamps at your local hardware store or specialty lighting store.
- Use full cut-off or partial cut-off lighting fixtures to minimize glare. Full cut-off means that no light is emitted above the horizontal.
- Carriage or coach lamps have undirected 360-degree beams which are offensive to the night sky. If you don't want to remove these, you can just replace the standard 60-watt bulbs with 25-watt chandelier bulbs.
- Retrofit existing fixtures with shields to reduce glare. As a precaution, any "do-it-yourself" electrical work should be followed by a safety inspection.
- Avoid dusk-to-dawn security lights. A more effective approach to security is a motion detector with a delayed reset.
- Aim lighting fixtures away from the water and neighbouring properties. Choose fixtures that aim or reflect light only onto the intended target area. Illuminate residential lanes or walkways from above.
- Provide adequate light for the intended task, but don't over-light. Choose lights that meet your needs without lighting the entire waterfront.
- Glare from shore or dock lighting can interfere with boat navigation at night. Consider using non-intrusive alternatives to boat dock lighting such as solar reflectors or reflector tape. There are new technologies for solar lighting which are also suitable for boat docks.

Credits:

Township of the Archipelago, Township of Georgian Bay, Township of Muskoka Lakes, Town of Gravenhurst, District of Muskoka, Muskoka Lakes Association, Township of Carling, Township of Lake of Bays, Township of Seguin, Town of Huntsville, Georgian Bay Association, Muskoka Heritage Foundation

With assistance from David Liebl and Robert Korth, Wisconsin Lakes Partnership and University of Wisconsin - Extension and David Zimmer



(Photo by Stephanie Conner)

**Contribute to Reflections 2017!** — Facebook is fleeting; *Reflections* is forever! Want your photos and writing immortalized on coffee tables across Kawagama and Bear? Please send in your photos and stories of life on the lake! We are always looking for:

- photos
- recipes
- articles
- stories
- poems

Send your submissions to Sara at [reflections@klca.org](mailto:reflections@klca.org). Please send writing as unformatted Word documents or in the body of your email. Send photos by email, Dropbox, or other file-sharing method and provide the highest resolution version available. Or send hard copies to Reflections c/o KLCA, Box 98, Dorset, ON P0A 1E0. Don't hesitate to contact Sara with any questions!

**Please Welcome Doug and Ellen to the KLCA board** — We are pleased to announce that we have two new board members joining the KLCA. Doug Middlebrook will be the new Navigational Director and Ellen Wiley will be the new Membership director. Below you can read a little more about these two exciting new additions to the KLCA Board of Directors.

**Doug Middlebrook:** While on a cottage hunt with local realtor Ellen Wiley(!) in 1993, Doug discovered the magnificence of Bear and Kawagama Lakes. Doug and his wife Tina purchased a cottage on Bear Lake and then spent their children's (Rankin and Leslie) formative years in bug shirts, bathing suits, sweaters and snowmobile suits. After hundreds of "marina trips" down the lake for his \$52.00 newspaper (\$2.00 Newspaper, \$10.00 treats and \$40.00 gas), Doug felt it was time to give back to an association he has been a member of for 23 years.

As KLCA's new Chair of Navigation and Boating Safety, Doug believes his role is to not only manage the installation and removal of the lake's markers each year, but to inform the members and non-members of KLCA about responsible boating and its impact on shoreline erosion and the safety of other boaters, water-skiers, wake-boarders and swimmers. He welcomes all boaters to safely navigate their canoe, kayak, aluminum tinnie, fishing, pontoon, ski or wakeboard boat through the narrows into Bear Lake and climb a mountain, cool off in a waterfall or jump off a rock.

Doug looks forward to your suggestions and the continuation of the "Adopt a Marker" program where volunteers adopt the "one cottage, one marker" concept on our lake. It literally takes just a couple of minutes to set or pull each marker. If you are interested and willing to be a part of a team that benefits all cottagers on the lake, please email the KLCA ([info@klca.org](mailto:info@klca.org)), to express your interest and Doug will contact you with details!

**Ellen Wiley:** Ellen started cottaging on Kawagama in 1963. Kawagama "got in her blood at a very young age" and she knew she had to be here. As a teenager, Ellen worked at both Marinas in the summer months pumping gas, doing water taxis, working in the stores and even doing small engine repairs. Ellen worked in California at UCLA Medical Centre as an RN for a couple years and then moved to Dorset permanently in 1980 at which time she was working at Mountain Trout House part time and as an RN at Huntsville Hospital. Up until that time, she had not missed a summer on Kawagama. In 1987, Ellen decided to change careers from nursing and has been in real estate ever since, which allows her to work in the outdoors and more specifically, out on Kawagama Lake. Ellen loves boating and is frequently seen out on the lake. She often comments that she has the best job in the world as she gets to work — by boat!

**Thank You!** — We would like to thank our retiring Membership director, Marion Michinsky, for all her tireless hours and 10 years of service to the KLCA Board of Directors. We will miss her quick wit at board meetings and her personal touches that she added to emails. If you had contact with Marion about membership, you will know she was always quick to respond and eager to help.

We would also like to thank Tom Mulhall, our former Navigational Director, who is taking a break from the board during a busy time with his new job promotion. Tom was a figurehead on the lake whenever markers needed to go in or out, he and kept cottagers safe while boating throughout the past several years. We are lucky that Tom (and his sons) will still help out the KLCA when they can.

Thanks to both of these wonderful volunteers!

**MPAC: The 2016 Property Assessment Update** — MPAC has updated the assessed values of more than 5.5M properties in Ontario based on a legislated valuation date of January 1, 2016. Residential Property Owners in Peterborough County, Haliburton County and the City of Kawartha Lakes were issued Property Assessment Notices on July 11, 2016. Farm and Managed Forest property notices will be released on October 11, 2016 and Multi-Residential and Business properties will be released October 18, 2016.

**What's New:**

1. *A New Property Assessment Notice.* MPAC is delivering Residential Property Assessment Notices up to five months earlier than previous updates. We incorporated feedback from property taxpayers and redesigned the Property Assessment Notice. It's easier to read and includes a clear explanation of phase-in, the valuation process, and the Ontario property assessment system.

2. *Rolling 120-Day Request for Reconsideration (RfR) Deadline – Residential Deadline is November 8, 2016.* Changes under Bill 144 means property owners have 120 days from the issue date of their Property Assessment Notice to file a Request for Reconsideration with MPAC. This will allow us to process a number of Request for Reconsiderations before the Assessment Rolls are returned to municipalities in 2016, bringing greater stability and predictability to the property assessment and taxation system.

3. *Advance Disclosure & Pre-Roll Consultations.* Disclosure is about transparency and shared understanding. It's our commitment to share information with property owners and stakeholders and provide fair, consistent, and accurate property valuations through a no-surprise approach. MPAC has been holding consultation sessions with municipalities, property owners, and representatives to discuss how assessment methodology is being applied to large and special purpose business properties for the 2016 Update and we have developed a three-level disclosure protocol.

4. *A Revamped www.aboutmyproperty.ca.* With its simplified design and improved navigation and mapping function, AboutMyProperty™ conveniently connects property owners with their assessment. Property owners can now get information about market trends, including information on property values and percent change in their area, without having to log in. Property specific details and reports can be viewed through a secure log in. Login information for property owners is available on your Property Assessment Notice.

You can view MPAC videos at these links:

- [How MPAC Assesses Property](#)
- [The Request for Reconsideration process](#)
- [Property Assessment and Taxation](#)
- [AboutMyProperty™ Overview](#)



Photo by Vicki Toole

*Just a reminder that you are receiving this email because you have given permission on the annual KLCA renewal form. If you no longer wish to receive our emails, please send a message to: [membership@klca.org](mailto:membership@klca.org) with the subject line "unsubscribe."*