

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MUSKOKA LAKES ASSOCIATION CREATES TASK FORCE OVER SECOND MAJOR “100 YEAR FLOOD” IN LAST 3 YEARS**

Emergency Task Force set up by the 122 year old Muskoka Lakes Association in early April calls on Government to explain second major flood in less than 3 years.

Muskoka, ON – April 20, 2016 – Today, the MLA (Muskoka Lakes Association) announced the continuing work of their emergency task force to get to some answers as to why major flooding of all three lakes in Muskoka (Lake Joseph, Lake Rosseau and Lake Muskoka) as well as the Moon River, Muskoka River, Rosseau River, Huntsville, many smaller lakes and surrounding areas has happened once again. The 2013 flooding was called at the time a “100 year flood”. That year it is conservatively estimated to have cost residents, businesses and cottagers over \$50 million in un-insurable damages. This year's event is even more catastrophic given floating ice carried by the high water and strong winds that caused even worse damage to homes, docks, boathouses and shoreline eco systems. Area contractors are unsure how they will be able to even come close to repairing this newest damage. “We just don’t have enough people around to hire and train to fix this kind of serious flood damage. It was a challenge in 2013 and now given the damage this year we’ll be struggling to keep up” said Mark McMullen a Muskoka based contractor.

Local resident and MLA President Michael Hart, who organized the task force and the continued call out to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) to explain both why this has happened again but also how it can be prevented, said: “None of us can afford this kind of damage to our homes, our businesses, our family cottages and the surrounding infrastructure. It simply isn’t realistic to completely re-build and re-plan all of the homes on these lakes and rivers”. The MLA believes that the risk of damage to waterfront property in Muskoka is not being adequately factored into current watershed management practices and that lower Spring water levels should be implemented to protect properties in future. Hart said the MLA will pursue such changes with the Hon. Bill Mauro, MPP and the MNRF. Hart, who has fielded literally hundreds of calls and emails from angry taxpayers daily says he and his task force will not rest till they arrive at a long term solution.

The Mayors of Gravenhurst, Bracebridge, Township of Muskoka Lakes and Sequin Townships, in addition to the District of Muskoka Chair have also lent their support to the MLA and it’s thousands of members in a bid to get real answers. As long time cottager George Faught said “100 year floods are just that. Every 100 years. Not every couple of years. If we can’t get this fixed once and for all we might as well all say goodbye to this internationally renowned vacation jewel, enjoyed by generations of Canadians and shut off the lights and say good night. Because no one can afford this every few years”.

**About the Muskoka Lakes Association:**

With more than 2,300 member families, the Muskoka Lakes Association is one of Canada’s oldest and largest associations of waterfront property owners. The MLA serves members and area residents near the municipalities of Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Muskoka Lakes and Seguin, Ontario – with an emphasis on protecting and promoting water quality, advocating for responsible spending and fair taxation, promoting responsible land use and providing leadership on important Muskoka issues. The association’s head office is located in Port Carling, Ontario.

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