

February 8, 2017

Mr. Dan Duggan
District Manager, Parry Sound District
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
7 Bay Street, Parry Sound, ON P2A 1S4

RE: Request to Adjust Target Level for Lake Muskoka/ Muskoka River Water Management Plan

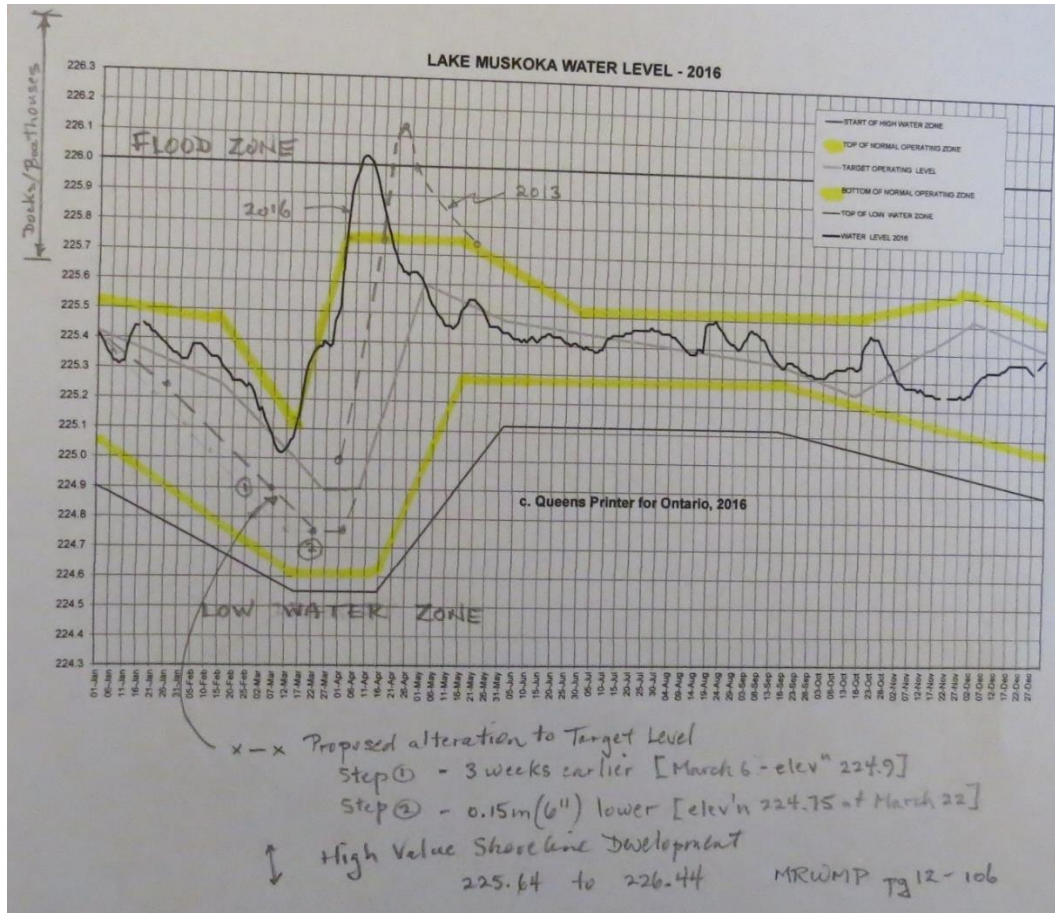
Dear Mr. Duggan,

Since last we met in August of last year, the Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) has made further study of the water level control issue, including seeking advice from experts in neighbouring jurisdictions. We wish to modify our previous short term request to be more in line with the “tweaking” you had proposed at the meeting but subsequently removed from consideration in a follow-up letter dated August 24, 2016.

The MLA now wishes to advance a proposal that would assist in mitigating observed changes in regional climate, understanding that this proposal would not spare all lakeshore structures from flooding but may, hopefully, lessen the amount and duration of high water exposure.

The three main components of the proposal are illustrated in the following chart and as described below:

- a) To start drawdown approximately 3 weeks earlier (see point 1 on attached Rule Curve) to provide for observed and predicted earlier “ice out” dates [References 1, 2 and 3]
- b) To continue drawdown after the current target minimum of 224.9 m is reached, at approximately March 6th, to a new minimum of 224.75 m. This can provide a storage buffer against strong spring storms that currently strike with little warning.
- c) To apply this request only to Lake Muskoka acknowledging that drawdown of Lakes Rosseau and Joseph would risk navigation difficulties in dry years and there is little upstream storage to compensate for drought risk. Extra drawdown of Lake Muskoka would assist level management for the Upper Lakes by maintaining the head difference at Port Carling.



The MLA believes there could be benefits to residents downstream of Bala by starting the drawdown earlier. Earlier steady flow might mitigate the very high flows experienced when rapid melting and or strong storms occur, again by providing a storage buffer in Lake Muskoka. Similarly, backups at natural flow constrictions at Moon Chutes, at Port Carling and at Bala Park Island may be mitigated. The MLA acknowledges that this proposal is only applicable to “normal” spring snow conditions and that water level differences to protect lake trout spawning have not been incorporated. The MLA wishes to interact with MNR in a collaborative manner to define alternative scenarios. We are offering this proposal as a short term adjustment for consideration until such time as the resources can be found to review the WMP using up to date modelling and climate changes predictions. When this more comprehensive review occurs, MLA wishes to be involved as a stakeholder.

References

- (1) Sale, P.R. et al. (2016), Planning for Climate Change in Muskoka, A report from Muskoka Watershed Council, 52pp.
- (2) AECOM (2011), Trent Severn Waterway - Water Management Study, prepared for Parks Canada, 4 volumes
- (3) Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations (2016), Managing Your Waterfront Property in a Changing Climate, 20pp.
- (4) OCCIAR (Oct 2016), Climate Change in Muskoka - A Workshop on Extreme Weather and Emergency Management (Delegates Package), 37pp

Sincerely,

Robert Ensor, President

Cc: Mara Kerry, Acting Resource Management Supervisor, MNR
 Anne Collins, Resource Management Supervisor, MNR
 Chris Cragg, Chair MLA Water Quality and Environment Committee