

McLEAN BAY WETLAND HERITAGE AREA

BACKGROUND

During the summers of 1990 to 1992 fieldwork was completed to assess candidate areas in Muskoka for their heritage value. A final report was produced in 1994. In total 48 heritage areas and 11 heritage sites were recognized as being significant within Muskoka.

The current District Official Plan policies that pertain to heritage areas were approved in 1991. These policies need to be reviewed and enhanced where appropriate to help deal with land use issues related to the heritage areas. Heritage areas are at the very heart of what makes Muskoka such a unique and vibrant place.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA

Location: Morrison Township, Gravenhurst

Size: 65 hectares

Features: The area is a shallow bay of clear, relatively calcareous water in the northwesternmost part of Sparrow Lake. Because of the influence of the Severn River waters arising largely in the limestone-based watersheds to the south, Sparrow Lake has a rich submersed aquatic flora. Along the shore is a narrow marsh fringe of emergent species, with sections of taller marsh supporting cattails and shrubs.

CRITERIA FULFILLED:

Representation

Rare Species

Fish and Wildlife Concentrations

Scenic Landscapes

OWNERSHIP & DISTURBANCE

Ownership: The land-based sections are entirely privately owned.

Boat traffic along the Severn River causes some disturbance, and the adjacent uplands along the bay are heavily cottaged.

SENSITIVITY

The sensitivity of the area is related to the hydrological functioning of the wetland and bay area.

NEXT STEPS

Muskoka is reviewing existing land use policies within the District Official Plan as they relate to heritage areas. Landowner, agency and interest group involvement in the process will help determine appropriate policy for these valuable natural areas, and will help to identify local concerns and issues.