**Date:**

**Attention:**
Lori McDonald, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk –lmcdonald@bracebridge.ca
Summer Valentine, Director of Planning, District of Muskoka –summer.valentine@muskoka.on.ca
Graydon Smith, Mayor Town of Bracebridge -gsmith@bracebridge.ca
Cheryl Kelley, Director of Planning, Town of Bracebridge -ckelley@bracebridge.ca
Matt Holmes, Manager of Planning Services -mholmes@bracebridge.ca
Mark Quemby, Ward Councillor, Monk Muskoka –

mquemby@bracebridge.ca

**Subject: Request for an Ontario Wetlands Evaluation Assessment of Muskoka Royale Development Subject Lands – Re: D109-08/18 and D14-17/18**

Dear Ms. McDonald, Mayor Smith, Mr. Holmes, Councillor Quemby, Ms. Kelley and Ms. Valentine,

I am writing to request that the Town of Bracebridge cause Muskoka Royale Development Inc. (MRD) to secure an Ontario Wetlands Evaluation of the Subject Lands which is part of the Beaumont Wetlands Complex (including adjacent lands[[1]](#footnote-1) that may be part of a wetlands complex) between Stephens Bay Road and Stagecoach Road to the east and Ecclestone Drive to the west (legally described as Lots 7 and 8 and part of Lots 6, 9 and 10, concession 12, Muskoka North Ward, Town of Bracebridge, District Municipality of Muskoka) that is proposed for an extensive private school facility in South Bracebridge.

Ontario’s *Provincial Policy Statement*(PPS) explicitly states that “development and site alteration” are not permitted in “significant wetlands” in the Ecoregion in which the town of Bracebridge lies**.**[[2]](#footnote-2)

In addition, the *Town of Bracebridge’s Official Plan* requires the Town to identify and confirm wetlands (see Town of Bracebridge Official Plan at B10.7).

From my understanding no assessment under the Ontario Wetlands Evaluation System (OWES) has ever been undertaken to determine whether the wetlands on the MRD property are in fact “significant”. Given that, the Provincial framework specifically prohibits development on significant wetlands, therefore a determination of the status of the MRD wetlands must be established and made publicly available as soon as possible.

I request that you require the developer to secure an Ontario Wetlands Evaluation of the MRD properties before any further steps are taken in the planning process for this development. This evaluation must be undertaken by a Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry-certified wetlands evaluator.

As per the *Town of Bracebridge’s Environmental Protection Policy[[3]](#footnote-3)* the site being considered for rezoning for this development requires a wetlands assessment to ensure ecological and natural heritage protection, as well as flood-prevention. According to the PPS, Natural Heritage is to be protected for the long term; 2.1.2 of the PPS states “The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term *ecological function*and biodiversity of *natural heritage systems*, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among *natural heritage features and areas*, *surface water features*and *ground water features*.

I look forward to receiving notice from you of the results of the wetlands evaluation of this property.

Sincerely,

1. See Provincial Policy Statement (2014) at 2.1.8 Development and site alteration shall not be permitted on adjacent lands to the natural heritage features and areas identified in policies 2.1.4, 2.1.5, and 2.1.6 unless the ecological function of the adjacent lands has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the natural features or on their ecological functions. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Provincial Policy Statement (2014) at 2.1.4(a) and 2.1.5. I note that the province’s Provincial Policy Statement Review Proposed Policies (2019) retains the exact wording of section 2.1 from the 2014 version of the Statement. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Town of Bracebridge Environmental protection policy: Economic Development Policy Natural Attributes - A7.3.2.3: “To encourage the protection of the Town’s natural attributes, such as its rural character, water quality of its lakes and rivers as well as other natural environmental features in order to ensure that the recreational and tourism uses that rely upon these attributes continue to thrive.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)