

# ROCK WIND WATER



Defining a Sense of Place  
Go Home Bay Area

Township of Georgian Bay  
August 2006

*“After all, this is a single and relatively small area of the province, with common geological and biological features, dominated by the same industries (once forestry, and now tourism and cottage services) and inhabited by seasonal and permanent populations of comparable socioeconomic status. But speak to anyone from the Bay and in a very short time you will be confronted with certain basic tenets of local culture, all predicated on its “wilderness” landscape of rocky topography and exposed shoreline. There is an unabashed pride in their “woodsiness” - a comfortable knowledge of shoals and rattlesnakes, a preference for informality and solitude. There is an intense feeling of place attachment - unusual because it is based not on deep historical roots (with a hundred years’ residence at most, cottagers hardly constitute an “indigenous people”) but on the ways cottagers imagine and use the Bay, as a landscape associated with the enjoyment of nature through recreation.”*

Claire Elizabeth Campbell  
Shaped By The West Wind  
UBC Press 2005

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## Section 1 Introduction



Georgian Bay, and specifically the Go Home Bay Area, is as much a part of the cultural heritage landscape of Canada as any other landscape in the nation. Through local and personal histories, poems, pictures, the art of the Group of Seven and more recent visual artists, and the

living memories of generations of cottagers, Georgian Bay and the archipelago of islands and mainland that make up the Go Home Bay Area have a breadth and depth of cultural history that is unique to this area. This range of history and culture supports the widely held notion that this is a unique cultural heritage landscape in the area, Township, Province, and the Country as a whole.

As a cultural heritage landscape the Go Home Bay Area has a “sense of place” that is both unique and shared by all Canadians. As Claire Campbell noted in her seminal 2005 work Shaped By The West Wind, “Oh, like the Group of Seven” was the most frequent response she received when she told people she studied Georgian Bay. As a natural landscape the area is part of the Georgian Bay Littoral Area UNESCO biosphere reserve, recognized for its unique environmental and wilderness qualities.

But a “sense of place” is also a highly individualized concept as well. While the physical elements of place may be the same, the “geological and biological features” noted by Dr. Campbell, each resident and visitor to the Bay has a single

and separate sense of place built over time and in response to the unique landscape and their own personal histories within it. What the landscape means to one resident may not define the same sense of place to other residents.

There are, however, basic elements of the physical landscape of the Go Home Bay Area and the relationships of the historic built forms to the physical landscape that together comprise the unique character and “sense of place” of the area.

The purpose of this report is to determine what are the basic elements of the landscape (both natural and man made) that comprise the “sense of place” of the Go Home Bay Area and, most importantly, determine how these elements should be the subject of both policies and regulations in a land use planning context for the area.

This report will focus on the basic elements of the “sense of place” of the Go Home Bay Area. It will describe the boundaries of the area, review and analyze the Resident Survey completed in 2006, review historic documents including the Madawaska Club histories, and review built form from a structure survey, site visits, pictures, and from The Cottage Tree newsletter produced by the Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay. The report will also identify how these basic elements should be addressed within a new planning framework for the Go Home Bay Area.

This report and the companion report, *Planning Issues and Options*, are intended to form the basis for the recommendations to update the Community Plan and Zoning By-law for the Go Home Bay Area in the Township of Georgian Bay.

## Section 2 Go Home Bay Area

The Go Home Bay Area is not a legally defined entity or geographic area, but is generally considered to comprise the historic lands associated with the Madawaska Club and the mainland and islands located around the Go Home Bay Area. Because of its similar landscape and historical development patterns and ownership, this area forms a “community of common interest” in this area of Georgian Bay. To plan for this community of common interest requires that its boundaries be defined.

There are currently no fixed boundaries for the many cottage associations located along the length of the shoreline of Georgian Bay. There are no formal agreements between the cottage associations as to the boundaries of the lands within each association. Over the years, the Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay has extended its membership to include lands and residents outside the historic club lands. Residents in these areas joined the Club either as a result of historic membership in the Club or because of a shared commitment to the goals and objectives of the Madawaska Club.

As part of this Community Plan Review and update it was critical that the Go Home Bay Area be defined and that boundaries be determined in a cooperative manner between the Cognashene, Wah Wah Tay See, and the Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay associations.

The starting point for defining the Go Home Bay Area is the Madawaska Club. The Club, with its long history and ownership in the area, forms the single largest landowner and only formal cottage association at Go Home Bay. The Madawaska Area comprises approximately 890 hectares of lands in the Go Home Bay Area that has been acquired by the Club over a century ago. The Madawaska Community Area,

as defined by both historic ownership and the Township of Georgian Bay, is detailed on Schedule D1 of the Township’s Official Plan and is detailed on Appendix ‘A’ to this report.

Through a review of detailed mapping, navigational charts, Club membership distribution outside the traditional Club lands and local knowledge, a proposal for both the north and south limits of the new Go Home Bay Area was prepared. The proposed boundaries were provided to both the Wah Wah Tay See and the Cognashene Cottage Associations and discussed with the potentially impacted landowners in those areas. The objective of the boundary review process was to ensure that there was consensus on the defined boundaries between the adjacent cottage associations and to ensure that the affected landowners agreed to their inclusion in the Go Home Bay Community Plan Area.

Agreement with the two associations and the impacted owners was received and the boundary of the Go Home Bay Community Plan Area has been determined as shown on Appendix ‘A’ to this report. This area, through the nature of its location and the long history of the community, defines a distinct community of common interest and a reasonable planning area.

The Go Home Bay Area now covers approximately 6,000 hectares of land, islands and water and is centred by the historic Madawaska Club lands and community. Additional mainland south of the Madawaska Club has been included in the Go Home Bay Area as have Champion Island and the Warwick Rocks. Mainland north of the Madawaska Club has also been added to the community area, up to Gunn Island. Gunn Island and its residents have historically associated with the Wah Wah Tay See Cottage Association and have therefore not been included in the Go Home Bay Area.

Of importance in defining the Go Home Bay Area was the inclusion of the islands, including the larger and more significant islands west of the existing Community Plan Area, within the Go Home Bay Area.



These islands include Starr, Westwind, Bernadette, Galbraith, and Split Rock Islands and the many smaller islands and “rocks” that make up the archipelago of islands at Greater Go Home Bay.

The westerly limit of the Go Home Bay Area has been set just west of the North Wooded Pine Island. As a result most of the small islands and rocks west of the Go Home Bay Area, including Entrance, Delf, Morris, Valentine, and Gilead, have been included in the defined Go Home Bay Area. Many of the long time residents of the area have indicated that the multitude of rocks and islands that make up the archipelago in the Go Home Bay Area form a significant component to the landscape, vistas and views in the area, and its “sense of place”.

Georgian Bay and the Greater Home Bay area are both “associative” and “vernacular landscapes” as described by Cameron in Shaped By The West Wind. Associative landscapes possess cultural or heritage value for a particular group, and vernacular landscapes are those “landscapes that evolve organically over time”. Go Home Bay is fiercely valued by the many owners and residents of the area whose families can trace over 100 years of history in the area. The Go Home Bay Area has also developed its own character and

style of cottages and other structures in direct response to the landscape and the challenges it posed in the form of rock, wind, and water.

The newly defined Go Home Bay Area therefore forms a community of common and shared interests and a reasonable planning area for the purposes of these reports and the preparation of the Community Plan Review and update.



### Section 3 Resident Survey

A survey of residents was conducted in early 2006 requesting details and information about their cottage properties and their perceptions and concerns about the future of the Go Home Bay Area. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix 'B' to this report.

Of the approximately 160 built-on properties within the study area (145 of which are formal members of the Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay) approximately 54 completed questionnaires were received. A full summary of the results are attached as Appendix 'C' to this report. The following is a review and analysis of the results of the Resident Survey.

#### 3.1 Built Form Questions

As would be expected from a historic summering area where the first cottages were built in 1899, the Go Home Bay Area continues to be characterized by smaller, single storey, natural material (wood and stone) cottages in locations that were chosen by the natural constraints and opportunities of each site. In addition to the main cottage, most of the cottage sites support a range of accessory buildings used for typical cottage activities.

While a few cottages (4 or 8.7% of all responding) were noted as smaller than 800 square feet or larger than 2500 square feet (4 or 8.7% of all responding), most of the cottages (38 or 82.6% of all responding) fell between the range of 801 and 2500 square feet. More cottages (16 or 34.8% of all responding) were noted as falling in the 801 to 1200 square foot size than any other category, with 11 (or 23.97% of all

responding) each within the 1201 to 1800 square feet and the 1801 to 2500 square feet categories. With over 41 of the reported cottages less than 1800 square feet in size, modest cottage sizes would appear to the norm in the Go Home Bay Area. Most cottages (37 or 71.1% of all responding) were also noted as being 1 storey in height, with 40 (or 83.3% of all responding) being 1.5 storeys or less and only 8 cottages (or 17% of all responding) reported as being 2 storeys. This would also seem to be reflective of the ages of the cottages noted by the respondents and the difficulties in building in this difficult and isolated landscape.

Thirty-four cottages (or 70.8% of all responding) were noted as being over 41 years of age, with the single largest number of cottages (22 or 45.8% of all responding) falling within the 61 years or over age category. Only 9 (or 18.6% of all responding) of the cottages were listed as being less than 20 years of age. The age of the cottages also reflects the long-term single ownerships, generally within the family of the original owner.



These facts also reflect the value that owners place on the history and character of the area and of the individual family cottage. This has resulted in modest sizes and low profile structures, natural colouring and unadorned construction as part of the area's personality. The value that residents place on the family cottage is also reflected in the resident responses. While 53% indicated that they were planning or contemplating

future construction, only 1 respondent indicated that they would tear down the family cottage. Fully 98% (46) of the respondents indicated that they would not tear down the cottage.

The preserving and maintaining of the historic family cottage is therefore a core value among those residents who responded to the questionnaire.

Cottage locations in relation to the water include a range of depths from the shoreline. These depths exist because of the difficult and rugged terrain of most cottage sites and the date of construction before local planning



controls. As a water access community where labour and materials had to be boated in, one would expect cottages to be located close to the shoreline in order to minimize the distance materials had to be moved. The Madawaska Club histories note that many of the cottages were built by local men (Joe Nault and members of the Roi family) who understood the Bay and the power of its winds and waters. This would seem to explain why only 6 respondents (or 14.3% of all responding) indicated cottages located less than 20 feet from the high water mark, with less than half of the cottages being located more than 60 feet from the high water mark.

The questionnaire revealed that through the long history and use in the area, the cottagers have constructed a range of other structures to support the use of their lands. Boathouses

(34), accessory sheds (21), sleeping cabins (24), and outhouses (28) were common structures that were noted as having been built over time to support the main cottage use.

Of no surprise in a cottage community, residents report a high number of watercraft for each property and a range in number and type of dock facilities to accommodate those watercraft. Only 6 respondents (or 13.6% of all responding) indicated that they kept 3 or less boats at the cottage. The remaining 38 (or 86.4% of all responding) indicated that they had 4 or more boats. Watercraft ranged from motorized boat (generally used as the main vehicle for transport between one of the six local marinas and the cottage) to canoes, kayaks, and assorted sailboats. One respondent indicated keeping a PWC or “jet ski” at the cottage.

With respect to docking facilities, 20 respondents (or 41.6% of all responding) noted that they had only one dock. 24 respondents (or 50.0% of all responding) reported that they had two docks. Only 4 respondents (or 8.3% of all responding) indicated that they had three or more docks.

In terms of dock length only 1 dock was reported at greater than 50 feet in length in all the responses. Most docks, according to the respondents, are between 30 and 40 feet in length. With fluctuating lake levels and with locations in the Go Home Bay Area exposed to the high winds and pounding water of Georgian Bay, it is no wonder that docking facilities are limited in both number and length.

### 3.2 Intensity of Use and Issue Questions

Most respondents, reflecting the over 100-year history of cottages in the Go Home Bay Area and the Madawaska Club, indicated they had been coming to the area for over 21 years. While 73.3% of respondents (33) indicated that only 1



family owned the cottage, 65.1% (28) indicated that 2 or more families shared the use of the cottage. This reflects the long history of family ownership and indicates the beginning of a generational transfer that is happening and will continue to happen within the Go Home Bay Area.

Frequency and intensity of stay and use of the cottage were requested by the questionnaire and responses, as was expected, reflected the range of cottagers and cottage experiences. More people stay at the cottage on weekends than during the week, with 15 respondents (or 34.9% of all responding) indicating that 6 people or more stay at the cottage on most weekends. Interesting to note is that 39 residents (or 92.9% of all responding) reported that 5 or fewer people stay during the week and 28 respondents (or 65.1% of all responding) reported that 5 or fewer people stay during weekends.

Cottage use frequency ranges from 20 days or less (3 or 6.7% of all responding) to respondents who noted that they spend 61 days or more (17 or 37.8% of all responding) at the cottage. With 16 respondents (or 35.6% of all responding) indicating that they spend between 41 and 60 days at the cottage each year, the survey would suggest that cottages in the area, in spite of their water access only nature, are used consistently during the season.

While having guests to the cottage was reported as occurring between 2 and 4 times during the summer, both the number of guests (2 to 3) and the number of nights that they stayed (2 to 3) were relatively low.

Very few respondents (4 or 9.1% of all responding) indicated that they had owned a cottage in other locations. Of the residents who responded to the question about why did they choose the Go Home Bay Area, the locational attributes of its

privacy, wilderness, less density and larger lot sizes, and remote quality were most often noted as the reasons. These attitudes are also reflected in the three features noted as the most valued in the area:



- Nature and the physical beauty of the area;
- The privacy, solitude, and quiet of the area; and,
- The sense of community.

These attributes, and the need to protect them, are included in the responses to the questions regarding how to protect these features and what the respondents felt were the most significant threats to the Go Home Bay Area.

The residents' most frequent suggestions for protecting the valued features of the area included a range of limitations and restrictions respecting density and intensity of development. These included limiting density by requiring large lot sizes and limiting the size of cottages and other structures. Respondents also noted preserving the water access only nature of the community by prohibiting road access was an important way of protecting the valued features of the area. Environmental restrictions, relating to water quality and habitat protection, was the third most frequent suggestion to protect the features of the area.

The top five threats to the Go Home Bay Area and its sense of place as reported by the residents were:

- a. Increased density and “monster” cottages
- b. Decreasing water levels
- c. Water pollution
- d. Increasing land values & increasing taxes
- e. Increasing boat traffic

Of these, only a) and c) can be directly addressed within the framework of a Community Plan, while e) can be addressed to the extent that additional cottages result in additional boat traffic. The other threats, the long standing concerns with the lake level, general concerns with the cost of owning and maintaining the family cottage, and the concerns of a water based community with the speed, frequency and volume of boat traffic through the area are generally outside the scope and mandate of the local land use planning documents.

The questionnaire identified a clear sense from the majority of respondents that they felt greater controls on built form are needed to protect and preserve the unique cultural heritage landscape that makes up the Go Home Bay Area and that the quality of the waters of Georgian Bay needed to be protected and preserved.

The suggestions to address these threats included a full range of options, from zoning restrictions (limiting the size of cottages and other buildings), by-laws to restrict pollution, and the restriction of boat traffic being the three most frequently cited.

## Section 4 Current Built Form

In addition to the Resident Questionnaire, a review of the size and nature of the current built forms in the Go Home Bay Area was undertaken through site visits, review of historical documents, and an analysis of assessment data on cottage sizes.

### 4.1 Cottage Size

The Township of Georgian Bay requested, as part of the Community Plan Review, the District of Muskoka to analyze and summarize the assessment data respecting the recorded cottages and structures that make up the current built forms in the Go Home Bay Area. The assessment data does not yield information with respect to the design or the location of the structures on the individual cottage lots, but it does provide a picture of the character of the area through a description of the range of cottage sizes, the type and number of boathouses, and the number of sleeping cabins within the area.

The results of the analysis of the structure survey by the District is displayed on Table 1.

The structure survey identified 159 cottages within the study area and analyzed the size of the cottages based on five categories. Data on the number of cottages by size are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1 - Floor Area (sq. ft.)

Floor Area	Number	Percentage of Total
<800	28	17.6
801 - 1200	50	31.4
1201 - 1800	54	34.0
1801 - 2500	23	14.5
> 2500	4	2.5

The largest number of cottages falls in the 1201 to 1800 category. Surprisingly, over 17% (28) of all cottages are less than 800 square feet in size, likely reflecting the original historic cottages constructed on the sites shortly after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of the existing cottages (104 or 65.4% of all) fall within the range of 801 square feet to 1800 square feet, representing a modest cottage size. It is interesting to note, from the Resident Questionnaires, that very few of the cottages were built at one time to their current size. Most cottages have been renovated and added to as family needs and conditions changed and as subsequent generations put their mark on the family cottage.

The vast majority of cottages (127 or 79.9% of all) fall within the middle three categories, with 97.5% of all cottages being less than 2500 square feet (155) and only 4 cottages (or 2.5% of all) exceeding 2500 square feet in size.

The Go Home Bay Area is characterized by small to modest cottage sizes, within a range of 801 to 1800 square feet, with almost all cottages being 2500 square feet or less in size.

While the data analysis did not determine the exact size of those cottages larger than 2500 square feet, from site inspections and local knowledge it is believed that these cottages are still modest in comparison to other cottage areas and are not the “monster cottages” being experienced in other recreational areas of Ontario.

The modest cottage sizes of the Go Home Bay Area reflect the more difficult building environment, conditions, and history that are posed by the isolated conditions of this water access only community. But it also reflects the values of the community.



#### 4.2 Accessory Structures

The District also counted the number of boathouses and sleeping cabins on properties within the Go Home Bay Area. The results of this count are displayed on Figure 2 and in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Accessory Structures

Structure	Total
Sleeping Cabins	162
Boathouse	140
Boathouse with residential use	3

Sleeping cabins (or bunkies) are a typical feature of the cottage experience in the Go Home Bay Area, with the “structure survey” revealing that most of the properties in

the area support these accessory residential structures. Boathouses, despite the fluctuating water levels of Georgian Bay, are also a common structure within the Go Home Bay Area, with 140 boathouses being recorded in the Assessment data system.

Boathouses with residential use above are not a common feature of the built form in the Go Home Bay Area. The structure survey revealed that only three boathouses were listed as having a residential use above. Boathouses with residential units generally have associated decks or other outdoor amenity areas that increase the intensity of development at the shoreline. This is not a built form that is typical of the area.

#### 4.3 Cottage Age

In 1999 The Madawaska Club at Go Home Bay published The Cottage Tree. In addition to documenting past and current ownership of each of the cottages, The Cottage Tree recorded the date of construction of the cottage and noted if the original cottage had been demolished and replaced.

Table 3 below details the analysis of the age of the cottages as noted in The Cottage Tree.

Table 3 - Date of Construction

Age	Number	Percentage of Total
< 1944	85	54.5
1945 - 1964	40	25.6
1965 - 1989	24	15.4
1990 - 2005	7	4.5

The Go Home Bay Area is a longstanding cottage community, reflective of the history of the Madawaska Club. While over

54% of the cottages (85) were built before 1944, many of those cottages were built shortly after the incorporation of the Madawaska Club in 1898. For many of the cottages, a construction date was listed at or shortly after the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The architecture of the area therefore reflects the long history of cottage development in the area and the age of the cottages. The architecture also reflects the difficulty in obtaining materials and labour in this remote area of the Province at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the need to use local materials and simple plans designed to fit the setting and the site. The resultant cottage styles fit the individual sites characteristics rather than drawing attention to the cottage itself. This rustic style has resulted in a built form that is low in height, uses natural materials of wood and stone with natural colours, and presents a “natural” response to the rock, wind, and waters of the Go Home Bay Area.

#### 4.4 Cottage Height

In addition to recording the history of the ownership and the date of construction of the cottage, The Cottage Tree included a visual record of each cottage in the Club. This unique visual survey of the exiting built form was analyzed to get a sense of nature of the cottages and the height of the existing cottages within the Go Home Bay Area. The Cottage Tree includes records on a total of 170 cottage sites, including sites where no cottage had been constructed at the time.

Table 4 below details an analysis of the cottage pictures and the number and percentages of a range of cottage height. The numbers will not equal the total records in The Cottage Tree because sites were either noted as vacant or it could

not be determined from the picture the height of the cottage.

Table 4 - Cottage Height

Height	Number	Percentage of Total
1 Storey	104	66.7
1.5 Storey	35	22.4
2 Storey	17	10.9

Very few (17, or 10.9% of all) of the existing cottages are 2 storeys in height. Most cottages have been constructed at a height of 1.5 storeys or less (139 or 89.1% of all), with a 1 storey cottage height being the most common height of all the cottages included in The Cottage Tree survey (104 or 66.7% of all). This simple architecture and limited height reflects not only the age of cottages and the difficult building conditions in the area, but the value the original owners placed on fitting the cottage to the unique setting and the particular demands of each site.



## Section 5 Elements of Place

The images and landscape of Georgian Bay and the Go Home Bay Area are as well known to most Canadians as the landscapes of the prairies, the Rockies of Alberta and British Columbia, and the rugged coastlines of Newfoundland and New Brunswick.

The images of this significant cultural heritage landscape have been captured in the memoirs, pictures, poetry, and paintings of some of Canada's most famous artists and writers. Most, if not all, Canadians can bring to mind the images of the Georgian Bay landscape.

The landscape elements at play in the Go Home Bay Area combine to form an ecosystem unique to the Great Lakes, and possibly the world. This situation has been confirmed through the designation of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay, including the Go Home Bay Area, as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. These designations are meant to showcase how development can occur in a sustainable fashion alongside conservation. The Biosphere Reserve designation encourages landowners, municipalities and the Province to continue working towards conservation and development that complements and fits into the natural environment.

The following describes the component elements of the cultural landscape of the area and the natural and human made elements of the Go Home Bay Area.

### ➤ Exposed Granite Rock

After millennia of exposure to the fierce west winds of Georgian Bay, one of the area's most distinctive features is the exposed granite rock that describes the shorelines of the

area. The more exposed islands and rocks of the western portion of the Go Home Bay Area are almost devoid of soil and trees, with only the hardiest of species clinging to these precarious environments. The larger islands, in particular the leeward side of the islands, and the more protected lands further east in the Go Home Bay Area have less of the shoreline scoured by the west wind, but all lands have the exposed granite rock at the interface between the waters of Georgian Bay and the lands of the area.



### ➤ Windswept Pines

In addition to the exposed granite rocks, the west wind has also shaped the vegetation that occupies the shoreline of the Go Home Bay Area. It is these "windswept pines" of the area, and their relationships with the water and rocky shoreline that have dominated the images and themes of the paintings of the Group of Seven and the photographs of such local photographers as Bud Watson and others.

### ➤ Water Quality of Georgian Bay

The water is everywhere and everything in the Go Home Bay Area. It is the road to the cottage - access to the area is gained from six different marinas, it is the place to play, it is the source of drinking water (for some), and has been the backdrop to over 100 years of history in the area. The water

of Georgian Bay has always possessed an unparalleled reputation for its clarity and quality.

The deep and clear water of Georgian Bay is a basic element of the sense of place of the Go Home Bay Area must be included in the policy and regulatory responses to defining and protecting the cultural heritage landscape of the area.

➤ Windswept and Undeveloped Islands of the Outer Bay

Of critical importance to the sense of place in the Go Home Bay Area are the windswept and undeveloped islands and rocks that mark the gateways into this water based community from the north, south and the west.



These islands and rocks are significant elements of the vistas and views of the area from the cottages and from the boats that bring residents and visitors to the area.

It is the interplay of the deep clear waters of Georgian Bay and these windswept and undeveloped islands that mark, for most residents and visitors, the entrance into the isolated wilderness of the Go Home Bay Area.

➤ Isolation

Part of the character of the Go Home Bay Area is that it remains an isolated community that is water access only. Vacationing in the area requires a significant commitment by

residents. This commitment includes travelling to one of six marinas, buying supplies for the stay and boating out to the cottage, while remaining highly aware of the weather and winds on Georgian Bay that can make boat travel a difficult (if not dangerous) journey.

The experiences of Go Home Bay are different than in road access cottage areas because of the isolation and privacy of the area afforded by being a water based community and the isolation and privacy afforded by the narrow channels and passageways through the archipelago of islands and rocks. It is not uncommon that views from a cottage would include only the natural and undisturbed waters and shoreline of the area as a result of the physical terrain and geometry of the area.

Long time residents have a love and affection for this difficult environment, separating them from other cottage areas and communities, with the area's "...ruggedness, its openness, it's vastness of space..." putting them "closer to nature in Georgian Bay" written by Dr. Campbell in Shaped by the West Wind.

➤ Low Density

As the original owner of the central lands, the Madawaska Club has had an important role in the location and size of the cottage sites that were originally assigned and then sold to the Club's members. The Club understood early on that its members valued the low density, large lot sizes, and scattered nature of the cottages within the area. The Club has also indicated that, although it continues to own 72.32 hectares of lands, no further cottage sites are proposed beyond those that are currently designated and zoned.

Maintaining the low density, larger lot sizes, and scattered nature of the cottage sites in the Go Home Bay Area is also key in the definition of the sense of place for the area. By providing larger lot sizes and greater frontages, a greater percentage of the shoreline will likely remain in its natural state and less of the shoreline will be “disturbed” by active uses like docks, boathouses, and swimming areas. The resultant shoreline, comprised of large lengths of undisturbed areas interspersed with small areas of human uses and structures, is one of the major elements that differentiates the Go Home Bay Area from the other shoreline communities in the Georgian Bay area.

➤ Low Profile Cottages

Whether as a result of history and the difficult building environment or the direct and conscious decisions of the pioneering cottage owners to the area, the predominant built forms in the Go Home Bay Area are small and modest cottages less than 1800 square feet in size and with a height of 1 and 1.5 storeys. The cottages have been nestled onto their sites in locations that respond to the constraints of each lot, recognize the need to be mindful of the elements of the Bay, and tend to draw attention to the site and situation and not to the cottage itself.

The Go Home Bay Area has not yet seen the arrival of exceptionally large cottages that take full advantage of the development permissions in the Township Zoning By-law. The historic cottages of the area generally are modest in size and as a result do not dominate the landscape. Even the newer cottages to the area have respected this character and have tended to generally be modest in size and height. Very few of the cottages in the area are 2 storeys and no cottages are greater than 2 storeys, and only 4 cottages are greater than 2500 square feet in floor area.

The sense of place is therefore one where cottage design and location respect the unique characteristics of the area and the site, where cottage size and massing do not dominate the landscape, and where the use of natural materials and colours blends into and becomes part of the visual aesthetic of the area.

Preserving these historic approaches and standards to sensitive cottage design and massing for new development, whether through additions and renovations or new cottages, will be an important component in protecting the sense of place of the Go Home Bay Area.

➤ Uninterrupted Tree Lines and Minimal Tree Removal



Related to the topography of the area, the dominant style of the cottages and how they have been sited on their lots, development patterns in the area have to a great extent resulted in the preservation of the unbroken tree

line views from the waters of Georgian Bay. This, coupled with the limited tree and vegetation removal that has occurred during the historical development of the area, has preserved a “ribbon of green” along the near shore area that provides the backdrop to the incredible views and vistas from cottage to cottage and from water to shore.

Clearing and landscaping of cottage lots for manicured lawns as outdoor living areas is not a common practice in the area

and has not occurred, with few expectations, along the shoreline of the cottage lots. This is likely as a result of the values and attitudes of the residents in the area as it is the rocky terrain, limited and shallow insitu soils, and the costs and efforts of building and maintains these areas.

This approach to site development, while not unique to the Go Home Bay Area, is one of the key elements in defining the area's sense of place.

### ➤ Small Scale Shoreline Structures

Boathouses and docks form an integral and functional element in this water based community. While both forms of structures are common (or essential in the case of docks) they generally have been modest in size, height, and length.



Boathouses are required to be located at the water's edge out of functional necessity. However, the boathouses that have been constructed within the Go Home Bay Area have tended to be located onshore rather than over

the water. This reflects the resident's knowledge and experience with the fluctuations of the water levels of Georgian Bay and the difficulty in developing wet slip boathouses that are more typical of controlled water level lakes. Boathouses that have been constructed in the area tend to be of a simpler design, single storey, single slip or single boat capacity, and modest in size.

More elaborate boathouses, like you would see in the Muskoka area (Lake Joseph, Lake Muskoka, Lake Rosseau), having 1.5 storeys, with two or more slips, residential unit above, attached decks and boat ports, are not a building form or pattern established in the Go Home Bay area. This approach reflects the general ethos of the area to more rustic design, more harmony with the natural setting, and built forms that do not dominate the landscape or "shorescape".

Despite the fact that docking is an essential and functional element of the built form in the area, they are not a dominant structure on the shorelines of the Go Home Bay Area. Docking tends to be limited in number and in length. For a water based



community, over 90% of residents to the Resident Questionnaire reported that they had 2 or fewer docks and only 1 of all the respondents indicated that their dock length was greater than 50 feet. In the areas of Greater Go Home that are directly exposed to the winds, waters, and ice of Georgian Bay, docks must be removed and stored over the winter. As a result, docks tend to be very practical and functional in nature, and not dominate the landscape or shoreline of the area. Even with the fluctuations in the water levels of Georgian Bay, there are very few large docks (both in size and length) in the area. Residents have developed, over time and with hard learned experience, ingenious methods to manage dock locations in light of the fluctuation of the water levels of Georgian Bay and the practical need to protect these structures from the ravages

of both wind and ice. Modest docks, both in the manner of number and size, are a basic component of the sense of place in the Go Home Bay Area.

➤ Accessory Structures Located To Rear Of Main Cottage

Residents indicated that their cottage lots supported a range of accessory buildings. Many residents indicated that they had multiple accessory structures on their lots including a boathouse, shed, sleeping cabin, in addition to the main cottage. And yet, the views and vistas of the shoreline in the Go Home Bay Area are not cluttered with these multiple structures. The views and vistas of the shoreline, where dotted with structures, are generally composed of small docks of unobtrusive size and placement, a modest single storey boathouse, and the cottage carefully located on the property in harmony with the main elements of the area. The historic development pattern of the area has seen residents construct their accessory structures in locations that are not generally visible from the water and are located generally to the rear of the main cottage. This forms part of the visual aesthetic of the area and part of its sense of place.



## Section 6 Regulating and Protecting “Sense of Place”

The Go Home Bay Area looks and feels today much as it did in 1899 when the first cottages were constructed in the area by members of the Madawaska Club. This is no accident.

As a result of the philosophy of the Club, the values of the long time residents of the area, the raw power and nature of Georgian Bay, the cultural and artistic history of the area, the isolation and difficult travelling and building conditions, and as a result of the undisputed beauty of the area, Go Home Bay has become a cultural heritage landscape.

Over 100 years of stewardship by past and current owners in the area have preserved the fundamental elements of the sense of place of Go Home Bay and as such this stewardship should be recognized as a fundamental principle in policy for the area. Additionally, the fundamental elements of the “sense of place” should be preserved both in the policy framework in the Community Plan and in a regulatory regime in the zoning by-law and other implementation tools.

The discussion that follows reviews the fundamental elements of the “sense of place” and provides suggestions with respect to their protection and management.

### ➤ Exposed Granite Rocks

The shoreline and windswept granite rocks that comprise such a significant visual component of the sense of place of the Go Home Bay Area need to be protected as part of the long-term planning strategy for the area.

New structures and expansions to existing structures, where possible, should avoid building on this fundamental component of the landscape. Appropriate setbacks from the 100 year flood level of Georgian Bay should ensure that the shoreline areas are protected from inappropriate development and site alteration in relation to the construction of main dwellings and other structures.

The interrelationship between the rocks, water, and trees of the area and the historic development patterns in Go Home Bay support limitations on any significant landscape or site alterations in order to accommodate new development. Development of new cottages, expansions to cottages, and other new structures should be required to work with the landscape and not require site alterations through either blasting or the placement of fill.

Policies and regulations are therefore required to prohibit or limit the alteration of this critical visual element of the landscape. Where blasting is required to permit the construction of a boathouse or to create a navigable waterway to a lot, blasting should be limited in scope and area and should be conditional on all blast rock being removed from the shoreline.

### ➤ Windswept Pines

The windswept pines of Georgian Bay, as so dramatically portrayed in the art of Fred Varley, Lauren Harris, and the other members of the Group of Seven, are a signature element of the visual aesthetic of the area. Preserving these signature trees should be a goal of the Community Plan.

As with the exposed granite rocks of the shoreline, appropriate setbacks from the 100 year flood level of Georgian Bay should ensure that these signature trees are protected from development in relation to the construction or additions to main dwellings and other structures. In addition to appropriate setbacks, requiring the preservation of these signature trees and all shoreline vegetation, and minimizing the active areas at the waters edge, should be both a policy goal in the Community Plan and implemented in the regulatory regime.

➤ Windswept and Undeveloped Islands of the Outer Bay

Forming both the gateway to the community and the main backdrop to the views and vistas of Georgian Bay from the shore, these outcroppings of windswept rocks are critical components of the Go Home Bay Area sense of place. A goal of the new Community Plan should be that since these islands form part of the fundamental sense of place of this cultural heritage landscape, new development on them should not be permitted. Where privately held, these islands should only be considered for development following a detailed study and a full planning and development review process. Strict criteria and guidelines should be developed with respect to the required supporting studies and reports (including visual impact analyses of views and vistas) and to provide a framework to make decisions in these cases. Criteria and guidelines must also address additions and renovations to existing cottages and structures located on the islands in the outer bay.

➤ Isolation

It was very clear from the Resident Questionnaire that the isolation of the area, being a water access only community,

and the resultant sense of travelling into the past and wilderness of the area was a highly held value. Providing road access to the area would fundamentally change the character of the area and could lead to an increase in the nature and manner of use of the area.

The Community Plan should therefore establish a principle and provide clear policies that the Go Home Bay Area is an isolated water access only community and that road access to the area is not supported or encouraged. While local planning documents have no jurisdiction over Crown land and provincial land use planning for these lands, the Community Plan should strongly discourage the province from constructing roads into the area or to either of the Crown Reserves located north and south of the area.

➤ Low Density

Through the careful stewardship of the Club and past owners of lands and islands in the area, the Go Home Bay Area presents a very different character from other areas of the Georgian Bay coast. Lots are larger both in area and frontage and there are breaks in the private ownership so that cottage lots do not form a continuous ribbon along the shore. This development pattern, a direct result of conscious decisions in response to the physical and historic landscape, has helped define the sense of place of the Go Home Bay Area.

The density standards established by the Club in its first Community Plan have worked well in helping to preserve the sense of place and as such should be maintained and extended to the larger Go Home Bay Area both in policy and regulation.

➤ Low Profile Cottages



Preserving the historical patterns of cottage construction, one which has tended to see modest cottages, should be a principle objective of preserving and protecting the sense of place of the area and a basic element

of the zoning framework for the area. Cottages in the area are generally less than 1800 square feet in floor area, a maximum 1.5 storeys, and are nestled onto their sites to respond to the constraints of each lot, recognize the need to be mindful of the elements of the Bay, and tend to draw attention to the site and not to the cottage.

Built form and massing policies and regulations, while preserving this historic development pattern, should also provide sufficient flexibility for landowners to find the best site for the cottage and to express their own response to the sense of place in their cottage design.

➤ Uninterrupted Tree Lines and Minimal Tree Removal

Preserving the uninterrupted tree line and limiting vegetation and tree removal from the cottage sites should be a policy goal of the Community Plan for the area. This goal would address the visual character of the sense of place, but would also address issues of water quality. Preserving shoreline vegetation and mature trees will help prevent erosion and sedimentation of the limited soils in the area. In addition to limiting tree removal and promoting and

encouraging the maintenance of existing shoreline vegetation, the policies and regulations for the area should discourage formal landscaping with manicured lawns particularly along the shoreline. Manicured lawns and outdoor living areas lead to greater runoff and reduced water quality. The use of pesticides and fertilizers should also be strongly discouraged in the Go Home Bay Area.

➤ Small Scale Shoreline Structures

The shoreline of Go Home Bay is not dominated by large boathouses and overly elaborate docking configurations. The shoreline character continues to be dominated by the natural beauty of the area and interspersed with small scale shoreline structures which, as a result of scale, size, colour, and location, are unobtrusive to the overall views and vistas of the shoreline.

In order to preserve this element of the sense of place policies and regulations should be provided regarding boathouses that would limit them to 1 per lot, 1 storey in height, no accessory residential uses permitted, and be limited in size. Policies and regulations respecting docking should also be provided that limits their width and length (maximum 50 feet from water's edge) and directs their locations to the most environmentally suitable areas of the site (e.g. outside of Type 1 Fish Habitat).

➤ Accessory Structures Located to Rear of Main Cottage

In order to preserve the uncluttered nature of the shoreline in the Go Home Bay Area, policies and regulations should be provided that direct permitted accessory structures to the principle cottage to be located to the rear of the main cottage and screened from view from the lake.

➤ Water Quality of Georgian Bay

It should be a major goal of the Community Plan that new development and redevelopment in the Go Home Bay Area must protect and preserve the quality of the water of the area and Georgian Bay.

Policies should be provided in the Community Plan that recognize the significant partnerships involved in preserving and protecting the quality of Georgian Bay and the stewardship of all partners in this vital resource. Policies should be provided that encourage all partners, the federal, provincial and municipal governments, local cottage associations, and the individual cottage owners, to participate and consult each other on the various programs and initiatives in protecting the heritage coastline and the water quality of Georgian Bay. Policies should be provided that set an environmental framework for development in the area with the goal being the protection of the quality of the Bay.

Policy requirements would include those directions listed earlier in this report that have an environmental impact, such as adequate setbacks, shoreline vegetation preservation, minimal tree and vegetation removal, and limited landscape alteration. In addition, environmental policies should address matters of on-site sewage treatment, water runoff, boating maintenance, solid waste disposal, and related matters.

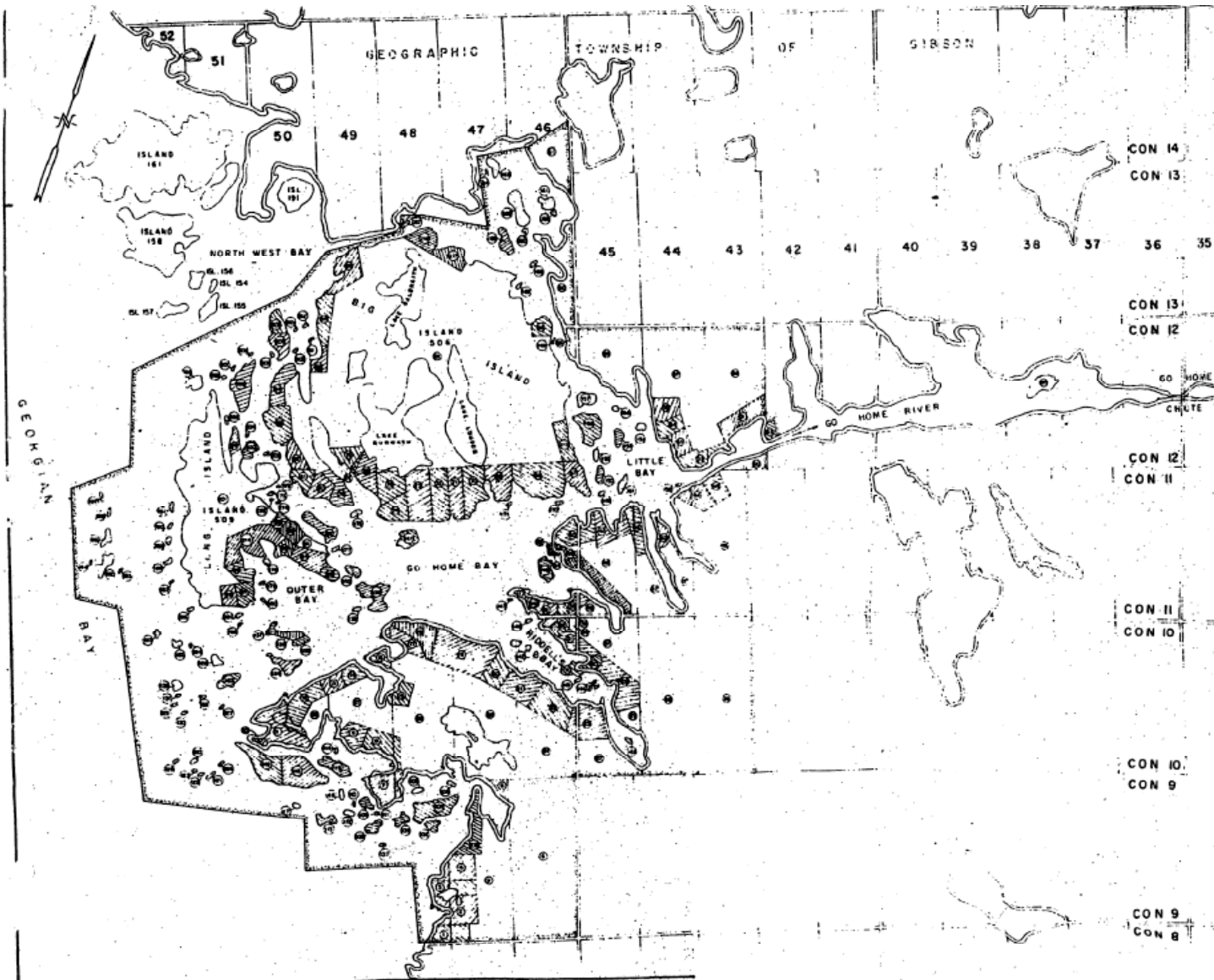


*“Abrupt granite rising from the clearest  
water in the world. Crowned with a tangled diadem  
of blue green foliage...  
And always beneath birdsong the sound of water.”*

*Douglas LePan, “Islands of Summer”  
Weathering It: Complete Poems  
McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1987.*



APPENDIX 'A' - SCHEDULE D1 OF THE TOWNSHIP OF GEORGIAN BAY OFFICIAL PLAN



**Schedule "D1"**  
to the Official Plan of the  
Township of Georgian Bay

**Madawaska Area**

- LEGEND**
- BOUNDARY OF MADAWASKA AREA.
  - OPEN SPACE.
  - COMMUNITY SPACE.
  - RESIDENTIAL AREA.
  - CIRCLED NUMBER DESIGNATES INDIVIDUAL PARCELS WHICH COMPRISE THE MADAWASKA CLUB.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THIS  
TO BE A TRUE COPY  
*Bonnie A. Meier*  
DEPUTY CLERK  
TOWNSHIP OF GEORGIAN BAY

PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF  
D.H. GALBRAITH  
ONTARIO LAND SURVEYOR

**GREATER GO HOME BAY AREA COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE  
LANDOWNER SURVEY**

The questionnaire asks a series of questions regarding what you value about the area, what makes the Greater Go Home Bay area unique, and specific questions concerning your own land and cottage. **All information collected on the Meridian website will be kept confidential and will only be used in an aggregate form in the study.** The Meridian website and the GGHBA webpage are secure and no one will be able to see your completed survey once it is placed on the Meridian website. Your completed survey can be easily uploaded to the webpage by going to the "Upload your completed survey" tab just below the title on the GGHBA webpage. It would be greatly appreciated if the Questionnaire be completed and returned to the GGHBA website by January 30, 2005.

Please provide your property assessment roll number: \_\_\_\_\_ \*

**A. TELL US ABOUT YOUR COTTAGE AND PROPERTY:**

1) Is your property \_\_\_\_\_ mainland or \_\_\_\_\_ island?

*If you do not have precise measurements to answer all the questions, please answer them to the best of your ability. We appreciate that it may be difficult to measure your cottage at this time of year.*

2) What is the total square footage of your cottage? \_\_\_\_\_ ft<sup>2</sup>

3) How wide is your cottage at the water side? \_\_\_\_\_ ft

4) How many storeys is your cottage?  
 1 storey    2 storeys    3 storeys

5) What is the age of your cottage? \_\_\_\_\_

6) Is your cottage:  
 log    wood siding    manufactured siding OR    brick or stone?

7) What colour is your cottage? \_\_\_\_\_

8) Do you have any detached accessory buildings? If Yes, what are they and what size are they?

Boathouse   \_\_\_\_\_ (ft<sup>2</sup>)

Shed   \_\_\_\_\_ (ft<sup>2</sup>)

Outhouse   \_\_\_\_\_ (ft<sup>2</sup>)

Sleeping Cabin \_\_\_\_\_(ft<sup>2</sup>) \_\_\_\_\_ number  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_(ft<sup>2</sup>)

- 9) How far is your cottage set back from the current high water mark? \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Have there been any renovations or additions to the original cottage? If yes, please describe. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Do you propose or anticipate undertaking any renovations or expansion to your cottage in the next 5 to 10 years? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 12) Are you considering tearing down and replacing your cottage?  
 Yes  No
- 13) How many docks do you have?  
 1  2  3  More \_\_\_\_\_  
How wide are they? \_\_\_\_\_ How long are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
What shape?  "T"  "L"  "I"  Straight  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**B. TELL US ABOUT YOUR COTTAGE LIFESTYLE**

- 1) How long have you cottaged in the Go Home Bay area?  
 1-10 yrs  11-15 yrs  16-20 yrs  Over 21 yrs
- 2) How many days would you and your family spend at the cottage in a typical summer? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How many families share ownership of the cottage? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) How many families use the cottage? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Have you owned a cottage in any other shoreline or lake area other than Go Home Bay?  Yes  No
- 6) If the answer to the above question is yes, please explain why you chose a cottage in the Go Home Bay area. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7) What are the three features that you value most in the Go Home Bay area?  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Please provide your suggestions as to how those features you noted could be protected.
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) What do you consider to be the top 3 threats to the Go Home Bay area?
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Please provide your opinion as to how the threats you have noted could be addressed.
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Which marina do you use? \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) How many boats do you keep at the cottage regularly and what type.
- 1    2    3    4+   Types: \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) On average, how many people do you usually host during a typical visit by your guests? # \_\_\_\_\_
- On average, how many nights do your guests usually stay during a typical visit? # \_\_\_\_\_
- 14) Please indicate, on average, the number of times you host guests in each of the four seasons:
- Spring \_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Winter \_\_\_\_\_ Fall \_\_\_\_\_

**C. HELP US LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GO HOME BAY AREA**

Do you have any other information that may be of interest or helpful in the planning process? You can upload written submissions to the GGHBA webpage the same way you will upload this survey or you can email them to Wes Crown at [wes@meridianplan.ca](mailto:wes@meridianplan.ca) or Chris Jones at [chris@meridianplan.ca](mailto:chris@meridianplan.ca). You can also contact Wes or Chris at 705-737-4512 (ext. 224 or ext. 233 respectively) if you have any questions or how you can help.

**GO HOME BAY AREA COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE  
LANDOWNER SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY**

**Notes:**

1. Not all questions were answered on returned questionnaires, therefore totals for each question may not equal total of returned Questionnaires.

**PART A**

**1. Location of Cottage**

Mainland	24 (47%)
Island	27 (53%)

**2. Square Footage of Cottage**

0 - 800 Sq. ft.	4 + 1 vacant lot
801-1200	16
1201-1800	11
1801-2500	11
2500 +	4

**3. Width of Cottage at Water Side (ft)**

0-20 ft	1
21-40	21
41-60	16
61 +	5

**4. Number of storey's**

1 storey	37	77%
1.5 storeys	3	6%
2 storeys	8	17%

**5. Age of Cottage - Years**

0-20	9
21-40	5
41-60	12
61 +	22

**6. Siding**

Wood	42	86%
Manufactured	5	10%
Log	2	4%

**8. Detached Accessory Buildings**

Boathouse	34
Shed	21
Outhouse	28
Sleeping Cabin	24
Other	6

**9. Cottage Setback from High Water Mark (ft)**

0-20	6
21-40	13
41-60	4
61 +	19

**10. Any Renovations or Additions**

Yes	36	75%
No	12	25%

**11. Future Renovations**

Yes	23	47%
No	23	47%
Maybe	3	6%

**12. Tearing Down Cottage?**

Yes	1	2%
No	46	98%

**13. How Many Docks?**

1	20
2	24
3	3
4	1

**Width of Dock (ft)**

4	1
5	5
6	16
8	19
10	5

**PART B****1. How Long have you Cottaged in the Go Home Bay Area?**

1-10 years	4
Over 21	41

**2. How Many Days do you Spend at the Cottage - Average?**

0-20	3
21-40	9
41-60	16
61+	17

**3. How Many Families Share Ownership?**

1	33	73%
2	7	16%
4	2	4%
5	3	7%

**4. How Many Families Use the Cottage?**

1	15	35%
2	10	23%
3	11	25%
4	5	12%
5	2	5%

**5. How Many People Stay During the Week?**

1-5	39
6-10	3

**How Many People Stay on the weekend?**

1-5	28
6-10	15

**6. Have You Owned a Cottage in any other Shoreline or Lake Area?**

Yes	4	9%
No	40	91%

**7. Why Choose a Cottage in the Go Home Bay Area?**

- a. Location
- b. Privacy, Wilderness, Large Lots, less density



- c. Looking for more remote, less congested area

**8. Three Features Most Valued about the Area**

- a. Nature/beauty of area
- b. Privacy/solitude/quiet
- c. Community/friends & family

**9. Suggestions To Protect Those Features**

- a. Limit building/density restrictions/lot size/cottage size limits/structures
- b. No road access
- c. Environmental restrictions

**10. Top 5 Threats**

- a. Increased density and “monster” cottages
- b. Decreasing water levels
- c. Water quality pollution
- d. Increasing land values & increasing taxes
- e. Increasing boat traffic

**11. How to Address Threats**

- a. Zoning restrictions (size of cottages & other buildings)
- b. By-laws to restrict water, air & noise pollution
- c. Restrict boat traffic

**12. Which Marina Do You Use?**

Georgian Bay Landing	12	26%
Georgian Bay Water Taxi	7	15%
Honey Harbour	10	21%
King Bay	12	26%
Paragon	3	6%
Other	3	6%

**13. How Many Boats do you Keep at the Cottage?**

1-3	6
4+	38

**14. How Many Guests Usually Stay During a Typical Visit?**

Average: 2-3

**How Many Nights Do Your Guests Usually Stay?**

Average: 2-3

**15. Average Number of Times You Host Guest in Each Season**

Spring	1
Summer	2-4
Fall	1
Winter	