# Rattlesnake bites surpass 2014 records and continues to climb

Green Party candidate's dog latest bite victim

PARRY SOUND - On Friday afternoon, the West Parry Sound Health Centre confirmed yet another Massasauga rattlesnake bite, bringing this year's total to 10.

In 2014, there were nine rattlesnake bites in the district, down from 16 bites in 2013. As of Friday, two bites have been treated in Grey Bruce County, two in Midland, and the remaining six have been treated at the West Parry Sound Health Centre the treatment depot for central Ontario. One bite victim has included a West Parry Sound Health Centre physician, Doctor Brad Hunkin.

Jim Hanna, public relations and communications person at the hospital, said that all bites have been unprovoked, unlike the man who attempted to take a selfie with a rattlesnake and then paid the price with a hefty medical bill in San Diego, California.

The Ontario government's webpage on the Massasauga rattlesnake describes the snake as having a body that is grey to dark brown with dark brown "butterfly" or "saddle-shaped" blotches down the back, with alternating blotches down the sides. Due to this colouring, the snake is easily camouflaged amongst foliage. Historically, Massasauga rattlesnake bites occur accidentally when an individual, not seeing the snake, steps on it.

To avoid accidental bites, species at risk coordinator with the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, Glenda Clayton, advises that while walking be aware of where you place your hands and feet, wear closed-toed shoes and long pants, and use a flashlight when traveling at night.

People aren't the only ones at risk for a Massasauga rattlesnake bite – dogs are also at risk. Jennifer Garner, doctor of veterinary medicine at Cottage Country Animal Clinic, said that a number of dogs are treated each summer at the clinic due to rattlesnake bites. "Although these snakes



are well camouflaged and retreat when approached, they are easily sought out by dogs as something interesting to sniff,' wrote Garner in email correspondence. "The best way to prevent a rattlesnake bite is to keep your dog on a leash when walking through trails, along the shoreline, and in known rattlesnake habitat.

Kenton Otterbein, natural heritage education leader at Killbear Provincial Park, said that this time of year sees an increase in rattlesnake sightings due to mating season.

"This is typically mating season when the male rattlesnakes are actively looking for females and it is often the time of year when we have our warmest nights," said Otterbein. "Rattlesnakes are more likely to be active at night if it's above 20 degree Celsius.'

Hanna advises that if a rattlesnake has bitten you it is important to seek medical attention immediately. Garner also advises the same for your dog, even if you are unsure but suspect that your dog has been bitten.

"Rattlesnake bites are extremely painful and can cause a number of different local



Pictured above, family dog Willow, sports a noticeably swollen mouth after being bit by a Massasauga rattlesnake last weekend. Pictured left, said Massasauga rattler is barely noticeable, camouflaged into the foliage. Willow received veterinary attention and is since recuperating.

and systemic signs," wrote Garner. "Most commonly, we see rapid onset of swelling at the site of the bite, and with that comes severe pain. Redness and bruising at the bite are also common."

The symptoms that accompany a rattlesnake bite are quite familiar to local family dog, Willow, owned by federal Parry-Sound Muskoka Green Party candidate Glen Hodgson and his partner Kristy Kujala of Seguin Township. Willow encountered a rattlesnake this weekend and has been successfully treated at a Parry Sound veterinary clinic.

Garner further wrote that the severity of the outcome depends on factors such as bite location and the health status of the

dog, among others. "Bleeding disorders commonly develop after envenomation, which requires particular care and treatment," wrote Garner. "Approximately 20 to 25 per cent of rattlesnake bites are considered 'dry,' which means no envenomation has occurred. However, there is no way of determining if a bite is dry without medical assessment."

The Massasauga was listed as threatened when the Endangered Species Act took effect in 2008.

In 2014, the population was split into two, with the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence population listed as threatened, and the Carolinian population listed as endangered.

Loss and fragmentation of the Massasauga habitat, road mortality, and persecution by humans are the most significant threats to the species.

For more information on the Massasauga rattlesnake, including reporting a siting, visit: www.ontario.ca/environment-andenergy/massasauga-rattlesnake

Any illegal activity can be reported to 1-877-TIPS-MNR (847-7667).

## The Bala falls effect; power company CEO gives his thoughts

#### BY ROLAND CILLIERS

HUNTSVILLE - It seems you can't talk about power in Muskoka without talking about Bala Falls.

Chris Litschko, CEO of Lakeland Holding Ltd, was at Huntsville's general committee meeting on July 29 and was asked to give his thoughts on the ongoing controversy around the hydro project in Bala Falls. Lakeland Holding is a municipally owned organization that provides power throughout the region.

The planned Bala Falls hydro project has long been a source of controversy in the region and has been the subject of multiple protests.

Litschko believes that opposition has caused changes in the way the provincial government now handles hydroelectric projects.

"That plant, and what has occurred there, has had an effect on water power going forward.

Chris Litschko, CEO at Lakeland Holding Ltd, gave his thoughts at the July 29 Huntsville general committee meeting on the effect the Bala Falls protests have had on the way the province now approaches green energy projects.

Even at our cascade generation station, our environmental assessment is up to two years now. It's taking so very long, and if you think about it, we are just taking a plant down and putting a new one up," said Litschko.

### **Cascade Street station**

The Cascade Street Generating Station in Parry Sound is planned to receive a \$15 million upgrade. That facility was built almost 100 years ago and the planned upgrade is estimated to more than double

Litschko compared the relatively long assessment period for Cascade, which is occurring after the Bala Falls protests, to the significantly larger upgrade that occurred at the Bracebridge station.

"When you look at the two upgrades in Bracebridge it was a \$23 million upgrade. We did the environmental assessment in one-to-one-and-a-half-years. This simple project in Parry Sound we are up to two years now and counting, and its because, I think, the ministries' are a little more hesitant making sure everything is perfect when they give final approval," Litschko said.

### Traffic court for three-vehicle Highway 69 crash

#### BY ROB LEARN

FRENCH RIVER - A Sudbury man is headed to traffic court for an accident that put six people in harm's way.

On Aug. 9 at 3:15 p.m., officers from the Sudbury Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) responded to a threevehicle collision on Highway 69, Municipality of the French River.

A northbound Ford SUV was slowing down to turn left into the French River Trading Post when it was rear-ended by a northbound Jeep.

The impact sent the Ford SUV veering into the oncoming lane where it was struck by a Ford pick-up truck. The southbound pick-up truck subsequently rolled over several times.

The driver of the Ford SUV, a 54-year-old female, from Aurora, 30-year-old male, from Sudbury, were treated for minor injuries at the scene and released by paramedics.

The driver of the Ford pick-up truck, a 52-year-old male, from Barrie, was extricated from the vehicle by firefighters and airlifted to hospital.

He suffered serious but nonlife threatening injuries. His 23-year-old male passenger, also from Barrie, was transported to hospital by ambulance with nonlife threatening injuries. Both remain in hospital. Two other passengers in the pick-up truck were not injured.

The male driver of the Jeep was charged with Careless Driving and will appear at the Provincial Offences Court in Sudbury on

The highway was closed in both

and the driver of the Jeep, a directions and was re-opened at 6 p.m.



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#### **ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD NOTICE** TO CUSTOMERS OF UNION GAS LIMITED

Union Gas Limited has applied for approval to change its gas commodity, storage and transportation rates effective January 1, 2016.

Learn more. Have your say.

Union Gas Limited has applied to change its rates to better reflect how it supplies natural gas to its customers. The proposed changes include the following:

- A change in the reference price used to set rates on a quarterly basis for a majority of its customers; and
- A change to how it allocates costs to the different types of customers that it serves.

An average residential customer would see the following annual bill impact, but these impacts would only start in 2018:

Residential Customer – Service Area	Approximate Bill Impact
Southern Ontario (Windsor to Hamilton) Northern Delivery Area (North Bay to Kapuskasing)	Decrease of \$20 Increase of \$26
All Other Delivery Areas	Decrease of \$1.50 - \$51.50

Other customers in Union Gas Limited's service area, including businesses, will also be affected.

#### THE ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD IS HOLDING A PUBLIC HEARING

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) will hold a public hearing to consider the application filed by Union Gas.

We will guestion Union Gas on the case. We will also hear arguments from individuals and from groups that represent the customers of Union Gas. At the end of this hearing, the OEB will decide whether to approve the changes that Union Gas has requested in this application.

The OEB is an independent and impartial public agency. We make decisions that serve the public interest. Our goal is to promote a financially viable and efficient energy sector that provides you with reliable energy services at a reasonable cost.

#### BE INFORMED AND HAVE YOUR SAY

You have the right to information regarding this application and to be involved in the process.

- You can review the application filed by Union Gas on the OEB's
- website now. You can file a letter with your comments, which will be considered
- during the hearing. You can become an active participant (called an intervenor). Apply by August 25, 2015 or the hearing will go ahead without you and you will
- not receive any further notice of the proceeding. At the end of the process, you can review the OEB's decision and its reasons on our website.

#### **LEARN MORE**

Our file number for this case is EB-2015-0181. To learn more about this hearing, find instructions on how to file letters or become an intervenor, or to access any document related to this case, please select the file number EB-2015-0181 from the list on the OEB website: www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/notice. You can also phone our Consumer Relations Centre at 1-877-632-2727 with any questions.

#### **ORAL VS. WRITTEN HEARINGS**

There are two types of OEB hearings - oral and written. The OEB will determine at a later date whether to proceed by way of a written or oral hearing. If you think an oral hearing is needed, you can write to the OEB to explain why by August 25, 2015.

#### **PRIVACY**

If you write a letter of comment, your name and the content of your letter will be put on the public record and the OEB website. However, your personal telephone number, home address and e-mail address will be removed. If you are a business, all your information will remain public. If you apply to become an intervenor, all information will be public.

This hearing will be held under section 36 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, S.O. 1998 c.15 (Schedule B).

