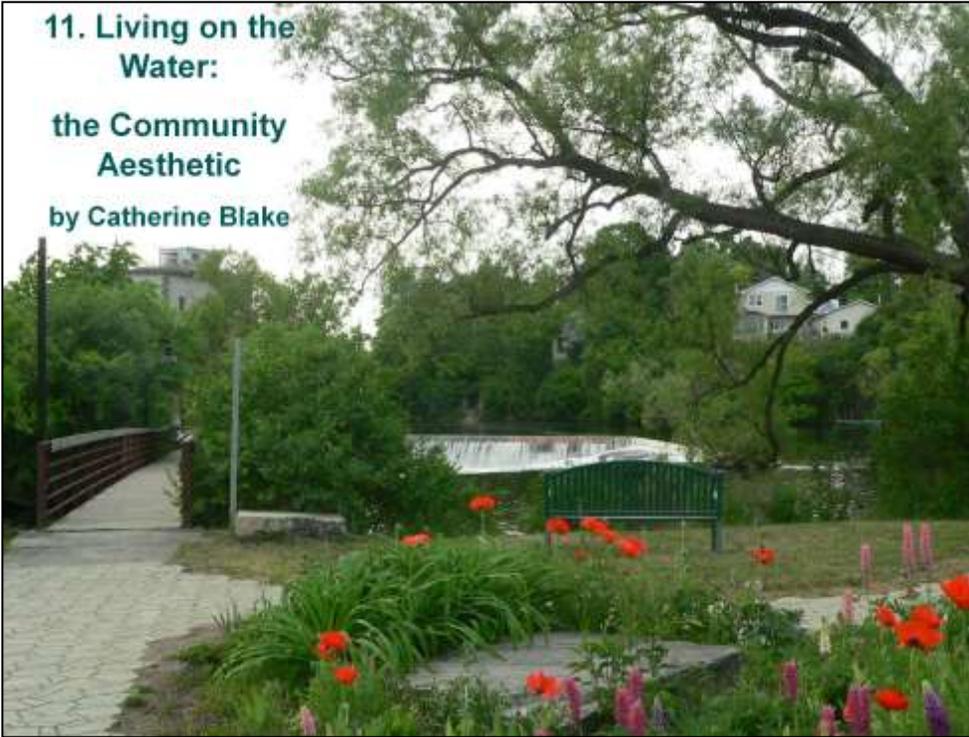
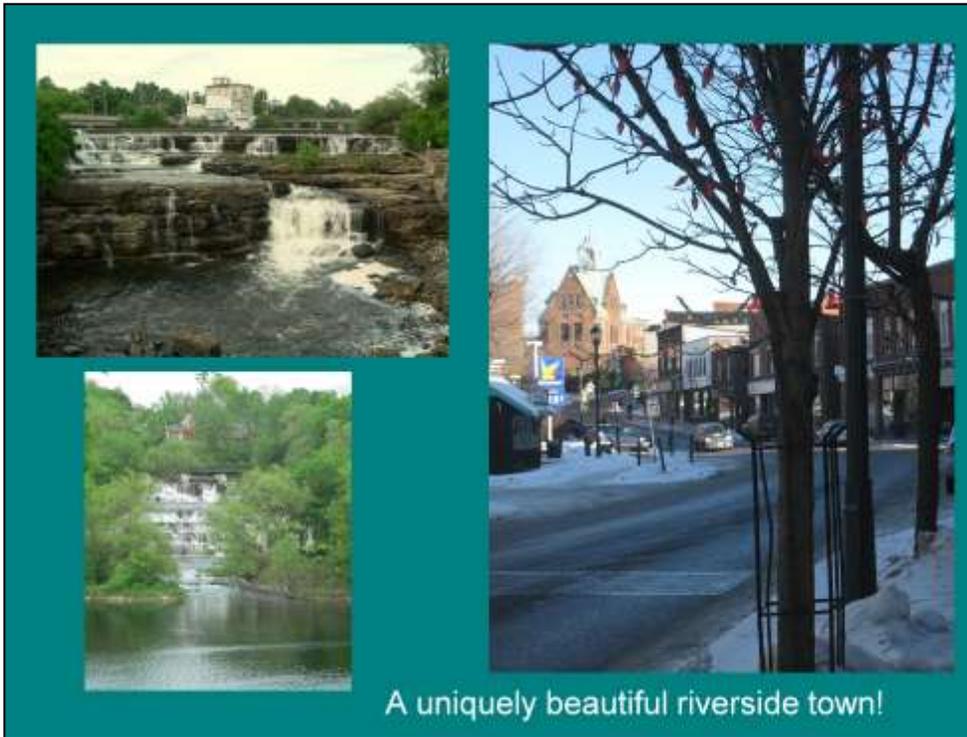


**11. Living on the
Water:
the Community
Aesthetic
by Catherine Blake**





We have the historic heritage of a nineteenth century mill town with its three water falls, stone mill buildings, post office with its clock tower and the winding and hilly main street.

The Mississippi River and the Cascade Falls are a natural jewel in the heart of Almonte.



The cascade and open water above it have been the legacy of all citizens of Almonte to enjoy, and this area may become closed off to us.

However, the historic recreational area of the upper falls is ignored in the Final Environmental Report.

As a result of the project, this area will become a hazardous and restricted location similar to what we see here at Metcalfe Park.



Metcalfe Park is located at the base of the main falls of Almonte. The hydro power of this waterfall has been harnessed by the new Mississippi Mills Power Plant. This area that used to be tranquil, green, and safe is now cordoned off at the “tail race” for safety as the water coming out of the plant sometimes flows at very high speeds.

The Old Town Hall Garden . . .

will be off-limits for
the duration of the
construction period.



This garden was planted by the Beautification Committee and has become a favourite place for wedding photos, a starting point for walks on the Riverwalk, and a pleasant place to rest and listen to the waterfall. However, Enerdu has applied to the town for permission to use this area as the start point for a temporary construction road into the river bed. The tree and gardens will be lost and though they should be replaced in some fashion after the end of construction, this area will be closed off during the period of construction.

Our Riverwalk



The Riverwalk runs along the cascade, under the railway bridge and to the Barley Mow. All scenes along this walk are subject to change with this project.



This is the way the cascade looked last spring at the height of the spring runoff. Of course, in summer it does not look this full. However, the proposed weir would control the flow of most of the water through the turbines for the majority of the year. We would like to save the look of this cascade!



We are used to seeing the cascade like this in early summer, when the water coming down over the rocks is due mostly to the gaps between the flashboards of the present weir. The new weir will of course, not have these gaps.

An Obermeyer Weir Fall



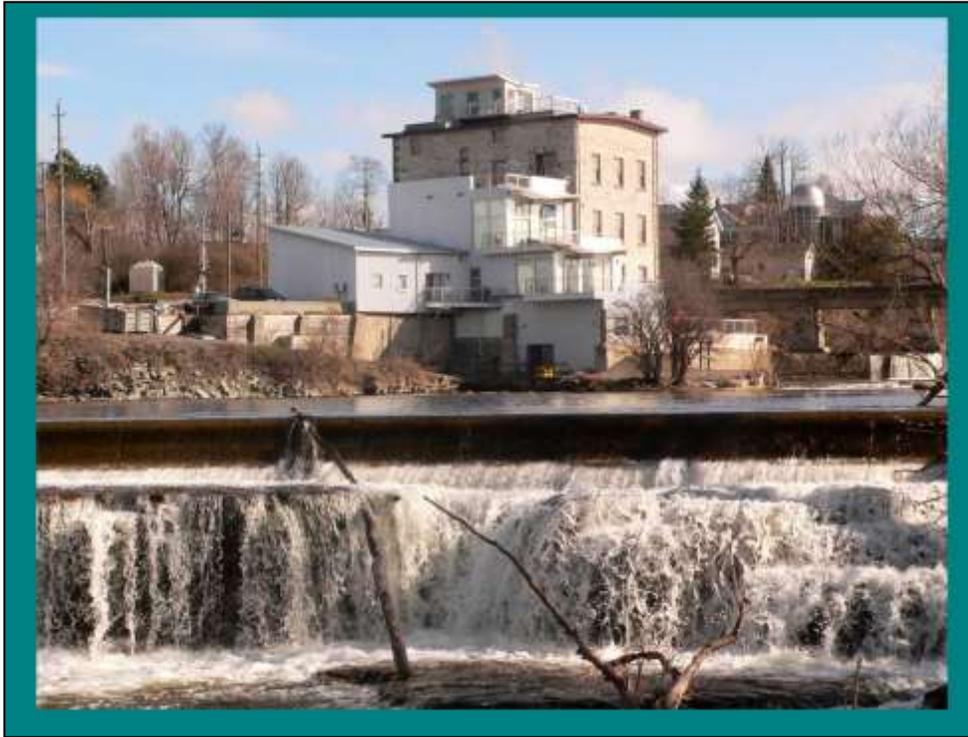
The proposed Obermeyer weir is designed with a smooth concrete vertical or slanted profile and Enerdu proposes to dig out the rocks below the weir, for an undisclosed reason. Hence we would have a smooth flow of water over the proposed weir--or none at all depending upon water flow and height of the dam.

(The top of the proposed weir has a rubber "bladder" that can be raised or lowered to control the flow of water toward the turbines.)

Appleton after the new dam



Moreover, after the new weir is installed, if it is higher than one meter (3 feet), which it will be, the regulations of Navigation Canada come into effect. The area may well be posted with big red warning signs similar to these at Appleton since the new dam. The weir area may be fenced off as well,, and red buoys will almost certainly be strung across the river to restrict boating in the area.



This is the present appearance (in 2013) of the Enerdu generating plant housed at the base of the “Old Flour Mill” (the taller stone structure). There are apartments in both the steel clad and stone buildings. The new power house will be built directly adjacent to these two buildings, but will extend into the river, constricting the river about 30%, at what is already its narrowest point.

This historical recreational area is likely to be off-limits to boaters.



This historic recreational area is ignored in the Environmental Report. It is now a tranquil area for canoeists and kayakers as well as other boaters, but will become, to an unknown extent, off-limits.

Impacts of the
construction phase ...

minimized and
underestimated

hoe ramming and / or
blasting

effects on old stone
structures

no plans for assessing
and / or repairing
damages



How are blasting and/or hoe ramming going to affect the old stone structures adjacent to the construction area? The Old Town Hall, which has been repointed and renovated at considerable cost, sits on the same limestone shelf which will be blasted and/or hoe rammed.



Here are two hoe rams working in another river bed. The excavation will tear up fish habitat and bird nesting areas; it will also deepen the river, creating faster flows and likely, more irregular erosion of the shoreline.

Enerdu claims "run of river" operations. However, their "peaking practices" (holding back water to generate power at peak-time rates) last summer created fluctuations twice a day up and down the river from the dam.

Water level fluctuations are a serious matter for:

- *Loons, herons and nesting birds*
- *Fish spawning*
- *Shoreline appearance*
- *Swimming, fishing*



During the summer a pair of loons were constantly to be seen just above the falls, and juveniles spotted with them after they had left the nest. Loons nest at the water level and fluctuations of the water level endanger the nest and juveniles. A pair of herons were also nesting in the area

Compensatory or Residual Flow



“Compensator” or “residual” flow is the amount of water allowed by the controller of the weir or dam to fall over the weir, to maintain the aesthetics and natural look of the waterfall.

This amount is subject to negotiation between the proponent and the Ministry of Natural Resources when granting the “Water-taking Permit”. The only reason we have an appreciable amount of water falling over the main falls since the construction of the Mississippi Mills Power Plant is because concerned citizens worked hard and paid money for lawyers to preserve this. We may have to negotiate to preserve any residual flow over the new weir if it goes ahead. It is not a given.

Flashboard Weir allows some water flow



Here is how the cascade looks in early summer. The only reason that there is any flow at all is because of the gaps in the boards.

The water coming down here is important for the maintenance of the beauty of the falls for all of us, and to attract tourists to town.

Water flowing keeps the Cascade area below the falls useful for birds and draws tourists.



Hérons, gulls, sandpipers, etc. are regularly seen here searching for fish and crustaceans to eat.

No more fishing here.



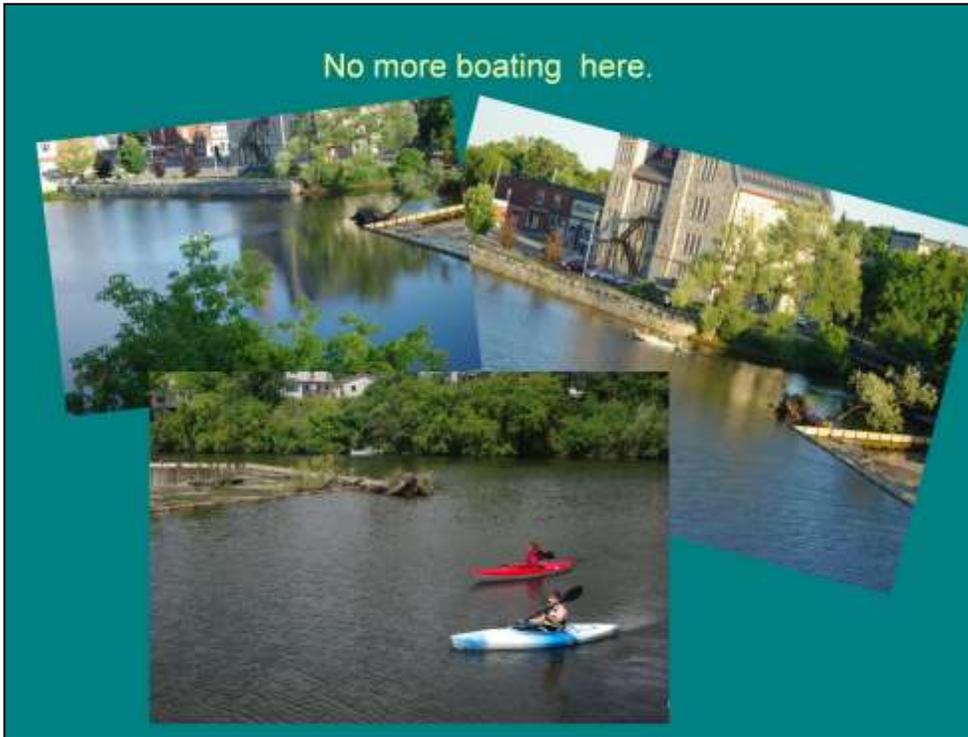
Water flow is important for fishing, too. Sport fishing will be affected in a big way below the weir where this photo was taken in 2012. Not only will you never be allowed to fish here any more (as it is in the proposed tail race area), but also you will not find any fish surviving passage through the turbines anyway! Only the smallest minnows will survive passage through the turbines. (This is according to Enerdu's Environmental Report.)

No more swimming here!



This area has been a traditional swimming hole for youth in Almonte for over 100 years. However, with the proposed power plant, this will be the intake area for the turbines, and be off-limits.

No more boating here.



This has been a particularly pretty and quiet spot to paddle or putter in boats. However, we expect it would be cordoned off with orange buoys on chains, strung across the river somewhere down river from the McLann Bridge, but we do not know exactly where.

Our “jewel” could look more like this!



Instead of enjoying the “jewel in the heart of town”, we can expect to see signs and buoys detracting from the natural beauty of the area – and keeping us out!