

Georgian Bay Lighthouses declared “Surplus or a Heritage site.”

What about those near us between the French River and Collingwood?

Department of Fisheries & Oceans has declared almost 1,000 lighthouses across Canada, including all of Georgian Bay's major lights, to be 'surplus' to their needs. These iconic lights now face an uncertain future, with either demolition or death by neglect a very real possibility.

The sad truth is that satellite navigation has made many lighthouses surplus to requirements.¹ Of course, lighthouses “give our children and grandchildren a feel for what happened in this place a hundred or two hundred years ago.” and draw tourists, who spend money.

To understand what is happening around us I have visited some web sites and highlighted points of interest.

To see some of the major lighthouses in Georgian Bay in our area visit the website

<http://www.visitgeorgianbay.com/lighthouse-marine.cfm?action=1&category=5>

There are over 10 lighthouses pictured in our immediate boating area, East Georgian Bay, from the French River down to Collingwood.

The Future of our Lighthouses

From website <http://www.lynximages.com/future.htm>

“Rather than continuing to destroy the lighthouses, a more concerted effort must be made to ensure the transfer of responsibility from the Canadian Coast Guard to other interested bodies who will protect these historic structures. Our lighthouses are not only geographical landmarks, they mark a chapter in, and a tangible link to, the story of the creation of this country. So far only two lighthouses on Georgian Bay, Manitoulin Island and the North Channel are protected as Classified sites under Historic Sites and Monuments: the Cove Island tower, and the Griffith Island tower. The lightstations' other buildings, including Cove Island's fog plant, and Griffith's dwelling are not declared heritage buildings. The 1857 Griffith dwelling, one of the earliest buildings in this region of Ontario, sits derelict. Losing these structures is short-sighted and unacceptable.

There are numerous inspiring examples of more far-sighted solutions to the perceived problem. As one American, aware of the situation said: "why do Canadians always see things as problems? Why don't you see their potential?" In the United States, lighthouses are protected heritage structures, and, by becoming successful tourist draws, actually contribute significantly to local economies. They are focuses of community pride. “

For information on what communities have done with their lighthouses, the following organization is very helpful:

Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association

P.O. box 580

Allen Park, Michigan, 48101

Another informative web site is maintained by Sean Tamblyn, of Heart of Stone Photography.

Save Georgian Bay's Lighthouses

The days are numbered for the iconic lighthouses that have defined the Georgian Bay landscape for over a hundred years. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans has deemed them as being 'surplus' to their needs, so most of the major lights on the Bay have either demolition or death by neglect in their future.



Above: twilight settles over the Bustard Islands lighthouse and twin ranges, possibly for the last time.

Visit <http://www.heartofstonephoto.com/photos/save-georgian-bay-lighthouses> for full article.

This website has a petition to

“SAVE GEORGIAN BAY’S LIGHTHOUSES”



In addition the site includes a tracker showing current designations of individual lighthouses around the Bay. Some lighthouses have been labelled Heritage sites; others labelled surplus.

<http://www.heartofstonephoto.com/photos/georgian-bay-lighthouse-tracker>

What can be done?

The Heritage Canada Foundation is organizing a petition to the federal government to help provide funds to local groups and communities to save Canada's lighthouses. Without that assistance, it's feared that most of Canada's lighthouses, and many of Georgian Bay's lighthouses, will come down.

For further information, please visit the Georgian Bay information page on website

<http://www.heartofstonephoto.com/save-georgian-bays-lighthouses>

TO SIGN THE PETITION TO SAVE CANADA'S LIGHTHOUSES go to website

<http://www.savecanadalighthouses.ca/index.php>

Paul Morgan

PS ¹ The Mar 31 Issue of Economist has an interesting article on plight of lighthouses in the USA.

Go web <http://www.economist.com/node/21551534>

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