



Minutes

Friday, March 26, 2021
1:00 pm
Zoom Online Meeting

Present

Geoff Ross (Chair)
Rob Attfield
John Cooper
Caroline Konarzewski
Karen Maxwell
Aaron Rusak

Nancy Alcock
Sandy Cairns
Chris Cragg
Richard Lammers
Daryle Moffatt
Peter Sale

Patricia Arney
Margaret Casey
Piret Hurrell
Pete LeMoine
Michael Peppard
Kevin Trimble

Staff

Christy Doyle
Cassie Weston
Christiane Masters

Rebecca Willison
Kevin Boyle
Jacquie Evans

Samantha Hastings (@ 2pm)
Craig Little

Presenters

Natasha Barlow
Birds Canada

Guests

Geoff Carleton
Jo-Anne Goodwin
Janelle Calvert
John Klinck
Jason Dwyer
Susan Boudreau

Katie Paroschy
Trudy Killin
Sue McKenzie
Cody Avery
Linda Acton-Riddle

Bill Heatlie
Roberto Bellicoso
Jim Rusak
Rupert Kindersley
Mark Misko

Welcome

Geoff Ross called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated November 27, 2020 be approved.

CARRIED (by consent)

Correspondence

- Letter to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks in support of the recommendations made by the Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group in their "[Interim Advice and Recommendations to Address Priority Environmental Issues in the Muskoka River Watershed](#)" report.

Presentation

[Wetlands, Waterways, and Waterbirds: The Boreal Connection](#) – *Natasha Barlow, Boreal Conservation Project Specialist, Birds Canada*

Natasha gave a very informative presentation on how water features around your property and neighborhood provide crucial resources for thousands of birds traveling to and from their northern breeding grounds in the Boreal region. She discussed different ways to help Boreal birds, including citizen science programs and gardening for birds. She announced that Birds Canada is in the process of developing a resource outlining what plants to plant on your property for birds depending on where you live.

Following a question and answer period, Christy Doyle thanked Natasha for her excellent presentation.

Provincial Watershed Initiative Updates and Discussion of Next Steps for MWC

- **Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group Update** – Kevin Trimble and Patricia Arney gave a brief presentation on the [MWAG recommendations and the next steps](#) to move forward.
- **Presentation to District Council & Resolution** – Samantha Hastings, Commissioner of Community and Planning Services for the District of Muskoka, gave a brief presentation about [recent developments](#) between the Province and the District of Muskoka (and MWC) on the Muskoka Watershed Conservation and Management Initiative. She outlined the huge role for MWC going forward, should the resolution included at the end of her presentation pass. She indicated that DMM will have overall responsibility for the projects, including managing consultants and the financials, but that the projects are for the entire watershed. Samantha thanked Christy for the significant amount of time she has put into the initiative so far in 2021 and then opened the floor for discussion.

Peter Sale noted that there is a mismatch between integrated watershed management (IWM) that goes into the future and the government providing funding for a year and then it ends. The community roundtable (CRT) is a long-term proposition. Kevin Trimble responded that this is just the beginning of a bigger process.

Daryle Moffatt questioned the process for bringing the resolution forward. Patricia Arney noted that a similar process was followed when the District of Muskoka requested that MWC serve as their Public Advisory Committee. She supports the resolution wholeheartedly and feels that it's a direct result of MWC's own recommendations in its IWM paper.

In response to a second question asked by Daryle regarding the involvement of Ontario Power Generation on the task force, Kevin responded that power producers will be expected to participate on the water quantity task force.

Michael Peppard expressed concern about ongoing funding and questioned whether permanent funding could be sought from the District of Muskoka. Samantha Hastings responded in the

affirmative and noted that there is potentially an additional \$10 million available for additional projects (grants plus matching funding from the government).

Kevin acknowledged the incredible amount of work Samantha, Christy, and Julie Stevens have put into negotiations with the Province.

MOTION

Moved by Margaret Casey, seconded by Chris Cragg

THAT Muskoka Watershed Council agrees in principle to form a Community Roundtable in order to assist in advancing Muskoka watershed initiatives, as requested by the District of Muskoka;

AND THAT a small group of Muskoka Watershed Council members continue to work with the District to further refine the terms of reference for the Community Roundtable and associated task forces.

CARRIED

Project Updates

- MWC Strategic Plan – Karen Maxwell reported that the thought leaders survey has been distributed and follow up will occur over the next weeks by MWC volunteers. Once completed, next steps will include undertaking a SWOT analysis and revising the MWC Operating Procedures.
- Official Plan Reviews – Geoff Ross noted that the new IWM project related to reviewing land use policies dovetails closely with MWC's OP Policy document, but that the new IWM projects as a group will strain MWC resources. The net result will likely be a slow down and uncertainty as to the time required to complete the OP work.
- MWC Communications – Pete LeMoine reported that two articles were published in February on IWM. Karen asked about lake associations reprinting MWC articles in their newsletters. Kevin noted that articles have been used in the past. Pete LeMoine will follow up with Metroland to see if they have any objections.

Partner Updates

- Seguin Township – Daryle Moffatt reported that the Seguin Official Plan review has slowed down as they recently lost a staff member, but that the process continues.

New Business

Peter Sale reported that the Magpie River in Quebec has been [granted legal personhood status](#) in a bid to protect it from future threats, such as hydro development. It is the first time a river has been granted legal status in Canada.

Next MWC Meeting

Friday, April 23rd at 1:00 pm through Zoom.

Adjournment

Geoff Ross adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.

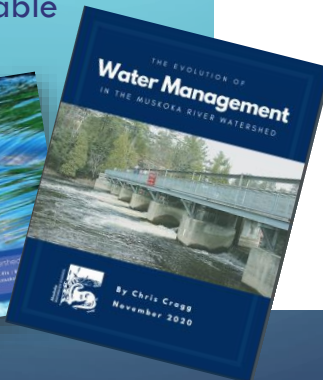
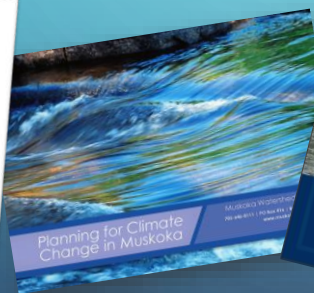
IMPLEMENTING INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Leadership Role of MWC

March 2021

Outline

- Review of what MWAG is
- Status of MECP's "Muskoka Watershed Conservation and Management Initiative"
- The MWAG Recommendations
- MWC - Community Roundtable



Report of the
Muskoka Watershed Advisory Group:

Interim Advice and Recommendations
to Address Priority Environmental Issues
in the Muskoka River Watershed

Prepared for
The Honourable Jeff Yurek
Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
June 2020

Muskoka Watershed Conservation and Management Initiative

Minister's Terms of Reference

- “The purpose of the initiative is to better identify risks and issues facing the Muskoka region, allowing the community and the province to work together to protect the environment and support economic growth of this important area.”
- “By protecting the Watershed and working with the local community, the Muskoka Watershed Initiative will help the province to develop a broader, comprehensive approach to watershed management in Ontario.”
- Commitment of \$5M and another \$5M if matched = up to \$15M

3

MWAG Mandate

- Identify and prioritize the most important issues facing the Muskoka River Watershed
- Identify and prioritize the “types” of projects needed to address those issues



MWAG TIMELINE

- August 2018
 - Muskoka Watershed Initiative announced
- August 2019
 - MWAG appointed by MECP
- June 2020
 - Interim Report submitted to Minister Yurek
- October 2020
 - Report released to the public
- **Early 2021**
 - **MECP starts discussions with potential funding recipients & project delivery partners**



MWAG RECOMMENDATIONS

- Most Important Recommendation : Integrated Watershed Management
- “Most Pressing Need” : Flood Mitigation
- “Specific Projects for Enhanced Watershed Health”

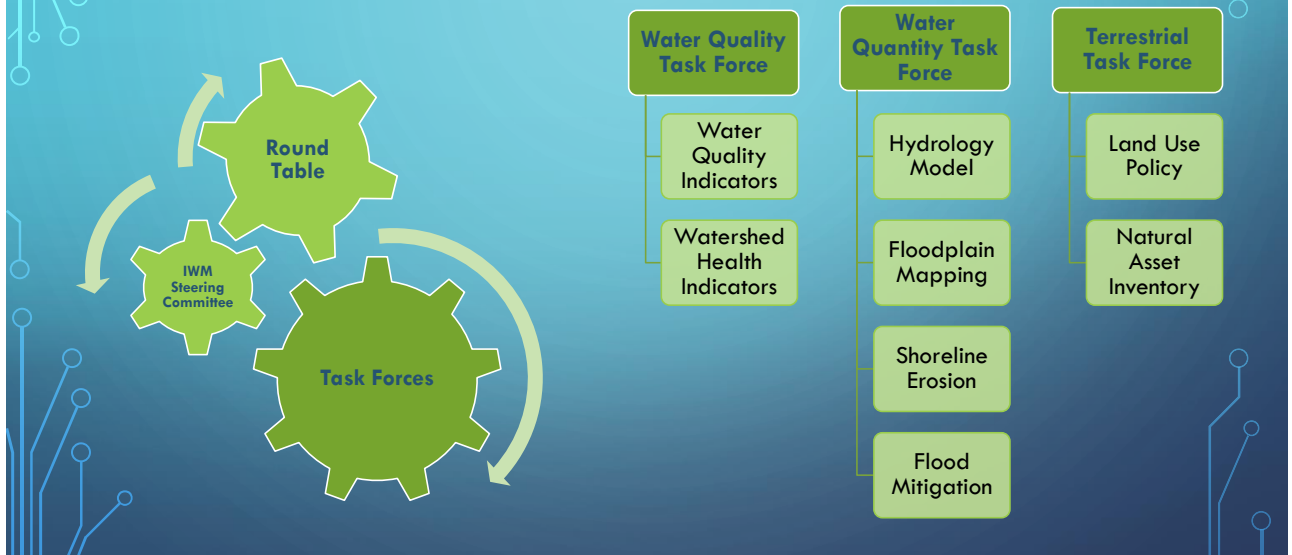
MWAG RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Integrated Watershed Management**
 - 1a Establish a Community Roundtable
 - 1b Develop Communications Strategy
 - 1c Investigate models for governance
2. Establish Task Forces
 - Water Quantity,
 - Water Quality,
 - Terrestrial
3. Watershed Health Indicators
4. Watershed eco-hydrologic model
5. Land Use Policy review

MWAG RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Continued role for MWAG
7. Requirement that Province participate – MNRF/MECP
8. **Flood Mitigation**
 - 8a Operational “Tweaks” to MRWMP
 - 8b Structural Modifications in the watershed
 - 8c Expand DMM Flood Mapping project
9. Expanded Water Quality Program
10. Natural Assets Inventory

MWAG'S IMPLEMENTATION VISION



Community Roundtable Vision

- Watershed's future is in the hands of the ENTIRE WATERSHED COMMUNITY
- Community commitment to a vision for the future of the watershed
- CRT is the glue – keeps **integration** and **vision** both alive
- Long term oversight – driving toward a Watershed Plan and **implementation**
- **MWC CAN BE THE SPARK (NUCLEUS?)**
 - MWC has endorsed IWM;
 - MWC already represents a broad base of stakeholders (BUT NOT ALL – YET);
 - History, respect, DMM relationship
 - Finger on the pulse of the baseline knowledge – Report Card.....

IWM PLAN



How will the plan be used?	5
2 The Planning Context	6
3 The Planning Process	12
4 The Watershed at a Glance	16
The Biophysical Environment	17
The People	19
The Economy	19
5 Vision, Principles and Core Concepts	20
A Vision for the Watershed	21
Guiding Principles	22
Core Concepts	23
6 Plan Recommendations	24
Water Quality, Availability Away from the Mainstem and Consumptive Use	26
Peace River Flow Regime	28
Wetlands and Wetland Loss	30
Non-Saline Groundwater	32
Policy Integration	34
7 Implementation: From Plan to Action	36
Partnerships	38
Stewardship	39
Milestones and Schedule	39
Monitoring and Reporting Success	40
	41

Can MWC lead ? Yes we can...

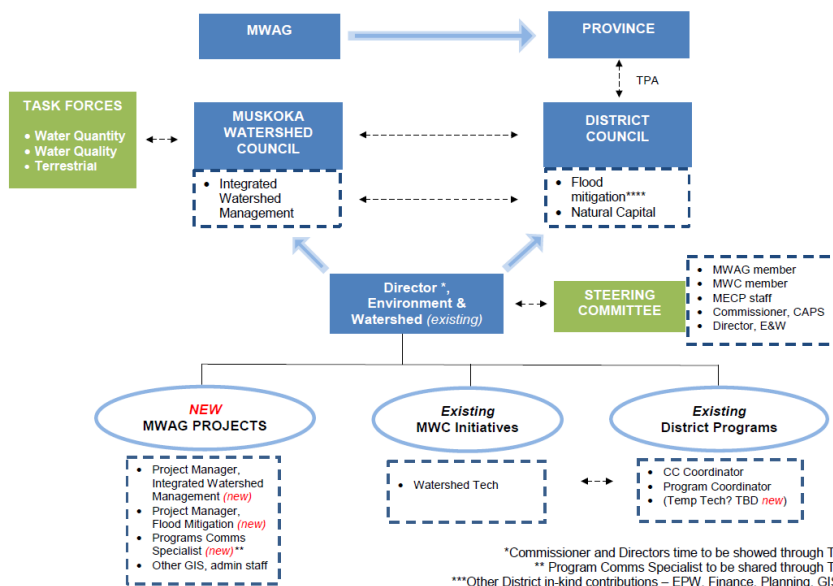


What is the Mighty Peace Watershed Alliance?

The Alliance is a multi-sector, not-for-profit society committed to planning for an ecologically healthy watershed while ensuring environmental, economic and social sustainability. Its active stakeholders and communities use consensus, adaptive management and innovation to understand and promote living within the watershed. The MPWA's Board of Directors report on the state of the watershed, lead watershed planning activities, promote best management practices and develop educational programs.



Transitional Governance Model



*Commissioner and Directors time to be showed through TPA
 ** Program Comms Specialist to be shared through TPA
 ***Other District in-kind contributions – EPW, Finance, Planning, GIS...
 **** With support and technical guidance and resources from MNRF

Project Sequencing (Q2 – Q4, 2021)

Phase 1 Projects	MWAG Rec #
Project staff	1a, 2
Comms plan and implementation	1b
Hydrologic model (baseline)	4
MRWMP Operational Adjustments	8a (i)
Identification of potential localized structural mitigation measures (scope, impacts, costs, prelim design)	8b (i)
Floodplain mapping (incl. hydraulic modelling, LIDAR imagery)	8c
Natural Capital Inventory	10

Project Sequencing (Q3, 2021 – Q2, 2022)

Phase 2 Projects	MWAG Rec #
Scope and terms of reference for comprehensive review of MRWMP	8a (ii)
Review of potential watershed scale flood mitigation modifications	8b (ii)
Land use policy review	5

Project Sequencing (Q4, 2021 to Q2, 2022)

Phase 3 Projects	MWAG Rec #
Watershed health indicators	3
Water quality indicators	9c
Shoreline erosion	12
Public access inventory	19

Potential Next Steps...

- Await confirmation of projects and funding
- Execute a TPA
- Form Steering Committee
- Hire Staff
- Work with MWC to form task forces
- Draft communications plan
- Draft and release RFPs (13 in total)
- Hire consultants
- Undertake work
- Consult with stakeholders and public (MWC, task forces, Engage Muskoka)
- Prepare final reports

Recommendation

THAT Muskoka Watershed Council agrees in principle to form a Community Round Table in order to assist in advancing Muskoka watershed initiatives, as requested by the District of Muskoka*;

AND THAT a small group of Muskoka Watershed Council members continue to work with the District to further refine the terms of reference for the Community Round Table and associated task forces.

* Amendment added at the MWC meeting on 26/10/2021