



Muskoka

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Minutes

Friday November 26, 2010
1:00 pm

Council Chambers – District Municipality of Muskoka
70 Pine Street, Bracebridge

Present

Patricia Arney
Piret Hurrell
Jan McDonnell
Ken Riley
Al Shaw
Paul Wiancko

Margaret Casey
Caroline Konarzewski
Don McVittie
Peter Sale
Lyle Steep
Scott Young

Patsy Cross
Anna Mallin
Greg Mierle
Peter Seybold
Brian Sturgeon

Regrets

Ben Boivin
Louise Cragg
Isobel Heathcote
Don MacKay
Steve Munro
Brian Tapley
Debbie Vernon

Dan Brooks
Tonia Di Sabatino
Duncan Heybloom
Mary McCulley
Mary Robertson-Lacroix
Ian Turnbull
Jim Walden

Fran Coleman
Lou Guerriero
Neil Hutchinson
Rob Milligan
Paul Stueck
Alicia Tyson

Staff

Judi Brouse

Guests

Melissa Halford
Anne McTaggart
Samantha Hastings

Phung Tran
Gault McTaggart

Cathy Seybold
Mark Misko

Welcome

Patricia Arney took the Chair as Rob Milligan was away. Patricia called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm by welcoming members and guests. Following roundtable introductions, Jan McDonnell and Peter Sale provided autobiographies for the Council.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION by Paul Wiancko, seconded by Jan McDonnell

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated November 5, 2010 be approved.

CARRIED

Correspondence

- Notice from Stantec re: Hwy 11 Access Review from Muskoka Road 117/Cedar Lane northerly 6.3 km (GWP 322-00-00)
- MWC Letter of support for the Creative Paths Muskoka project
- Invitation to the Sixteenth Inaugural of the Muskoka District Council

Presentations

1. [Species at Risk & Biodiversity](#) – Jan McDonnell, Wildlife Biologist, Ministry of Natural Resources
2. [Endangered Species Act – Parry Sound District](#) – To have been presented by Jeremy Rouse, Species at Risk Biologist, Ministry of Natural Resources. Jeremy was unable to attend due to snow conditions so Jan McDonnell made the presentation.

Jan explained that there are three levels of biodiversity including genetic, species and ecosystem diversity. The presentation highlighted many 'biodiversity facts' ranging from the total number of species world-wide, to the number currently at risk, to the number of species that man uses daily for food, clothing, and other goods.

In answer to a question from Peter Seybold, Jan confirmed that species were identified based on concern expressed by people in the field.

The presentation on the Endangered Species Act (ESA) reviewed the purpose of the Act and various components including stewardship.

Scott Young noted that there was a lot of misinformation about species at risk and the ESA. In response to his concerns Jan agreed that continued support by organizations like MWC is important to dispel some of that misinformation.

Ken Riley referred to the George Morris Centre paper on the ESA and questioned how some of the concerns might be addressed. In particular, he expressed a concern that the Act results in private cost to protect biodiversity and yet results in a public good. He questioned if it was really possible to conserve biodiversity if private property owners are not engaged. Jan agreed that engaging private property owners is critical. However, in some cases the George Morris paper provided misleading information and some points were not appropriately explained, which could lead the reader to mistaken conclusions. For example, when reading the section about municipal planning, the reader would have benefited from knowing that there is significant technical direction provided by the province on ESA matters by the Natural Heritage Reference Manual (available online), and includes municipal, provincial and private landowner responsibilities. Another example is the subject of forestry as it relates to the ESA. The document states that "Crown land is leased for use by the private sector under the forest tenure system" and that "the private sector owns, or manages under lease, a significant portion of the habitat used by publicly owned natural resources". "Lease" implies exclusive use, which is not true, and the implication is that habitat is at the mercy of the forestry companies, when in fact the province dictates the rules by which logging can occur through legislation (CFSA), including rules to ensure compliance with the ESA. The rules are significant as are the consequences of ignoring them.

Paul Wiancko questioned if the ESA could protect some species at risk when logging is occurring. In particular, he questioned if the setbacks imposed around 'area of concerns' are sufficient to protect a species. Area of Concern prescriptions are developed to protect values on crown land from the impacts of logging. The French Severn Forest Management Plan (the one that encompasses Muskoka) includes AOC prescriptions for our SAR (i.e. Massasauga, Blandings

turtles). Because these AOCs were developed prior to the ESA coming into effect, they are currently being reviewed with the intent to ensure they are in compliance with the ESA. An amendment to our FMP is expected to reflect these changes.

In response to a question from Scott Young with respect to managing small local habitats like urban wetlands, Jan indicated that leaving them alone was the best policy.

Funding Request to Seguin Township

Motion by Anna Mallin, seconded by Peter Sale

THAT Muskoka Watershed Council submit a grant request to the Township of Seguin for the development of stewardship guides.

CARRIED

Updates and New Business

- *November 2010 Activity Report* – was distributed with the agenda. All MWC members are encouraged to join a committee and get involved.
- *Biodiversity Project* – Peter Sale outline the project to engage multi-generational members of the Muskoka Community in a discussion on changes in biodiversity over time and how we might conserve biodiversity in the future.
- *Climate Change* – Judi Brouse outlined the work of the Climate Change Ad-hoc Committee to develop some helpful mitigation programs with various sectors of the community, including forestry, hydro, health, and water resources.
- *Large Natural Areas* – Scott Young provided an update on the Terms of Reference for the Large Natural Areas project being developed in conjunction with Al Shaw and RiverStone Environmental Solutions Inc.

Member Organization Updates

- Peter Seybold provided an update on the year end monitoring report for the MLA water quality program
- Samantha Hastings noted that the District of Muskoka was holding a Good Forestry workshop on Saturday, November 27, 2010.
- Don McVittie reported that the Parry Sound-Muskoka Stewardship Network was moving forward with projects even though MNR had not yet appointed a Stewardship Coordinator.

Next MWC Meeting

Friday, January 21, 2011 at 1:00 pm in the Pine Room at the District of Muskoka.

Adjournment

Patricia Arney adjourned the meeting at 2:45 pm.