

# Request for Proposal:

## Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC)

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## **Company Background**

Viceroy Research was founded in 2012 by graduates of Georgian College Research Analyst Program and is based on Toronto. The company specializes in packaged goods and product appeal, community economic development, environmental education research and alternative healthcare choices. Our team consists of four members with a wide range of educational experience.

- Adam Whibley, B.A. Hons. Psychology & Sociology – Strategic Planner
- Daksh Patel, B. Pharmacy – Data Analyst
- Pradip Dey, M. Phil Economics – Data Analyst
- Robert Jamison, B.A. Political Science – Project Co-ordinator

## **Client Background – Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC)**

Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC), established in 2001, is a volunteer based non-profit, non- governmental organization with an eye to champion watershed health. It is affiliated with the District Municipality of Muskoka (DMM) and Muskoka Heritage Foundation (MHF).

MWC consists of a general council as well as a number of committees. The council is comprised of representatives from a wide range of stakeholders, including municipal, provincial and federal government; lake and area ratepayer association; local industry, tourism etc. from across our watershed. There are four MWC committees. They are

- a. Executive Committee
- b. Communication Committee
- c. Policy and research Committee
- d. Strategic Direction Committee

## **Literature Review**

### **(a). Reviews of Different Conservation Authorities in Ontario**

There are 36 conservation authorities in Ontario. The jurisdiction of conservation authorities is based on watershed area. The conservation authorities maintain watershed health. Watershed health is important because it has direct impact on human health and activities and on our environment.

Most of the conservation authorities produce report card of watershed health. Report Cards are produced for the most part every 4 to 5 years. Report cards highlight conservation achievements and provide overall indication of the environmental health of the watershed.

### **(b). Summary of the Key Measurements used in the Report Cards**

The following are the key indicators/measurements used in different watershed report cards.

1. Fisheries: It is good indicator of stream and water quality
2. Forests: Forests are good indicator of ecosystem health since they are home to plants and wildlife and help improve air and water quality
3. Surface water quality and Ground Water quality: Any contamination in water would have an adverse effect in human body. Some indicators are bacteria level, chemical analysis.
4. Wetlands: Percent area under wetland. It is important for maintaining water quality. It is a habitat of fish and wild life.
5. Describes features of individual watersheds such as geology, soils, land use, major water courses, natural areas etc.

**(c). Influence and Effectiveness of Watershed Report Cards in Canada**

Barbara Veale (2010) identified opportunities to increase the usefulness and effectiveness of watershed indicator report cards. She identified the contextual factors influencing the practice of watershed management through an analysis of available documents. She also supplemented the information with the opinions gathered from 109 in-depth and semi-structured interviews. She found some shortfalls of the report cards which are (a) lack of consistent, spatial-specific and timely data (b) inconsistent measures and indicators between successive watershed reports (c) The goals, objectives, targets and benchmark of some of the watershed are ambiguous (d) the message of the report cards are not clear and sometimes difficult to understand.

**Research Objectives**

1. To conduct research on the awareness of local environmental issues
2. To measure the impact of the Muskoka Watershed Council Report Card
3. Identify how the Report Card can reach a broader audience
4. Find ways to make the Report Card more effective in its goals

**Methodological Approach and Sampling Considerations**

Viceroy Research has always been a company focusing on accurate results. From our past experiences, we are going with paper-based and online survey. We have studied the demographics of the Muskoka district from the data provided by Statistics Canada. There are about 54,000 residents in the district with varying from those in the business community to youth. However, during our interaction, the client told us to focus more on permanent residents in terms of raising awareness. The Statistics Canada data says that there are about 23,000 permanent residents. The main purpose of doing this research is to discover how the permanent residents are made aware of environmental issues associated with the watershed and about the existence of the Report Card. To achieve the results we will start with a pilot survey of 1000 newspaper inserts. We have arranged a relationship with the Muskoka *Weekender* newspaper that will help us to get the desired response. The newspaper would help us by writing a story about the MWC and the Report Card with a link to the website for the online survey and the MWC website. The pilot survey would probably tell us about the response rate. After three weeks of the pilot survey in the field we would then go with the primary survey of about 5000 surveys. We would also advertise on Moose FM and FM 105.5 radio station about the survey to grab attention of the community. The main purpose of using both methods is for convenience of the respondents. We are assuming that the youth and those aged up to 50 would go for the online survey, after going through the paper. And the respondents above 50 years old would be using paper based survey to respond.

**Deliverables, Timeline & Budget**

Viceroy will deliver to the Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC) an effective research project that raises community awareness of the MWC and the Report Card the Council publishes every four years. We are planning a comprehensive approach to accomplish this goal. A media campaign will be organized that stretches across three mediums that will reach the broadest possible audience for the least amount of cost. This campaign will spread the word about the online and paper-based survey Viceroy will conduct.

Viceroy will provide a detailed report that will summarize our research findings based on the results of the survey. Included in this report will be information on just how effective the MWC Report Card environmental awareness campaign has been in informing local communities about watershed issues, and identifying any demographic gaps of the Report Card in raising that awareness. Individual perceptions about local issues impacting

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the watershed will also be measured with the survey, and if the Report Card has any effect at all in terms of influencing individual behavior regarding local environmental concerns.

Viceroy feels that that our research project will be completed before the September 1<sup>st</sup> due date. Our clear and realistic timeline takes into consideration all planning and research design, analysis and final recommendations. The month of April will consist of an initial client meeting to discuss the aspirations of the Muskoka Watershed Council and how Viceroy can help achieve those goals. From there we will start our research design and methodology selection, which we anticipate having confirmed by the 13<sup>th</sup> of May, along with the formal proposal that will also be completed and presented in that month. Data collection based on Phase I of our research will also begin on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May and finish on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June. Moreover, Phase II data collection will also start on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June and end around the 13<sup>th</sup> of July. Data analysis of both phases will start soon after on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July and take about a month. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of August we anticipate a final report and presentation to the client.

Our budget projections are based on the understanding that the Muskoka Watershed Council is a non-profit corporation and therefore has a limited budget to spend on research. Viceroy has taken this into consideration and has attempted to keep cost to a bare minimum. Our largest budgetary item is our labor costs, which we have attempted to keep as low as possible. Printing of the 6000 surveys we plan to distribute will cost, at most, \$1000. Our plan to use Moose FM and FM 105.5 is budgeted at \$750 but is contingent on how good the response rate is for our pilot surveys. If the response rate is high, then we can rely only on a brief radio spot to advertise and remind the community about the MWC and our primary survey and news report that will be included in the Muskoka *Weekender* newspaper. If survey response is low then we can plan an “advertorial” that will help spread the message and campaign of the MWC and the Report Card in a detailed fashion. The surveys that will accompany the newspaper story are charged at a rate of \$75 per 1000 inserts, and we plan to purchase 5000 inserts at a cost of \$375. We have also decided to utilize the online survey tool Survey Monkey to handle our entire digital data gathering at a low cost of \$350. Finally, we have arranged a gift certificate survey-completion draw incentive through Muskoka Outfitters who will provide discounted canoe or kayak tours, sporting goods purchase or rental in exchange for being mentioned in the Muskoka *Weekender* news story.

### Proposal Summary

Viceroy Research is proposing a highly flexible methodology that recognizes the financial limitations of the Muskoka Watershed Council while still reaching the broadest possible demographic for awareness and research goals. Our research design is comprehensive in that we have addressed all the needs and desires of the MWC. Finally, and most importantly, our research proposal is “off the shelf” and ready to be implemented. We have made contacts in the media and business community who are fully supportive of our project and are ready to work with us.