

Muskoka Watershed Council
Community Round Table (CRT) – Integrated Watershed Management
(IWM)
Minutes

Date: April 13, 2022

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

Kevin Trimble (Chair)	Kathleen Lamb	Don Macintosh
Jade Turmelle	Bryan Ingram	Cameron von Bratt
Carolyn Dubois	Deborah Martin-Downs	Geoff Ross
Greg Padlo	Jo-Anne Goodwin	Kevin Laframoise
Michael Walmsley	Penny Thomas	Stephen Fahner
Wendy Sommerville	Chris Cragg	Andrew McCammon
John Cooper	Peter Sale	John Nemeth

District of Muskoka Staff:

Christy Doyle, Director, Watershed and Environmental Programs
Glenn Cunnington, Project Manager, Water Strategy
Cassie Emms, Program Communications Specialist

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks

Kevin Trimble, Chair, opened the meeting.

2. Review and approval of minutes from April 13, 2022

Minutes approved.

3. District of Muskoka Project Updates

Glenn Cunnington provided that all 12 projects are now awarded. Glenn is expecting final work plans in the coming weeks for the last 5 projects which includes CRT engagement activities. The successful request for proposals will be shared with the CRT for further information.

All other projects are progressing well. The LiDAR data for the floodplain mapping project was received in February, and bathymetry will be collected this Spring. This data also informs the hydrological model project.

The natural capital inventory project is also progressing well. Background data is currently being collected, which includes artificial intelligence analysis. Vernal

pool modelling is also a component of this project, as well as stream order mapping and corresponding ground-truthing.

Glenn also added that District staff have been working with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP) to free up funds from the Transfer Payment Agreement between the two agencies to support the CRT through an IWM Engagement Expert.

4. Update on CRT funding – Governance Study

Kevin announced that the funding for the governance study was successful and that an agreement between Muskoka Watershed Council and the MECP is being drafted. Geoff Ross is drafting the Request for Quotations for interested proponents.

Kevin explained that the governance study is a literature review exercise. Kevin and Geoff will update the CRT on the scope of this study. Deborah Martin-Downs asked if the District of Muskoka asked the Province to continue to fund the IWM program. Andrew McCammon added that we will need to get creative if funds are not available. For example, if IWM means embracing traditional indigenous knowledge, then a cultural shift is needed. Or, if IWM means better water quality, then more monitoring is required.

5. IWM Educational Priorities and Summary of Topics from March 23, 2022

Kevin thanked everyone again for the discussion in the last meeting. The main discussion topics were summarized in three categories:

- The status quo – what is wrong with it?
 - o Climate change
 - o Not recognizing cumulative effects
 - o Development, land use, and infrastructure
 - o Lack of accounting of ecosystem services and functions at a watershed scale
 - o Governance is inconsistent across the watershed and lacks a watershed scale lens
 - o Limitations of the Muskoka River Water Management Plan
 - Kevin welcomed a presentation on the Muskoka River Water Management Plan, climate change, and local land use and development to educate the CRT on these topics.
 - Brian Ingram offered to assist with providing a presentation on the Muskoka River Water Management Plan.
- What does an IWM plan look like?
 - o What would be different tomorrow if we had a well developed IWM process and watershed plan?

- How would an IWM plan be implemented?
- How the CRT and District projects fit in the process.
 - Kevin welcomed a presentation on IWM, hiring an IWM engagement expert, and emphasized the importance of initiating the governance study.
 - Deborah Martin-Downs offered to connect Kevin with a contact from the Fraser-Bay Council who may be interested in presenting to the CRT about IWM.
- What is the role of the CRT?
 - Public input on District projects and longer-term vision
 - Collaboration of all stakeholders, including all watershed municipalities and businesses
 - A shared vision for the future of the watershed
 - Kevin explained that the next steps would be to hire an IWM Engagement expert and have presentations on success stories of collaborative community-driven IWM

Kevin then explained that the CRT has four tasks to undertake: developing a vision for the Muskoka River watershed, providing input on the District projects, initiating a governance study, and educating the community. The CRT will combine these tasks into an action plan when the first round of information gathering projects are completed by the District. Kevin welcomed questions.

John Nemeth explained that the Planning Act and Provincial Policy Statement are significant in enabling implementing IWM at the policy level. Kevin referred to the MWAG report and Muskoka Watershed Council whitepaper on Integrated Watershed Management, which speaks to this issue.

Andrew McCammon asked if drinking water is included in IWM. Kevin explained that there is no source protection agency in Muskoka; however the governance study will hopefully address commonalities to areas with PPS.

Greg Padulo suggested that First Nation participation and indigenous knowledge need to be included from the beginning. It is important to put extra thought into how to engage with First Nations, given the capacity issue. Kevin agreed.

6. Next Steps including meeting scheduling, Adjournment

CRT meetings are now scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month at 4 PM. The next meeting will occur on Wednesday, May 11, at 4 PM.