

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

Minutes

Date: July 13, 2022

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

Kevin Trimble (Chair)

Andrew McCammon

Chris Cragg

Deborah Martin-Downs

Don Macintosh

Geoff Ross

Greg Padulo

Jade Turmelle

Jo-Anne Goodwin

John Cooper

John Nemeth

Kathleen Padulo

Patricia Arney

Peter Sale

Stephen Fahner

Tom O-Callaghan

Hutchinson Environmental Science Ltd.

Kris Hadley

District of Muskoka Staff:

Glenn Cunningham, Manager, Watershed Programs

Alana Perez, Integrated Watershed Management Program Coordinator

1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement

Kevin Trimble opened the meeting and provided a land acknowledgement.

2. Review and approval of minutes from June 8, 2022 including Barb Veale's presentation "Integrated Watershed Management: What's it all about?" and the Public Access Inventory consultation

Andrew McCammon noted that the minutes do not capture one aspect of Barb's presentation – establishing current conditions. This was added to the minutes. Kevin Trimble mentioned that this was not intentional and that the minutes are a very brief summary of the meeting. Barb Veale's presentation is posted to the MWC website. He also noted that establishing current conditions is an intrinsic and critical early step in the IWM process, which was partially initiated through the twelve DMM projects that are underway.

Minutes were approved.

3. Presentation: Muskoka River Water Management Plan

Chriss Cragg provided a presentation on the Muskoka River Water Management Plan, focusing on water quantity with a history of water uses and water level management in the Muskoka River watershed. Chris outlined some options for flood mitigation, such as improving outflow from the watershed, improving flow within the watershed, improving upstream storage, operational adjustments, restrictions on development within the floodplain, and public education.

Following the presentation, Kathleen and Greg Padulo provided a comment regarding a drastic drop of the water level in the South Muskoka River on July 1, outlining ecological and recreational concerns. Chris responded that more information would be required to understand the reason for this, and Kevin added that this question should be brought to the water power producers (who will be presenting at the next meeting).

4. Consultation: Water Quality Indicators

Kris Hadley from Hutchinson Environmental Sciences Ltd. provided a presentation on the purpose, scope, and progress of the Water Quality Indicators Project. Kris summarized some emerging issues in water quality that are relevant to the Muskoka River Watershed, including climate change, harmful algal blooms, calcium decline, salinization, invasive species, microplastics, nanomaterials, and contaminants. Kris also talked about the existing water quality monitoring programs in the watershed.

CRT members provided some feedback to Kris via discussion. A brief summary is provided below.

- Patricia Arney mentioned that one of the challenges will be to determine how to use the water quality data, and consolidate and cooperate across political boundaries and programs.
- Peter Sale mentioned that pharmaceuticals should also be included. It is also important to make sure we use the data that is collected.
- Kevin Trimble mentioned that we should determine overarching water quality indicators that represent a healthy watershed.
- John Nemeth mentioned that perhaps we should go to the Province to encourage funding for research such as the Dorset Research Centre.
- Deborah Martin-Downs asked about the difference between septic systems and wastewater treatment in terms of impacts to lakes. Kris responded that this will be included in more detail in the final report.

5. Other Business

Andrew McCammon mentioned that there is not enough time at CRT meetings to provide adequate feedback and ask questions during DMM project consultations. Andrew suggested that we need to do more to make sure action

items from past meetings are being done, including keeping councillors informed. Kevin responded that he is looking to form a leadership group for the CRT and is interested in meeting with Andrew on this. The group has recently finished presentations to councils to educate them about the CRT.

Kathleen and Greg Padulo requested more information on the 12 technical projects. Glenn provided a link to the District website page which provides details on these projects: <https://www.engagemuskoka.ca/integrated-watershed-management-home-page>

Kathleen and Greg are also concerned about a lack of Indigenous participation on these projects. Kevin responded that we have formally invited all First Nations in the watershed to participate on the CRT and we have 3-4 First Nations CRT members. Kevin agreed that we should continue to work on this and that we need to find ways to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge as the IWM process begins to unfold.

6. Adjournment

The next CRT meeting will be on August 10, which will include a presentation from the Hydro Power Producers. Consultation sessions will continue later in August and into the fall.