

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

Minutes

Date: September 14, 2022

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

Chris Cragg

Geoff Ross

Jo-Anne Goodwin

Kevin Trimble (Chair)

Patricia Arney

Tom O’Callaghan

Deborah Martin-Downs

Greg Padulo

John Nemeth

Michael Peppard

Peter Sale

Don Macintosh

Jeff Peeters

John Cooper

Penny Thomas

Stephan Fahner

Hutchinson Environmental Sciences Ltd:

Kris Hadley

Canadian Water Network:

Sandra Cooke

Vicki Hammond

District of Muskoka Staff:

Alana Perez

Glenn Cunnington

Rebecca Willison

Stuart Paul

1. Welcome, Land Acknowledgement

Kevin Trimble opened the meeting and provided a land acknowledgement.

2. Review and approval of minutes from August 10, 2022 including Bryan Ingram (Bracebridge Power) and Justin Bremner’s (OPG) on the Water Management Plan vs. Integrated Watershed Management and the CRT Status Review and Discussion.

Minutes were approved.

3. Presentation: CRT Development, Status, and Path Forward

Kevin Trimble (Chair) provided a presentation on history and future of the CRT. Kevin began with a demonstration of the MWC website (muskokawatershed.org) and where the CRT and IWM information can be found. Kevin’s presentation involved a description of the evolution leading to the CRT, the original intention for the CRT, and the actual trajectory to where we

are today and where we are going. Kevin explained the long-term goals of the CRT, which are to develop an IWM plan for the Muskoka River Watershed and form a governing body to oversee the ongoing implementation and adaptation of the Plan. The immediate missions of the CRT are to consult and provide input on the DMM technical IWM projects, develop a vision and work plan, and outline an action plan for next steps in the process.

Following Kevin's presentation, there was time for discussion and questions, summarized briefly below.

- Greg Padulo feels that the CRT needs more “clout,” ideally in the form of funding. Greg feels the District’s Engage Muskoka website is unclear regarding the 12 IWM projects. Kevin Trimble responded that this could be a topic of a future CRT meeting.
- Deborah Martin-Downs commented that the 12 technical projects will have some recommendations that are quick, easy wins that should be completed to get the ball rolling and demonstrate success, potentially leading to more funding and opportunities.
- Peter Sale reminded the group that we have had indications of support from all watershed municipalities and hope to soon have representatives on the CRT from each municipality.
- Penny Thomas inquired about the possibility to implement a new conservation authority for the Muskoka River Watershed. Kevin Trimble responded that this is one of the options for the future, among others. The governance study will be looking at the various options. Patricia Arney added that in the past, we have had indications from various Ministries that there is little support for a new conservation authority for the Muskoka River Watershed.

4. Project Results Presentation: Water Quality Indicators

Kris Hadley from Hutchinson Environmental Sciences Ltd. Provided a presentation on the results of the Water Quality Indicators project. Kris provided an overview of the water quality programs in the Muskoka River Watershed and some recommendations for future water quality monitoring of harmful algae blooms, calcium decline, salinization, and contaminants. Kris’ future recommendations included coordinating efforts and resources for the future, filling data gaps in stream monitoring, expanding the spatial scope of monitoring programs by developing guidance and training for citizen scientists, and planning for the future by archiving water samples, analyzing additional parameters, and re-assessing the program regularly to make necessary changes.

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

- Kevin Trimble suggested that the various overlapping water quality programs should be coordinated so we are not duplicating efforts. Kris agreed and added that most independent programs gather similar data and can usually be combined.
- Patricia Arney mentioned that testing for pharmaceuticals should be completed on water bodies that have wastewater outfalls, to monitor for this emerging issue. Kris agreed that it is good to measure close to the discharge locations, but it is likely that most of these parameters are going to be below the detection limit.
- Peter Sale recommended that the data that is collected needs to actually be analyzed, as often the data is not evaluated until after an issue occurs. Kris mentioned that the District's annual reporting is significant, but there's always more that can be done (i.e. setting up scripts to analyze data).
- Chris Cragg asked about multiple stressor environments and the addition of factors like invasive species. Kris responded that this is a complex issue that requires more funding and research, but that the best way to deal with invasive species is prevention.

5. Adjournment

The next CRT meeting will be on October 21, which will be a project results presentation for the Natural Capital Inventory project from Dougan and Associates. The next regular monthly CRT meeting will be October 12.

DMM Project Consultation Schedule – Fall 2022

Wednesday September 21, 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Project: Natural Capital Inventory

Wednesday October 5, 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Project: Land Use Policy Review

Wednesday October 12, 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Project: Hydrologic Model

Wednesday October 19, 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Project: Public Access Inventory

Wednesday November 9, 4:00 - 5:30 PM

Project: Operational Adjustments & Scoping Study