

Muskoka Watershed Council - Community Round Table (CRT) Minutes

Date: March 23, 2022

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

Kevin Trimble (Chair)	Stephen Fahner	Michael Peppard
Michael Walmsley	Penny Thomas	Andrew McCammon
Geoff Ross	Don Macintosh	Peter Sale
Norm Huggins	John Nemeth	Gareth Seltzer
Jo-Anne Goodwin	Deborah Marin-Downs	Cameron von Bratt
Chris Cragg	Patricia Arney	Kevin Laframboise
Bryan Ingram	Greg Padulo	Kathleen Padulo
Carolyn DuBois	Caleb Timmermann	Tom O'Callaghan
John Cooper	Jade Turmelle	

District of Muskoka Staff:

Christy Doyle, Director, Watershed and Environmental Programs

Glenn Cunnington, Project Manager, Water Strategy

Alana Perez, Integrated Watershed Management Program Coordinator

Cassie Emms, Program Communications Specialist

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks

Kevin Trimble, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that the focus of the meeting will be on Integrated Watershed Management educational priorities, given that the imminent task of the CRT is to provide the District of Muskoka comments on their technical projects.

2. Review and approval of minutes from February 17, 2022 meeting, review of action items

Minutes from the February 17, 2022 meeting were approved. Kevin drew attention to the table in Item 4 and asked CRT members to email crt@muskokawatershed.org their sectors in addition to their location in the Muskoka River Watershed.

Kevin also encouraged everyone to complete the survey to assist with scheduling regular monthly meetings.

3. Refresher on long and short range missions

Kevin reviewed the [Mission, Vision, and Objectives](#) of the CRT.

Michael Peppard asked if the role of the CRT is to look at the outcomes of the District of Muskoka technical projects and then advise how IWM will move forward for the Muskoka River Watershed. Kevin provided that one of the short-term goals of the CRT is to provide comments on the District of Muskoka's technical projects, with a longer-term goal of making recommendations on behalf of the entire Muskoka River Watershed community including municipalities, business, community and social sectors. This includes initiating a governance study.

Kevin Laframboise asked if the CRT has a formal role in municipal policy development that will result in the District's IWM initiative. Kevin Trimble indicated that the CRT does not have a formal role in municipal policy development; however, the intent of the CRT is to represent the entire Muskoka River Watershed, and determine a governance structure together with all stakeholders mentioned above. IWM will ideally be implemented through the new governance body in various municipal public works and planning departments (i.e. official plans, infrastructure planning, climate action plans, etc.) as well as in other levels of government (e.g., related to water management and flood control).

4. Case Study Review – Why IWM is needed in Muskoka

This item was combined with Item 6.

5. District project update and imminent consultation needs

Glenn Cunnington introduced Alana Perez, the new IWM Program Coordinator. Alana's position is funded by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks and is included in the District of Muskoka's Transfer Payment Agreement. Alana's role will be to assist with continuing the technical projects.

Glenn announced that all technical projects have either been awarded or are in the final stages of being awarded.

Four projects will be brought forward to the CRT for input this Spring and outlined the imminent consultation needs including the approximate

timing. Glenn noted that the timing for the consultation sessions will be refined as the projects progress.

Project	Approximate Timeline	Purpose of Consultation
Public Access Inventory	Late April	<p>Project Focus: Mapping aquatic and terrestrial public access points across the Muskoka River Watershed and policy options that support environmental, social and economic priorities.</p> <p>Consultation Need: Input and ideas on good/bad locations for public access, how to determine what is too much or too little, and also overall public concerns on access considering environmental, societal, and economic implications.</p>
Water Quality Indicators	Mid May	<p>Project Focus: Review existing water quality programs and recommend a plan for monitoring water quality indicators across the Muskoka River Watershed.</p> <p>Consultation Need: Provide input on what water quality issues are significant to you and your sector. Some examples include: Has water quality ever impacted your drinking water? What environmental stressors are your greatest concerns?</p> <p>It will include a public meeting in addition to a follow-up survey.</p>
Erosion Survey	Late May and June	<p>Project Focus: Collecting information on existing shoreline erosion locations across the Muskoka River Watershed. The District's data collection App "E-</p>

		<p>Rode" is an online citizen science tool incorporated into this project.</p> <p>Consultation Needs: General education on erosion and inform your sectors and contacts about E-Rode.</p>
Watershed Health Indicators	Mid-Late June	<p>Project Focus: Measure watershed health using environmental and ecological metrics.</p> <p>Consultation Needs: Different factors that are important to your sector as it relates to watershed health.</p>

Glenn indicated that final products will be presented with the CRT by later summer.

John Nemeth asked Glenn what level of detail the consultants are providing given the short timeline. Glenn indicated that each project is challenged with a time constraint however many projects are looking at existing data. Glenn further added that it's important to keep in mind that collectively, all of these projects aim to identify the existing conditions of the Muskoka River Watershed. The next steps would be to identify information gaps resulting from these technical projects and recommend projects that would further inform a future IWM plan for Muskoka.

Andrew McCammon indicated that Ontario Conservation Authorities have protocols about interference with wetlands and watercourses. Andrew asked if the District of Muskoka has a similar protocol or does the District use the Ontario Natural Heritage Reference Manual for standards of watershed management in Muskoka. Kevin indicated that there is no single government entity including no Conservation Authority that covers the entire Muskoka River Watershed. The Water Producers are implementing the Muskoka River Water Management Plan (MRWMP). There is no watershed-level regulatory framework other than the implementation of the MRWMP by the water power producers, and communications roles are filled by provincial agencies and municipalities.

Michael Peppard asked Glenn how the Operational Adjustments Study and the Scoping Study are progressing. Glenn shared that these projects were awarded late last year. The first deliverable will be completed by late July, with the final report due in October.

Glenn will share a schedule for the projects in addition to the awarded consultants with the CRT.

6. IWM Educational Priorities

Kevin shared a presentation on some aspects of Integrated Watershed Management to stimulate a discussion of what the CRT would like to learn more about in order to be prepared for consultation needs and to foster the long term goals of the CRT. Some example questions include:

- What is the business case for IWM in Muskoka?
- What is IWM and why does Muskoka need it?
- What are the key issues driving IWM in Muskoka?
- What's the difference between collaborative community-driven IWM and IWM lead by a single municipality?
- What is our understanding of the District of Muskoka projects and the "Characterization" stage of IWM?
- How is a watershed plan implemented and by who?
- What is a governance study?

A lengthy discussion was held and the following provides a summary of key questions and topics to explore:

- Need an overview of IWM.... As an example, invite someone from the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority to present their experience in IWM to the CRT.
- Focus on tangible analysis to help the CRT see what IWM can do for the watershed. For example, reduction in erosion rates.
- Is the Muskoka River Water Management Plan being updated?
- How does IWM deal with the need for a watershed-wide Natural Heritage System – some past work has not been fully utilized and there are many unresolved problems across the watershed.
- Mandated government/conservation IWM requirements versus community-driven IWM and how the governance study will help with this.
- What drives the need for IWM – i.e. Land development?

- Eliminating gaps between developers, municipalities, engineers, planners, and environmental organizations to ensure protected areas are protected, not mitigated.
- How the CRT can effectively communicate with planners/engineers/developers/municipalities? Would Provincial oversight be required?
- How do the 12 DMM projects fit into the bigger IWM process?
- Is the CRT's mandate restricted to reviewing the DMM projects?
- How to translate current best practices to future best practices, including determining what we want Muskoka to be like in 50 to 100 years (i.e. a vision for watershed management).
- What are the main issues and stressors of the Muskoka River Watershed?
- Have the recommendations outlined in the Muskoka Watershed Inventory Project (2006-2009) implemented? How will the results of this project be incorporated to IWM and the District's projects?
- What is the difference between the Muskoka River Water Management Plan (MRWMP) and a watershed management plan?
- Has monitoring increased since flood instances have increased?
- How does a watershed plan find its way into land use and infrastructure process?
- What are the constraints or limitations to IWM in Muskoka?
- Is there other funding sources available for the CRT?
- A vision document for watershed management

7. Next Steps including meeting scheduling

Kevin reminded everyone to email crt@muskokawatershed.org their sectors and geographical representation and complete the survey to assist with regular scheduled meetings.