



Muskoka
Watershed Council

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2028



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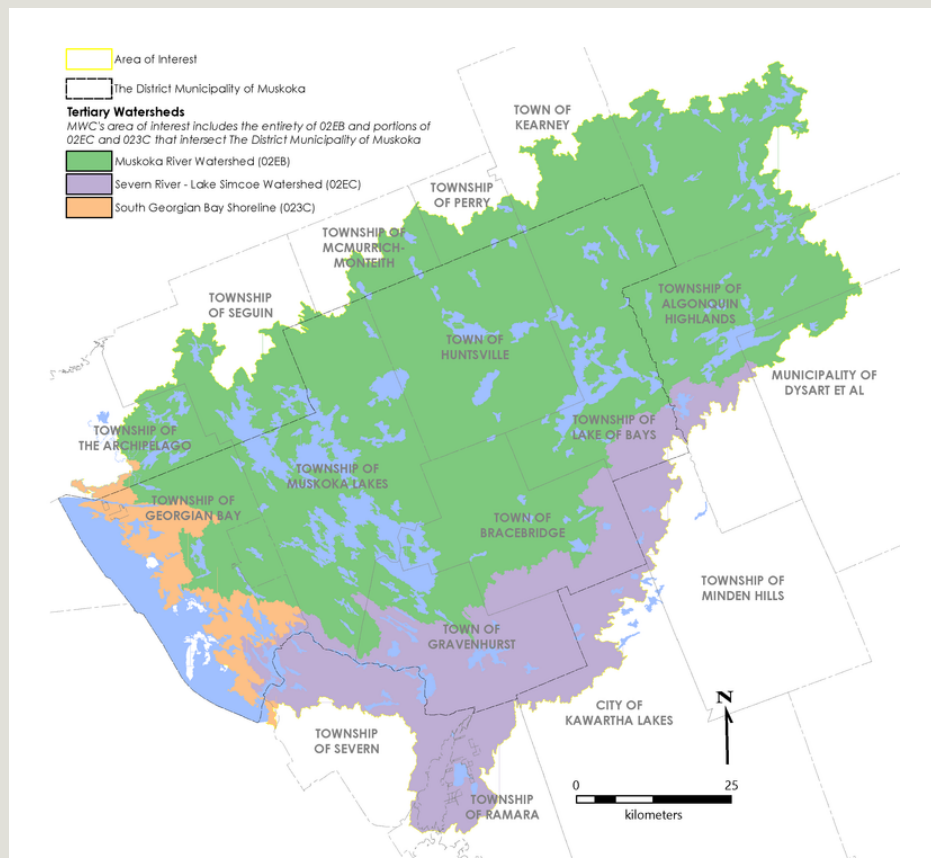
ABOUT MWC

Muskoka Watershed Council is committed to the enhancement of the health and sustainability of the entire Muskoka River Watershed, from its headwaters in Algonquin Park to its outlets to Georgian Bay, as well as those parts of the Severn River-Lake Simcoe Watershed and the Georgian Bay shoreline and islands that lie within the District of Muskoka.

Our mission is to empower the community to protect and enhance watershed health.

MWC was formed to educate on environmental issues, provide science-based environmental policy advice, and help address watershed management issues.

MWC provides a framework for coordination and cooperation among key interests and stakeholders, and reports on the health of the watersheds on a regular basis.





MWC was founded in 2001 and became incorporated as an independent non-profit organization in July 2019.

MWC is an advisory body and not a regulatory or enforcement agency. It makes recommendations to municipal governments, to decision-makers, to managers and to the general public on ways to protect and restore the resources of the area's watersheds.

MWC represents key interests and stakeholders across Muskoka's watersheds, ensuring a comprehensive look at watershed issues.

MWC'S GOALS

MWC's Strategic Plan defines the actions to accomplish the following three goals:

1. Communication, Stewardship and Awareness

2. Policy and Advocacy

3. Enhanced Watershed-Wide Knowledge Base



Goal #1

Communications, Stewardship and Awareness

OBJECTIVE

Increase the level of awareness and engagement of the community on watershed health and stewardship issues.

STRATEGIES

1. Engage the public in hands-on stewardship programs
2. Create and disseminate public information through a range of programs, media and events
3. Enhance public recognition of the MWC "Brand"
4. Take on the role of integrator of an Environmental Alliance, collaborating with other community sectors

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Set measureable targets for:

- Level of community awareness of environmental issues
- Community participation in stewardship programs
- Attendance at events
- Media articles published
- Engagement on social media

TACTICS

1. Annual funding applications for and delivery of stewardship programs:

- Love Your Lake
- The Natural Edge
- Citizen Science for Algae
- Stewardship Recognition Awards

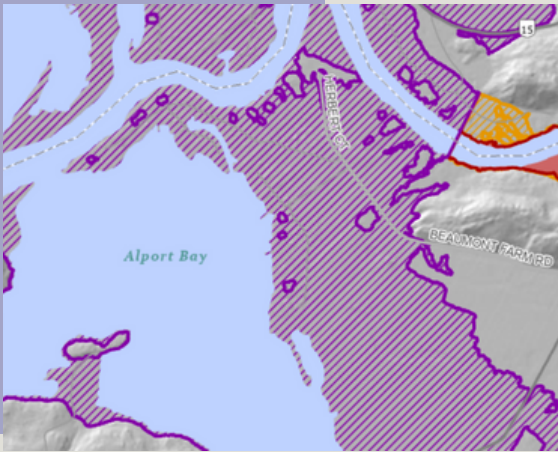
2. Organize/deliver, as per quarterly communication plans:

- MWC Report Card on 5-year intervals
- Bi-annual Environmental Summits and Stewardship Conferences
- Quarterly public seminars and lectures, summer markets
- Bi-weekly media articles on current topics
- Material & presentations for schools
- All products posted on MWC website, social media channels

3. As part of items 1 & 2, create and promote eye-catching material that educates and promotes MWC's logo & brand. Highlight what MWC does that others do not.

4. Organize discussions with various community sectors examining common ground and complementary goals and resources. These are to include:

- FMW, CAM, & other like-minded ENGOs, towards an Environmental Alliance
- Business sectors via Chambers of Commerce



Goal #2

Policy and Advocacy

TACTICS

- 1. Continue to engage the community via the Community Roundtable (CRT), as an MWC sub-committee, tasked to:**
 - Establish a common vision and goals for all sectors with respect to the health of the watershed, economy and community
 - Create a “roadmap” for bringing IWM, as a way of thinking and managing, to Muskoka’s watershed
 - Engage Chambers of Commerce as links to the broader watershed business community
 - Develop a document (or series of) that clearly describes how the whole watershed works as an ecosystem. The Living in Cottage Country book is still a great reference
 - Work with municipalities and other watershed stakeholders to develop a road map and prioritized recommendations for action
- 2. Undertake MWC review and comment on all municipal and district OP’s. Enable “green” development in building codes, ecotourism and infrastructure.**
- 3. Establish annual delegations to all councils within the watershed (go beyond the 6 lower tier municipalities)**
 - Establish working relationships with CAOs, planning depts., individual councillors.
 - One on one chats with potential key influencers

OBJECTIVE

Planning decisions are based on:

1. Current science as expressed in MWC position papers, and
2. Integrated Watershed Management for the Muskoka River Watershed as a whole. Emphasize the cross municipal boundaries nature of watershed impacts.

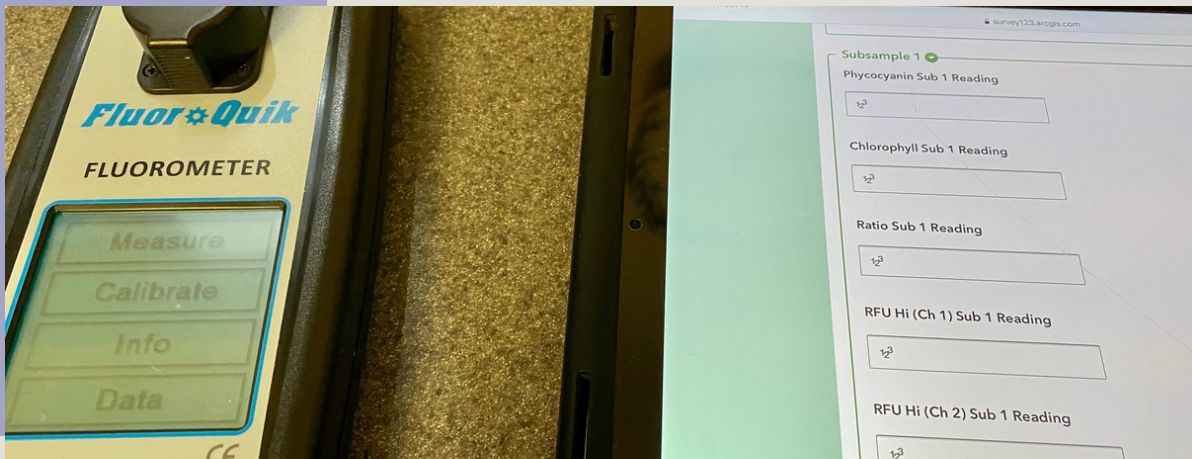
STRATEGIES

1. Collaborate with watershed stakeholders to initiate integrated watershed management
2. Advocate for district and municipal governments to adopt and implement recommendations of MWC Position/Advocacy Papers relating to watershed health.
3. Enhance engagement and collaboration with district and municipal governments, and the province.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Set meaningful & measurable targets for:

- Sectors actively engaged in the CRT
- CRT reports
- Impact of MWC recommendations on Municipal Official Plans
- Interactions with municipal councils and staff



Goal #3

Enhanced Watershed-Wide Knowledge Base

OBJECTIVE

Knowledge (science-based & traditional) of the Muskoka River Watershed as an ecosystem is adequate to support policies and action that effectively protect and enhance watershed health.

STRATEGIES

1. Create new and updated MWC Position Papers.
2. Collaborate with other organizations on research to expand the size, scope and quality of the knowledge base for the watershed.
3. Engage indigenous community to learn from and include 100's of years of experience on ecosystem stewardship.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Set meaningful & measurable targets for:

- New, updated position papers (+ similar documents) created and published
- Knowledge gaps which have been resolved
- New collaborative programs & results
- Degree of indigenous engagement

TACTICS

1. Position papers should:

- Express current scientific knowledge in plain language accessible to non-scientists
- Place scientific knowledge in the context of the interconnected parts of the whole Muskoka River Watershed ecosystem
- Make better use of data to identify trends of concern
- Identify potential actions that address identified problems
- Research the gaps and needs for new Policy papers

2. Collaborative efforts to include:

- Expand the MWC algae program, in collaboration with FMW
- Work with DESC and universities on research that is beyond the capacity of MWC
- Engage with DMM on lake sampling program to ensure it stays current

3. Seek indigenous representatives for all major MWC programs and identify the indigenous knowledge component of resulting reports and papers



BoD GOAL #1

Membership Recruitment & Retention

OBJECTIVES

1. Recruit and onboard 1-2 new members per quarter as required.
2. No loss of members due to mismanaged expectations.

STRATEGIES

1. Define member and volunteer requirements and expectations. (Volunteers are helpers or contributors who are not signed members)
2. Increase member and volunteer engagement
3. Create a plan to retain and recognize member contributions
4. Grow the number and variety of members

TACTICS

1. **Member responsibilities:**
 - Create written policies on member qualifications and required contributions, reach beyond scientists.
 - Procedure to recruit and onboard new members.
2. **Member engagement**
 - Create volunteer and member education program
 - Engage members to bring forward projects
 - Create associate members with smaller roles
3. **Track the number of members and recognize their contributions**
4. **Build membership capacity**
 - Recruit existing members to assist in bringing new members who represent needed stakeholders
 - Recruit members with skills different than ours to expand capacity beyond what we do currently
 - Create an answer to: Why would someone want to be an MWC member vs joining a different ENGO?
 - Reach out to developers and builders, why would they want to be involved?



BoD GOAL #2

Revenue and Funding

OBJECTIVE

Build the human capacity and dollars to do the things we want to do.

STRATEGIES

1. Create an annual Operations budget
2. Create a fundraising team
3. Create a specific Business Plan for each significant project to engage with potential funders and volunteers. It defines:
 - what is to be done,
 - why it is important,
 - what it will cost, and
 - how it will be executed.

“If you have a good business plan the money will come”

Muskoka
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TACTICS

1. **Budget - Completed for 2023**
 - Create a budget framework
 - Determine funding requirements
2. **Fundraising team to undertake:**
 - Community fundraising events
 - Fee for service from municipalities(?) on projects most important to them
 - Corporations looking for a branding opportunity
 - Real estate, chambers, developers, trade associations
 - Source grant and other funding opportunities
 - CEOs who are cottagers and have vested interest
 - Wealthy private donors
 - Have an answer to what does a donor get for their \$. That is: WIIFM vs supporting a different ENGO?
3. **Project Business Plans**
 - Create a procedure to identify a potential project, and have it approved by the Board
 - Create a project team and lead to build the Business Plan



BoD GOAL #3

Governance and Administration

OBJECTIVE

All Legal requirements to operate MWC are completed and reviewed half-yearly or as required.

STRATEGIES

1. Governance docs are complete and approved, revise as necessary
2. Financial reporting documents and procedures are complete and approved
3. Create a formal MOU with DMM that defines what, who, when where, how, etc.
4. Create Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy
5. MWC requires an Executive Director. IWM will require a coordinator, part-time or part of an Executive Director's role. Staff team required?

TACTICS

1. Review Governance docs yearly
2. Finance review by BoD quarterly
3. Assign MOU responsibility to a director
4. Review DMM or other ENGO's DEI policy
5. Board to determine if needed
 - Create role/scope of work, salary
 - Create a Sub-committee to hire