



# *Muskoka*

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## WATERSHED COUNCIL

### Minutes

Friday, February 17, 2023  
1:00 pm  
Pine Room (District of Muskoka) & Zoom

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#### Present (In-person)

Peter Sale (Chair)  
Pete LeMoine  
Kevin Trimble

Javier Cappella  
Michael Peppard

Andrew Fyfe  
Geoff Ross

#### Present (Zoom)

Patricia Arney  
John Cooper

Mario Buszynski  
Richard Lammers

David Bywater  
Jess Lario

#### MWC Staff

Rebecca Willison

#### DMM Staff

Christy Doyle

Christiane Masters

Stuart Paul \*

#### Guests

Forrest Pengra (Seguin Twp) \*

Penny Thomas \*

Andrew McCammon \*

\* Attended by Zoom

#### Welcome

MWC Chair Peter Sale called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. MWC member Andrew Fyfe provided an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

#### Confirmation of Minutes

#### MOTION

Moved by Michael Peppard, seconded by Geoff Ross

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated November 18, 2022, be approved.

**CARRIED**

## MOTION

Moved by Michael Peppard, seconded by Andrew Fyfe

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated January 20, 2023, be approved.

**CARRIED**

## Presentation

[Preparing for the Aftermath Forest; managing beech regeneration in the face of Beech Bark Disease](#) – Javier Cappella, Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc.

Beech Bark Disease is caused by a combination of an insect and a fungus. Beech scale insects infest beech trees and make them more vulnerable to the *Neonectria faginata* fungus. The disease leads to high levels of beech tree mortality and a declining beech population. This disease is currently found in the southern portion of the French-Severn forest.

Westwind Forest Stewardship received funding from the Province as part of the Muskoka Watershed Conservation and Management Initiative to develop a forest restoration pilot project on private land in the Muskoka River Watershed. This project includes removing beech tree understories (that develop because of beech bark disease) and planting other species. The pilot project also includes community engagement and educational activities. Westwind has carried out similar programs to manage Beech regeneration on Crown Land for the past five years.

After answering some questions, Peter thanked Javier for his informative presentation.

## Strategic Planning Session – Pete LeMoine and Geoff Ross

Geoff Ross provided a brief overview of MWC's process to develop a strategic plan and shared a preliminary draft of the strategic plan to stimulate discussion at a high level.

- Draft Vision Statement: The Muskoka watershed's natural assets remain healthy, resilient and sustainable in the face of all threats.
- Draft Mission Statement: To empower the community to take action that protects and enhances watershed health.

Pete LeMoine walked through the draft strategic priorities (goal sheets) developed based on previous input from MWC members at two strategic planning workshops.

1. Community Outreach and Awareness on Watershed Health, Threats and Stewardship
  - Engage the public and enhance their awareness of the importance of the environment to the lives of all members of the watershed community.
2. Policy and Advocacy
  - Planning decisions are based on potential impacts watershed-wide.
3. Watershed-Wide Knowledge Base to Inform Management

- MWC creates the “picture on the puzzle box” to help decision makers see their role in solving the puzzle.
- 4. Communications and Promotion
  - Create greater recognition of MWC in the community – above and separate from the educational content of our products.
- 5. Membership Recruitment and Retention
  - Recruit and on-board 2-3 new members per quarter.
  - No loss of members due to mismanaged expectations.
- 6. Integrated Watershed management (IWM)
  - Management of the Muskoka River Watershed shifts from 13 municipalities acting independently, to a process where all municipalities act in a coordinated manner where actions consider the entire watershed as an ecosystem.
- 7. Revenue and Funding
  - Build the human capacity and dollars to do the things we want to do.
- 8. Governance and Administration
  - All requirements for legal org complete by March 2023

The draft documents will be distributed to the membership following the meeting to solicit input for the next draft of the strategic plan.

### **Project Updates**

- **Fundraising Committee** – Peter Sale reported that we are still waiting to hear back from FedNor.
- **Membership Committee** – Michael Peppard reported that he and Pete LeMoine have reached out to all expiring members to gauge their interest in continuing. They have received a good response so far. There have also been discussions about recruiting new members from the CRT.
- **IWM Community Roundtable** – Kevin Trimble reported that the CRT is at a juncture now and CRT members are figuring out what their next steps are. They would like to develop an action plan that includes priorities, targets, management plans, etc. What are the roles of the CRT and MWC in the IWM process? We will need to work closely with DMM. Kevin and Peter will be presenting at the DMM Community and Planning Services Committee meeting on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. MECP has accepted the governance final report and will release the remaining funds. The CRT wants to build better connections with local ENGOs and public works departments. The MLA newsletter has a good article on the District's IWM projects.
- **2023 Muskoka Watershed Report Card** – Peter Sale reported that the Report Card Sub-committee will be meeting next on March 3<sup>rd</sup> and will be discussing ways to present the data and the types of indicators to include. Rebecca and Peter met with staff from the Georgian Bay Biosphere (GBB) and Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) to talk about ways to collaborate for all three upcoming report cards.

### **Partner Updates**

- **District of Muskoka** – Christy Doyle reported the Community and Planning Services Committee will receive their orientation on watershed programs at the February meeting. DMM is entering the third and final phase of floodplain mapping, which should be completed in 2023. DMM's

Environmental Initiatives Coordinator has been helping with the development of regional climate action plans, and three of the five municipal plans have been approved, with resources, by their respective municipal councils.

- **Ontario Headwaters Institute** – Andrew McCammon noted how difficult it is for the public to understand IWM, which is why OHI is creating a Coalition of Ontario Water Guardians to focus on water security. He suggested that MWC work to encourage municipal councillors to carry out IWM while MWC focusses on education and outreach.

### **New Business**

None.

### **Next MWC Meeting**

MWC's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in the Pine Room at the District of Muskoka administration building, located at 70 Pine Street in Bracebridge, and through Zoom.

### **Adjournment**

Peter Sale adjourned the meeting at 3:10 pm.