



# *Muskoka*

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## WATERSHED COUNCIL

### Minutes

Friday, November 18, 2022  
1:00 pm  
Pine Room (District of Muskoka) & Zoom

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#### Present (In-person)

Peter Sale (Chair)  
Neil Hutchinson  
Geoff Ross

Andrew Fyfe  
Pete LeMoine  
Bet Smith

Lance DeCaire  
Michael Peppard

#### Present (Zoom)

Nancy Alcock  
Javier Cappella  
Cathy Oakden

Patricia Arney  
John Cooper  
David Parsons

David Bywater  
Richard Lammers  
Kevin Trimble

#### MWC Staff

Glenn Cunnington \*

Rebecca Willison

#### DMM Staff

Christiane Masters

#### Guests

Forrest Pengra (Seguin Twp) \*  
Aisha Chiandet \*

Rupert Kindersley \*

Katrina Krievins \*

\* Attended by Zoom

#### Welcome

MWC Chair Peter Sale called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. MWC Director Neil Hutchinson provided an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement.

#### Confirmation of Minutes

#### MOTION

Moved by Andrew Fyfe, seconded by Kevin Trimble

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated October 21, 2022, be approved.

**CARRIED**

## **Presentation**

### **State of the Bay 2023** – *Katrina Krievins, Aquatic Conservation Programs Manager for the Georgian Bay Biosphere*

The third State of the Bay (SOTB) report for Georgian Bay will be released in 2023 by the Georgian Bay Biosphere (GBB). The first State of the Bay ecosystem health report was released in 2013 with the goal of summarizing available research about water, wetlands, fisheries, and habitats in this unique landscape, and sharing it with people who care about Georgian Bay. In 2018, the second report was published with new information on climate change, landscape biodiversity, and a recognition of the work of conservation groups and Indigenous communities. The 2023 report will build on past reports by incorporating Indigenous knowledges to compliment scientific analyses and deepen our collective understanding of environmental change.

The SOTB program has four goals:

1. Communicate the condition/health of the Georgian Bay Biosphere region as informed by multiple knowledge (two-eyed seeing);
2. Bring attention to research and knowledge gaps and actively pursue ways to fill those needs and gaps;
3. Inspire stewardship action (caretaking, protecting, restoring, enhancing); and
4. Showcase the work of partners.

GBB's plan is to release the State of the Bay magazine by early summer, attend community events throughout the summer, and then hold a SOTB symposium and/or workshops in the fall. GBB looks forward to collaborating with MWC on the upcoming Muskoka Watershed Report Card.

During Katrina's presentation, she highlighted Barb Veale's PhD work, which has a lot of good information that was used to build the State of the Bay report. Peter Sale noted that there may be some value in gathering similar organizations in the Muskoka area together to discuss ways to better collaborate and consolidate messaging.

After answering some questions, Katrina was thanked by Peter for her excellent presentation.

### **2023 Muskoka Watershed Report Card** – *Peter Sale*

Peter Sale reported that the Report Card Sub-committee has met once to discuss previous indicators and how to move forward. Additional members are welcomed to join the Sub-committee. The Sub-committee has decided to try and focus on trends instead of just a grade to better tell the story of the slow degradation that may be happening in our subwatersheds. We will also focus more on the stories that the indicators tell rather than the indicators themselves. He noted that Javier Cappella from Westwind Forest Stewardship will be giving a presentation early in the new year about the Beech Bark Disease research they have been doing and how this information may be included in the Report Card. The Sub-committee has also been discussing ways to include a measure of development in the Report Card.

Peter noted that he has been speaking with the Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) and the Georgian Bay Biosphere (GBB) about coordinating messaging for the three reports due to be released in 2023.

### **Project Updates**

- **Fundraising Committee** – Peter Sale reported that more members are needed for the Fundraising Committee. A FedNor application is close to being submitted for an intern to assist with the Report Card and Algae Monitoring Program.
- **Membership Committee** – Michael Peppard reported that they have taken a look at the skill sets and geography of the current membership, and gaps have been identified. A new membership form has been developed and piloted with Lance DeCaire as the newest member. More volunteers are needed to sit on the Membership Committee.
- **IWM Community Roundtable** – Kevin Trimble reported that the CRT public consultation sessions for the 12 DMM projects are winding down and will be completed in December. MWC and the CRT intend to start on a vision for the watershed and a workplan that will synthesize watershed baseline conditions, information gaps, and recommendations for next steps on IWM. The action plan will also involve developing a road map toward a watershed plan to enable partners to continue adding projects (pieces to the puzzle), the results of the ongoing Governance Study and a funding model. MWC plans to begin reaching out to key municipal decision-makers in the new year, starting with DMM senior staff and the new Chair, to explore how to move IWM forward together and what roles partners can play. Peter acknowledged Kevin and Geoff Ross for shouldering the bulk of the CRT work to date and noted that more active involvement from MWC members is needed.
- **Strategic Planning** – Pete LeMoine reported that a strategic plan has been drafted and is being reviewed by the Strategic Planning Sub-committee. Additional input will also be sought from the strategic planning workshop participants during a second in-person workshop. A draft of the report may come forward at the AGM in January.

### **Partner Updates**

- None

### **New Business**

- Annual General Meeting – January 20<sup>th</sup> and Peter encouraged members to attend in person if possible.
- Bill 23 – Patricia Arney expressed concern about the likely impacts of Bill 23 on the IWM program if it is passed. Peter and Andrew Fyfe provided a brief overview of the concerns with Bill 23. Andrew put together a list of deadlines for commenting on the various components of the Bill. Peter reported that MWC was a signatory to a group submission by Anne Golden, David Crombie, Tim Gray and others titled “The Problems with Bill 23 and the Proposal to Remove Lands from the Greenbelt” and that a submission will be developed by MWC as well. Nancy Alcock reported that Bill 23 was discussed at the District Council meeting and senior staff have been putting together a response in cooperation with each Area Municipality.

Geoff reported that he has drafted the first piece in a two-part response on the wetlands component of the Bill. The first piece is a high-level response that says that anything that decreases protections for wetlands is a bad idea. The second piece should comment on the specifics of the proposed changes.

Aisha Chiandret noted that the Canadian Environmental Law Association (CELA) recently gave a presentation to municipalities where it was suggested that submissions on Bill 23 include local specifics in order to make them more relevant and have more impact.

Peter provided a reminder that anything we submit must be scientifically based. There are a number of comments already drafted by other organizations, including the District of Muskoka, Muskoka Lakes Association, and Ontario Nature. Andrew, Geoff, Kevin and Neil Hutchinson will work on developing comments on MWC's behalf to be submitted through the Environmental Registry of Ontario. This is a long process (bill, regulations, etc). Copies of the letters will be signed by Peter as Chair and sent to the relevant ministries, and the MPP. They will also be posted on the website.

### **Next MWC Meeting**

MWC will be holding it's Annual General Meeting on Friday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm in-person and through Zoom.

MWC's next regular meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 17<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 3:05 pm.