



# *Muskoka*

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## WATERSHED COUNCIL

### Minutes

Friday, March 21, 2025

1:00 pm

Castle Peak Retirement Residence Multipurpose Room (Bracebridge Library) & Zoom

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#### Present (In-person)

Aaron Rusak (Chair)  
Lance DeCaire  
Don Macintosh  
Kevin Trimble

Patricia Arney  
Peter Johnston  
Michael Peppard

John Crowley  
Peter Kelley  
Don Smith

#### Present (Zoom)

Nancy Alcock  
Allan Hazelton  
Bet Smith

Mario Buszynski  
Madison Menard

Joan Frain  
David Parsons

#### MWC Staff

Rebecca Willison

#### DMM Staff

Glenn Cunningham

#### Guests

Sandy Cairns  
Preston Nielsen \*  
Jared Jylha \*

Rebecca Gasman (left @ 1:50 pm)  
Scott Millard \*  
Joel Davey \* (@ 1:35 pm)

Kyra Watters \*

\* Attended by Zoom

#### Welcome

MWC Chair Aaron Rusak called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. MWC Director Don Smith gave the land acknowledgement, expressing gratitude for indigenous teachings and perspectives.

#### Confirmation of Minutes

#### MOTION

Moved by Aaron Rusak, seconded by Peter Johnston

THAT the Minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated January 17, 2025 be approved.

**CARRIED**

## MOTION

Moved by Aaron Rusak, seconded by Kevin Trimble

THAT the Minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated February 21, 2025 be approved.

**CARRIED**

## Presentation

### Anaerobic sediments and internal ferrous iron (Fe<sup>2+</sup>) loading in shallow near-shore lake waters –

*Rebecca Gasman, PhD Candidate, Physical Geography, Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change, York University*

Rebecca presented preliminary results from her PhD research on internal loading of nutrients in shallow lake waters. She explained that internal loading is the resuspension of nutrients from sediments into overlying waters, controlled by physical and biological mechanisms. Her study focuses on iron loading in three lakes across Canada, including two in Muskoka (Three Mile and Leonard) and one in the Northwest Territories. Rebecca described her methodology, which involved selecting two different bays within each lake to deploy data loggers and conduct water sampling at three locations within each bay. She used a custom-built platform for the loggers and a ferrozine trap to measure ferrous iron levels. Her research aims to understand how climate change is affecting lake dynamics and nutrient cycling, particularly in relation to cyanobacterial blooms.

Rebecca presented research on the thermal stratification and dissolved oxygen levels in various bays on the study lakes. The study found that the amount of thermal stratification varied across locations, with some bays having a strong thermal gradient while others had a weaker one. The dissolved oxygen levels also varied, with some bays experiencing hypoxia or anoxia, while others remained well-oxygenated. The research also explored internal iron loading, finding that it varied across locations and was influenced by factors such as wind turbulence and mixing. The study concluded that the morphologies of the bays played a significant role in determining the levels of thermal stratification, dissolved oxygen, and internal iron loading.

Preliminary results suggest that shallow near-shore areas contribute more to internal loading than previously theorized, and that fluxes in nutrients can vary significantly spatially and temporally, all of which has important implications for water management in Canada under future climate change.

After answering some questions, Aaron thanked Rebecca for her interesting presentation.

## MWC Meeting Dates

Aaron Rusak reported on the decision made by the Board to move monthly MWC meetings to the third Wednesday of the month from 4-6 pm to make it easier for students and employed

people to attend and participate. The bulk of the meetings will be held in the Community Room at Stevens' Your Independent Grocer in Bracebridge.

### **MWC Fundraising Strategy**

Kyra Watters and Jared Jylha from Well Known Marketing and Advertising provided an update on the fundraising strategy, which includes a sponsorship structure and standardized fundraising procedures. They previewed the sponsorship package developed with the Fundraising Committee and highlighted the upcoming video and photo shoot with Aaron Rusak to create engaging content. The importance of direct outreach and personal introductions to potential sponsors was emphasized.

Peter Sale will be managing a master list of potential donors to avoid redundancy, and members are encouraged to contact Peter before approaching businesses or individuals, or add the sponsor information to the master spreadsheet. The sponsorship package offers various levels of sponsorship, ranging from small donations to \$50,000+ commitments, with corresponding benefits for donors. A follow-up Zoom meeting is planned to provide more detailed guidance on approaching potential sponsors. The initiative will be promoted through social media, email blasts, and a press release, with the aim of securing larger, sustainable donations and building long-term relationships with sponsors. Please contact Rebecca at [info@muskokawatershed.org](mailto:info@muskokawatershed.org) to receive copies of the sponsorship package to share with prospective sponsors.

### **Committee Updates**

- **Membership** – Michael Peppard reported that seven new members have joined MWC. Mike welcomed them and the new members in attendance, John Crowley and Madison Menard, briefly introduced themselves. Peter Johnston expressed his appreciation for adding youth members to MWC. Peter will be spearheading a Youth Committee for MWC which can include MWC members as well as community members.
- **IWM** – Kevin Trimble reported that the IWM Committee continues to meet monthly. The Committee is undertaking six tasks, including finalizing the Committee's Terms of Reference, supporting municipalities in establishing a consortium, developing new resources including articles, presentations, and an IWM infographic, and striking a technical sub-committee to discuss the synthesis report and gap analysis.
- **MSE** – The Muskoka Summit on the Environment Organizing Committee is meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup> to determine the theme and location for the fall 2025 Summit and discuss potential speakers. Promotion for the Summit will begin in earnest once the details have been finalized. Volunteers are needed on the Organizing Committee to assist with logistics, booking and communicating with speakers, catering, securing sponsorships, developing the program, and more. Email [info@muskokawatershed.org](mailto:info@muskokawatershed.org) to join the MSE Organizing Committee.

**Partner Updates**

- Township of Lake of Bays – Councillor Michael Peppard reported that the Township is reviewing their Official Plan and will be hearing about Phase 1 at a meeting next week, which includes a natural heritage component.

**New Business**

- None.

**Next MWC Meeting**

MWC's next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 pm in the Community Room at Stevens' Your Independent Grocer, located at 270 Wellington Street in Bracebridge, and on Zoom.

**Adjournment**

Aaron Rusak adjourned the meeting at 2:15 pm.