



Muskoka

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Minutes

Friday, November 22, 2024
1:00 pm
Council Chambers (District of Muskoka) & Zoom

Present (In-person)

Aaron Rusak (Chair)	Nancy Alcock	Patricia Arney
Susan Boudreau	John Cooper	Terry Crew
Joan Frain	Andrew Fyfe	Peter Johnston
Pete LeMoine	Doug McColl	David Parsons
Michael Peppard	Geoff Ross	Peter Sale
Kevin Trimble		

Present (Zoom)

Chris Cragg	Jo-Anne Goodwin	Allan Hazelton
Richard Lammers		

MWC Staff

Rebecca Willison

Guests

Greg Padulo *	Katrina Krievins * (left @ 2 pm)	Taryn van Kooten
Preston Nielsen *	Allison Needham *	Om Patel
Sherrill Judge * (left @ 2 pm)	Chris Adams * (left @ 2 pm)	

* Attended by Zoom

Welcome

MWC Chair Aaron Rusak called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Community Roundtable member Greg Padulo, a project manager from Generation Seven Consulting, gave a land acknowledgement. He emphasized the importance of acknowledging the Indigenous communities in the watershed, including the Wahta Mohawks, Moose Deer Point, Beausoleil First Nations, the Chippewas of Rama, Wasauksing First Nation, and Georgina Island First Nation. Greg also highlighted the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, which represents the land and the need for collaboration and sharing of knowledge.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION

Moved by Aaron Rusak, seconded by Peter Johnston

THAT the Minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated October 18, 2024 be approved.

CARRIED

Business Arising from the Minutes

Kevin Trimble reported that several members have volunteered to review the Muskoka Official Plan when it is released but that a volunteer is still needed to lead the process.

Presentations

[Taking a New Approach to the State of the Bay Program](#) – Katrina Krievins, Aquatic Conservation Programs Manager, and Sherrill Judge, Maawaanji'iwe Manager, Georgian Bay Biosphere

Sherrill shared her experiences as the Maawaanji'iwe Manager for the Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere for the past four years. She emphasized the importance of life renewal and connecting to the land, spirit, water, and relations within the community. Katrina Krievins, the aquatic conservation programs manager with GBB, discussed the significance of the Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere as a UNESCO World Biosphere region. She highlighted the region's diverse habitats and species, and the importance of respecting the treaties that apply to everyone living in the area. Katrina also shared the history of the State of the Bay program, which was created to assess the local ecosystem health and report on trends every five years. The program has evolved over time, shifting from a grading system to focusing on trends and sources of data.

Katrina and Sherrill discussed the integration of Western and Indigenous science in the State of the Bay program. They highlighted the importance of acknowledging and valuing multiple ways of knowing and sharing knowledge. Sherrill shared her experiences with the program, emphasizing the role of the Cultural Advisory Committee and the guidance of advisors like Dr. Brian McInnes. She also discussed the challenges posed by climate change, particularly in relation to the traditional Anishinaabe celebration of seasons.

Sherrill discussed the importance of water in Anishinaabeg culture, emphasizing its role in sustaining life. She shared a song about water and its significance, and mentioned her responsibility as a grandmother to pass on knowledge and care for water and life. Katrina then discussed the decline in phosphorus levels in Georgian Bay, attributing it to the invasion of Zebra and Quagga mussels. She also mentioned a documentary series that explores the impact of these mussels on the Great Lakes ecosystem released this past summer titled All Too Clear.

Following questions, Aaron thanked Sherrill and Katrina for their presentation and emphasized the importance of using all forms of knowledge in understanding the environment.

Truth, Reconciliation and Watershed Management – Greg Padulo, Generation Seven Consulting

Greg discussed the importance of truth and reconciliation in watershed management, emphasizing the need for active, meaningful participation of Indigenous communities. He highlighted the role of the Provincial Planning Statement in engaging with Indigenous communities and the need for a coordinating agency to facilitate this. Greg also addressed the issue of Indigenous communities being overwhelmed by requests for consultation and suggested the creation of an initiative where communities could coordinate information on a watershed scale. He stressed the importance of personal relationships in Indigenous relations and the need for a more coordinated approach to ensure equitable participation.

After answering questions, Aaron thanked Greg for his informative presentation.

Engaging Students in the Work of MWC – Taryn van Kooten & Om Patel, Gravenhurst High School

Taryn and Om, two students from Gravenhurst High School, shared their perspectives on how to engage youth in MWC activities. They emphasized the importance of building personal relationships, making meetings more accessible (i.e. later in the day), and using social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok to promote youth involvement. Inviting students to speak at MWC events is another way to get students involved, as well as supporting the formation of youth councils (like what Huntsville and Gravenhurst used to have). MWC should tailor messaging to parents and grandparents to better engage youth. They also highlighted the need to understand the youth's perspective and tailor the approach accordingly.

Doug McColl noted that we need to be pullers not pushers. We want to educate the youth and give them the knowledge and tools to go back and educate their community. Messaging should be lighthearted to get their attention.

Committee Updates

- **Fundraising Committee** – Peter Sale reported that the Fundraising Committee has met twice since the Summit to discuss ways to raise money. The question of whether MWC should apply for charitable status has been raised again, and input is requested from MWC members on this topic.
- **IWM Community Roundtable (CRT)** – Kevin Trimble discussed the CRT's ongoing work and the need to re-invent themselves following the conclusion of the District-led IWM projects. There has been some formal communication between District Chair Jeff Lehman and MWC about the direction of the IWM process, and a key project for the CRT is to work on a synthesis report of existing watershed data and identify key science gaps.

Partner Updates

- **Town of Huntsville** – Nancy Alcock reported that despite not currently having a youth council, she does meet with students and teachers regularly and would like to restart the youth council. The IWM Leadership Forum is happening next week and there will be participation from Wahta and Moose Deer Point as well as most of the upper and lower tier watershed municipalities and the province. The goal of the meeting is to establish whether all the people in the room want to work together on watershed management.

New Business

- **MWC Ad hoc Planning Meeting** – Aaron Rusak reported that one meeting was held in early November and a second meeting is being scheduled for December 6th from 1-4 pm. All MWC members are invited to attend and help set concrete goals and action items for the new year. A summary of the first meeting will be sent out along with details of the December 6th meeting.

Next MWC Meeting

MWC's next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 17th from 1-3 pm in the in the Castle Peak Retirement Residence Multipurpose Room at the Coulson Family Bracebridge Library, located at 34 Salmon Avenue in Bracebridge, and on Zoom.

Adjournment

Aaron Rusak adjourned the meeting at 2:45 pm.