



Muskoka

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Minutes

Friday, January 28, 2022

1:00 pm

Zoom Online Meeting

Present

Geoff Ross (Chair)
John Cooper
Pete LeMoine
Michael Peppard
Kevin Trimble

Nancy Alcock
Neil Hutchinson
Karen Maxwell
Aaron Rusak

Patricia Arney
Richard Lammers
David Parsons
Peter Sale

Staff

Samantha Hastings
Cassie Emms

Christy Doyle

Rebecca Willison

Presenter

Cameron von Bratt
Freshwater Ecosystem Services

Guests

Piret Hurrell
Caroline Konarzewski
Aisha Chiandot

Maya Tomkiewicz
Norm Yan
Rupert Kindersley

Andrew Fyfe
David Bywater
Neil Levesque

Welcome

Chair Geoff Ross called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm with approval of the agenda followed by a brief Land Acknowledgement.

Confirmation of Minutes

MOTION

THAT the minutes of the Muskoka Watershed Council meeting dated November 26, 2021 be approved.

CARRIED (by consent)

Recognition of MWC Chair Geoff Ross

MWC Director Kevin Trimble thanked Geoff Ross for his leadership and dedication as MWC Chair over the past two years as his term comes to an end. Geoff was gifted with a certificate of appreciation and paddle as a thank you. Geoff thanked Kevin for his remarks and the kind gestures of appreciation from the membership. He noted the work done by the Board of Directors and specifically thanked Vice-chair Karen Maxwell for her work on the strategic plan and the governance review. He then thanked specific members and staff for their contributions to various initiatives. He highlighted some of the exciting opportunities for MWC in the future and noted the need for new members.

MWC Leadership

Kevin Trimble replaced Geoff Ross as Acting Chair for the purpose of approving an Interim Chair. Kevin explained that, as the current Chair term has officially ended but that the AGM isn't being held until later this spring, an Interim Chair is needed to lead during the next few months until a new Chair and Vice-chair can be elected at the AGM to serve the standard two-year term.

Peter Sale has offered to serve as Interim Chair until the AGM. Kevin noted that, while any MWC member is able to put forward their name for this position, it is strongly encouraged that they instead express their interest in serving as Chair or Vice-chair to the Board of Directors and put their name forward for election at the AGM.

Election of Interim Chair

MOTION by Pete LeMoine, seconded by Richard Lammers

THAT Peter Sale be appointed to serve as MWC Interim Chair until the 2022 MWC AGM.

CARRIED

Formation of a Nominating Committee

MOTION by Nancy Alcock, seconded by Peter Sale

THAT a Nominating Committee be struck.

CARRIED

Kevin repeated the request for MWC members interested in serving as Chair or Vice-chair to contact the Board of Directors to learn more about what the positions entail.

Peter Sale replaced Kevin Trimble as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Presentation

[Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment at the Watershed Scale](#) – Cameron von Bratt, Freshwater Ecosystem Services

As part of the global [eBioAtlas](#) program, the Great Lakes eBioAtlas Project provides the tools, training, and methods needed for the collection of both terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity data at the watershed scale. By collecting water samples across the watershed, trace amounts of environmental DNA (eDNA) of vertebrates are sequenced and analysed using a novel metabarcoding method in order to provide accurate and detailed detections of numerous freshwater and terrestrial species. This new transformative technology enables biodiversity data to be gathered by anyone, anywhere in the world, by filtering water with a simple kit. Surveys conducted over a matter of days can provide data that would take decades to gather using current field methods.

Cameron discussed how MWC could lead the collection of biodiversity information at the appropriate watershed scale, contribute to the Great Lakes eBioAtlas Project, and be able to use this data to accurately inform biodiversity and conservation action.

Following a question and answer period, Peter thanked Cameron for his excellent presentation.

MWC 20th Anniversary

Geoff Ross and Christy Doyle highlighted the [congratulatory remarks](#) sent to MWC from DMM Chair John Klinck. Following this, Peter Sale highlighted the beginnings of MWC and some of the [major accomplishments](#) since its founding in 2001. Cassie Emms then introduced a promotional video she produced to celebrate MWC's 20th anniversary. The video is available on the MWC YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/rRkLRsZIEIq>.

Project Updates

- **Community Round Table** – Kevin Trimble reported that the CRT is holding regular monthly meetings and about 25 members currently sit on it with another 20 members being considered. The next meeting is planned for mid-February. MWC continues to talk to MECP and DMM to potentially reallocate funds from the Transfer Payment Agreement to support outside expertise with the CRT as well as engagement strategies to reach out to specific audiences. Discussions are also taking place with the MECP to secure funding to undertake a governance study.
- **Governance Review** – Karen Maxwell reported that a Governance Sub-committee has been meeting and looking at how the workings of MWC have changed as a result of incorporation. Policies and procedures are being reviewed as part of the governance review, as well as the development of a constitution. Peter noted that the AGM has been delayed in order to have the By-laws ready to be approved at the AGM.
- **MWC Strategic Plan** – Karen Maxwell reported that a strategic plan outline is being developed to reflect discussions arising from the governance review. She noted that it's a slow process, but that progress is being made. It has been paused until the governance review has wrapped up.
- **MWC Communications** – Pete LeMoine thanked staff for managing the social media accounts and providing valuable information. He reported that an article written by Geoff Ross was recently published [about the CRT](#). The Working Group will be meeting next week at 2 pm and information about communications and how people can help will be discussed.

Partner Updates

- **District of Muskoka** – Christy Doyle reported that the [12 technical IWM projects](#) that the District is managing are all underway or with open RFPs. She noted the contribution to the projects provided by MWC members and indicated that more information is available on the [Engage Muskoka](#) website. Work is continuing on the [Muskoka Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) and Community Working Group with the expectation of a corporate and community GHG plan being released during 2022. Climate action plans are also being developed with the participating Area Municipalities. The five [causation studies](#) are expected to conclude in early 2022 and will provide insights into some of the lakes most affected by cyanobacterial blooms. The District has launched a new [EnviroHub](#) section on their website.

- **Stewardship Recognition Program** – Rebecca Willison reminded attendees that the registration period for the [Doug Cross Stewardship Recognition Program](#) ends on Monday, January 31st.
- **Georgian Bay Biosphere** – David Bywater provided an update on GBB activities. The [State of the Bay](#) report will be released next year and they are looking at ways to better incorporate indigenous knowledge with the science. The Community Nominated Priority Places (CNPP) project, funded by Environment and Climate Change Canada, will continue in 2022 to assess local populations of Species at Risk, their associated threats, and develop appropriate conservation practices. On the climate change front, David reported that nine municipalities have joined the [Integrated Community Energy and Climate Action Plans](#) (ICECAP) initiative and baseline GHG emissions profiles have been completed for six municipalities.

New Business

None.

Next MWC Meeting

Friday, February 25th at 1:00 pm through Zoom. It will feature a presentation by Javier Cappella from Westwind Forest Stewardship Inc.

Adjournment

Peter Sale adjourned the meeting at 3:00 pm.



Office of the District Chair

SENT VIA EMAIL (info@muskokawatershed.org)

January 27, 2022

Geoff Ross, Chair
Muskoka Watershed Council
70 Pine Street (second floor)
Bracebridge, ON P1L 1N3

Dear Chair Ross,

On behalf of Muskoka District Council, I would like to formally congratulate Muskoka Watershed Council on its 20th anniversary.

Muskoka District Council is proud to support the Muskoka Watershed Council (MWC) and recognizes the remarkable range of successful initiatives and achievements that MWC has initiated and accomplished over the past 20 years.

Through municipal and community support, and with the extraordinary efforts of Muskoka Watershed Council's members and volunteers, Muskoka's natural environment has been sustained and enhanced, and awareness of our shared watershed has been strengthened.

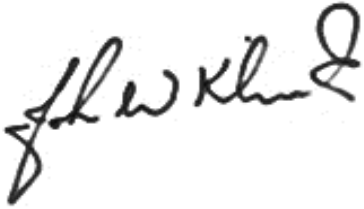
So many MWC volunteers have helped to monitor Muskoka's water quality, to restore our shorelines, to improve natural habitat for the hundreds of species that also call this area "home", and to research local environmental matters. The quality of Muskoka's environment would not be the same without all of your work.

In addition, the Community and I, are particularly appreciative of MWC's contributions that have helped to shape Muskoka District Council's Official Plan, including our new policies related to climate change, sustainability, and enhanced recreational water quality.

MWC has built a legacy of working across the watershed, and I commend you for continuing to develop new, innovative ways to reach all corners of the watershed. Muskoka District Council is encouraged that MWC will continue to help guide residents and visitors from across Muskoka and beyond through existing and emerging environmental issues, especially as climate change becomes more pressing, and as integrated watershed management approaches are explored.

Congratulations to MWC for all of the success you've had as an organization, and I wish you the best in the upcoming years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Klinck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent.

John W. Klinck
District Chair

THE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY OF MUSKOKA

Cc: Scott Aitchison, MP Parry Sound-Muskoka
Norm Miller, MPP Parry Sound-Muskoka
Muskoka District Council
Julie Stevens, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Muskoka
Samantha Hastings, Commissioner of Community and Planning Services, District of Muskoka
Molly Ross, Communications Manager, District of Muskoka



Muskoka
WATERSHED COUNCIL

20 YEARS OF CHAMPIONING WATERSHED HEALTH

Muskoka Watershed Council was established in 2001 with the belief that the most effective way to sustain the watersheds of Muskoka is through cooperative approaches to watershed management.

Over the past 20 years, Muskoka Watershed Council has accomplished measurable success and strong public support in pursuit of its mission - *to champion watershed health.*

11

BEST PRACTICES
BROCHURES

4

STEWARDSHIP
BOOKLETS

18

POSITION PAPERS

STEWARDSHIP MATERIAL

Muskoka Watershed Council has produced a series of best practices and stewardship information packages for cottage and home owners, including the Living in Cottage Country handbook. There is a topic for everyone!

LOVE YOUR LAKE

Muskoka Watershed Council delivers the Love Your Lake Program, which assesses the shorelines of lakes and encourages lakefront residents to take stewardship action.

19

LAKES
PARTICIPATING

6,113

PROPERTIES
ASSESSED

8

YEARS
RUNNING

5,323

NATIVE PLANTS IN
THE GROUND

9

YEARS
RUNNING

7,071

SQUARE METERS
OF RESTORED
SHORELINE

RENATURALIZATION PROGRAMS

Muskoka Watershed Council has delivered several renaturalization programs, including The Natural Edge program to create important shoreline habitat, improve water quality, and promote environmental stewardship.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

MWC delivers the Muskoka Stewardship Conference, an event where the public learns about stewardship topics from renowned experts. MWC also helps coordinate the Muskoka Summit on the Environment, which promotes a dialog between science and policy to ensure healthy ecosystems in Muskoka and beyond.

6

STEWARDSHIP
CONFERENCES

5

SUMMITS
ON THE
ENVIRONMENT

\$781,861

RAISED THROUGH THIRD
PARTY FUNDING

GRANTS AND FUNDRAISING

To deliver stewardship programs and resources to the community, MWC relies on grants and fundraising. These funds greatly enhance MWC's success in championing watershed health.



MWC HIGHLIGHTS: OVER THE YEARS

2002

CLEAN & GREEN 13 LAUNCHED

MWC's first program! It challenges residents and visitors to make positive steps to improve the health of Muskoka's watersheds.

2004

FIRST MUSKOKA WATERSHED REPORT CARD RELEASED

The Report Card is a science-based evaluation of the health of Muskoka's watersheds. A series of Report Cards has been produced every four years since.

2007 & 2009

MUSKOKA WATERSHED INVENTORY PROJECT

This inventory identified significant natural areas of the watershed and degraded areas.

2011

FIRST MUSKOKA STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE

This conference highlights stewardship topics, ideas, and encourages action. Muskoka Stewardship Conferences are held bi-annually.

2016

PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE IN MUSKOKA PUBLISHED

This report investigates the climate that Muskoka is likely to experience at mid-century, and recommends actions to ameliorate the impacts of climate change.

2017

FIRST MWC INTERN HIRED

Interns have since been hired annually to assist with program delivery and communications, which in turn prepares career-ready individuals.

2018

FIRST VIRTUAL WATERSHED REPORT CARD

Displayed on an StoryMap with videos and local spotlights, the 2018 Muskoka Watershed Report Card is interactive, engaging and encourages stewardship activities.

2019

ALGAE MONITORING PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The program was developed in response to a recommendation from the Planning for Climate Change report because algal blooms are expected to become more common with a changing climate.

2020

A CASE FOR INTEGRATED WATERSHED MANAGEMENT IN MUSKOKA PUBLISHED

This publication details the need for Integrated Watershed Management (IWM) in Muskoka and discusses the steps and resources required to achieve IWM.

2021

COMMUNITY ROUND TABLE ESTABLISHED

To ensure the economic, societal, and environmental goals of the Muskoka River Watershed are considered to advance Integrated Watershed Management.

2001

MWC WAS ESTABLISHED

Founder Ken Black presented the concept of Muskoka Watershed Council to the District of Muskoka.

2004

MUSKOKA WATER STRATEGY PASSED

The District of Muskoka passed the MWS which formally provided ongoing support for MWC.

2005

BEST PRACTICES PROGRAM DEVELOPED

This program provides hands-on advice on how to live, work and develop properties in the watershed while protecting its natural values.

2008

ENVIRONMENTAL LECTURE SERIES LAUNCHED

MWC has welcomed renowned experts to raise awareness about environmental issues. This series continues with lectures and talks presented regularly at Council meetings and across the watershed.

2015

LIVING IN COTTAGE COUNTRY HANDBOOK PUBLISHED

This publication guides residents on how to keep their property and way of living environmentally friendly while understanding local rules and regulations.

2017

MWC SERVED AS DISTRICT'S PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MWC provided significant community input to shape the District of Muskoka's Official Plan, which includes a local focus on climate, sustainability and water quality protection.

2018

ROBERT ALLEN MEMORIAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD INITIATED

In memory of Rob Allen, Muskoka native plant advocate and long-time MWC supporter, this award is presented annually to a resident on Three Mile Lake who demonstrates good stewardship.

2019

MWC INCORPORATED AS A NON-PROFIT

2019

CLIMATE CHANGE CURRICULUM DEVELOPED

MWC worked with students to develop climate change content for delivery in local schools.

2021

DOUG CROSS STEWARDSHIP RECOGNITION PROGRAM LAUNCHED

To honour the late Doug Cross, a past MWC member, this annual program rewards Watershed stewards.