



## MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)

Meeting of the Board of Directors

### Meeting Minutes

Online through Google Meet

June 17, 2021 6:30 P.M.

#### 1. Call to Order and Record of Attendance

The meeting of the Muskrat Watershed Council was called to order at 6:37 p.m.

##### Attendance:

**Present:** Karen Coulas, Rene Coulas, Debbie MacDonald, David Thomassin, Jeff Reeves, Barbara Green, Anna-Maria Blum, Ava Kelly, Lorne Nimmons, Gwen Bennett, Mara Peever, Ruchi Hamal, Sukhpreet Saini

**Regrets:** Andy Laird, Andrea Bishop, Gerry Rook, Evelyn St. Amour

**Lake Dore Representative Present:** Michael Gulliver, Lake Dore Property Owners' Association

**Council Representative Regrets:** Mike Moore, Township of Whitewater Region

Claus Trost, Township of Laurentian Valley

Township

#### 2. Adoption of Agenda

Debbie approved the agenda, Jeff seconded it.

##### Approval of minutes from May 20, 2021 meeting:

Jeff approved the minutes, Dave seconded.

Before starting the formal agenda, Karen invited fourth-year University of Waterloo Environmental Engineering students Mara Peever, Ruchi Hamal and Sukhpreet Saini to introduce themselves. Along with fellow Environmental Engineering student, Thea Taylor, who was not

able to attend this meeting, they are interested in discussing a possible research and design project they could do as part of their course's Capstone Design requirement that might also benefit the Muskrat watershed.

The Capstone Projects allow students to use their technical knowledge, design principles, teamwork and communication skills to solve a challenging engineering problem. Students are encouraged to look at problems in their local communities. Since Mara grew up in Foresters Falls and remembers swimming at Cobden Beach - until blue-green algae forced it to close - working with the MWC seemed a natural choice.

The team's interests include water quality, nutrient management, river engineering, watershed management, wetlands and ecohydrology, aquatic and ecological health and field work.

One project they are considering is designing a treatment wetland to remove nutrients entering Muskrat Lake from the Snake River, to reduce algae blooms. The group stressed they are open to other suggestions as well. There is no obligation for the MWC to implement the group's design.

Dave suggested they check with him, Debbie and Karen on [info@muskratwatershedcouncil.com](mailto:info@muskratwatershedcouncil.com) to discuss details. Dave will send the group Rebecca Dalton's report as background information.

### 3. **Treasurer's Report**

- Please see attached document.
- To make it easier to manage our two Scotiabank accounts, one is now labelled a chequing account, the other, a savings account.
- There is still no news about when Bingo volunteering will resume.

### 4. **Director's Reports:**

#### **Agricultural Committee Update – Karen and Rene Coulas**

- We have found a third planting site for the Great Lakes Local Action Fund project (GLLAF) and Rene will be contacting the person soon. We had visited another location on Lake Dore earlier but that property was not suitable for this grant, as it already contained a natural filter and didn't need replanting.
- Rene suggested it would be beneficial for the MWC to do a presentation for Lake Dore residents about the importance of natural shorelines to help filter out excess nutrients. We could also talk about birdhouses and loon nesting boxes. Mike Gulliver said a presentation at the August 28 annual general meeting of the Lake Dore Property Owners' Association would be good.
- We have hired Ava Kelly as a summer student. Karen, Dave and Ivan Burton (Manager/Planner/EDO, Township of Whitewater Region) comprised the hiring committee. Only two of

eight applicants met all the hiring criteria. On May 26 the committee interviewed Ava and hired her on the spot. Ava introduced herself as a recent BSc graduate from Dalhousie University. Ava has been working on projects for the township as well as looking into grants and drafting a fundraising letter for the MWC.

- Update on Stormwater Ag Project: Dave gave a quick update on the progress of this joint project between the Township of Whitewater Region, agricultural partners and the MWC. They are looking at accessing and a plan for the berm area and agricultural runoff in that particular area.

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### **Science Committee Update – Dave**

- Blue-green algae: Recent warm, rainy weather means conditions are perfect for blue-green algae blooms. It may start earlier this year. Dave recommends we keep track of any reports of blue-green algae. Karen suggested Ava keep a tally of reports. Dave will create a google form to go on our website and will do a Facebook post about it.

- Lake Dore: Please see comments above, under Agriculture Committee Update.

- Loon Survey: We have to do a loon survey in June, July and August on four lakes in the watershed. Dave will do Muskrat Lake, Debbie will do Jeffreys Lake, Mike G. will do Lake Dore. Either Dave or Mike G. might do Mink Lake. These volunteers will meet next week and Dave will explain what they need to do.

- Loon boxes: We have permission to go to the Ross landfill to look for scrap wood to make the boxes. Anna Maria is going on Saturday and will check. She has the list of required materials. The landfill is open Wednesday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Anna Maria will confirm with Dave that she is going and Dave will email the person at the landfill.

- Cobden Beach: Rene fixed the pumps and the aerators are now all running. Rene, Jeff, Karen and Debbie volunteered to help put down the weed mats at the beach. They will meet at the beach Tuesday, June 29 at 10:00 a.m. to do this.

- Watersheds Canada: It is not quite official yet, so we can't announce it on our website or on social media. But Watersheds Canada has given funding for the fish habitat project in Jeffreys Lake. It is a joint project between Algonquin College, the Jeffreys Lake Association and the MWC. Olmstead Lake may also be involved as the narrows between Jeffreys Lake and Olmstead Lake are a spot where fish habitat may be placed. Volunteers will be needed to collect brush and install the fish habitats. Debbie will speak to the Jeffreys Lake Association about this project at their next meeting.

- RCDHU (Renfrew County District Health Unit): Dave called them to reopen communication about Cobden beach closures. The beach is closed now but there has been no testing since last year. June 23 is the next RCDHU testing date, then we will update our website. We are still waiting for someone at RCDHU to contact us. Jeff suggested we ask Reeve Cathy Regier to intervene. We would like RCDHU to share their beach closure information with us and we would also like to have a representative of the RCDHU designated as our regular contact.

### **Communications & Media – Dave**

- Lake Stories: Dave needs more lake stories to post. Anna Maria, Barb and Debbie will each write one.

- YourTV: Instead of the previously-offered five short clips about the MWC, YourTV has offered us a 60-minute show. Ava said she could work with the producer. Karen, Dave and a teacher we have approached at Algonquin College can provide background. Dave and Karen will not be able to host. Deadline is mid-August. Rene suggested half the show could feature our accomplishments. Karen said maybe property owners involved in previous planting projects could speak about the planting done on their property. A Media Steering Committee was formed, comprised of Dave, Jeff, Ava, Barb, Debbie and Anna Maria. The committee will meet on Google Meet on Thursday June 24 at 1:00 p.m.

- Board of Director emails: Dave has created gmail accounts for Ava and all the directors, except Jeff, who says he doesn't need one. Karen and Debbie will have access to these email accounts. We have signed up for a free google service designed for not-for-profit organizations. It includes online google doc sheets, slides, gmail drive meet and other software programs. We will be able to have 100 participants, up from our current 50. We still have our [info@muskratwatershedcouncil.com](mailto:info@muskratwatershedcouncil.com) account which now comes to Dave's phone so he can reply faster.

#### **Fundraising Committee Update - Dave**

- Letter Drive: Dave took some training about how new businesses should advertise, which offered tips that might help the MWC. For example, they suggested sending a letter out to local residents to advertise your business. Focus on services offered, don't ask for money. Dave said we could do something similar to explain who we are and what we have to offer. Ava and Karen have already drafted a fundraising letter. Maybe this could be adapted? Jeff asked whether we most need funding or members. We already receive funding from several grants. There was discussion about the possibility of contacting groups of fishermen or renting a virtual booth at a cottage show.

#### **5. Old Business – Updates**

- Beach Sign: Ava is working on it. We are still waiting to hear back from Sun Signs. Dave's friend John will take a photo. We need to think about what to put on the sign. It could be something short about the aerators, with a QR code. Karen suggested Ava look for information on our website and write it more simply. The sign will be about the size of a laptop: 18 x 29 inches. The township may have experience about what materials to use: aluminum?

- Boat Launch: The township is looking into the possibility of the MWC receiving some revenue from the boat launch over the next few years. Anna Maria mentioned the Indigo Donations App, which allows people to donate through their phones. Using QR codes, a non-profit organization can get donations, send receipts and get donor analytics. There is no monthly fee. The only cost is a small percentage when an organization receives a donation.

#### **6. Other/New Business**

- Water Testing Kit: We unanimously passed a motion to buy a Hach Surface Water Testing Kit, so we can do our own testing. Possible sites include the beach area near the aerators, the zeolite installation, the perimeters of Lake Dore. Jeff asked if the results are recognized. Dave replied the results would give other agencies enough evidence to come out and investigate further if necessary, similar to the Algonquin College tests. The kit comes with a DVD explaining how to operate it. Cost is about \$600, more with tax and shipping. Jeff suggested we use some of a recent \$1,000 donation to pay for the kit

and inform the donor how their money was spent. Mike G. said he will ask if the Lake Dore Property Owners' Association may also wish to contribute. Dave will send Mike the information. Dave will check if the kit is in stock. If so, Debbie will place the order. Rene suggested the kit, and other equipment, could be stored at his and Karen's place to keep all our equipment in one place.

7. **Next Meeting:** Thursday July 15, 2021

There was discussion of meeting in Cobden Park next time. If not, we will meet as usual on Google Meet:

[meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk](https://meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk)

+1 587-978-1050 (PIN 460326449)

8. Adjournment: 8:40 p.m.

**Minutes recorded and submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Barbara Green, Interim Secretary, Muskrat Watershed Council

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Karen Coulas, Chair, Muskrat Watershed Council

MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL		TREASURER'S REPORT - June 2021	
<b>Meeting May 20, 2021 - Scotia Account Balance</b>	<b>\$ 29,175.83</b>	<b>Business Chequing Account</b>	
<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenses</b>	
Miscellaneous PayPal Payment - Donation	\$ 300.00	WeedsBGone Rebuild Kit Payment	\$ (930.44)
GLAF - Co-cordinator Payroll Reimbursement	\$ 1,870.48	GLAF - Co-cordinator Payroll payment - error	\$ (1,870.48)
Miscellaneous PayPal Payment - Purchase Reimbursement	\$ 324.49	Scotia Service Charge	\$ (8.00)
GLAF - Rolling Acres Payment - Reimbursement	\$ 3,000.00	Miscellaneous PayPal Payment - Purchase Error	\$ (324.49)
GLAF - Mask Landscaping Payment - Reimbursement	\$ 1,881.45	E-transfer Service Charge	\$ (5.00)
		GLAF - Rolling Acres Payment withdrawal error	\$ (3,000.00)
		Summer Student Salary	\$ (675.41)
		Canada Postal Box Rental - Reimbursement	\$ (195.49)
		GLAF - Mask Landscaping Payment error	\$ (1,881.45)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$7,376.42</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ (8,890.76)</b>
<b>Current Amount in Scotia Account</b>	<b>\$ 27,661.49</b>		
(Note: Float \$250.00)			
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<b>Meeting May 20, 2021 - BMO Account Balance</b>	<b>\$ 5,680.77</b>	<b>SBCNA Charity Gaming Business Account</b>	
<b>Income</b>		<b>Expenses</b>	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Current Amount in BMO Account</b>	<b>\$ 5,680.77</b>		
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