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**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, June 15, 2023 6:30 p.m.**

**In person: Basement of the Whitewater Township Building, 44 Main Street, Cobden ON**

**Online through Google Meet**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

**+1 587-978-1050 (PIN 460326449)**

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

The meeting of the Muskrat Watershed Council was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

**Attendance:**

**Present:**  Karen Coulas, Rene Coulas, Debbie MacDonald, Barbara Green, Dave Thomassin, Amanda Walt, Michael Walt, Megan Rae, Rick Adamson, John Stuart, Andy Laird, Deanna Nicholson

Regrets: Andrea Bishop, Jeff Reeves, Gerry Rook, Anna-Maria Blum, Greg Stasyna, Evelyn St. Amour

**Council Representative Regrets:**

Chris Olmstead, Township of Whitewater Region

Claus Trost, Township of Laurentian Valley

Before the meeting began, MWC volunteers introduced themselves to Deanna Nicholson, the new Environmental Services Superintendent for the Township of Whitewater Region. She explained her role with the township and her interest in MWC.

1. **Adoption of Agenda**

Debbie approved the agenda, Michael seconded it.

**Approval of minutes from May 18, 2023 meeting:**

Rene approved the minutes, Amanda seconded.

1. **Treasurer’s Report- Debbie**

See attached treasurer’s report.

Michael Walt gave Debbie an invoice for parts he bought for the aeration system. This debit will appear on our next treasurer's report.

SBCNA Bingo

We have two volunteer dates next month: July 2 and July 30, 2023. Shifts run from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Barb will volunteer with Debbie on July 2, Amanda will join Debbie on July 30.

1. **Directors’ Reports**

**Agricultural Committee – Karen & Rene**

Cobden Beach

Aeration system upgrade

The aeration system has been upgraded. Each new compressor is 10 times more powerful than the old ones were, which should lead to a cleaner swimming area.

Beach Mats (motion to buy 6 more, date for installation)

We will not buy more mats now. We’ll install the ones we have and see how they work. See installation date below.

Beach Buoys (date to install)

The beach mats and buoys will be installed at Cobden Beach on Monday, July 3. Meet at the beach at 8 a.m.

Signs

We are waiting to hear back from Whitewater Township on billboards but the wash boat signs are up at all boat launches.

Invasive Species Action Fund

MWC met the deadline for applying for this fund, which was last week. We are now waiting to find out if we are successful or not.

Community Services Recovery Fund: new hire - Megan Rae

With funding from this grant, MWC has hired former MWC volunteer, Megan Rae, as a project coordinator. Megan will work from mid- June to the end of September 2023. Her duties will include developing strategies for marketing and recruiting volunteers, developing and printing brochures and educational materials, scheduling community events and stewardship activities, designing and developing a material display for MWC’s event booth, researching and acquiring technology for virtual meetings, recruiting volunteers to conduct biweekly stewardship activities, attending specialized training (i.e. grant writing, recruitment, customer retention) and developing internal training for MWC’s board of directors, assisting in reviewing MWC’s bylaws, engaging with local lake associations and encouraging them to join MWC, engaging with local townships for support, recruiting volunteers for fall projects, engaging with local schools and training MWC’s board of directors on newly-created procedures.

AGM

Saturday, July 29, 2023 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Cobden Legion, 43 Main Street, Cobden

The meeting will be in person, possibly also virtually if available. Our guest speaker will be Robin Cunningham, from the Pembroke Area Field Naturalists. Coffee, water and light refreshments will be served.

Fish Bundles

A possible stewardship project for MWC to consider is making fish bundles, These woody piles of debris or brush help protect fish populations by restoring key aquatic habitat features like food sources, cool water, shelter and protection, and spawning areas. Olmstead-Jeffrey Lake has already participated in a fish bundle project in partnership with Watersheds Canada. Algonquin College students also took part. The bundles of brush are tied together with rope put on the bottom of the lake or river.

Water Testing

MWC volunteers have completed water testing on Muskrat, Mink, Dore and Olmstead-Jeffrey Lakes, using the water testing kit we bought last year. Results show pH, temperature, phosphorus, and nitrate levels.

Township Bylaws concerning replanting of trees after new builds

We are looking at sharing information with the township on how other bylaws have included a clause on replacing vegetation removed on new builds.

**Science Committee – Dave**

Algonquin College

Please see invasive species Action Fund above.

Properties for Tree planting

We need five properties for tree and shrub planting. A maximum of 50 trees and shrubs will be planted at each site. The planting will be student-led. MWC has found an interested landowner on Pumphouse Lake and will look for landowners on Mink and Olmstead-Jeffreys lakes and on Lake Dore.

Blue-green /algae reporting

MWC needs to clarify how to deal with reports of blue-green algae in the watershed. Dave met with Amanda on addressing communication and reporting.

ArcGIS licence and mapping reporting

This mapping and data manipulating technology might be useful for MWC to communicate to the community what is going on in our watershed. It connects people, locations and data using interactive maps. It provides analysis tools and allows users to share insights with the world or with specific groups. Dave will talk more about this technology at our August meeting.

Whitewater Township Tour

MWC is hoping to meet with the Township of Whitewater Region to set up a series of visits to other townships. We hope to introduce MWC to the new councils, ask for recruitment support and help the councils understand the services we offer and provide. Dave will meet with Counsellor Chris Olmstead and Mayor Neil Nicholson soon to discuss this possible tour.

**Communications & Media - Amanda**

Beach aeration system

Amanda will update our website projects page about our new aeration system and will write a blog about it.

Media training

Amanda is taking some training on social media platforms to better fulfil her role as Media Director.

Newsletter - Proposed Contents:

Amanda suggests this list of contents for our newsletter:

Letter from the Chair

Volunteer Spotlight

Dave Thomassin, Volunteer of the Year

Initiatives

GLLAF, Cobden Trail Cleanup, Beach Aeration system upgrade, cattle fencing, tree planting, watering systems, soil sampling

Directors’ Updates

Each MWC director will contact Amanda this week to confirm what content they will submit for the newsletter. Deadline to submit content to Amanda is July 16, 2023.

Article about Volunteering

Closing remarks

**Fundraising Committee Update - Karen**

No update

1. **Old Business**

MWC bylaws - date to meet to revise them

Karen will contact the committee to find a date to meet. Committee members are Karen, Evelyn, Dave and hopefully Julie Truelove, who was involved with writing the original bylaws.

1. **Other/New Business**
2. **Next Meetings**

AGM:

Saturday, July 29, 2023 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Cobden Legion, 43 Main Street, Cobden

The meeting will be in person, possibly also virtual, if available.

Next regular meeting:

Thursday, August 17, 2023 6:30 p.m.

**In person: Basement of the Whitewater Township Building, 44 Main Street, Cobden**

**Online: Through Google Meet**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

**+1 587-978-1050 (PIN 460326449)**

1. Adjournment: 8:03 p.m.

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

Barbara Green, Secretary, Muskrat Watershed Council

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

Karen Coulas, Chair, Muskrat Watershed Council

DON’T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MWC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023!

COST IS $20 PER MEMBERSHIP

IT’S EASY TO RENEW - JUST SEND AN E-TRANSFER TO:

treasurer@muskratwatershedcouncil.com

(Please put your name and email address in the message box so we can email your tax receipt.)

