

# Muskrat Watershed Council



## MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)

Meeting of the Board of Directors

**AGM Meeting Minutes**

**Online (Google Meets)**

**August 20, 2020 - 6:30 P.M.**

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

The meeting of the Muskrat Watershed Council was called to order at 6:36PM.

#### **Attendance:**

**Present:** Karen Coulas, Rene Coulas, Andy Laird, David Thomassin, Debbie MacDonald, Megan Rae, Jeff Reeves, Erin Dolan, Barbara Green, Michael Gulliver, Kathy Moore, Peter Doris, Andrea Bishop, Gerry Rook, Steve Saunders, Christine Trudeau

**Regrets:** Tom Dolan, Julie Sylvestre, Evelyn St. Amour

#### **Council Representative- Laurentian Valley Township:**

Claus Trost - Regrets

#### **Council Representatives – Township of Whitewater Region:**

Councillor David Mackay- Regrets

### **2. Adoption of Agenda – Motioned by Karen Coulas**

Rene adopted the agenda, Barb seconded it.

### **3. Opening Remarks**

#### **MWC Chair – Karen Coulas:**

- Thanks to everyone who participated and worked hard this year
- It was a challenging year, but we got things accomplished. We installed the weed mats, updated the websites, worked on the soil project, hosted the Inter Lakes meeting, and more.

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

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

- Soil Project (Joint project with a few committees). In the winter we had a meeting with the members that participated in the soil project. The vast majority of participants attended and listened to Peter Doris talk. They all enjoyed it. We are going to put the project on hold for this year. With the drought, and COVID, it is not the best year to be running the program.
  - o The soil project was a project in which farmers had their soil tested, sent off, and analyzed. They were able to ask Peter Doris for information on their soil profiles, and ask questions. Farmers were informed where and why to sample, how it affects their wallet, and how it affects the lake.
- Rene installed a buffer in his field as a test project. We'll discuss this at future meetings, once he has more information on the success of the project.

#### **Science Committee Update – David Thomassin**

- We started doing meetings this year on every even month. Ex: February, April, June... This makes it simple and everyone can have the dates in their calendar.
- Participation has been well received for the online meetings.
- The science committee worked with the Renfrew County planning group concerning future developments. New builds on the lake are no longer allowed with septic systems, unless they follow the new protocol.
- Agri Food Canada will be doing a presentation on using hay bales for water filtration to the science committee.
- Zeolite. The project has been designed, and the bags are filled. We haven't put them in the water yet, but with the water being so low, we didn't do it yet. UNB is helping out with the project on the research side. We are shipping 20 gallons of water to them in the next few weeks so they can work with it.
- In the upcoming year, we'd like to focus on the Cobden Marsh berm restoration, the birds at the Cobden Beach, stewardship project with the loon boxes, and learning more about the Lake Dore blooms.

- There was no water quality network work this year. The lab was only open for critical testing.
- Beach mats: This June we installed mats at the beach to help control the weed growth. There are six (8\*28 feet). They seem to be working and doing what we expected them to do. They will be taken out in the fall.

### **Communications and Media – Megan Rae**

- **Microcystin Sampling on Muskrat Lake**
  - o A pilot project for the summer of 2020
  - o Is being headed by the Office of Applied Research in partnership with the MWC
  - o Spurred from a report recently received from the University of Montreal concerning an algae bloom sample that was collected by representatives from MWC and the Office of Applied Research at Algonquin College in Pembroke
  - o Goal is to test the usability of the Abraxis Microcystin Field Test Kit in detecting levels of Microcystin in blue-green algae blooms on Muskrat Lake.
  - o 6 locations on the lake were selected as sampling sites. 5 privately owned properties and 1 publicly owned. Specifically selected to best represent different locations Muskrat Lake.
  - o Duration of sampling is 3 months, started in July and will end in September.
  - o Would like to include more cottage owners, locations and frequency of sampling but we are limited by the number of test strips
  - o All data collected this year will be compiled into an online, public database that will be made available on our website in the new year.
  - o Microcystin tests in July yielded below measurable range (>0 ppb). 2 locations in August however yielded low to moderate levels of Microcystins (0-5ppb). Those results remain under the Ontario Guidelines though (>20ppb).
- **Natural Edge Program-Update**
  - o Natural Edge Program is organized and run by Watersheds Canada, a not-for-profit located in Perth Ontario focused on helping to improve freshwater habitat and water quality on lakes and rivers across Canada
  - o Partnered with the Muskrat Watershed Council and the Office of Applied Research at Algonquin College in Pembroke to launch a 3-year Natural Edge Program in the Muskrat Watershed. Specifically targeting agricultural shorelines.
  - o Goal of the project is plant 45,000 native trees and shrubs by 2021. Over time the vegetative buffer zones will help reduce erosion, create habitat for wildlife and absorb sources of agricultural run-off (fertilizers and pesticides)
  - o Funded mainly through the Ontario Trillium Foundation but have received extra funds to help cover the landowner payment fee from LUSH Cosmetics, Whitewater Township, Whitewater Brewery, M&R Feeds and Farm Supply and Corteva Agriscience.

- In 2019 we planted another 15,000 trees and shrubs bringing our program total up to 30,000
- Fall 2020 marks the final year of the program in the Muskrat Watershed, planting properties have already been selected, final 15,000 native plants scheduled to go into the ground come October
- Natural Edge Program Coordinator Chloe Lajoie and I are working on completing the final evaluation of the project to present to the Ontario Trillium Foundation at the end of the year. We are currently conducting plant success counts and participant interviews to help determine the success of the project.
- Once finalized the evaluation will be made available on our website
- **Social Media: Year in Review**
  - Facebook
    - Likes increased by 40 and Followers by 50
    - Equals a 20% increase in both
  - Instagram
    - Followers have increased to 187 from 125/150 same time last year
    - Future plans to boost Instagram include using Instagram stories more and including more hashtags in Instagram posts
  - New Website-Review
    - New website launched in December 2019
    - Included an improved layout, monthly blog entries, updated water quality page, video archive, etc.
    - In a year we have seen a 90% increase in users (1500 users in one year), a 76.6 increase in website sessions (2400 sessions)
    - Bounce rate and session times show increases but there is quite a bit of positive and negative variance from day to day, week to week, month to month etc. It still something that we can continue to work on. When I compared Jan 2019-August 2019 to January 2020 to August 2020, the bounce rate had decreased, page sessions, avg session duration, number of page sessions per user and had increased.
    - Number of webpages visited (Page Sessions), is sitting around 2
    - Over 80% of visitors to our website were identified as new visitors, which is what we were aiming for
    - Top 5 visited webpages were about, home, algae bloom advisories, water quality data and donate

### **Fundraising and Outreach – Karen Coulas**

- Megan got us a grant from Corteva Agriscience.
- We got the Farmers Bayer grant for \$2500.
- We hosted the Inter Lakes Association meeting in September. There are quite a few other lakes that test lake water. We share many of the same issues. We got information from what kinds of projects other groups are doing. For example: Aylen

Lake installed fire pumps, and one helped put out a fire. Round Lake installed defibrillators. We found out early that the cormorant hunt is open this fall. Some lakes may not have known, so we shared the information.

- We attended the Taste of the Valley, Cobden Fair, and the ploughing match.

### **Tourism – Andy Laird**

- With COVID we weren't able to do anything tourism related.

### **5. Treasurers Report**

- See document at the end for the yearly Financial Report and the August report.
- Debbie motions that we pay Dean Sinclair \$774 for the services they provided us. Dave approves, and Andy seconds.
- Bingo: They are not looking for volunteers until the end of September or October. They have started giving some payouts to charities that are in dire need of funds. We are not one of them at this time.

### **6. Nominations and Elections**

- No one new wants to volunteer at this point. We don't have many new attendees at this meeting.

### **7. Approval of minutes from AGM 2019**

- Debbie approved the minutes first, Barb seconded them.

### **8. Closing Remarks:**

- As much as we could, we still moved forward this year. We are in good shape for continuing with our projects next year.
- Volunteer of the year: Andy Laird. A major asset to this group!
- Thanks to the Whitewater Township for letting us have our in person meetings for free in their buildings.

### **9. Next meeting:**

- All meetings are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month. Our next meeting will be on Thursday September 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

### **10. Adjournment: 7:48pm**

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

Erin Dolan, Secretary, Muskrat Watershed Council

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

Karen Coulas, Chair, Muskrat Watershed Council

**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
As At March 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash	\$ 32,230	\$ 31,155
Accounts receivable	807	1,043
	33,037	32,198
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Net assets</b>	33,037	32,198
	\$ 33,037	\$ 32,198

**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Operations and Net Assets**  
(Unaudited - See Notice to Reader)  
For the Year Ended March 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>Revenue</b>		
Contributions and membership fees	\$ 20,453	\$ 15,813
Bingo	7,431	6,624
Summer Employment Grant	4,366	7,478
	32,250	29,915
<b>Expenses</b>		
Bank charges and interest	104	119
Insurance	1,154	1,230
Memberships	-	146
Office and general	1,889	369
Professional fees	572	364
Program expenses	17,110	3,578
Wages and benefits	10,582	8,693
	31,411	14,499
<b>Excess of revenues over expenses for the year</b>	839	15,416
<b>Net assets, beginning of year</b>	32,198	16,782
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	\$ 33,037	\$ 32,198

MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL

TREASURER'S REPORT - August 2020

Meeting July 16, 2020 - Scotia Account Balance

**\$ 29,154.23**

Business Chequing Account

Income

STRIPE Membership Payments  
Canada Helps Donation

\$57.36  
\$2.88

Expenses

Scotia monthly fee

\$ (8.00)

**Total Income**

\$ 60.24

**Total Expenses**

\$ (8.00)

Current Amount in Scotia Account

**\$ 29,206.47**

(Note: Float \$240.60)

July 16, 2020 - BMO Account Balance

**\$ 4,661.02**

SBCNA Charity Gaming Business Account

Income

Expenses

Maintenance Fee

\$ (2.50)

**Total Income**

\$ -

**Total Expenses**

\$ (2.50)

Current Amount in BMO Account

**\$ 4,658.52**