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**MUSKRAT WATERSHED COUNCIL (MWC)**

Meeting of the Board of Directors

**Meeting Minutes**

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

**Online through Google Meet**

**Thursday, July 21, 2022, 6:30 p.m.**

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

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

**Attendance:**

**Present:**  Karen Coulas, Rene Coulas, Debbie MacDonald, Jeff Reeves, Barbara Green, Dave Thomassin, Rick Adamson, Evelyn St. Amour, Andy Laird, Gerry Rook

**Regrets:**  Andrea Bishop, Anna Marie Blum, Erin Dolan, David Luong, Drew Charkavi

**Council Representative Regrets:**

Claus Trost, Township of Laurentian Valley Township

Mike Moore, Township of Whitewater Region

1. **Adoption of Agenda**

Dave approved the agenda, Rene seconded it.

**Approval of minutes from June 16 2022 meeting:**

Jeff approved the minutes, Debbie seconded.

1. **Treasurer’s Report- Debbie**

See attached document.

SBCNA Bingo:

August 14, 2022 is the next volunteer date. Dave suggested we email people who wanted to volunteer. They would have to take the Ontario Lottery and Gaming training. Debbie will contact them.

Post office box fee:

Debbie will pay $201.01.

Beach Sign:

Rene moved that we pay Speed Pro the $237.30 fee owing for the design of our beach sign. Gerry seconded the motion.

1. **Directors’ Reports**

**Agricultural Committee Update – Karen & Rene**

Jeffrey Lake:

Rene met with a landowner on Pumphouse Lake, near Jeffrey Lake, whose cattle had been near the water. The landowner has now fenced off the cattle to keep them out of the water and is pumping water for them. Rene suggested we invest $3,000 -$7,000 to build a similar watering system at this location as we built on one of our other sites. We could look into a Community Improvement Program (CIP) grant from the Township of Whitewater Region (WWR) The deadline to apply for this grant is Aug. 15, 2022. Debbie said cattle fencing and watering would qualify for a CIP grant. The landowner said he’d be willing to pay part of the cost. Rene suggested the landowner could make a donation to MWC. Dave said we should go ahead with this project since we don’t have another project this year. Debbie moved that we go ahead with the project, Gerry seconded the motion. Rene talked to landowner about planting trees as a buffer that would be included in the $7,000. Debbie and Karen will start the paperwork for applying for the CIP grant.

**Science Committee – Dave**

Blue green algae 2022:

There have been blue green algae blooms reported at four locations so far this year: Hydro Bay, Cobden Beach, Cedar Haven campground and the Cobden water treatment plant. The bloom at the water treatment plant was tested and found to be toxic.

Cobden Beach was closed by the Health Unit. There is a 30-day wait to reopen it. Dave will talk to WWR to ask them to email the Health Unit to see if the beach can be opened sooner if no more blooms occur.

Rene said we need to send the Eganville Leader a picture and write up once the beach is open saying it’s okay to swim again. He suggested hand delivering this information to publisher, Gerald Tracey. Barb or Drew can work on the write up.

Loons Need a Home in Muskrat Lake - Dave:

We will build three platforms: one for Muskrat Lake, in the marsh; one for Jeffrey’s Lake; one for Lake Dore. We will ask the lake associations to partner with us. The loon platforms will be installed in October. Fall is better than spring as loons mark their nesting spots in the fall. It is safe to leave the platforms in over the winter: the dry cedar construction will float high. We could do part of the assembly (the notching) ahead of time, then take the platforms to a location at each lake for final assembly. This would be more visible to the community and invite community involvement. To gather information about the placement of the loon platforms, Dave contacted the Pembroke Field Naturalists and Ducks Unlimited, but hasn’t heard back yet. Karen and Rene will visit the Shaw Woods Outdoor Education Centre for more information, including whether the loon platforms should be enclosed with an overhead hoop covered by branches, to deter predators.

Cedar Posts - Anna-Maria shared this information in an email:

No 8” diameter found

Olmstead doesn’t have them

Bell lumber - No

Dawson Cedar - out of business

Carp just outside of Ottawa has given us $15 per post.They are from 6 -7.5 - inch diameter and 8’ long. We just need to cut them. No delivery though so we will need to pick up. We will need 12 or 15 if we want cross post in platform.

Rene also looked into cedar posts near Golden Lake.

Return of the Birds of Cobden Beach:

Dave talked to WWT about this. WWT said there were no more birds because the birds aren’t attracted to the roof of the water treatment plant. But Dave noticed seagulls on the roof. Gerry mentioned there are not as many seagulls around as there used to be. Debbie asked it it might have been cormorants.

Bringing Cobden Marsh Back from the Dead (potential partnership with WWT):

Ivan Burton, Chief Administrative Officer for WWT, suggested MWC put in a proposal for everything we want to do at the marsh. We could partner with the Civitan Club and the Ottawa Valley Active Transportation Alliance (OVATA). Debbie is on the OVATA and said they will write a letter of support. WWT will look for a grant and partner with us. They will take the lead. We need someone to be in charge of MWC’s participation on this project. Karen suggested we invite one of our new volunteers to do this. Barb will draft a letter to volunteers, based on information Dave will send her. Dave will set up a meeting with WWT.

How does Muskrat Watershed look from space and from the sky? Report on initial findings water quality from space - Dave:

Due to cloud cover, no good images of blue green algae on Muskrat Lake were taken from the plane. It may not be possible possible to detect blue green algae in Muskrat Lake from the sky since a lot of the drainage runs into the Snake River.

Tree plantings - Dave: If Watersheds Canada doesn’t get their grant, should MWC look at redoing plantings using our funds?

This item was not discussed as the $75,000 Watersheds Canada grant is still likely. Please see Possible Replant 2023 under Old Business, below.

Update on pumps, mats, signs and buoys - Dave

Dave has the new mats to replace the old ones which are finished. Rene fixed both compressors that were noisy. Cost: $1,000 for rebuild of pumps. $12-1400 for mats. We have six bubblers going again.

Anna-Maria gathered the following information and shared it in an email:

Buoys are back to just under $5 each. They are red and white and have free shipping. They are 3” x 5” and we could use 30 to cover off 60 feet. She added 120 feet of rope as she expects to have to replace it and it will be good to have extra rope on hand. Shipping is free. Total is $179.10. The 5” x 1” buoys are $34 for a 2 pack and $85 with shipping, so Anna-Maria doesn’t feel that is too expensive. The Cobden Beach sign has been approved by Karen and Jeff. Anna-Maria is waiting to hear if she should go ahead and order it

Next week after the meeting is there a good time for Dave and Rene to swim to inspect the bubblers and move them?

At 8:00 a.m. on Thursday July 28 Karen, Rene, Dave and Debbie will meet at the Cobden Beach to pull up two bubblers and inspect them.

**Communications & Media - Karen**

The letter to lake residents is finished. We can get the letters printed like a pamphlet, then we can fold them and place a mailing address sticker on each letter. We will need 340-360 mailing labels for cottages and year-round residences around Muskrat Lake. The letter is two pages long. The cost per letter for printing and postage is about $1.25. This is still cheaper than the price of a newspaper ad. Karen will need help to fold the letters and put on mailing stickers.

**Fundraising - Karen**

No update.

1. **Old Business**

People want to read about the watershed . . . where are our billboards? - Dave

Evelyn said Golden Lake has changed their billboard - it’s now one big poster. Maybe this is to make it waterproof and solid, so no one can steal it? Rene suggested we ask Golden Lake why they changed their billboard before looking into making one for Cobden Beach.

Posters and shoreline management booklets - Anna-Maria shared the following information in an email:

The posters are blown up and laminated, we have 100 copies of the shoreline management booklets to hand out for educational purposes. There will be no charge for these items to MWC. We could attach one of our business cards to each booklet or we could insert an MWC flyer into each booklet. Anna- Maria can do this if we wish. She will need to know where to get the business cards and flyers and where to drop off the booklets when they are ready.

Cobden Boat Launch Collection: What was learned by the Calabogie Lake Association?

Dave noticed Calabogie Lake has a donation box - do we want one? Debbie mentioned donation boxes can be vandalized. Also donations made to the box won’t get an income tax receipt. Karen suggested letting WWR try it and maybe they will give us some money if it works. There will be a new council after the municipal election and they can decide.- Dave

Possible Replant 2023 - Karen:

Karen met with Watersheds Canada. They want more information. Watersheds Canada could contribute $75,000 towards planting. It will be a smaller amount of replanting and 10 acres will be replanted professionally. We are still in the running for this grant money and Watersheds Canada sounds very interested in us. It might be over multiple years. Planting could happen as early as this fall. We could do tillage to make spring planting easier. Spring planting would probably be in April.

1. **Other/New Business**

Waterfront Property Bylaws Discussion - Karen:

Karen attended a meeting of different townships that are now adding regulations to their bylaws. One regulation would require waterfront landowners to have a plan to replace any shoreline vegetation that is destroyed during the construction of a new residence. Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and Hastings County have this regulation for new builds. Karen will send us the information and we will discuss it at our September meeting. We could take this suggestion to the new WWR council after the municipal election. We could share it later with other lake associations who could also bring it up with their councils.

AGM - Karen: Thursday, Aug. 18, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

Dave will provide pictures of our activities, such as the Great Lakes Local Action Fund project. Debbie, Karen and Dave will present. There will be a focus on blue green algae. Planning for the meeting will take place the week before. Water & some beverages will be provided. Karen will add the AGM date to our letter that is going out soon and and will mention the presentation.

2023 grant applications: what do we want to do after one year without projects? - Dave

Government grants are in October and March: the better money is in October - the deadline is October 18. We should start thinking now and get something together to be submitted. Karen suggested waiting until we find out about our possible project with Watersheds Canada. There is a new e-tech person at Algonquin College whom Dave will invite to our AGM.

Cobden Fair, Friday August 26 and Saturday August 27, 2022:

Debbie can volunteer at our MWC booth on Aug. 26 Barb may be available on August 27, possibly other volunteers will be available, too.

1. **Next Meeting**

**AGM** Thursday, August 18, 2022

**MEETING WILL BE BOTH IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL:**

**IN PERSON MEETING WILL BE IN THE BASEMENT OF THE WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 44 MAIN STREET, COBDEN, ENTRANCE FROM THE PARKING LOT**

**ONLINE MEETING VIA GOOGLE MEET**

meet.google.com/ezd-qitc-btk

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

1. Adjournment: 8:55 p.m.

**Minutes recorded and submitted by:**

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Barbara Green, Secretary, Muskrat Watershed Council

**Approved by:**

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Karen Coulas, Chair, Muskrat Watershed Council

DON’T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MWC MEMBERSHIP FOR 2022!

COST IS $20 PER MEMBERSHIP

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

muskratwatershedcouncil@gmail.com

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

