

# Winter River – Tracadie Bay Watershed Association (WRTBWA)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the WRTBWA

Held on September 19, 2018, 7:00 pm at the office of the WRTBWA at 13977 St, Peters Road, Marshfield, PEI

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**Present:** John Hughes, Sarah Wheatley, Clare Martin, George Coade, Scott Stevens, Esther Currie, Cathy Corrigan, Lowell Vessey, Jean-Paul Arsenault, Matt Steeves, and Ryan Winters

**Absent:** n/a

George called the meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

## 1. Minutes from the August 15, 2018 meeting

Minutes from the August 15, 2018 were read and discussed. Lowell moved to approve the minutes from August 15<sup>th</sup>. Cathy seconded. All were in favour and the minutes were approved.

## 2. Chairperson's Report – George

- George had nothing to report for this meeting.

## 3. Treasurer's Report – Lowell Vessey.

Opening Balance: August 1, 2018	\$165,006.49
Less o/s cheques clearing	\$5,003.39
Plus deposits	\$12,999.00
Less expenses	\$28,300.78
Plus o/s cheques	\$5,370.41
Closing balance/August 31/18	\$150,071.73

Deposits were from Canada Summer Jobs and PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund.

Besides usual payroll and office expenses, there were fees for a beaver trapper, staff mileage, field supplies, and equipment purchase. Lowell moved to accept the Treasurer's report, J.P. seconded. Discussion had regarding the beaver trapping expenses. All were in favour; the report was accepted.

## 4. Committees

### • Field Committee – J.P. Arsenault Chair J.P. reported

- J.P. and Clare attended the field trip for board members and had an interesting visit with Sarah, Emma, and Vanessa. They had an opportunity to view the work done this year and from last year. J.P. said they were pleased with Sarah and the staff's engagement and with the work completed. Clare found it very informative. They went to many sites: Union Road to see a new culvert and bridge (noted the stagnant water), Officer's pond for the possible fishway project, Friston Road to see brush mats, Suffolk road to see hung culverts, and the Vanco branch for culvert removal and tree planting projects.
- The Field Committee hasn't met since the last meeting. They want to have the B.O.D. review the 2017 field report first, to get better direction to go forward.
- George, Lowell, J.P., and Clare had a meeting with the Minister of Environment and some department staff to discuss three main topics: 1. Charlottetown Water Extraction Permit, 2. Communication, 3. Data Collection into the future.
  - Water Extraction Permit - No new permit will be in place for the Miltonvale wellfield for 2-3 years. They are waiting until Dr. van den Heuvel finishes his research funded by the province. The goal is to provide information to effectively regulate high capacity wells (such as those to provide water for municipalities and farms), while protecting groundwater supplies, stream flow, and fish habitat. We discussed our goal of having a 25% reduction in water extraction from the Winter River watershed and our concerns with the existing permits and regulations.
  - We are happy with the new committee improving communication between the City, Province, and WRTBWA.
  - Data collection needs: They would like to know the impact of a 25% reduction in extraction from our watershed. We could use data we have collected from our v-notch weirs in springs, depth loggers in streams, and annual head water surveys as before and after measurements.

- Miltonvale wellfield is still not in operation. There is a problem with the computer system. During testing, when they reached 900 gallons/minute the system had problems. They are running the whole system at a minimal flow, just to avoid water becoming stagnant and problems with restarting the system.

**5. Coordinator’s Report – Sarah Wheatley reported (see report)**

- Restarted tree planting for fall.
- Staff of 4 - Matt, Vanessa, Emma, and Drew (who is a fall helper)
- Wetland Assessment course/training to be held in Hunter River Oct. 1 & 2, 2018
- Pater Branch - straw bales placed to prevent erosion
- Field trip to Kensington to see silt pumps in action, this prompted a discussion of estuary projects. Kensington is creating a channel by sucking silt out and using the material to infill a side area. Unclear how effective this will be in the long term. Goal is to decrease width of river to increase the flow of water.

**6. Review of 2017 Field Work Report**

- J.P. spoke from the Field Committee. He helped review the 2017/18 report. This document helps us to plan for the 2018/19 year and beyond.
- The report describes all the work that we do, from tree planting to data collection. J.P. noted how well it illustrated what we do. Sarah reviewed how much staff time was spent on each of the main types of work, with graphs of total person hours spent on each activity type by year. A similar graph outlined how Sarah’s time is spent.
- Data collection - Sarah explained the purpose of different data that we are collecting (incl. requirements for grants, to plan future projects, long-term monitoring). For example, looking at impacts of reduced water extraction on stream flow using data from weirs, depth loggers, and headwater surveys. Sarah pointed out that the temperature loggers required minimal time to collect information. Scott asked about the impact of rainfall fluctuations on the stream flow measurements. Sarah explained that they wait days after rainfall to measure weirs, and the spikes in flow due to rainfall are obvious in the depth logger data. We are most interested in the low flow conditions when there is no rain than the spikes from heavy rain.
- Clare asked if the recommendations in the report were implemented for this year? Sarah noted they had been met.
- John commented on tree planting, that we should highlight the success of some of our earlier work, such as photographs of trees planted in early years to see their current height, and noting that over 4,000 trees were planted one year.
- J.P. asked if we seem to be on the right track with the work we are doing, after reviewing the report? Discussion was had, and hearing Sarah speak to the points it was then affirmed that yes, we are on the right track for allocation of time between various types of projects.

**7. Request for Stream Alteration Permit**

- George spoke regarding the request from a landowner for assistance with a stream alteration permit for a private bridge, stating he felt this doesn’t really reflect our core mandate. Members agreed with this comment. He will write a letter to send to the landowners.

**8. Fishway**

- There is a conflict of opinion over the current design for the fishway, between our contracted engineer and a UPEI researcher who did his PhD on fishway design and effectiveness. Discussion and suggestions heard. Matt suggested exploring ways to divert flow at key migration periods. We should also ask Sean if there is an upper limit on the distance between the fishway outlet and the dam for it to still be considered effective.
- Before exploring other questions related to the fishway, we should wait for response from Ducks Unlimited.
- Further discussion was tabled.

**9. Electrofishing and use of the Alliance Equipment**

- Sarah would use the equipment and Alliance would supply education and training. We could use it to compare branches for fish populations. The Alliance would supervise the process.

**10. Next Meeting**

**Meeting adjourned 9:18**                      Next meeting: October 17, 2018

Signature – George Coade, Chair of WRTBWA	Date
Signature – Esther Currie, Secretary of WRTBWA	Date