

# Pockwock Watershed Management Committee

## Meeting Minutes



Pockwock Watershed Management Committee		
Date: October 12 <sup>th</sup> , 2023		Meeting Time: 10:00 am
Location: 2 Park Ave & virtually via Microsoft Teams		Adjourned Time: 12:10 pm
Member name and position:		Agency/Representation:
Attendees	Michael Allen (MA), Watershed Planner (virtual)	Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
	Jeff Brown (Jeff), Forestry Technician (virtual)	DNRR
	Jillanna Brown (Jill), P. Eng., Reg. Engineer	NSECC
	Greg Cummings (GC), Watershed Planner (virtual)	NSECC
	Barry Geddes (BG), ( <i>Secretary</i> ) Watershed Manager	Halifax Water
	Rachel Gilbert (RG), Manager of Planning	Municipality of East Hants (MEH)
	Patrick Lynch (PL), Regional Forester (virtual)	Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR)
	Anna McCarron (Anna), ( <i>Vice Chair</i> ) Source Water Planner	Halifax Water
	Neil Morehouse (NM), Manager Protected Areas & Ecosystems (virtual)	NSECC
	Michael Perry (MP), ( <i>Chair</i> ) Community Representative	Mount Uniacke
Regrets	Alana Murray (Alana), Manager of Water Supply Plants	Halifax Water
	Sally Steele (SS), Protected Areas Coordinator, Western Region	Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)
	Colin Waddell (Colin), Senior Manager, Water Services	Halifax Water

### 1. Attendance / Introductions

Meeting called to order by Chair, MP.

Discussion	<p>Attendance/ Introductions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• five (5) attended virtually (noted above);</li> <li>• regrets conveyed (noted above); and</li> <li>• quorum noted.</li> </ul>
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	<p>Anna reminded the Committee that the meeting is being recorded via Teams for minute taking purposes. Once the minutes are approved, it is standard practice to delete the recordings.</p> <p>PL introduced himself as Tim O'Brien's replacement on the Committee for DNRR. Tim has retired from DNRR.</p>		
Decision	New Committee member from DNRR to replace Tim O'Brien has been assigned.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
	DNRR to assign new Committee member.	DNRR	Complete (remove)

### 2. Review and Approval

October 12, 2023, Meeting Agenda			
Discussion	Approved as presented.		
Decision	Approved as presented.		
<b>Motion</b> to approve March 9, 2023, Meeting Agenda		<b>Moved</b> by Jillanna, seconded by BG. All in favour	
March 9th, 2023, DRAFT Meeting Minutes			
Discussion	Minor administrative edits noted.		
Decision	Approved with minor administrative edits.		
<b>Motion</b> to approve March 9, 2023, Meeting Minutes		<b>Moved</b> by Jillanna, seconded by BG. All in favour	

### 3. Old Business

a. Pockwock Water Storage and Withdrawal Permit Application – Update	
Discussion	<p><i>(March 9, 2023)</i> Trish Isnor, Halifax Water Guest, reported that Halifax Water received the water withdrawal approval from NSECC for the same average daily withdrawal rate as in the previous approval (110 million litres per day (MLD)). This is not a standard 10-year approval – it expires November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027. Further discussions with NSECC and DFO are required regarding downstream ecological maintenance flow and dam requirements.</p> <p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that there is nothing new since the March 9, 2023 meeting. Information continues to be gathered relating to downstream maintenance.</p>
Decision	Ongoing – continue to provide updates.

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b. Resource Management Updates			
i. Forestry			
Discussion	<p>BG/Jeff reported that Westfor completed Crown block DNRR ID – HN068462, started in 2019, located on the west Pockwock boundary. Due to Hurricane Fiona damage in 2022, approximately 20% of the area that had been commercially thinned, as originally prescribed, underwent salvage operations to clean up the downed trees. The remaining untouched area was re-assigned to an irregular shelter-wood harvest type – a partial harvest with smaller, open style cut blocks that is less susceptible to blow-down. Despite the wet summer, there were no issues to report.</p> <p>An old wooden culvert was damaged during hauling operations. There were no environmental concerns, as a result, to report. It is scheduled to be replaced in 2024.</p> <p>Sections of the main access road on the west side were graveled to repair the road running surface washouts from this summer’s heavy rainfall events. No water crossings were impacted by the rain events. No issues to report.</p> <p>A 30 m-wide fire break on Halifax Water land was cut around the JD Kline Water Supply Plant (WSP) fence line during the early months of 2023. No issues to report.</p>		
Decision	Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG/DNRR	Ongoing
ii. Water Quality			
a) Geosmin update:			
Discussion	<p>BG reported that low levels of geosmin were detected between July and October 2023. The detection limit is &lt;3 ng/L. See Halifax Water website <a href="#">My Water Has a Taste &amp; Odour   Halifax Water</a> for more information on Halifax Water’s Geosmin Monitoring Program.</p>		
Decision	Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG/Colin	Ongoing
b) Lake Recovery Research:			
Discussion	<p>BG reported that lake recovery research continues, which includes Halifax Water’s algal monitoring strategy – a multi-pronged approach to identify and assess risk of algae and cyanobacteria. The program is in its early stages. As the program matures, more information will be shared with the Committee.</p>		
Decision	Standing agenda item.		

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Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG/Colin	Ongoing
<b>c. forWater Research Network</b>			
Discussion	BG reported that the <i>forWater</i> Research Network was awarded an extension (end of 2024) due to Covid-19 restrictions, to allow researchers time to complete the data compilation and to finalize reporting requirements. Once reports are completed, they will be shared with the Committee.		
Decision	Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG	Ongoing
<b>d. Tours of the Watershed Area</b>			
<b>i. Helicopter tour</b>			
Discussion	The Committee advised leaving this as a standing agenda item for when time is right.		
Decision	Standing agenda – complete as required.		
<b>ii. Educational Ground Tour of Harvest Areas – VIPs</b>			
Discussion	<p><i>(March 9, 2023)</i> Initially planned for summer 2023, this educational ground tour is part of a larger ongoing Halifax Water outreach initiative to increase knowledge of source water protection amongst community leaders, including first responders and politicians.</p> <p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG reported that Halifax Water is currently rethinking its Corporate Communication strategy, which will include such initiatives. Therefore, the tour is on hold until the strategy has been defined. Also, this summer’s weather conditions (extreme hot dry to record rain falls) were not ideal for guided tours. Keep on agenda.</p> <p>MP advised that the best time to schedule a tour that includes local first responders and councillors would be 2025, following municipal elections.</p>		
Decision	Standing agenda item until complete		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Plan a tour for the watershed area targeted at a small group consisting of councillors, community leaders, first responders, East Hants directors and PWM Committee members.		BG/MP/RG/AM	Summer 2025
<b>e. Lake Trout Study</b>			
Discussion	BG reported that the Lake Trout Study continues. Acadia University has added eDNA sampling – a form of DNA sampling where water samples are collected and assessed for		

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	signature Lake Trout DNA from body fluids released into the water column – to monitor for the presence/absence of Lake Trout. The results will be shared once available. To date, no Lake Trout has been caught in Pockwock Lake through the study. Research permits remain in place.		
Decision	Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update as necessary.		BG	Ongoing
<b>f. Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) Annual Report</b>			
Discussion	This was an action item from the March 9, 2023, meeting. BG confirmed that the 2022 Annual SWP report was sent to NSECC. No further action required.		
Decision	Update as required		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Standing spring meeting agenda item.		BG	Every spring meeting
<b>g. Water Supply Enhancement Project</b>			
Discussion	BG reported that the Water Supply Enhancement Project is part of a long-term (25 year plus) capital project to upgrade the JD Kline WSP. Jill confirmed that NSECC initiated discussions with Halifax Water regarding the long-term upgrade. Halifax Water is considering options to improve water treatment with respect to changes in climate and water quality. The Committee will be updated as needed. MP inquired about the recent growth in population that caused the upgrade to come sooner. BG reported that the upgrades were planned prior to the increase in population.		
Decision	Update the Committee as needed		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Keep on agenda		BG	As required

### 4. New Business

#### a. Hammonds Plains Wildfires

Discussion	BG updated the Committee on the following regarding the Hammonds Plains Wildfire: None of the Pockwock watershed was burned. However, due to the proximity of the fire, it was decided to allow DNRR to use Pockwock Lake as the water bomber's water supply, as the internal provincial firefighting policy was followed, as follows:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The province demonstrated that no sufficient freshwater supply was available due to low water conditions;</li> <li>• Current weather conditions were unfavorable for the bombers to access the ocean;</li> <li>• The bombers came from dry dock in Newfoundland and were free of firefighting chemicals;</li> <li>• The fire was within 3 km of the JD Kline WSP and burning towards it, which put the WSP and water supply at direct risk; and</li> <li>• Once another source became available, the bombers were to use it. Two days later the bombers were able to use another source.</li> </ul> <p>Halifax Water continues to monitor water quality through its source water quality monitoring program.</p> <p>Electrical power was cut to the JD Kline WSP when the powerlines were burned by the fire. The standby generator was used. Generator fuel was delivered by truck every 36 hours via the Pockwock watershed access road until the main Pockwock Road off Hammonds Plains Road was opened for deliveries. Standard operating procedures were followed. Fuel trucks were equipped with appropriate spill kits and escorted in and out of the watershed. Once power was restored, fuel deliveries stopped.</p> <p>The cause of the fire was manmade. The outcome (where the responsibility lies) is uncertain. Jeff reported that during the annual firefighting meeting in the Mount Uniacke area, crews were reminded that when fighting fires in the Pockwock watershed to remember that it is a drinking water supply and to follow the provincial firefighting policy for fighting fires in a drinking water supply.</p>		
Decision:	Information only.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Remove from Agenda		BG	Next Agenda
<b>b. Pockwock heavy rainfall events</b>			
Discussion	<p>The Committee discussed the record rainfall amounts in 2023 and the impact on Pockwock as follows:</p> <p>The Pockwock watershed experienced minor to moderate washouts. Any washouts were confined to road surfaces with long grades.</p> <p>BG reported on the Pockwock bridge replacement program as follows:</p> <p>All of the bridges have been replaced over the past five years. The new bridges were designed using Q100 (1 in 100-year flood event) flood calculations – an increase from Q25 (1 in 25 years) from when they were last installed 25 or so years ago, resulting in most bridges doubling in size and height to allow more water to pass.</p> <p>Jill asked what other recommendations Halifax Water suggests to reduce the risk of washouts.</p>		

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	<p>BG advised that the following Halifax Water road maintenance practices are effective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Type 2 (2inch minus) crushed gravel for gravelling road surfaces, which allows for better road surface drainage and reduces washouts;</li> <li>• implement road brushing practices that promotes high tree canopy growth over the roads to intercept rain before it reaches the road;</li> <li>• install barriers such as gates to keep traffic to a minimum; and</li> <li>• grade the roads only when necessary; opting for Type 2 crushed gravel on the road surface reduces the need for grading.</li> </ul>		
Decision:	Information only.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Remove from agenda		BG	Next meeting
<b>5. Landowner Q &amp; A</b>			
<b>a. Crown</b>			
Discussion	Nothing to report beyond what was already reported above.		
Decision	Standing agenda item.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Keep on agenda		BG	Next meeting
<b>b. Pockwock Wilderness Area</b>			
Discussion	Halifax Water License-to-Operate within the newly approved <a href="#">Sackville River Wilderness Area</a> continues.		
Decision	Keep on agenda		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Provide update on License-to-Operate		BG/NM/SS	Pending
<b>c. Mount Uniacke Community</b>			
<b>i. Uniacke Trails Association (Trail development) and PWMC Letter of Support</b>			
Discussion	<p><i>(March 9, 2023)</i> BG advised that a new road and bridge were constructed across the Uniacke River, north of the watershed, providing new access for ATV traffic to Western Crown lands (BG displayed a map of the location). As a result, ATV traffic has significantly dropped.</p> <p>BG suggested removing this action item since the original intent (to divert ATV traffic away from the Pockwock PWA) has been achieved.</p> <p>The Committee advised waiting for MP to report on his discussion with the Uniacke Trails Association before deciding to remove it from the agenda.</p>		

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	<p>(October 12, 2023) MP reported that he spoke with BG prior to the October meeting. It was concluded that the concerns about ATV use inside the Pockwock watershed were addressed due to the new road and Uniacke River bridge construction.</p> <p>MP reported that complications remain with the rail to trail project, which is not a concern for the Committee. Therefore, it was decided to retract and remove this item from the agenda.</p>		
Decision	Remove from agenda		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Contact MP about trail development and letter of support		BG/MP	Retract
Remove item from Agenda		BG	Next meeting
d. Municipality of East Hants			
i. Planning and Development within Pockwock’s natural watershed boundary: Sulphide Bearing Materials Regulations and <b>salt impacts</b> in Watershed			
Discussion	<p><b>General Discussion:</b></p> <p>RG reported to the Committee that a lakeshore development brochure was sent out to communities that the Lakeshore Bylaw applied to. The brochure provided information about the importance of lakeshore protection and the rules that applied. A copy of the brochure can be found here: <a href="https://www.easthants.ca/files/2023/09/Lakeshore-Development-Brochure.pdf">Lakeshore-Development-Brochure.pdf (easthants.ca)</a></p> <p><b>Uniacke Business Park salting activities:</b></p> <p>RG reported that MEH planner Lee-Ann advised her that MEH does not have a mechanism to regulate salt on private lands within the Uniacke Business Park; therefore, there is nothing MEH can do to restrict the use of salt on private lands within the Pockwock watershed portion of the Uniacke Business Park.</p> <p><b>West Lake Private Property Development</b></p> <p>BG reported speaking with MEH regarding a recent subdivision planned for a large private holding on the north shore of West Lake. RG confirmed that MEH received a tentative plan, which is still under review. No approvals have been issued.</p> <p>BG reported that the developer of this subdivision contacted Halifax Water asking to gain access across adjacent land owned by Halifax Water, to avoid crossing a large wetland at the front of their property. Discussions are ongoing.</p> <p>Jill reported that a wetland alteration application for this property has been made. No decision has been made.</p> <p>RG/MP confirmed that the lakeshore bylaws (discussed above under <i>General Discussion</i>) apply to this property and will come into effect for the lots developed along West Lake. This includes setbacks for dwellings and on-site sewage disposal systems (OSSDS).</p>		



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	<p>The Committee discussed OSSDS setbacks and whose responsibility it is to ensure proper installation. NSECC and municipalities have different OSSDS requirements; however, NSECC is responsible to issue the approval and to audit the installation, if required. The province wants the applicant to apply its “best-effort” when installing an OSSDS such that maximum protection is applied with respect to municipal and provincial requirements. For example, there are instances where pre-approved lots cannot meet the most current provincial or municipal requirements; therefore the “best-effort” is taken into consideration. The province relies on qualified installers to make the best decision in such instances.</p> <p><b><i>Uniacke Business Park Winter Maintenance Program</i></b></p> <p>BG reported speaking with the Department of Public Works (NSPW) who confirmed that they provide winter maintenance services for MEH in the Mount Uniacke area, including the Pockwock watershed portion of the Uniacke Business Park.</p> <p>NSPW advised that a lot of science and thought goes into developing and implementing a comprehensive winter maintenance program. They don’t just “dump” salt. Weather conditions, application of sand vs salt, amount of sand/salt applied per metre of road, truck availability, cost containment, safety requirements and service requirements are all included in these calculations.</p> <p>They are aware of the watershed and take it into consideration while fulfilling their service requirements. Halifax Water samples this location to monitor the impact of Highway 101 and will continue to monitor water quality and report any concerns/changes.</p> <p>BG indicated that NSPW is interested in providing a presentation to the Committee for educational purposes.</p> <p>RG indicated MEH would like to have someone from their operations group at the presentation.</p> <p>A special presentation was discussed. Halifax Water to follow up with NSPW and complete a doodle poll with the Committee members to determine a good time for a presentation.</p> <p><b><i>Mount Uniacke Secondary Planning Strategy</i></b></p> <p>RG reported that MEH has begun the process of developing a Secondary Planning Strategy for the Mount Uniacke area. MEH is planning discussions with Halifax Water and the Pockwock Management Committee.</p>		
Decision	BG to contact NSPW to set up a presentation on winter maintenance programming.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
MEH to discuss winter maintenance on private lands within the Uniacke Business Park of the Pockwock watershed.		LM/RG	Complete
Contact the Department of Public Works to meet and discuss alternatives to salt for winter maintenance within the Pockwock watershed for the Uniacke Business Park.		BG	Complete

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Follow up with NSPW to set up a presentation on winter maintenance program for the Mount Uniacke Area	BG	Special meeting
<b>6. Melvin Tract Lands</b>		
Discussion	<p><i>(March 9, 2023)</i> A tour of the watershed and Melvin Tract lands for Upper Hammonds Plains Community members is planned for this summer (2023).</p> <p>Gina inquired what Halifax Water’s emergency protocol is in the event of a chemical spill or similar event for the Pockwock WSP. The community has concerns with the recent increase in development and that there is only one way in and out of the community. How would the community be notified? Colin committed to meeting with the Upper Hammonds Plains Community separately to address their concerns.</p> <p>Jill requested that Halifax Water report any changes to the facilities’ contingency plans in its annual report to NSECC. Colin committed that any changes related to the facilities’ contingency plan would be made by Halifax Water Regulatory Services by the required date.</p> <p><i>(October 12, 2023)</i> BG confirmed that Halifax Water completed a tour of the watershed and Melvin Tract lands. Eight (8) members of Upper Hammonds Plains attended the tour.</p> <p>BG confirmed that Colin discussed Halifax Water’s emergency protocol for the Pockwock WSP with members of the Upper Hammonds Plains Development Association, separately.</p> <p>BG reported that the Upper Hammonds Plains Community Development Association and Halifax Water have decided to meet separately to discuss the Melvin Tract Lands and Tomahawk watershed as they do not fall within the boundary of the Pockwock Watershed Protected Water Area.</p>	
Decision	Remove from agenda. This is a separate matter for Halifax Water and the Upper Hammonds Plains community to discuss.	
Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline
1. Tour of watershed/Melvin Tract Lands.	BG/Colin	Complete
a. Remove from Agenda	BG	Next meeting
2. Meet with the Upper Hammonds Plain Community to discuss Halifax Water emergency protocol for Pockwock WSP.	Colin	Halifax Water responsibility
a. Remove from Agenda	BG	Next meeting
<b>7. Education / Awareness</b>		
<b>a. Newsletter and PSA</b>		
Discussion	BG reported that Halifax Water is currently rethinking its Corporate Communication Strategy, which will include source water protection.	

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	<p>BG inquired whether MEH provides information on the Pockwock watershed to new landowners who purchase land within the Pockwock watershed area of the Uniacke Business Park. RG indicated that MEH is not actively providing information other than what is already available through the zoning bylaws. MP indicated that such information is available during time of purchase.</p> <p>RG advised that any education relative to the watershed area, beyond the MEH bylaws, should be funneled through the Committee.</p>		
Decision	Provide update on Communications Strategy as it becomes available.		
Action Items		Person Responsible	Deadline
Update when necessary.			Ongoing

- 8. Election of Officers – Fall 2024**
- 9. Next meeting – Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 10am, Virtually via Microsoft Teams and in-person at 2 Park Avenue**
- 10. Adjournment – 11:57am – motion moved by RG, seconded by Anna**

*Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Barry Geddes*

