



WCA Annual General Meeting – MINUTES



Tuesday, March 11, 2025 @7:00pm – 8:30pm, online.

Meeting Participants: Approximately 18 WCA members attended the AGM, including board/committee members Gary Ataman (Chair), Bill Ness (Outings), Christopher Mayberry (Communications), Barb Young (outgoing Treasurer), Erik Thomsen (board member), Jeff Hayman (Website), Matt Eberly (CCR & WCA YouTube), and Tom Connell (Conservation / Secretary).

Agenda

1. Approve agenda and 2024 AGM minutes (Tom Connell)
2. Chairman's Message (Gary Ataman)
3. Committee reports:
 - a) Membership (Gary)
 - b) Nastawgan (Gary)
 - c) Treasurer Report WCA & CCR (Barb Young)
 - d) Outings (Bill Ness)
 - e) Communications (Chris Mayberry)
 - f) Conservation (Tom Connell)
 - g) Website (Jeff Haymer) and YouTube (Matt Eberly)
4. Election of directors (Tom)
5. Other new business
6. Adjourn Meeting



Note: AGM presentation material is included as an appendix to these minutes.

The meeting started at 7:05 with 16 members in attendance (fulfilling quorum requirements).

Gary welcomed everyone to the call and outlined the agenda.

1. Approve Agenda and 2024 AGM minutes (Tom Connell)

A motion to approve the agenda (Mayberry/Tobin) was carried without objection. A motion to approve the 2024 AGM minutes (Mayberry/Tobin) was carried without objection.

2. Chairman's Remarks Welcome (Gary Ataman)

Gary provided an overview of the WCA org chart, and introduced the various individuals holding different responsibilities. Gary's remarks provided a summary of the WCA's history, and an overview of core activities (outings, Nastawgan) and some specific initiatives underway, such as the recent sponsorship of Paddler Co-op, the website update, and the introduction of selective advertising in Nastawgan. Gary also recognized Kathy Turner (Treasurer) and Iori Miller (Nastawgan Editor) who have taken on new WCA roles. Thanks to predecessors Barb Young and Aleks Gusev for their contributions over many years in these roles.

3. Committee reports

(a) Membership (Gary Ataman)

Gary provided an overview of the current distribution of members by location, countries, provinces/states and guest members. See report for details.

(b) Nastawgan (Gary Ataman)

Gary provided an update on Nastawgan, and highlighted Iori's efforts to incorporate a diverse selection of content in each issue, and to re-establish the regular seasonal publishing cycle for the four annual issues of Nastawgan as spring, summer, fall and winter in the 03, 06, 09 and 12 months of the year.



(c) Treasurer Report WCA & CCR (Barb Young)

Barb (on behalf of current Treasurer Kathy Turner) provided an overview of the current financial situations of WCA and CCR. The position of WCA was determined by two more significant items: the Paddler Co-op contribution, and the website update project. The WCA's financial position have allowed the organization to proceed with both projects, while maintaining the WCA on a sustainable financial footing. Nastawgan production costs continue to be the most significant item in annual income statement. YouTube and advertising revenues have provided a modest but growing contribution to our operating performance. Barb also reviewed the financial report of CCR, and will remain treasurer of that affiliated organization. Barb acknowledged the assistance of Pat McGrail on tax arrangements. Motions to accept the financial report (Ness/Mayberry) and to waive the audit requirement (Mayberry/Tobin) passed without objection.

(d) Outings (Bill Ness)

Bill presented the Outings Committee report, and noted the ongoing post-Covid recovery of outings. The Outings Committee includes Bill Ness and Mary Perkins. 2025 is off to a good start based on the number of listings in the system currently. In response to a question, Bill welcomed the idea of more skills courses for WCA members. Bill observed that there is likely member appetite for additional flatwater outings, which are a lower share of total outings than whitewater. Members are also encouraged to suggest and/or arrange webinars. See the Outings Committee report for further details.

(e) Communications (Christopher Mayberry)

Christopher provided an overview of activities relating to the WCA's monthly round-up email bulletin. The bulletin has incorporated an expanding range of useful information and reminders of upcoming activities, and has maintained a stable click-through rate around 70%. Members are encouraged to continue to send content ideas to the Communications chair. Chris will be handing over these responsibilities to a successor to be determined. Members appreciate Chris's valuable efforts with Communications over the last two years.

(f) Conservation (Tom Connell)

In presenting his report, Tom encouraged WCA members to identify any local conservation-related issues they might get involved with, and consider having WCA take position or add its voice to any causes that may be reasonably connected to WCA areas of activity. Larry McHenry has taken an active role with the committee, and has engaged with a number of conservation groups, and highlighted issues relating to possible new hydro developments in Ontario and Quebec, as well as initiatives relating to indigenous-led conservation projects. A member mentioned a situation with the Mad River and the actions of certain groups that limit the navigability of the river in the Creemore area.



(g)(i) Website (Jeff Haymer)

Jeff provided an overview of ongoing maintenance issues relating to the WCA website (such as Nastawgan indexing, error messages, etc.), and described the project to update the website to the Drupal 10 platform from Drupal 6. The upgrade should generally improve the website performance, although it will not entail much in the way of visible changes to the website. The upgrade project is currently on-track to go live in May or June.

(ii) YouTube (Matt Eberly)

Matt provided an overview of WCA YouTube activity. The WCA currently has about 1,700 subscribers, with numbers growing consistently at one or two per day. Matt observed that the content caters primarily to people interested in getting information about trip routes, activities, etc., in contrast to some sites that might attract more followers through an emphasis on entertainment. That being said, it is popular among paddling sites, and serves the purpose of raising the profile of the WCA and attracting the interest of potential new members.

Matt suggested that the MyCCR website might be due for a significant refresh, and this was flagged as a topic for future WCA board discussion.

4. Election of Directors

The WCA by-laws contemplate six directors and a number of committee heads and similar roles (that may or may not be held by board members). Chris Mayberry, Terry Brayman and Gary Ataman indicated that they are ready to conclude their time on the board, and in Gary's case, his seven-year term as WCA chairman. The WCA thanks Gary, Chris, and Terry for their contributions, and Gary in particular for leading the organization very effectively, including through the challenges of the COVID period.

Three nominations were put forward for new board members: Melissa Lindsay, Larry McHenry, and Joe Tobin (see below for summary biographical details). The appointment of the three candidates to the board was confirmed by a vote of members. Joe agreed to take on the WCA chair role, with an orderly transition of those responsibilities from Gary. Gary plans to continue to serve as Membership Secretary. At the next board meeting, the specific allocation of board and committee roles will be finalized.

- Melissa (Mel) Lindsay – Mel is a trained psychotherapist and educator and also a seasoned paddling instructor and guide; she was a leader of the tripping program at Camp Kandalore, and is currently affiliated with Paddler Co-op and operates a private therapy practice.



- Larry McHenry -- Larry is a Mechanical Engineering Technologist (CET OACETT) by profession, and also an avid wilderness adventurer based in the Ottawa Valley, where he is actively engaged in multi-generational outdoor activities; he's a frequent participant in WCA paddling and webinar activities, and has an action-oriented interest in wilderness conservation, including as a member of WCA's conservation committee.
- Joe Tobin -- Joe serves in the Canadian Armed Forces as a Lieutenant-Colonel, and is currently the Commanding Officer of 4th Canadian Division Training Centre in Meaford, ON; Joe is a very active canoe tripper and whitewater paddler, and ran trips in 2024 on rivers including the Madawaska, Dumoine, and Petawawa.

Thanks, and welcome to the newly appointed WCA board members.

5. Other New Business

Matt introduced the topic of a possible upgrade to the MyCCR website, and potential WCA support for this project. Gary suggested that Matt create a statement of work, seek quotes to determine implementation cost of upgrade to website or creating a new website. This activity should first be reviewed with the CCR board.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was adopted at 8:30pm (Ataman/Mayberry).
