



Wintergreen Fund For Conservation

Wintergreen Fund for Conservation Member Information Handbook

The Chair and the Board of Directors of Wintergreen are very pleased that you have chosen to volunteer with the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation. Volunteers continue to play a critical role in the strengthening of our community. We hope that in sharing your skills, experience and dedication you will find the conservation opportunities with Wintergreen fulfilling and rewarding. The information in this handbook includes details about the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation and our expectations of our volunteers.

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to support our conservation goals.

What is Wintergreen Fund for Conservation?

The Wintergreen Fund for Conservation is a local, non-profit foundation made up of volunteers dedicated to the continued funding and support of community conservation initiatives. It is a charitable organization governed by the not-for-profit regulations of the Ontario Corporations Act.

Who is Wintergreen?

The people of Wintergreen are local citizens who have a keen interest in the conservation and protection of the environment. They appreciate the importance of having a clean and healthy environment within which to work and play.



What does Wintergreen do?

Wintergreen raises funds and organizes events in support of projects and programs that promote community conservation and enhance the local environment. We have contributed to initiatives such as the community recreational trail system, conservation promotion and education, and the beautification and greening of our community.

Wintergreen's Goals are:

- To encourage conservation education and environmental appreciation within the community.
- To raise funds, provide financial support and give charitable assistance to Mattagami Region Conservation Authority and other community organizations that share Wintergreen's ideals.
- To actively seek partnerships with community organizations, businesses and individuals to support new and existing projects and programs designed to enhance and protect our natural heritage and environment.
- To support those projects and programs that compliment community economic growth, including tourism, and are consistent with Wintergreen's Vision.

History

Wintergreen was established in 1997 in response to the Ontario government's funding cuts to Conservation Authorities across the province. Various programs focused on land and water conservation, environmental education, and outdoor recreation were no longer eligible to receive provincial financial support. In order to ensure that the Authority's role as a community conservation organization could continue, a local citizens committee consisting of several conservation-minded individuals from across the community



was established. Within a year, this group was successful in establishing the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation as a legal entity with a mandate to support and promote community conservation within the Mattagami and Porcupine watershed area. Over the years, the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation has been able to assist the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority in the development of a comprehensive community trail program, creation of conservation education materials including brochures and maps, and the implementation of an annual Scholarship for Environmental Conservation for local area students.

Committee Structure

The Wintergreen Fund for Conservation is structured and operated through its By-Law No. 1 (see Appendix A). The Board of Directors consists of three positions, a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Treasurer. Each Director of the Board is elected from the General Membership at the Annual Meeting. The positions are filled on a rotational basis for a period of three years. Two employees of the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority are also included as Officers and will act as Resources Liaison and Secretary.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in helping Wintergreen and consists of between 12 and 14 individuals. Members are selected from across the community. They are individuals who show a keen interest in the goals and objectives of Wintergreen Fund for Conservation and are representative of the many interest groups within the community. We encourage a diverse, multi-sector membership including representation from the general public, government and business, all age groups and all cultures. In order to ensure the continuity and growth of the organization, Wintergreen will encourage both the transfer of knowledge and the support of succession planning among its membership.

Members will volunteer their time and expertise in activities where they feel most comfortable. This can range from fundraising activities to developing conservation educational materials.

Individuals wanting to join Wintergreen should submit a letter of intent briefly outlining why they want to become a member. The Secretary will share the request with the general membership and if no vacancies are available, will keep the letter on file until a vacancy becomes available. Individuals will be asked if they want to be contacted as a volunteer to assist in Wintergreen activities.

Members who are regularly absent from meetings and do not actively participate in Wintergreen activities will be contacted by the Chair to determine whether or not they want to remain part of Wintergreen. If it is determined that the member is no longer interested in participating, they will be formally dropped from the membership and replaced. Any conduct or behaviour by a member that is not in keeping with the spirit of Wintergreen may also be grounds for dismissal.

High school students wishing to contribute to Wintergreen for their school volunteer hours may do so.

Meetings

Wintergreen meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m. at the MRCA office at Gillies Lake. Meetings may also take place electronically by videoconference or other available means. The Chair and/or the general membership may call supplemental meetings from time-to-time. Wintergreen's business is conducted following the rules and procedures as detailed in Wintergreen Fund for Conservation By-Law No.1. Robert's Rules of Order are applied to any situations not addressed in the By-Law. Meetings may take place without all members in attendance however quorum for any resolutions requires 50% of the membership plus one.

Administrative Support

The Mattagami Region Conservation Authority provides administrative support including, but not restricted to, maintaining records of Wintergreen's business (minutes, financial transactions, investments) and the co-ordination of media relations. All records and assets of the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation are kept at the offices of the MRCA.

- Draft Minutes are circulated to all members via e-mail no later than 10 days following any meeting. Members are required to submit any amendments to the Minutes no later than 5 days prior to the next General Meeting. Amended Minutes are then to be re-issued 3 days prior to the next General Meeting for final approval.
- A Financial Review of the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation is prepared each year. The auditor presents their report to the Board and Membership for review and approval.
- As required under the Ontario Corporations Act, all activities and charitable donations/receipts must abide by the specified regulations.

Community Relations and Messaging

Generally, the Chair is the spokesperson for the Wintergreen Fund for Conservation including news releases, media interviews, etc. We make every effort to include both Wintergreen members as well as all other participating parties and sponsors when media events are scheduled.

Wintergreen Fund for Conservation focusses all messaging on our efforts to assist community partners in furthering our goals and objectives as outlined in our Vision and Mission statement. Our expectation is that messaging will remain apolitical and non-controversial.

The Mattagami Region Conservation Authority promotes Wintergreen projects and activities through their social media sites. Wintergreen members work with MRCA staff in these social media efforts. This includes, but is not limited to, pictures and stories of Wintergreen events and projects.

Expenses Reimbursement

Any Wintergreen member who incurs expenses for participation in any event or project may be eligible for reimbursement of such costs upon approval through resolution by the general membership. Members are encouraged to seek funding approval prior to incurring any expenses.

Member/Volunteer Insurance and Harassment Policy

All members participating in any Wintergreen sanctioned event or project fall under the accident/liability insurance coverage of the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority. Wintergreen ensures that all identified insurance coverage protocols are met for each member prior to any activity. Wintergreen activities in the community often involve youth, and our membership strives to have youth representation. As such, Wintergreen



members will be required to have a Vulnerable Sector Check. Wintergreen submits an updated membership list to the Conservation Authority's insurance carrier each year.

Individuals identified as one-time volunteers are not covered by the Conservation Authority and as such would be required to sign a waiver and release of liability form prior to participating in any activities.

The Wintergreen Fund for Conservation is committed to an environment that is free from violence and harassment for all volunteers. Harassment is defined as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. Violence is defined as the exercise, or attempt to exercise physical force by a person that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker. It also includes a statement or behaviour that could reasonably be interpreted as a threat to exercise physical force that could cause physical injury. Violence and harassment by or against any Wintergreen member or volunteer will not be tolerated. Volunteers should report any issues to the Wintergreen Board of Directors.

Annual Activities Plan

Historically, members of Wintergreen have participated in community conservation using several different approaches. These include, but are not limited to, fundraising (selling raffle tickets in support of a particular project, meeting with potential community corporate sponsors, developing fundraising plans), volunteerism (planting trees, maintaining a community garden, guest speaking at a local area school, assisting with hiking events) and promotion (attending an information booth at a community event, attending a media event).

Some specific examples of what Wintergreen has supported in the past include:

- development of the community recreation trail network
- construction of the Gillies Lake Boardwalk and Promenade
- Scholarship for Environmental Conservation
- purchase of trail maintenance equipment
- publication of trail guides, maps and brochures
- support of conservation area improvements
- sponsoring and developing interpretive nature hikes



Wintergreen members will develop an Annual Activities Plan during the Annual Meeting; however, project suggestions can be received and adopted throughout the year. Wintergreen activities are tied closely with the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority; however, any community group or individual can request assistance provided the proposal aligns with Wintergreen's goals and objectives.

Specific project proposals to be considered by Wintergreen must be presented to the Members for review and approval. This submission will:

- identify the proposal's goals and objectives as they relate to Wintergreen,
- designate a project Chair and Vice-Chair,
- identify contributing parties or organizations,
- provide a budget outline and timeframe, and
- identify how the proposal meets all the legal and administrative requirements as set by Wintergreen.

2021 Board of Directors and General Membership

Chair: Mark Joron (2019-2022)
Vice-Chair: Scott Tam (2019-2021)
Treasurer: Kees Pols (2020-2021)
MRCA Resource Liaison: David Vallier
Secretary: Jennifer Bonsall

Members:

Claude Beaudin
Sylvie Côté
Jim Duncan
Joy Galloway
Jessica Kim
Michèle LePage
Crystal Percival
Laurent Robichaud
Sue Sorochan
Brenda Torresan
David Yaschyshyn



Garden Volunteers:

Denise Chartrand
Claire Delmonte
Nancy Guillemette
Eric Mascioli
Kees Pols
Sue Sorochan
Jo Szczebonski
AJ Zimmerman
Fran Zimmerman



Contact Information

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MattagamiRegionCA>

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