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**Monitoring the Moraine Stakeholders Meeting: Proceedings**  
**Garfield Weston Theatre**  
**Black Creek Pioneer Village**  
**Toronto, Ontario**  
**10:30am-4:00pm, June 28, 2005**

## Overview

On June 28, 2005, Citizens' Environment Watch (CEW), Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition (STORM) and the Centre for Community Mapping (COMAP) in collaboration with the Oak Ridges Moraine Stewardship Partnership Alliance held the inaugural Monitoring the Moraine Stakeholders Meeting. This meeting brought together over 40 participants representing local citizens' groups, non-government organizations, all three levels of government and the private sector to learn about the Monitoring the Moraine (MTM) project.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Introduce the MTM project and its objectives
- Gather feedback from experts in the field
- Begin the engagement process for a Monitoring Advisory Committee

During the morning session of the meeting, the MTM Steering Committee presented an overview of the project. The presentation is available at:

- <http://www.monitoringthemoraine.ca>
- [http://www.citizensenvironmentwatch.org/cew/MTM\\_Presentation\\_files/frame.htm](http://www.citizensenvironmentwatch.org/cew/MTM_Presentation_files/frame.htm)
- <http://www.comap.ca> ("MTM TRCA Presentation June 05" on the navigation bar)

The afternoon session was an opportunity for all participants to provide feedback on the project through an interactive "Interview Matrix" exercise. The results of this exercise, as well as a summary of the questions and comments taken from the floor during the day, have been compiled into the following set of proceedings. These proceedings will be used by the MTM Steering Committee to move forward and further develop the project in the coming months.





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## Next Steps

The MTM Stakeholder Meeting was a vital first step in promoting a truly collaborative project to strengthen efforts to protect the Moraine. The partners are now entering into the next phase of the project:

1. The establishment of an MTM Advisory Committee; and
2. Planning and carrying out Regional Consultation Meetings (with geographical representation across the Moraine) to gauge citizen interest in contributing to and participating in the project.

## Proceedings

The participant questions and comments have been summarized to highlight the key points from the meeting. Participant feedback has been grouped into the following categories:

- Monitoring Framework
- Collaboration & Gap Analysis
- Province, the Private Sector and NGOs
- Landowners
- Volunteers
- Quality Assurance & Proprietary Rights

## Monitoring Framework

There was unanimous agreement on creating a credible and integrative monitoring framework with consistent and comparable protocols that will produce scientifically defensible data to

further the objectives of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP).

Combining environmental and policy monitoring was recognized as an effective approach to bring about change. Environmental monitoring was acknowledged as a necessary adjunct to policy monitoring, particularly to assess the effectiveness of the ORMCP and its implementation for the review in 2014.





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While monitoring the compliance of the ORMCP is an important focus of the MTM Project, many recognized additional applications for environmental monitoring. There were several suggestions to widen the scale of the MTM Project to encapsulate the encompassing eco-region to which Oak Ridges Moraine belongs. A specific suggestion was to include entire watersheds from source to sink. Overall, the MTM Project was acknowledged as an initiative with an immense amount of potential.

Participants stressed the importance of carefully constructing the monitoring framework as it is the backbone for the MTM Project. The framework construction should be a unified effort from the government, all stakeholders, organizations and communities in order to achieve a shared vision and ensure coordination. The framework should be designed to:

- Bring diverse groups together and coordinate their efforts
- Establish the roles of all its players on all levels (local, regional and provincial)
- Expand the monitoring scope, identify gaps and overlaps, strengths and weaknesses
- Provide guidelines for protocol selection, data collection and management to ensure compatibility and confidence in the data
- Facilitate information sharing and ownership of the results with participants
- Link the local efforts to a bigger picture
- Be assessable and understandable to everyone involved
- Engage and educate the volunteers
- Provide general guidelines that can be built upon in future years

## Collaboration & Gap Analysis

There was an overall agreement that the project should be based on collaboration and partnerships between government agencies, stakeholders, the private sector, landowners, and volunteers. The challenge will be to have all the parties agree to a same set of principles. An inventory of the existing activities on the moraine must be compiled to avoid duplication and conflict, and promote coordination. The MTM Project needs to recognize these existing initiatives and learn from their experiences. Partnerships will be necessary to make better use of limited resources. The roles of all parties must be





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identified at all scales so they can make meaningful and practical contributions the MTM Project.

## The Province, the Private Sector & NGOs

Participants agreed that the province and the private sector should contribute funding, information, advice, and some form of structural framework and organization. NGOs should help fill any gaps, provide objectivity from the government and the private sectors, and obtain ground-level information from current monitoring efforts. They are a rallying point for citizens.

## Landowners

As 91% of the moraine belongs to private landowners, it is essential to have their support. Given their vested interest in their land, landowners will be an important source of volunteers. There are concerns, however, about engaging new volunteers. The messaging of the MTM Project needs to be sensitive to the landowners because the network of groups associated with the project may appear intimidating and bureaucratic, and deter landowner participation. They need to feel empowered and there needs to be a balance between ownership of their land and stewardship on their land. There are simple ways to get them involved and satisfy this balance, i.e. a spatially extensive survey along a watershed that is completed by landowners over one to two days.

## Volunteers

A major challenge in the MTM Project will be engaging and sustaining volunteers, especially young people. There has been a misconception that the need for citizen involvement on the Oak Ridges Moraine was relieved with enactment of provincial legislation. Another issue is that of monitoring versus stewardship: with volunteers as a limited resource, is their participation in monitoring going to divert them from stewardship projects? With the engagement of existing citizen scientists, there must be clear and simple rules on how the data they collect will be disseminated. Clarifying this process is important to assure volunteers that the data will be contributing to a larger unified picture and not supporting one side over another.





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## Quality Assurance & Property Rights

Questions arose concerning the quality assurance of the monitoring data. Quality assurance should be built into the monitoring framework. If information will be posted on a common map on the World Wide Web, its validity is crucial to prevent misinformed communication. Given that the MTM Project will be a collaborative effort among many partners, the property rights of the data must be considered and incorporated into the overall framework.

### INTERVIEW MATRIX PRESENTATIONS

During the Interview Matrix exercise, participants were split into groups of four. Each person in a group was assigned one of the following questions developed by the MTM Steering Committee prior to the meeting:

1. Identify three strengths and weaknesses of the approach to Monitoring the Moraine presented during the morning session.
2. Is there value in developing a set of monitoring design principles and a Monitoring the Moraine Framework? Please explain your answer.
3. What role do you see others (NGOs, government, private sector) playing the Monitoring the Moraine initiative?
4. What role do you see citizen volunteers having in the Monitoring the Moraine initiative?

Each person was given a notepad and was instructed to act a reporter in a series of six interviews (three as the interviewer recording answers on the notepad and three as the interviewee providing answers). Each participant had the same amount of time to provide feedback on each of the four questions.

After all interviews were completed, everyone was reorganized onto four groups according to their assigned question number. Each of the four large groups summarized the information collected for their question, developed a news story based on participant feedback and presented the story to the entire group. The final news stories presented by the groups are included below:



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*Question 1. Identify three strengths and weaknesses of the approach to Monitoring The Moraine presented during the morning session.*

**Caption: Monitoring the Moraine Plan full of holes!**

Monitoring The Moraine ponders the roles of citizens. Who will use the data? Will the data be useful and used in the long run? At the 10-year review period will there be community support for these policies? We need to monitor the pulse of the community, not just the ecological process. Right now, the attitudes of some property owners are negative. There are not enough incentives for some of them to be involved and where are the property owners in this monitoring process?

A number of weaknesses were established at this meeting. How do you manage the collaboration of partnerships and avoid turf wars? How do you manage the lack of buy-in of communities if it is not adequately communicated to them? How do you ensure that the science is valid, that the data has power, and that the experts do not collect it? How do you ensure that the respect is given to the individuals who are collecting the data? The program needs to be designed by professionals. Individuals need to be trained appropriately and proper respect needs to be given to the monitoring process. There are problems in maintaining consistency. People need to be trained, interested, and there needs to be consistency. How do you deal with turnover and sustainability? Big problems are a lack of dollars, staff time, and lots of energy and resources are needed. Will this deterrent take away from other resources that are used in other NGOs and monitoring programs across Ontario? We assume the framework of which the hierarchical monitoring should occur. It assumes that citizen-based monitoring should not be a surrogate for funded scientific government research and monitoring programs. There needs to be long-term management of data collected. Does it make sense to have ecological monitoring of a geological area? Do we have consistent base-line data to begin with? How do you address the difficulty of moving from a theoretical to a practical approach for volunteers?

On the other hand, a number of strengths were identified. Bringing community groups in large numbers can provide more data across the moraine. The Monitoring the Moraine project maintains the grassroots awareness of the plan. How effective is the plan? There will be an integration of ecological and policy review. There is great value in learning from this new model of working together and hopefully we can build on the strengths and





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the weaknesses of this work in process right here today. Stakeholders and grassroots need to be committed to this process. They already are committed, but how do we keep them involved and how do we move forward to 2014? We felt the technology can be an extremely useful tool for compiling all the data. We need to engage the citizens in the environment, educate and empower them to support the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan. We need to make sure the government follows through on their commitments. There is an accumulation of collective partner wisdom in this room and throughout the moraine. We can feed on that, help it develop and grow. We need the province to put the money where their mouth is and for everyone to stay involved.

*Question 2. Is there value in developing a set of monitoring design principles and a Monitoring The Moraine Framework? Please explain your answer.*

**Caption: Community monitoring at long last comes to the Oak Ridges Moraine!**

On June 28, a group of individuals representing community representatives and government agencies gathered together to discuss monitoring principles and framework that would follow across the moraine. It was a unanimous consent that this was a very needed project and that the Oak Ridges Moraine would benefit from this exercise. There is an expressed need to maintain consistency, not only with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, but also at all levels, and amongst the diverse groups and the different communities there. Volunteers will be trained to carry out appropriate science-based monitoring, and the data will be collected in a systematic credible manner. The idea is to achieve a shared vision and ownership of this project.

The principles would improved the shared vision, but adopt a standardized procedure of consistent recording of results and communications with various partners in monitoring. The framework will include a provincial, municipal, and local hierarchy, monitoring requirements, specific roles for community groups and recording. Funding is also a prerequisite of this exercise. The bottom line is the Oak Ridges Moraine can provide a case study for the importance of monitoring in general and to support creating a balance in environmental stewardship and sustainability.





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*Question 3. What role do you see others (NGOs, government, private sector) playing in the Monitoring The Moraine initiative?*

**Caption: The provincial government, local NGOs, and private sector partners have banded together to create pot of gold at the end of the Morainebow (fresh air, clean water, healthy ecosystems)**

The provincial government pledged scientific leadership, in-kind contributions and keeping citizens informed about what they should be monitoring.

STOP (as in the telegram days)

NGOs will share their information with each other and bring theory into practice.

STOP

Various private sector companies will provide in-kind funding such as lab space and consultants.

STOP

*Question 4. What role do you see citizen volunteers having in the Monitoring The Moraine initiative?*

**Caption: Citizen volunteers fill the gap in moraine protection!**

Citizen scientists are participating in the development, implementation, and monitoring program of the Oak Ridges Moraine eco-region. Never before have so many attempted to monitoring so much with so little. Citizens are working with the government to define the principles and roles of all partners involved. Citizens will be collecting in the field, monitoring the effectiveness of the moraine plan and the greenbelt, and will be educating themselves and other while continually building relationships with the space, communities and future generations.

