



Strategic Plan

2021-2024



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Overview

The board of directors of the Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed contracted the services of Campbell Consulting to facilitate a three-year strategic plan to establish priorities to improve the Porcupine River Watershed. Funding for this initiative was provided by The Venture Centre.

Board members included in the strategic planning:

Brenda Torresan
Angie Corson
Roxane Fillion
Karlie Maki
Meaghan Stringer
Rick Cecconi
Cristina Colantonio
Kaileigh Russell
Michel Emile Dupuis

In March and April of 2021, the board collectively established over forty action items to improve the watershed. These action items were categorized into the following pillars:

1. Porcupine Watershed Research in Action
2. Porcupine Lake Community Engagement
3. Get to Know the Porcupine River Watershed
4. Destination Porcupine River Watershed

The following plan is recommended as a tool for the board of directors to guide implementation of these priorities over the next three years.

Governance

Good governance means that processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. The concept of efficiency in the context of **good governance** also covers the sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of the environment.

Good governance is the key to building strong sustainable organizations. Board members should collectively be mindful of the need to practice good governance. The board of the Friends of The Porcupine River Watershed is encouraged too:

- Continually look for opportunities to build board capacity
 - Roles of the Chair
 - Board Structure
 - Policies & Procedures
 - Project Management
- Ongoing review of by-laws
 - Create a standing item on agenda – start of each meeting – max 10 min discussion
 - Review one by-law per meeting - 12 meetings/year – 12 by-laws reviewed/year
 - Create a by-law review schedule aligned with board meeting schedule

These are recommendations only, incorporating these practices are completely up to the board of directors and not mandatory.

Implementation of Strategic Priorities

Suggested structures to implement strategic priorities:

1. Align board positions with strategic priorities
 - Porcupine Watershed Research in Action – Research Position
 - Porcupine Lake Community Engagement – Events Coordinator
 - Get to Know the Porcupine River Watershed – Awareness Position
 - Destination Porcupine River Watershed – Special Projects Position

Each board position will lead one pillar of the strategic plan. Newly formed positions should include a terms of reference that describes the position and the volunteer commitment. It is the role of each position to lead, coordinate and report back to the board. Not recommended to create new board positions, but a re-alignment of board positions if possible.

2. Committee-based structure
 - Establish skills sets required to implement each pillar
 - Create stakeholder list for each pillar
 - Build committee structure based on these requirements
 - Chair of each committee should be a board member

This approach allows for non-board members to be involved in implementing priorities without the commitment of being a board member.

Several strategic plans have never seen the light of day simply due to poor planning on how to implement. The first step in implementing the items within this plan is discussing among the board how they want to proceed taking into account the level of commitment each board member wants to contribute towards implementation.

1. Porcupine Watershed Research in Action

The following guiding documents are to assist the Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed in determining the current state of the watershed as well as recommendations to remediate areas that require attention.

Porcupine Lake and River Study – Mattagami Region Conservation Authority – 1978

<https://friendsoftheporcupineriverwatershed.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/1978-01-Porcupine-Lake-River-Study-by-Acres-Consulting-Services-Ltd-fo....pdf>

The Porcupine River Remedial Action - Plan Stage One Report – Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed

<https://friendsoftheporcupineriverwatershed.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Porcupine-River-Watershed-Remedial-Action-Plan-Stage-1-Report.pdf>

The Porcupine River Watershed Remedial Action Plan – Stage 2 Report – Friends of The Porcupine River Watershed

<https://friendsoftheporcupineriverwatershed.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Porcupine-River-Watershed-Remedial-Action-Plan-Stage-2-Report-final.pdf>

Porcupine River Study (1998 - 2000) Effluent Sources and Nutrient Monitoring – Ministry of Environment

Link from website

Other Research

In consultations with Newmont, they have extensive research conducted on the Porcupine Watershed and Porcupine Lake. Other mining companies have indicated they have research as part of their environmental obligations to working within the watershed.

The Ministry of Natural Resources also has research on the Porcupine River Watershed and Porcupine Lake.

1.1 Porcupine River Watershed Remedial Action Plan #3

One of the outstanding matters concerning FPWR is the current environmental state of the watershed and what is required to remediate. It is recommended the board produces their own study which will take into account all previous and existing stakeholder research. This study will address gaps in research and produce a remediation plan for the entire Porcupine River Watershed.

Step 1

Meet with all stakeholders – present concept of developing a new study – seek financial commitment through partnerships

Step 2

Create working committee to oversee the building of a new Porcupine River Watershed Remedial Action Plan – ensure committee has environmental expertise to assist in guiding the committee appropriately

Step 3

Build a Request for Proposal (RFP) to contract professional services with scope of work to include:

- Environmental review of all existing research/studies
- Provide recommendations on research gaps
- Cost to address research gaps identified above
- Conduct gaps in research
- Build remediation plan
- Partnership with stakeholders to address future issues (beaver dams, weed growth, etc)
- Mapping of the watershed area
- Community consultation - groups, residents, ministries, mines, city, MRCA, etc
- Education and Awareness plan
- Things to consider – how has the watershed changed over the past 50 years, why did it change, how can we prevent any negative future change
- More fish studies and animal studies can show what has happened and how it can be improved

This RFP is to be built and issued in collaboration with stakeholders that have experience and expertise in procuring professional services. It is critical the scope of work is clearly articulated and represents all work to be conducted.

The newly formed Porcupine River Watershed Remedial Action Plan will form the basis of all future remedial work, direction on development and land/water use within the watershed. Different from previous studies, this new study will be the guiding document on all components of the watershed to be healthy and safe for community use.

2. Get to Know the Porcupine River Watershed

The 2021 Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed Three Year Strategic Plan will set the course of action for the next three years. These actions need to be shared with all stakeholders and partners need to be formed in order for successful implementation. Stakeholders include:

- Community Residents
- City of Timmins
 - Planning Department
 - Mayor and Council
 - Ward 2 & Ward 4 Councillors
- Mattagami Region Conservation Authority
- Mining Companies
- First Nations
- Forestry Companies
- Northern College

2.1 Increase Community Engagement

Building awareness of the efforts to make Porcupine Lake and the Porcupine River Watershed a better place is a high priority for FPRW. The newly developed Remedial Action Plan (as per above) and associated recommendations need to be shared with community residents.

With a plan in place and remedial actions set to take place, community residents need to know what is happening. Utilize the existing Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed Facebook group to share all research, upcoming remedial work, clean up programs, etc. Interviews with stakeholders, videos can be posted regularly to keep community residents updated. Use the Facebook group as a forum for continued dialogue. One board member to manage Facebook group and provide responses – not all board.

Start building content through pictures, events, video, interviews etc. that can be used for future social media posts. Pre-planning is key due to seasons and posting relevant content. Developing a social media strategy may seem intimidating but it is simply about posting relevant content at relevant times. Developing a social media strategy is encouraged.

The Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed website is in great shape and should continue to be used as a one-stop shop for all information on the watershed and lake. Be sure to include the website address in all social media efforts.

For reaching stakeholder groups not on Facebook, create two newsletters per year. Information about FPRW current projects, goals, positive content, benefits, wildlife, etc. No more than 2 pages. Be sure to cross promote, facebook presence, website, etc.

Future consideration – develop Porcupine River Watershed Guardian Team – volunteer based – role is to monitor activity within the watershed and report accordingly to FPRW. Finding ways of encouraging members to volunteer or squads of volunteer groups for different sections of the watershed. Great opportunity to create community by engaging with each other and the land. Signage around the watershed would both create awareness to recruit volunteers and to those considering harmful impacts to the watershed that people are watching – similar to that of community watch programs.

2.2 Stakeholder Engagement with Mining Companies

The mining companies are the main industrial stakeholders working within the watershed. FPRW has had the mines as partners since its inception. Efforts need to continue to involve them in decision making and efforts to improve the watershed. Suggestions include:

- Continual involvement in FPRW and PLC meetings
- Share environmental practices of mining companies working in the watershed on FPRW website
- Host public meetings with mining companies for community interactions
- Add 'Mining Activity in Porcupine River Watershed' section on website – to highlight mining activity happening on the ground

It is envisioned these mining companies will provide both financial and human resources to implement the priorities within this strategic plan. Continued effort to build stronger relations is recommended.

The Public Liaison Committee (PLC) for the Porcupine River Watershed brings together all stakeholders associated with the Porcupine River Watershed. This committee is fundamental to building awareness of all activity in the watershed. FPRW strongly supports the ongoing participation of this group and will continue to bring forward matters to this group for the betterment of the watershed. The board would like to acknowledge the importance of this committee and the critical role it plays in bringing together stakeholders for the betterment of the watershed.

2.3 Partnership Development with Northern College

In 2020, FPRW created a proposal for funding with Northern College which unfortunately was not successful. This effort stimulated partnership considerations with Northern College which should not be lost. Initiatives within this proposal can still be implemented:

- Meeting with Northern College – continue dialogue
- Northern College representative interested in sitting as a board member with FPRW

- Review funding partnership initiatives – rank projects that are still viable:
 - Environmental course for college – continued research on watershed
 - Healing Garden in partnership with Indigenous Nations
 - Updated work on the NC trail section of Porcupine Lake
 - Floating Islands
 - Construction projects could be done by the carpentry classes
 - Surveying class design plans for projects
- Build commitment for continued partnerships
- Fall event at the start of school year: partner with NC "Welcome to Porcupine Lake" walk for international students and other groups of students that would benefit from this. Just small groups - walk, enjoy, appreciate, learn.

Partnership could come in various forms:

- Formal relationship with staff/departments
- Student groups
- Northern College newsletter

2.4 Outreach on Environmental Education

FPRW would like to create more awareness of environmental practices contributing to a healthier Porcupine River Watershed.

Initiatives include:

- First FPRW BioBlitz August 2021 - People will only respect and protect what they love and understand. Small, educational events will develop a new respect for the area's habitat
- Re-establishing the milkweed patch destroyed during the construction of the 2 overflow units on Porcupine Lake
 - FPRW collaboration (Timmins horticultural society, Wintergreen, schools) to replant milkweed patch
 - Turn it into a registered, dedicated Monarch waystation, using volunteers and seeds from Porcupine Lake's two other large patches
- Promote iNaturalist project with a video
- Yellow Fish Road
- Water Rangers – water testing
- Annual Spring Clean – create branded vests for volunteers
- Biannual Newsletter
- Public safety and awareness of recreational use
- Public Liaison Committee – Annual Public Forum

3. Porcupine Lake – Community

Efforts to build greater awareness of the ‘Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed’ and their objectives include:

3.1 More Visible Branding

- Placemats in restaurants
- Design and create logo for specific events & partnerships
- Button specific for events on website
- Logo Design Contest - new FPRW sticker, events, partnerships, get the community involved – kids, families, etc.
- FPRW Merchandise – shirts, hoodies, hats, made locally in South Porcupine (Skoser) with for events like the clean-up, nature walks, etc. – sold on website/events
 - Consider quality merchandise for resale to maintain positive brand awareness

3.2 Porcupine River Watershed Photography Contest

- Host various wildlife photography contests from the Porcupine River Watershed
 - Welcome Back Spring Contest
 - Fall/Spring Migrations
 - Animals of the Watershed
 - Animals of Porcupine Lake
 - Best Action Shot
 - Best Landscape
 - Video/Drone Footage
- Contest Rules
 - Color or B&W
 - Professional or Amateur
 - All species big and small
 - Time of year taken
 - Closing date, draw date, winner announcements
 - Adult or youth – could be all ages
 - Have multiple categories – more winners
- Approval to post public on the FPRW website and social media pages
- Contest to be within watershed
- Require permissions for photo use - check box approval disclaimer online entry form
- Form a committee within FPRW to oversee contests

- Find prize sponsors in kind or financial or supported by FPRW funds
- Find and add names of judges outside of the FPRW board - professional photographers
- Awareness of contest
- Find a public place to display the photography (Timmins Library, Maurice Laundry Hall, Whitney Arena, Northern College, RMSS, Carlo Cattarello Arena, City Hall)
- Thank you cards to everyone who entered
- Try to have it recognized by a Canada Outdoors Magazine
- Evaluate and adjust for future contests

3.3 Promotional Jingle

In order to create awareness of all the amazing things FPRW are involved with, efforts towards 'building a brand' is required. In an attempt to establish brand recognition, develop a short (.30 second) musical jingle to be the recognized tune associated with FPWR and all their efforts.

- Create a contest to develop the jingle
 - Message meets objectives of the friends
- Consult local radio stations for free air time
 - Promotion of contest
 - Share winning jingle
- Promote to all local area bands, schools, Timmins Festival & Events Committee, Timmins Symphony
- Contest Rules
 - All music accepted, all bands and single performers accepted
- Establish group for selection of winner
 - Timelines and contract (time length for accepted Jingle)
- To play on radio, events, website and all social media channels

3.4 Benefits of Volunteering

The initiatives and work outlined in this strategic plan will require a great deal of human resources. Continued effort to recognize volunteers and recruitment will be ongoing. Develop a series of videos aimed to respect, manage and nurture volunteerism for all initiatives associated to helping out the Porcupine River Watershed:

- Feature local people
 - Share commitment to watershed and Porcupine Lake
 - Share love for the lake
 - Why do you want to make it better
 - Personal volunteering experiences from community members
 - Why do you volunteer
 - What motivates you to volunteer
 - What are the rewards of volunteering
 - Who can mentor volunteers

- Spring Clean ups with 100+ residents – good time to conduct interviews
- Need someone with video experience (Near North Video Productions)
- Make it accessible on the web site and social medias
- Review process for improvements once completed
- Three age groups, seniors, teens, youth, - 10 second scripted clip – 30 seconds in total – need script written

4. Destination Porcupine River Watershed

The Porcupine River Watershed is a dynamic ecological environment that offers lots of potential for recreational use. When considering capital improvements, all considerations should aim to be fully accessible, use products and items that are naturalized and have an environmental stream for the safety of the Porcupine Watershed and Porcupine Lake. Planning should include but not limited to:

- Design to avoid vandalism
- Ongoing maintenance requirements – roles and responsibilities – succession plan
- Useful life
- Zero impact to environment
- Operational Costs

4.1 Birding Destination of the North - Porcupine River Watershed

- Guided audio tour
- Promote local birds and local birding spots within the watershed (website, newsletter, social media, etc)
- Develop viewing areas in key locations – information boards
- Binocular Lending Program – Partnership with South Porcupine/Timmins Library
- Partnership with Tourism Timmins – contact Tourism Co-ordinator
- Promote e-birding registry
- Get community members to fall in love with birds and wildlife first
 - Lead introductory bird walks to develop a love for birds (and butterflies, etc)
- Consideration: Dome pumphouse retrofitted as birding lookout

4.2 Paddling Route from Porcupine Lake to Nighthawk Lake

The opportunity to create a paddling product for community residents and tourists exists between Porcupine Lake, Nighthawk Lake and Frederick House Lake. These are historical fur trading routes rich in history and significant water courses that played host to the 1909-1911 Porcupine Gold Rush.

The intent of this initiative includes:

- Mapping of canoe routes
- GPS points of interests
 - Distances
 - Rapids
 - Campsites
 - Historical Sites
 - Indigenous Areas of Significance

- Mining History/ Fur Trading Routes/Posts
- Wildlife Viewing areas
- Current mining activities

Suggested implementation

- Partnership development – MRCA, MNRF, City of Timmins, FPRW, local residents
- Permit approval
- Clean up river and mapping (weed removal)
- Campsite development
- Signage developed
- Incorporate MTO rest area at Nighthawk Lake bridge (possible improvements – showers)
- Website development – one-stop-shop for all information on routes (mapping, safety)
- Tourism Timmins – Marketing promotion

Considerations

- Weekend Warrior Projects – campsite development – volunteer work – river clean ups
- Media tour with lead instructor (Timmins Adventure Tours)
 - CTV, RADIO, and CBC Radio, social media influencers
- Possible naming of Paddling Route - "Follow a Fur Traders Adventure from Porcupine Lake to Night Hawk Lake"
- Canoe/Kayak Rental Service on the lake – Northern College – Bait Me Tackle
- Explore youth initiatives to assist with development – Stewardship Youth Ranger Program
- Establish Porcupine River Watershed Geocaches – located in areas of significance – Mark Joron is active in this effort
- Paddle races on Porcupine Lake and canoe route

4.3 Shoreline Remedial Work

Two shoreline review exercises took place during the development of this strategic plan. Building this plan and collaborating on Newmont offsetting options due to the expansion of waste mine rock piles. Through those efforts it was determined there is considerable remedial work along the shorelines of Porcupine Lake and throughout the watershed. The areas of concern raised include:

- Northern College to Ratcliffe Air Base
- Bristol Road to Porcupine Boat Launch
- Porcupine River Inlet near old town shops
- Bob Creek Inlet

Note: Northern College to Ratcliff was determined as the area of highest priority for remedial work by FPRW

It is recommended FPRW conduct an audit within their board and in consultation with key stakeholders to determine all shoreline remedial work that is required and from a cost-effective perspective, attempt to complete all remedial work within one project plan.

4.4 Trail Development

In partnership with the City of Timmins and the Mattagami Region Conservation Authority, trail enhancement and development around Porcupine River and Porcupine Lake. The following initiatives have been identified by FPRW for implementation:

- New Trail from Ratcliff to Tisdale street trail
 - Avoid walking on roads
 - Two bridges
 - Possible boardwalk style trail
- New Trailhead located adjacent to Ratcliffe Air Base
 - Current green space
 - Paved parking lot
 - Signage
 - Incorporate Birding Destination Signage
 - Considerations:
 - Bill Barilko Tribute (statue)
 - Bannerman
 - Fire of 1911
- Connect Ross Stringer trail to lake trail system
 - Follow Porcupine River Shoreline to new trail from Ratcliffe to Tisdale

Considerations for trail development:

- Appropriate planning with MRCA to follow trail development standards
- Funding – mining companies, government grants, MRCA, City of Timmins
- Improve trail signage with same look and feel of new city signs
 - Include points of interest
 - Type of forests
 - Spawning areas
 - Mining history
- Manitoulin Forest Pathway Model as possible framework to resemble
- New mapping of trail network – include on website

Other considerations brought forward for consideration:

- Extended docks at White Water Park boat launch
- Improved fishing boardwalk by Airport Hotel – St. Mary's River Sault Ste Marie fishing piers
- Water Fountain Porcupine River Bridge and Whitewater Park
- Boat launch improvements – can only unload 14-foot boat max

- Identify areas for possible commercial and residential development
- Billboards promoting FPWR situated in key locations within the watershed
- Fish Hatchery on Lake – possible partnership with first nation

Summary

Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed is a not for profit (for public benefit) organization founded in November 2014. The main goal of the organization is to offer public support and further enhancements to the Porcupine River Watershed Remedial Action Plan.

The initiatives identified within this plan are not to be solely implemented by Friends of the Porcupine River Watershed. More so, the board of the friends will aim to forge partnerships to implement the strategic priorities identified in this plan. The continued ecological and recreational growth of the Porcupine River Watershed does not solely lie with the friends but with all the stakeholders identified within this plan that work, study and play in the watershed. Within some initiatives, the FPRW may be a stakeholder at the table as opposed to leading initiatives.

The first priority for implementation should be the re-development of the Porcupine River Watershed Remedial Action Plan. This plan will form the basis of future remedial projects and a guiding document for any form of work commencing within the watershed.

Public consultation and stakeholder engagement of the initiatives identified in the plan are critical components to the overall success of implementation and for the most part, people will not commit to reading a long technical report. In an effort to communicate effectively with all, it is suggested a 3D virtual rendering of all proposed work is created similar to Goldcorp's rendering of the future of Hollinger Pit. This could include layers of the various work so users can see each component of the proposed improvements (i.e. shoreline riparian work, trail development, etc).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nm27fvBsV2M&t=176s>

To all stakeholders with interest in the Porcupine River Watershed, this plan is made for you and in order for the initiatives to be successfully implemented, it will require your assistance in one capacity or another. The board of directors of the Friends of The Porcupine River Watershed are volunteers and are commended for taking the lead to develop a plan to improve the watershed but the overall success of this plan lies with the stakeholders in this plan.