

Mackfest Briefing Final version for KWP Board Review

MACKFest is a whitewater canoe kayak festival taking place in the Marmora, Madoc area of Central Ontario, where 200 tourists come to paddle rivers adjacent to Highway 7, during Spring run-off. MACKFest has run for over 10 years, under the organization of Kawartha Whitewater Paddlers (KWP). The following briefing note is to be transparent in review of MACKFest funding, research and actions taken.

Since the inception of MackFest in 2007, the primary organizer advised the provincial sports association, Whitewater Ontario, of its intention. Whereupon WO communicated to the general public, that any surplus funds raised from Mackfest will be used to:

1. support local charity
2. donate funds to WO (first for operation and in future river advocacy)
3. provide funds to the paddling community

Starting in 2008, KWP was fully responsible for organizing MACKfest, supported by WO.

A new Board of Directors was elected in November 2017, and began a review of finances and programs. One action was to evaluate the effectiveness of KWP meeting our commitments of these 3 objectives.

Historical Context

With limited information provided to the new board, research was drawn from internal records, bank statements, contacting Trillium Foundation, Whitewater Ontario, Marmora Tourism and local government offices, and independent conversations with KWP members for historical input and accuracy.

1. We believe WO partnered with KWP to secure the start-up funds, and managed these funds initially for KWP.
2. We have not been able to confirm the source of the original Mackfest funding (\$2500 to \$5000 depending on who you ask).
3. Trillium Foundation has no record of funding WO as the applicant, or Mackfest as an event.
4. In March 2009, MackFest sent \$800 to WO who assigned it to a specific budget line titled "MACKFest".
 - a. Another deposit was made May 20, 2010 of \$6073.60 to WO who assigned it again to same budget line.
 - b. Balance WO budget line "Mackfest" was \$6873.60.

5. In 2010, WO, who had held all of the Mackfest monies, returned Mackfest funds to KWP for the club to administer as per their original objectives and to gain the benefit from future profits generated.
 - a. October 23, 2010, \$ 6073.60 (cheque # 1418) was transferred back to KWP.
 - b. \$800 was left in WO line item.
 - c. In Feb.2014, WO issued payment of \$346 to AWA for advertising MackFest. This left \$454.15.
 - d. April 12, 2017, WO transferred remaining balance \$454.15 (e-transfer) back to organizers.

6. A portion of funds raised from raffles at the event, is donated. As per past and current email communication, the KWP board believes we are under an obligation to donate a portion of Mackfest funds, based on that past practice and commitment to sponsors.

7. Marmora Tourism communicated with local businesses (September 2018) and found the Festival is highly regarded as source of tourism and financial impact. Their collective estimate is 150-200 people come to their community from Montreal, Ottawa, Petawawa, Peterborough, Toronto, Guelph and other parts of Ontario. Between groceries, restaurants, coffee shops, and accommodations, Marmora Tourism estimates the direct economic impact of MackFest for that 1 weekend event is \$20,000-30,000. This does not include any follow-up tourism by individuals who may return on their own at later dates.

The KWP Board has determined that the 3 objectives had varying degrees of success. Support of local retailers and sponsors has worked out; a donation had been made to Easter Seals Society in year 1 of MackFest, two subsequent donations were made to support local foodbanks and renovations to the Queensborough Community Centre. For the 3rd objective, the KWP board considered there was a better way to meet River Advocacy Objective.

There was no advocacy project identified for the Marmora area. The only river advocacy projects underway were: 1) Ottawa River Access, 2) Surf Cambridge Project, and 3) the Gull River Rehabilitation and Restoration Project.

In reviewing the one project close to Peterborough, KWP Board considered 3 main points:

- A. That the Minden Whitewater Preserve appears to have become the most frequently and consistently used section of river by current KWP members.
- B. The Gull River Restoration and Rehabilitation project will benefit other clubs beyond KWP, such as GKC, PRR, and other non-members who attend MackFest.
- C. there are 2 land access agreements that WO representatives set up for crossing private properties to enable MackFest paddlers. There is a cost of \$400 per year. Since those agreements have started, they are paid 100% by the WO Advocacy Fund. There are no records or recollection of

MackFest contributing to these costs. At this point, no further access issues had been identified in the Central Ontario area.

In January 2018, to ensure the proposal of supporting the Gull River Rehabilitation and Restoration project met the KWP memberships view of the club's mission, all current members were surveyed via private email using a survey site.

- . 83 percent of our surveyed members supported donating to the Gull

In Spring 2018, we approached WO President and Gull River Committee to confirm guidelines for funding and ensure monies were going to river improvements vs other non-river projects (campground etc). It was confirmed all monies assigned to Gull River would be going to expenses for project materials, and heavy equipment only.

Given all the above rationale, the KWP Board moved forward with a \$3000 cheque donated on behalf of KWP to Whitewater Ontario for the Gull River Rehabilitation and Restoration Fund.

While KWP endorses the original objectives of MackFest, it is viewed that more can be done in Advocacy, supporting Mamora area youth community. KWP reached out to WO to discuss paddling programs and club development ideas. WO is preparing a summary of models that clubs have used to grow paddling based on the needs of small communities like Marmora and local communities.

The board made decisions based on the information it had available to it at the time decisions were made. Significant effort was made to research it and confirm as much as possible within our volunteer capacity.