

Thames River Clear Water Revival – Thames River Water Management Plan

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 3, 2013, 9:30 – 11:30 am

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority – Watershed Conservation Centre (Boardroom)
1424 Clarke Road, London

Attendance:

Bonnie Carey, LTVCA
Jim Durham, MOE
Eleanor Heagy, UTRCA
Jennifer Jarvis, OMAF/MRA (via teleconference)
James Jenkins, Walpole Island First Nation
Luca Cargnelli, Environment Canada (via teleconference)
Tara Tchir, Project Manager, UTRCA
Glynis Tucker, City of London

Regrets:

Jenn Richards, MNR
Rob Wallis, MNR

1. Welcome, Introductions, Review Communications Committee membership

2. Brief Overview of Thames River Water Management Plan (TRWMP)

Tara Tchir (project manager) presented an overview of the TRWMP including chronology, goals and objectives, and current and future projects under the Water Management Plan.

***ACTION:** Tara will correct First Nation names.*

***ACTION:** Eleanor will post a pdf of the presentation on the website.*

The following comments arose after the presentation:

- The impacts of the pipeline from Lake Huron should be included in the project – would be addressed in water budget work (drinking water source protection program) as water is being removed from Lake Huron and added to Lake Erie.
- Look to the Healthy Lake Huron (HLH) (www.healthylakehuron.ca) initiative for additional insight.
- Need to engage other municipalities in the project. Perhaps focus on how this study will address climate change impacts.
- Are there grassroots organizations that can take on projects under the TRWMP umbrella? The HLH initiative is working with various groups (e.g., Pine River Watershed Initiative Network, Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association) that apply for funding and implement projects. This keeps the momentum going.
- Break down large plans into smaller projects and fit to funding sources.
- Ensure Conservation Authorities' watershed report cards are included in the TRWMP.
- The First Nations' buy in is really impressive in this initiative. It is an important consideration; the HLH initiative doesn't have nearly this level of participation.

***ACTION:** Jim Durham will ask Ted Briggs if Tara and Eleanor can attend the next HLH meeting (February 27, 2014) as observers.*

3. Terms of Reference – TRWMP, Communications Committee

The Terms of Reference for the Thames River Water Management Plan were circulated to the Communications Committee prior to this meeting, for information.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Communications Committee were discussed. It was agreed to change the frequency of meetings to: “The committee shall meet every two to three months on average and more often as necessary... Face-to-face meetings will be held in a variety of locations across the watershed.”

***ACTION:** Eleanor will make changes to the Communications Committee TOR and send to Communications Committee for final approval at next meeting.*

4. Draft Communications Plan

There was a lengthy discussion about the draft communication plan. The following comments were made.

- Targets are stakeholders not the general public.
- Need to include the Métis in the stakeholder list.
- Add focus on values in the key messages that include spiritual connection to river (especially relevant for First Nations).
- Include ecosystem approach in messages as it is part of larger strategy.
- Refine key messages, be more specific as to who the stakeholders are and gear the actions to them.
- Social media should be involved, as it may draw interest from people who have a very specific issue that is related to the TRWMP.
- We can add links to the current UTRCA social network since they are actively monitored, but this may be a position to consider in the future.
- It is important to cross promote the TRCWR with ongoing initiatives such as the annual Thames River Cleanup.
- Get name and brand out, build recognition, add messages to initiatives going on now.
- A target for the communications team might be for all people in the watershed to know the brand.
- Be careful with logo use and political implications as we don't want to create the impression that we are a funding agency.
- Need to consider which initiatives would qualify for use of the brand, given that there is a potential for misrepresentation of the brand. It was decided that the brand should be vetted through the project manager to ensure it represents relevant and appropriate projects. An appropriate project should have the support of at least one Steering Committee partner who can vouch for the relevance of the project to the TRWMP.
- Brand use should be added to TOR.
- May want to start tracking the impact that local grass roots organizations are having on the watershed. How is the impact of their work on the watershed landscape being identified and monitored or reported?
- The UTRCA's watershed report cards report on some of these activities.

***ACTIONS:** Eleanor will add social media links to UTRCA network. Eleanor will add branding information to the Terms of Reference. Eleanor will overhaul the draft communication plan to make it more targeted to specific stakeholders.*

***ACTIONS:** Tara will check with MOE to see if there is a second round of funds from SWI. Tara will include communications committee on future emails regarding funding opportunities. Tara will begin to develop a list of information to be communicated as key messages for both the stakeholders and the public in parallel.*

5. Showcasing Water Innovations (SWI) Project Commitments:

- **Stakeholder engagement strategy** – A stakeholder engagement strategy will be produced, with the Project steering committee members, to identify consultation priorities and to ensure that all members of the partnership are engaged in information sharing.
- **Promotional materials** – Promotional materials utilizing the Thames River Clear Water Revival brand will be produced to assist with the promotion of the Project across the Thames River basin, including development of a Project webpage hosted by the Recipient that can be linked to by partners organizations, and media releases as required to announce milestones and seek input from stakeholder groups.
- **Regional workshop** – A regional workshop will be hosted by the Recipient at the UTRCA Watershed Conservation Centre sharing Project information and seeking feedback from the large participant/stakeholder contact list that was developed in the delivery of the two Thames River Clear Water Revival Charrettes in 2008 and 2009 that led to the initiation of the development of a Water Management Plan.
- **Three panel display** – A portable three panel display will be produced that outlines the Project objectives and can be updated over time so that the Project objectives and results can be communicated.
- **Presentation** – A presentation will be produced so that all participating members of the core team can update stakeholders. Communication staff will present the Project to municipal councils, local community groups and agricultural groups.
- **BMP communications support** – Additional support for the stewardship component of the Project will provide an overview of the Project, a landowner survey, Project participation information and innovative Project fact sheets. This component will be promoted ongoing at regularly attended events such as the Outdoor Farm Show in fall and Western Fair Farm Show in spring and other events such as producer group meetings, Conservation Ontario Stewardship network meetings regularly attended by the stewardship program.

Tara noted that the project's SWI funding (\$389,000) has been extended to December 2014.

Regional Workshop

There was a lengthy discussion about the Regional Workshop (a deliverable of the SWI). Some suggestions for the workshop focus include:

- TRWMP update, report on projects
- Outdoor elements such as a barbeque and / or field trip to report on technical specifics and help build partnerships.
- Visit the longhouse in Oneida Nation of the Thames, traditional village in Delaware Nation of the Thames, or Ska-Nah-Doht at Longwoods Road CA. Munsee-Delaware Nation and Chippewas of the Thames First Nation may also offer learning opportunities.
- Wetlands restoration approach is very strong at Walpole Island FN. Could use as focus.
- Brainstorming project ideas for each goal and / or objective, who will lead the project, how much it would cost, prioritize all projects (similar to what was conducted with the technical water quality/quantity committee).
- Possible timing is May or June 2014.

***ACTION:** Tara will begin a list of projects that are related to the TRWMP and / or Clearwater Revival to assist with this task.*

6. Next steps

The next steering committee will be held on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 from 9:30 – 11:30 am, in Chatham at the LTVCA office (100 Thames Street, 519-354-7310).