

Thames River Clear Water Revival (TRCWR) Initiative
Steering Committee Meeting # 14 Minutes
November 12th, 2014, 9:30 am – 1 pm
Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, 733 Exeter Road, London

In Attendance:

Aimee Johnson, Walpole Island First Nation
Cherlene Vieira, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Chris Harrington, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Dave Richards, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Dean Jacobs, Walpole Island First Nation
Eleanor Heagy, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Ian Kerr, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (co-chair)
Isabel Lewis, Caldwell First Nation
Jason Wintermute, Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority
Luca Cargnelli, Environment Canada
Pat Donnelly, City of London
Sharilyn Johnston, Aamjiwnaang First Nation
Tara Tchir, Project Manager, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Tom Copeland, City of London (co-chair)
Trevor Robak, Ministry of Agriculture and Food/Ministry of Rural Affairs

Regrets:

Chief Louise Hillier, Caldwell First Nation
Dan McDonald, Ministry of Agriculture and Food/Ministry of Rural Affairs
Jenn Richards, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Rob Wallis, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Absent:

Lareina Rising, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Chippewas of the Thames First Nation
Oneida Nation of the Thames
Delaware Nation - Moravian of the Thames

Purpose of Meeting

- Finalize December 2 / 3 Symposium Agenda and list of invites
- Develop a work plan for the Water Management Plan

1. WELCOME AND REVIEW OF AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES:

- a) Meeting Agenda
Ian welcomed everyone and reviewed the purpose of the meeting.
- b) October 9, 2014 Minutes
The draft minutes were accepted as is.
- c) Outstanding Action Items
All action items have been addressed or will be addressed at this meeting.

ACTION: Eleanor will post the approved minutes from October 9, 2014 on the website.

2. PROJECT UPDATES

- a) Overview of the Great Lakes Framework



Cherlene and Luca gave a presentation on Great Lakes programs and how they tie into the TRWMP.

DISCUSSION

- The importance of linking local values and needs to binational needs and targets was discussed with many examples.
- Lake Erie is seen as a model for other areas.
- Environment Canada sees groups such as the TRCWR as implementers of actions to reduce phosphorus.
- Urban runoff and stormwater management are the “big unknowns” as far as phosphorus loadings. There may be an opportunity to have a municipal summit to look at nutrient sources.
- Dean is looking at where First Nations with limited capacity should focus their attention.
- The Premier sends mandate letters to each ministry. MOECC’s letter focused on the Great Lakes; OMAFRA on runoff and nutrients; MNR on wetlands.
- May be valuable for Steering Committee to have presentation on projects that are being implemented. Focus on projects that have room to grow, can build capacity and are easy to transfer.

ACTION: Tara to distribute presentation to steering committee.

ACTION: Cherlene and Luca to locate and distribute graph on distribution of Total Phosphorus up to 2013.

ACTION: Cherlene and Luca to distribute fact sheets.

ACTION: Cherlene and Luca to refine presentation for December 2 / 3 Symposium, including a slide that shows the 3 basin components of Lake Erie.

b) Co-Chair role and Governance Model of TRWMP

Chris reviewed the revisions to the governance model.

DISCUSSION

- Aimee noted that the revisions refer to the Water Management Plan, yet the governance model should be for the entire TRCWR initiative.
- All agreed that the proposed text is good, as long as we add a statement that the governance model is part of the broader TRCWR initiative and is being reiterated for the Water Management Plan.
- Ian suggested that a future agenda item should be developing a TOR for the TRCWR. It should be simple, describing the partnership, model and goals. Look at the Healthy Lake Huron initiative as a model (<http://www.healthylakehuron.ca/>). We could ask Ted Briggs (MOECC) to talk to the SC about HLH, in particular how the First Nations fit into the initiative.
- Dean explained that it is important from the First Nations’ perspective that we build and maintain FN capacity.

ACTION: Chris will make changes and re-circulate.

ACTION: Develop TOR for the TRCWR.

c) Status of funding for WISKI Water Quality Data Module proposal

Tara briefly reviewed some components of the proposal and mentioned that she will incorporate the proposal into an application for the Loblaw Water Fund.

DISCUSSION

- Tara wanted to know how the proposal should be written to secure funds from MOECC COA.
- Cherlene asked that we consider how much we can spend this fiscal year (by March 31, 2015) and how much next fiscal year. The budget of ~\$130K is achievable.
- Also need to demonstrate that the project is a partnership (e.g., develop proposal with First Nations for a feasibility study of community-based monitoring, determine monitoring gaps in the Lower Thames, purchase additional WISKI licenses, etc.).



- Aamjiwnaang and Walpole Island First Nations both have community-based monitoring programs in place.
- Is there a TEK component that can be brought into the WISKI model?
- Dean emphasized the need for respect for holders of TEK information as well as a way to ensure the information is used appropriately.
- Jason explained that Gertrud Nernburg identified gaps in sampling and hydrology in the LTVCA watershed near the mouth of the Thames. One reason for this is the pumps that landowners use to control when and where drains discharge water. There are dykes built along the Thames in that area because the land is so flat and low, so drainage of the surrounding land is controlled by pumps.
- Future funding proposals could include costs to add monitoring equipment, etc., of this area.
- There was general concern about the loads on the labs and the costs of analysis of samples.

ACTION: Chris, Tara, Jason, Ian and Cheriene to develop a proposal for initial funding of project by November 17, 2014.

ACTION: Tara to convene a First Nations Engagement Committee meeting to develop an RFP to undertake an assessment of First Nation community-based programs (current and potential) that could benefit from the use of remote water quality / quantity field techniques and develop a feasibility study (with budget) for the set up and maintenance of community-based monitoring in interested First Nation communities. This will be included in the funding proposal.

d) SWI Symposium, December 2/3, 2014

Eleanor verbally presented the draft agenda, the list of contacts that were invited and those who had responded. Approximately 25 people have indicated they are attending one or both days. There is room for up to 80 people.

DISCUSSION

- Both Aamjiwnaang and Walpole Island First Nations agreed to give a presentation at the Symposium that will be approximately 60 minutes (including questions) focusing on the application and value of TEK.
- Tara has been unsuccessful at contacting First Nations in the watershed to invite a guest speaker to open the symposium and welcome the audience.
- Pat suggested inviting the CAOs of the smaller municipalities.
- Ian mentioned that he limited the invitation to technical staff only, but will open it up to others since we can accommodate more participants.

ACTION: Eleanor to invite municipal CAOs, Essex Region Conservation Authority staff, Friends of the St. Clair River.

ACTION: Steering Committee members will continue to encourage staff to attend.

ACTION: Walpole Island First Nation and Aamjiwnaang First Nation will develop a presentation for the symposium.

ACTION: Walpole Island First Nation and Aamjiwnaang First Nation will help with outreach to First Nation communities living in the watershed for a welcome speaker.

ACTION: Tara to convene a First Nations Engagement Committee meeting to discuss an approach to build capacity with First Nation staff.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a) Other projects that align with COA / funding initiatives

Tara mentioned that Linda Nicks (UTRCA Hydrogeologist) is working on a proposal to use existing well data to get a better understanding of the contribution of groundwater to baseflow as well as to phosphorus and nitrate concentrations in the Thames River and watershed tributaries. Linda is applying for funding from the Loblaw Water Fund, but will be looking to MOECC for



historical data, the City of London for analysis at Sifton Bog, and MNRF for data from aggregate applications. She needs confirmation of these contributions for the funding application which is due December 23, 2014.

DISCUSSION

- There was general agreement that this is an important topic, especially given some of the information gaps from the water quality work presented by Gertrud.
- Cheriene suggested that Linda contact Mark Harris at MOECC regarding support and possible funding sources.
- Tara informed Pat and Tom that Linda will be looking for a contribution of Sifton Bog analysis.

ACTION: Linda Nicks to present proposal to the Steering Committee at the next meeting in January.

ACTION: Linda will contact City of London, MNRF and MOECC about support for proposal.

- b) Development of a Work plan for the Water Management Plan
Deferred due to time constraints.
- c) Communication committee update
Deferred due to time constraints.

4. ROUND TABLE UPDATES

(Steering committee members will provide updates to the steering committee of topics relevant to TRCWR from the organizations they represent)

DISCUSSION

- Ian would like to see a GIS product where spatial information gathered for the Water Management Plan or the overall initiative is shown on a map.
- It was suggested that round table updates should focus on implementation projects that need additional capacity or help from partners.

ACTION: Tara to add GIS project to list of projects.

ACTION: Tara to remind Steering Committee of agenda item referring to round table updates when she sends out the draft agenda to encourage partners to share implementation projects.

5. NEXT MEETING

ACTION: Tara to determine next meeting date in January.

