

Communications Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 27, 2015, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

UTRCA Watershed Conservation Centre, Fanshawe Conservation Area, 1424 Clarke Road, London

Confirmed

Bonnie Carey, LTVCA

Carine Schofield, MOECC

Donna Shaw, MOECC (Healthy Lake Huron Communication Committee) (GUEST)

Eleanor Heagy, UTRCA

Jennifer Jarvis, OMAFRA (via teleconference)

Luca Cargnelli, Environment Canada

Tara Tchir, Project Manager, UTRCA

Tara Thomas, City of London

Regrets

Aimee Johnson, Walpole Island First Nation

Jenn Richards, MNRF

Rob Wallis, MNRF

Minutes

1. Welcome, Review Agenda and Past Minutes

- Review agenda – no changes.
- Review minutes of March 31, 2015 meeting – approved.
- Review action items (see table below)

2. Terms of Reference for the Communications Committee

The committee reviewed the draft terms of reference, which now includes information from TRCWR draft charter. In March, the Steering Committee approved our recommendation that the Communications Committee be for the Clear Water Revival, not just the Water Management Plan. No comments on the draft TOR were received after our last meeting (March 31). The committee approved the Terms of Reference as final.

ACTION: Tara will inform the Steering Committee that the Terms of Reference are approved.

3. Water Management Plan – Communications/Engagement Strategy

The Thames River Water Management Plan (WMP) is to be written by the end of 2016. Target stakeholders identified for input are First Nations, the agricultural community and municipalities. General public awareness is a secondary goal. The timeline for developing a communications/engagement strategy is June 2015.

Healthy Lake Huron

Donna Shaw (MOECC Senior Regional Communications Advisor and Interim Chair, Healthy Lake Huron Communications Team) was at the meeting and presented an overview of the HLH initiative and their communications activities (*pdf provided via email*).

The HLH project aims to improve water quality, demonstrate the importance of community involvement, and give the community actions to do. Website - <http://www.healthylakehuron.ca/>

The HLH Communications Team coordinates communications activities for the steering committee and technical project working groups. Their main overall outreach tools are an annual newsletter and a website. The newsletter focuses on the five priority watersheds and activities going on there. They print 6000 copies every May, and distribute it through CAs, ministries, public health. They may expand the newsletter to include an agricultural audience, or may develop a separate newsletter for that audience.

The team conducted an internal survey of the participating members to look at current and potential communications activities. They will be undertaking a social media campaign to target the newsletter audience. They want to engage individuals and inspire them to take action rather than simply provide information.

Luca commented that the HLH project is similar to a scaled-down LAMP (Lakewide Action & Management Plan), with information sharing, working together, and participants from different levels of government/agencies. The CAs implement many of the projects and bring together groups, with government funding.

Grand River Water Management Plan

Luca provided information on the Grand River Water Management Plan. There are approximately 30 municipalities in that watershed, of which nine were involved in the plan development. These nine municipalities represent 70-80% of the watershed population. They signed the project charter and were involved on committees, etc. The GRCA drove the process, which is not the same as the TRWMP process. The TRWMP is not a CA initiative; it is a partnership.

The GRWMP involved municipal workshops, technical workshops (e.g., how to optimize water treatment plants), and general workshops that presented overviews of the plan. The WMP was a regular item on the agenda of the GRCA board meetings, so the municipalities were receiving information there, too. The steering committee participants from the agencies were at the director level and signed off on the plan to indicate their commitment to implementation.

Public outreach did not directly involve any NGOs, but there were meetings with them for feedback. That initiative publishes a quarterly newsletter (“Grand Activities”).

Two surveys were undertaken to gather public input on broad water values and define water uses. These were turned into goals for the plan. There was not much public comment/review otherwise; input was more targeted to various stakeholder groups.

There were several issues driving the WMP, including water taking, the large population living on the river, flood management and drinking water source protection. The GRCA already had a watershed strategy so the high level WMP goals came from the Grand Strategy.

Thames River Water Management Plan

Tara explained that we are not looking for stakeholder engagement in writing the TRWMP, but rather for input in developing actions to implement and then doing the actual implementation.

The consensus of the committee members was that we should connect with the TRWMP target audiences now, to build support and buy in for the project. We can provide information about the process and present the science and recommendations. We can provide watershed stories/articles to the watershed papers. The audience will have their own ways of distributing information; we need to tap into those existing communications channels.

ACTION for next meeting: Compile list of groups to target with communications activities

4. TRCWR Website

The committee reviewed the TRCWR website. Other than general information and links, the only project information relates to the UTRCA's SWI funded activities. It was agreed that we need to add information on what other partners are doing related to this project. Featured projects could be added on a rotating basis, highlighting stewardship projects, for example, that are improving water quality/quantity issues.

ACTION for next meeting: Develop plan to expand and update website

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

6. Next Meeting

The next Communications Committee meeting will be the morning of June 16, 2015 at the MOECC office (Huron Room), 733 Exeter Road, London.

Communications Committee Action Items

Actions Items from April 27, 2015 Communications Committee Meeting		
ACTION	LEAD	DATE COMPLETED
Inform the Steering Committee that the CC Terms of Reference are approved	Tara	April 27 SC meeting
Compile list of groups to target with communications activities	CC	<i>June 16 meeting</i>
Develop plan to expand and update website	CC	<i>June 16 meeting</i>
As a standing item for the agenda, ask MOECC/MNRF to provide an update on target setting for phosphorus reduction coming out of COA, as well as any updates from GLWQA/LAMP/COA.	MOECC MNRF Eleanor	<i>Discuss at June 16 meeting</i>
Develop overview presentation of the TRCRW and TRWMP (carried forward from October 2014 action items)	Eleanor	Will email draft to CC by June 5
Develop draft brochure on the TRCWR initiative (carried forward from October 2014 action items)	Eleanor	To be completed once ppt is done