

Thames River Clear Water Revival - Thames River Water Management Plan
Steering Committee Meeting # 16 - Minutes
Tuesday March 31, 2015, 12:30 – 3:30pm
City of London Civic Gardens Complex

CHAIRS: Tom Copeland / Dan McDonald

ATTENDEES:

Cherlene Vieira, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
Chris Harrington, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Dan McDonald, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Eleanor Heagy, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Isabel Lewis, Caldwell First Nation
Jason Wintermute, Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority
Jenn Richards, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Pat Donnelly, City of London
Tara Tchir, Project Manager, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Tom Copeland, City of London
Trevor Robak, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

REGRETS:

Aimee Johnson, Walpole Island First Nation
Chief Louise Hillier, Caldwell First Nation
Dave Richards, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Dean Jacobs, Walpole Island First Nation
George Henry, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation
Ian Kerr, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Luca Cagnelli, Environment Canada
Rob Wallis, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Sharilyn Johnston, Aamjiwnaang First Nation

UNCONFIRMED:

Oneida Nation of the Thames
Delaware Nation - Moravian of the Thames

GUEST:

Karen Maaskant, Water Quality Specialist, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

PURPOSE OF MEETING

- Water objectives/targets/indicators for water uses
- Table of Contents of Water Management Plan
- Work plan for the Water Management Plan

1. WELCOME AND REVIEW OF AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

- a) Tom welcomed everyone and introductions were made around the table. New co-chair is Dan McDonald, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, who will be alternating chair duties with Tom.
- b) Last minute additions to March 31, 2015 agenda – Tara added one item from the Communications Committee (item 3b below).



- c) Errors or omissions to minutes of November 12, 2014 and February 24, 2015 – None.
- d) Review outstanding action items – Completed (see actions table).

2. NEW BUSINESS

a) Status of the Thamesville Continuous Water Quality Monitoring Station

Karen Maaskant discussed the status of this station. The Great Lakes Nutrients Initiative (GLNI) is determining the impact of tributaries on Lake Erie by monitoring nine tributaries. Three of the nine (Thames, Grand, Sydenham) have automated stations looking at total and soluble phosphorus. The approach is binationally consistent and samples are taken every 8 hours.

The Thamesville site is the automated station on the Thames River. It has been operating since 2012. It is a challenging site to maintain, located along a 30 m bank, and has a 400 pound pump due to the amount of flow. Although sediment buildup and power failures have been a problem at this site, it does collect good data. The CAs had offered to partner with EC to help collect the samples, but EC declined due to the ongoing issues with the site.

Samples are picked up once per week and analysis occurs at the water survey station/hut, based upon the hydrograph. Karen stated that the 2012 and 2013 results indicate that the Thames has the largest phosphorus contribution (soluble and total) of the nine tributaries to Lake Erie.

GLNI ends in 2016. The sampling at the Thamesville site will be finished at the end of September 2015, with a report due in 2016. Although EC is not planning on dismantling the Thamesville site, new funding will focus on Lake Ontario. There may be some resources that can go towards Erie, but there will be a one to two year lag time without EC funding.

Thamesville is the last flow station on the Thames River; there's nothing on the downstream third of the watershed, which includes the City of Chatham as well as the Big Creek and Jeannettes Creek watersheds.

Suggestion is for a business case to be developed for both the Thamesville station and additional sites along the Lower Thames. This was discussed at length in the meeting and it was agreed that this is a high priority item and would be moved forward as a TRCWR initiative.

It was decided that Karen is to work on a proposal for the Thamesville station (costs to keep running, who needs to be involved, etc.) and combine this with work by Jason for additional stations along the Lower Thames River (how many, costs, etc.). Jason identified that there are some challenges for determining the contributions of backflow and that this would be put forward as a separate study.

ACTION: A one-pager would be needed for both items (from Jason and Karen) by April 21st.

The full proposal would follow by end of May. Proposal to include:

- **Importance of partnerships, where staff could get the samples, but that there would also**



- be a need for expertise and funding for lab and data analysis.
- Tom and Pat will determine whether municipalities along the Lower Thames monitor water quality.
 - In-kind contributions can include the investments already made for this station.

ACTION: Tom Copeland asked Dan McDonald if the Chatham-Kent Sewage Treatment Plants monitor.

Dan provided the following link to these results following the meeting on March 31:

<http://www.chatham-kent.ca/WaterandWastewaterServices/Wastewater/Pages/WastewaterFacilityReports.aspx>

b) Status of LTVCA water quality monitoring plan / gap analysis

Jason restated that a more detailed analysis is needed of the challenges for determining the contributions of backflow. Gertrud Nurnberg referenced that many areas along the Lower Thames are subject to internal loadings (e.g., phosphorus released from sediments). As a result, the effects of BMPs may not be readily apparent or might not lead to a measurable improvement overall. She recommends locations and types of sampling to be undertaken, as well as increasing the sampling frequency in existing locations and reestablishing historic stations.

A future study might be needed to figure out how much water is coming from pumping stations and of the effects of pumping on flow points.

ACTION: Jason to follow up with Dan M (if necessary) to see what MOECC might need for Permit to Take Water considerations.

ACTION: Jason to present information to the SC at the end of May regarding the pumping issue.

3. PROJECT UPDATES

a) Co-Chair role and Governance Model of TRWMP

ACTION: Chris to complete governance model and circulate to steering committee one week prior to the next meeting.

b) Communication committee wanted direction as to whether the communication TOR should reflect the TRCWR or just the WMP.

Decision: TOR should reflect the entire TRCWR.

c) Status of community-based water quality project with First Nations

Aimee could not attend this meeting, but Tara indicated that Aimee has three youth engagement proposals and that a decision on the preferred option will be made at an upcoming First Nation engagement meeting on April 7th. Jason indicated that Gertrud had some recommended locations for sampling within First Nation reserves (based upon drainage networks, etc.).

ACTION: Tara to bring Gertrude's recommendations forward to the First Nation committee



ACTION: Tara to share final youth engagement proposal with steering committee

d) Status of WISKI

CHRIS shared that a written proposal was developed for MOECC. A successful candidate was hired and training begins in early April. As well, the WISKI software/hardware has been secured. At this time, the project is a couple of weeks behind, but should get back on track.

ACTION: Chris to circulate MOECC proposal to steering committee

e) Status of agricultural attitudes study

TARA shared that a written proposal was developed for MOECC. A successful candidate was hired and has begun analysis.

ACTION: Chris to circulate MOECC proposal to steering committee

f) Status of Loblaw funding proposal

Tara shared that the proposal (referred to in February 24th steering committee meeting) was unsuccessful and Linda Nicks (hydrogeologist) is considering what her next steps will be.

4. WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

a) Determine water objectives/targets/indicators for water uses that were identified on February 24, 2015

- **Deferred**

b) Brainstorm Table of Contents of Water Management Plan (include projects by all members in the steering committee and assign responsibilities for chapter development).

Tara updated the document as we moved through the document.

ACTION: Tara to incorporate suggestions into the Table of Contents and circulate to steering committee prior to next meeting.

c) Development of a Work Plan for the Water Management Plan– **TARA**

➤ *Develop Google Excel spreadsheet of water quality / quantity projects with spatial coordinates (to identify gaps and optimize sampling effort)*

➤ *GIS product for water quality / quantity work on watershed*

- **Deferred**

5. CHARTER / TOR FOR THE TRCWR (brainstorm components of next steps)

a) Erosion Control Plan

b) Fish Management Plan

c) Others?

- **Deferred**

6. ROUND TABLE (Steering committee members will provide updates to the steering committee of implementation projects that need additional capacity or help from partners).



At the end of the meeting there was a discussion about the path forward. The current plan is for the Water Management Plan to be completed based upon the input of the Steering Committee by the fall of 2016. This will be a primarily technical document and there aren't any plans to go out for broad engagement and consultation (at this time). After the Water Management Plan is completed, broad consultation would occur and stakeholders would be asked 'how' they think the goals and recommendations could be implemented. The group discussed the pros and cons of this approach. Tara provided an example where this approach worked successfully (in Oxford County). Tom Copeland suggested that more consultation is better.

ACTION: All partners are encouraged to consider how communication, engagement and consultation should take place moving forward and come prepared to discuss this at the next meeting.

ACTION: All partners are to consider appropriate reference documents for the water management plan and a table of references will be started by Tara and circulated to the steering committee for input.

ACTION: Tara will develop a work plan around each of the water management chapters. All partners are encouraged to begin identifying individuals to contribute to relevant sections of the water management plan.

7. NEXT MEETING – week of the 27th – Proposed for April 30th.

ACTION: Tara to poll entire committee for most suitable date.

