

Thames River Clear Water Revival Communications Committee – Terms of Reference

The Thames River Clear Water Revival (TRCWR) is a long-term partnership initiative that is committed to a healthy and vital Thames River, which will ultimately benefit Lake St. Clair and Lake Erie. The TRCWR brings together all levels of government, Conservation Authorities, First Nations and the local community to achieve this common goal. Jeremiah the Bullfrog represents all the interactions of land, water, plants, animals and people in the watershed.

The TRCWR mission statement is: *A Commitment to a Healthy and Vital Thames River*

The TRCWR will identify the various components of a watershed study and their relationships. It is anticipated that this will be an iterative process, with each phase of the initiative recommending actions for the next phase of the initiative. The planning horizon for the TRCWR conclusions and recommendations will be approximately 25 years.

The TRCWR provides an opportunity to align the efforts of key partners such as watershed municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Provincial and Federal representatives, and First Nations. It will galvanize all participants to achieve mutually supported targets for sustainable water management, flood and low flow control, regional infrastructure planning, water quality improvements, location of water taking, and improved connectedness to the river.

The first step in the TRCWR is to develop a Water Management Plan (TRWMP). The Plan will focus on issues related to water quantity and water quality. The broader Thames Revival will consider all the interactions of land, water, plants, animals and people in the Thames River watershed.

The goals of the Water Management Plan are:

- Identify and address water quantity management issues.
- Improve water quality of the Thames River watershed and reduce the river's impact on Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River and Lake Erie.
- Strengthen community connections with the Thames River watershed and understanding of the river's relationship to the Great Lakes.
- Understand Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and determine how it can inform water resource management decisions.
- Strengthen collaborations among watershed managers: First Nations, municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Provincial ministries and Federal departments.

Communications Committee

Scope

The Communications Committee delivers on the TRCWR goals, directly or indirectly, through the actions, initiatives and authority of its respective organizations, and otherwise endeavours to ensure that the goals are achieved.

The Terms of Reference are approved by the TRCWR Steering Committee (SC). The Communications Committee seeks input and feedback into its activities from the SC but does not require SC approval of its activities.

Objectives

As a result of this partnership initiative, it is expected that target audiences will be aware and informed about all aspects of the Thames River Clear Water Revival, including:

- Goals and activities

- How they will be kept updated as the TRCWR progresses
- How they can participate in or support the actions being taken
- How to get more information or answers regarding the TRCWR

Membership

The Communications Committee membership consists of representatives from the agencies, municipalities and First Nations participating on the TRCWR Steering Committee, as follows:

Aamjiwnaang First Nation
 Caldwell First Nation
 Chippewas of the Thames First Nation
 Delaware Nation of the Thames
 Oneida Nation of the Thames
 Walpole Island First Nation
 City of London
 Environment Canada
 Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
 Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
 Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
 Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority
 Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

It is understood that the First Nations participating in the TRCWR may not all have the capacity (i.e., people available) to have a representative on the Communications Committee. Two other First Nations, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point and Munsee-Delaware Nation, have also been invited to participate.

Rules and Structure

- Membership includes direct involvement in the decision-making and responsibility for delivery of communications and outreach activities related to the project.
- Each organization shall contribute according to their expertise and capacity.
- The Committee, through its Chair, will seek input and feedback from the Steering Committee for the Communications Plan, related funding and implementation activities.
- Member organizations have a direct and equal say in the Committee's decisions and directives.
- Each Committee member shall participate in meetings including teleconferences and provide comments and input to the communication activities related to the project.
- If a team member is unable to participate in a meeting, he/she may designate an alternate.
- All Committee decisions will be made by consensus of members participating in that meeting/discussion.
- The member organizations may alter or change members over the term of the Committee.
- Guests may be invited to meetings to present or provide advice on specific agenda items.
- Sub-committees may be formed at the discretion of the Committee. Each of the sub-committees will report their findings and recommendations to the Committee.
- Any use of the TRCWR brand will be approved by 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 TRCWR.

Chair

A representative from the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) will serve as Chair of the Communications Committee. The Chair will:

- Schedule meetings as required and organize meetings efficiently and effectively.

- Conduct meetings fairly and equitably so that all views can be expressed and considered in decision-making.
- Prepare agendas for each meeting, and record important decisions and action items in minutes that are circulated to the Communications Committee members.
- Participate in the regular meetings of the Steering Committee to:
 - Provide updates on the activities of the Communications Committee,
 - Gather input and feedback related to Communications Committee activities and projects, as appropriate.

Frequency of Meetings

- Meetings will be held at the call of the Chair, based on input from participating members.
- The committee shall meet every two to three months on average and more often as necessary.
- Meetings may be face-to-face or via teleconference. Members who are unable to attend a meeting in person may, when feasible, participate via teleconference. Face-to-face meetings will be held in locations across the watershed.

Reporting

The Chair will prepare an agenda for each meeting, and the minutes following each meeting. The agenda and the previous minutes will be circulated to all committee members prior to each scheduled meeting.

Term

The Communications Committee will cease to exist upon the completion of the Project.