TRCWR Steering Committee Draft Minutes

July 7, 2021, 9-11 am (virtual meeting)

IN ATTENDANCE:
Cheriene Vieira (MECP)
Chris Harrington (UTRCA)
Courtney Jackson (Aamjiwnaang FN)
Eleanor Heagy (UTRCA)
Emma Young (Chippewas of the Thames FN)
Jason Wintermute (LTVCA)
Ken VanEvery (MNRF)
Naomi Williams (Walpole Island FN)
Pat Donnelly (COL)
Stephen Marklevitz (LEMU MNRF)
Tara Tchir (UTRCA)
Trevor Robak (OMAFRA)

REGRETS:
Dan McDonald (MECP)
Mary Alikakos (COL)
Brandon Doxtator (Oneida FN)
Brian Locke (LEMU MNRF)
Jason Lehouillier (MECP)
Jason Webb (Alymer MNRF)
Luca Cargnelli (ECCC)
Mark Peacock (LTVCA)
Sharilyn Johnston (Aamjiwnaang FN)
Warren Huff

Meeting Goals: Begin to develop (1) a process of outreach and engagement to potential new partners and, (2) a process for tracking progress towards achieving SWA recommendations.

1. **Welcome and Introductions - Tara**
   a) Land acknowledgements were provided by Tara, Jason, Naomi, and Cheriene.
   b) Review and approval of Minutes from June 7, 2021 meeting.
      - #5 - Region of Waterloo has never been involved; this should be Oxford County since they manage the stormwater system in Oxford County and Woodstock.
      - #6 - Flood plain mapping project – City of London and UTRCA are involved in this project.
      - The minutes were approved as amended.

2. **TRCWR Governance Model**
   a) Chris Harrington will be leaving the UTRCA. His replacement will take over this project file and join the Steering Committee. Tara continues to be the project manager.
   b) Chair/co-chairs for Steering Committee
      - The role has been primarily administrative, to help Tara build agendas and to run the meetings. While this is an important role, no one is able to take it on at this time.
   - **ACTION: We will have a rotating chair for now. Cheriene volunteered to chair the next meeting.**
   - **ACTION: Please consider what you see as the role of the steering committee chair/co-chairs.**
   c) Structure of committees and governance: do we need a different governance model (e.g., new/different members on Steering Committee, more working groups)?
      - The previous working groups were somewhat ad hoc and will need to change as we move forward with outreach and implementation.
      - We will likely need working groups for agriculture and municipalities.
      - Outreach/education and implementation are going to be major effort, and that may include a range of stakeholders.

3. **Update on Antler River Guardians Program for 2021 Season - Emma**
   - The Great Lakes Cultural Camps program will be coming to this area in August and the Guardians will join them. Their focus will be on the river and safe access, cultural teachings, and canoe training.
   - The Guardians did not run in 2020 due to COVID-19. While the Chippewas of the Thames are running the program, the goal is to provide opportunities for inclusion for youth from other First Nations.
   - Steering committee members suggested possible projects that the Guardians could be involved in.
   - ➢ **ACTION: Tara will set up a meeting with Emma and Cheriene to discuss possible ways that the steering committee partners can support the Guardians this year.**

4. **SWA Outreach & Engagement**

a) Continue discussion about potential partners or allies, so that we can expand the steering committee membership and establish working groups for sectors such as agriculture and municipalities.

- First Nations:
  - We would like to work towards participation of all 8 First Nations with traditional territory in the Thames River watershed.
  - We need to look at the TRCWR First Nations Engagement Plan and see if it is meeting everyone's needs. There may be other initiatives that have communications plans that would be helpful.
- Metis:
  - Should we reach out to Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO), are there local groups or representatives?
  - MNRF assesses hunting rights and whether there is an established history for this area. The Metis do not have any aboriginal rights for this area (Region 9). The Metis are a stakeholder but not an indigenous rights holder, at this time. The closest Metis community is Georgian Bay. The Saugeen area Metis are not an indigenous rights holder. There is a London MNO council.
  - ECCC is funding outreach to Metis related to the RAPs and LAMPs. TRCWR fits within the Lake Erie LAMP so this may be a good fit. ECCC/MECP outreach indicated that the MNO would like to be involved as a general stakeholder. MNRF has also been involved with MNO councils as stakeholders.
  - ➢ **ACTION: Cheriene will talk with Luca (ECCC) to see if there's interest in participating in this initiative.**
- Other municipalities:
  - Town of Ingersoll staff were involved in some of our water quality/quantity working group meetings in the past. Chatham-Kent has an environment officer who could be approached. Oxford County and Stratford were approached in the past and kept somewhat informed. The charrette reports have information on who was initially involved (https://www.thamesrevival.ca/home/resources-and-reports/).
  - City of London is willing to help engage other municipalities.
  - LTVCA / UTRCA are going to all municipalities to discuss changes to CA Act and strategic direction, moving forward. The SWA may fit into this outreach. Strategic plan development is a good opportunity for outreach to municipalities.
- Agricultural sector:

    - This sector is especially important due to the amount of agricultural land in the watershed. There are many groups, so we need to determine who and how to engage. Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Collaborative includes representatives of several agricultural groups. Agricultural organizations include Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation, National Farmers Union, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Ecological Farmers Association.
    - What are we going to ask these groups to do that is different from what has been happening for decades (i.e., research/promote BMPs and funding opportunities)?
- Other related initiatives:
    - St Clair Region CA is working on a phosphorus reduction plan for the Sydenham River.
    - The Canada – Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan (LEAP) nutrient reductions initiatives and habitat management may overlap with our efforts. We need to consider how to track and manage links and overlap.
- There are many other projects that may fulfill recommendations in the SWA and/or include partners that could/should be brought into the steering committee or working groups.
- We need to develop a process for outreach and engagement with potential partners/allies to determine:
    - Their needs and level of participation,
    - Types of outreach and communications tools that can help to promote the SWA and engage / encourage participation in implementation activities.

➢ **ACTION: Tara will organize meetings of smaller subgroups of the steering committee to brainstorm possible new members, expand on the list of possible related initiatives/partners, and consider working group membership and goals.**

5. Implementation of Partner Recommendations

- Determine what support partners need to implement SWA recommendations, including types of communication products (e.g., presentations, fact sheets, etc.), proposal writing, etc.
- Determine what tools should be developed for tracking progress towards list of actions/recommendations from SWA. Some examples of tools include:
    - Create catalogue of projects and programs undertaken by partners, organized by actions/recommendations. See the 2018 nutrient reduction project catalogue: http://thamesriver.on.ca/nutrient-project-catalogue.
    - Link to reporting that committee members are involved with for other projects that also relate to SWA recommendations (e.g., LEAP implementation).
    - Link recommendations/implementation to other reports (e.g. Lake Erie LAMP annual reports).
    - Create spreadsheets with each partner's recommendations/actions from the SWA, as well as who is responsible, status, timelines, etc.
- Discussion:
    - Avoid duplicating efforts to log and track projects, so that people are not reporting on the same project in multiple places (e.g., reporting to a SWA catalogue, Lake St Clair RAP, Lake Erie LAMP, LEAP, etc.). If a project is being reported on elsewhere then just include a reference in the catalogue or, if the catalogue is the more extensive record because it is more detailed, then use it as the main record.

- A catalogue would be more valuable in an online dashboard rather than a hard copy or pdf file. An online portal means projects can be easily updated, searched, etc. The Great Lakes Fish Commission is developing a similar style of reporting for fisheries assessment using an online reporting window, but this product is not ready yet. Projects could also be geo-referenced.
- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has a state of the bay report/ website https://www.cbf.org/ and a more detail report with an interactive map on smallmouth bass: https://www.cbf.org/about-cbf/locations/pennsylvania/issues/the-susquehanna-river-needs-help-now.html
- The workshop and presentations on some of the phosphorus catalogue projects was very useful and valuable. This should be considered also as an important component.
  - **ACTION – Tara/Eleanor will investigate feasibility of an online reporting window for projects.**
  - **ACTION – If partners would like a spreadsheet of their SWA recommendations and actions, Eleanor will create them.**

6. **Other Project Updates / Roundtable– All**

7. **Next Meeting:**
   - Presentation from Dan Bittman, LTVCA, on results from their COA grant (discussed in June 7, 2021 meeting).