

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors'
Meeting Agenda
September 15, 2026, at 9:00 A.M at the Watershed
Conservation Centre (or Virtually)

1. Modifications to the Agenda

2. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

3. Correspondence -

3.1. From Brian Petrie, Chair of the Board of Directors of Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) and UTRCA appointed elected representative to the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority Transitional Committee.

4. Reports – In Camera

4.1. Advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege

5. Adjournment

Tracy Annett, General Manager

To the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors

From Brian Petrie, Chair of the board of directors of Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) and UTRCA appointed elected representative to the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority Transitional Committee.

When the province announced the consolidation of the 36 conservation authorities (CAs) on March 10, 2026, a main justification provided for this restructuring was the critical need for greater accountability and transparency. This principle was reinforced in the June 3, 2026, update to Conservation Authorities, which stated;

“Transition Committees are expected to collaborate closely with CA Boards through shared members, as well as with Project Executives, to ensure that the operational and business needs of each Conservation Authority are effectively captured and considered throughout the transition.”

Furthermore, the July 30, 2026, correspondence from Hassaan Basit, CEO of the Ontario Provincial Conservation Agency, to Conservation Authority Board Chairs, Chief Administrative Officers, General Managers, Mayors, and Heads of Council, which officially announced the Transition Committee memberships, contained no mention of strict confidentiality mandates or requirements for legally binding non-disclosure agreements (NDAs).

Contrary to these explicit commitments to collaboration and transparency, the representatives appointed to the Western Lake Erie Regional Conservation Authority Transitional Committee have been presented a terms of reference and requested to sign a general, all-encompassing non-disclosure agreement that declares all meeting materials, discussions, presentations, and related records strictly confidential. If signed, this agreement will completely undermine our ability to work with the current boards to ensure operational and business needs are effectively met, as well as eliminate the ability to communicate the recommendations, decisions, and progress made by the Transition Committee at any municipally accepted level of transparency.

Given the impacts that consolidation will have on existing Conservation Authorities, watershed residents, and the member municipalities that provide much of the funding for both current and future regional Conservation Authorities, I believe the requested level of confidentiality does not meet the level of transparency and accountability necessary to maintain confidence and trust in the process. Furthermore,

because the committee's terms of reference and the requirement for complete confidentiality were not provided before members were appointed, and because this requirement appears fundamentally inconsistent with the consolidation initiative's stated goals of transparency, accountability, collaboration, and informed governance, I am requesting that our board reconsider the appointments and provide direction before any consideration is given to signing the proposed non-disclosure agreement. Requiring representatives to keep all information of the committee work confidential, rather than using accepted practices (such as those contained in section 239 of the *Municipal Act*) risks limiting meaningful oversight, informed decision-making, and the open exchange of information that are essential to a successful and credible consolidation process. This request is intended to ensure that our boards (and by extension- the local municipalities that our boards represent) remain fully informed and able to provide appropriate governance throughout the process.

Brian Petrie,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BP', is positioned below the name Brian Petrie.

Chair UTRCA, UTRCA Elected member WLERCA Transition Committee