

May 21, 2019

NOTICE OF
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019

TIME: 9:30 A.M – 11:25 A.M

LOCATION: WATERSHED CONSERVATION CENTRE
BOARDROOM

| AGENDA: | TIME |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Approval of Agenda | 9:30am |
| 2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest | |
| 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Thursday April 23, 2019 | |
| 4. Business Arising from the Minutes | 9:35am |
| (a) Environmental Planning Unit Orientation Presentation (T.Annett)(20 minutes) | |
| 5. Business for Approval | 9:55am |
| (a) 2018 Audited Financial Statements (S.Levin/C.Saracino)(Doc: FIN #921) (Report attached)(5 minutes) | |
| (b) Appointment of J.Schnaithmann as Officer Pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act (T.Annett)(Doc: ENVP #7740) (Report attached)(5 minutes) | |
| (c) Provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment Reduction Recommendation (C.Saracino/I.Wilcox)(Doc: #121496) (Report attached)(10 minutes) | |
| (d) UTRCA Comments Regarding ERO 013-5018 Modernizing Conservation Authority Operations | |

(I.Wilcox)(Doc: # 121569)
(Report attached)(15 minutes)

(e) UTRCA Comments Regarding ERO Posting
013-4992 Proposed Amendment to Conservation
Authorities Regulations for Development Permits
(T.Annett)(Doc: ENVP #7747)
(Report attached)(5 minutes)

(f) UTRCA Comments Regarding Bill 108,
Schedule 5, ERO 013-5033 Proposed Amendments
to Ontario's Endangered Species Act
(C.Harrington/S.Gillingwater)(Doc: WP #1639)
(Report attached)(5 minutes)

6. Closed Session – In Camera

7. Business for Information 10:40am

(a) Administration and Enforcement - Section 28
(T. Annett) (Doc: ENVP #7682)
(Report attached)(5 minutes)

(b) Environmental Targets Strategic Plan

i) Orientation Presentation
(I.Wilcox)(15 minutes)

ii) Targets 2018 Progress Report
(C.Harrington)(Doc: Admin #3313)
(Report attached)(10 minutes)

iii) Work Plan Summary
(I.Wilcox/S.Taylor)(Doc: #121575)
(Report attached)(10 minutes)

8. May For Your Information 11:20am

9. Other Business (Including Chair and General
Manager's Comments)

10. Adjournment 11:25am



Ian Wilcox, General Manager

c.c. Chair and Members of the Board of Directors

| | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------|
| T.Annett | J.Howley | S.Musclow | J.Skrypnyk | S.Taylor |
| B.Glasman | G.Inglis | C.Ramsey | M.Snowsell | B.Verscheure |
| C.Harrington | D.Charles | C.Saracino | P.Switzer | M.Viglianti |
| T.Hollingsworth | B.Mackie | A.Shivas | C.Tasker | I.Wilcox |
| | | | | K.Winfield |

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2019

| | | |
|------------------|------------|---------------|
| Members Present: | M.Blosh | P.Mitchell |
| | A.Dale | A.Murray |
| | D.Edmiston | B.Petrie |
| | A.Hopkins | J.Reffle |
| | T.Jackson | J.Salter |
| | S.Levin | M.Schadenberg |
| | N.Manning | A.Westman |

Regrets: H.McDermid

Solicitor: G.Inglis

| | | |
|--------|-----------------|--------------|
| Staff: | T.Annett | A.Shivas |
| | B.Glasman | M.Snowsell |
| | C.Harrington | C.Tasker |
| | T.Hollingsworth | S.Taylor |
| | S.Pratt | B.Verscheure |
| | C.Saracino | J.Welker |
| | J.Schnaithmann | |

1. Approval of Agenda

B.Petrie moved – seconded by T.Jackson:-

“RESOLVED that the UTRCA Board of Directors
approve the agenda as posted.”

CARRIED.

2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The Chair inquired whether the members had any conflicts of interest to declare relating to the agenda. There were none.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
April 23, 2019

M.Blosh moved – seconded by P.Mitchell:-

“RESOLVED that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors’ minutes dated April 23, 2019 as posted on the Members’ web-site.”

CARRIED.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes

(a) Environmental Planning Unit Orientation Presentation

T.Annett gave a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the Environmental Planning and Regulations Unit. Board members asked staff to circulate or present this information to the member Municipalities. Staff will work on an approach to get the messages presented to Municipal Councils. I.Wilcox, S.Levin and T.Jackson will be giving a similar presentation to the St. Marys Council at the end of June, and are looking to set up a time to present to the Perth South Council.

5. Business for Approval

(a) 2018 Audited Financial Statements
(Report attached)

S.Levin presented the report and confirmed that the Finance & Audit Committee met with Deloitte. The Committee talked to UTRCA Staff and Deloitte separately. Only positive comments were made by both parties on working together during the Audit.

The UTRCA investments lost money in December, but as of the end of March the portfolio had grown 5.6% since its inception.

T.Jackson moved – seconded by A.Westman:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the report.”

CARRIED.

(b) Appointment of J.Schnaithmann as Office Pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act
(Report attached)

T.Annett introduced Jessica Schnaithmann. S.Levin informed the Board that Mark Snowsell, Land Use Regulations Officer, will be retiring at the end of June and J. Schnaithmann will be filling his position.

T.Jackson moved – seconded by A.Hopkins:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the report.”

CARRIED.

(c) Provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment Reduction Recommendation
(Report attached)

I.Wilcox introduced the report and the three recommendations. A draft levy rate for 2020 will be presented for approval at the June meeting. More detail will be given at that time.

Staff confirmed that the Source Water Protection program funding has been approved with a small reduction. There has been no confirmation of funding for the Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure program. Despite the roll back by the Province of some 2019 cuts, Conservation Authorities are assuming the 50% transfer payment cut is still in place for 2019.

The Board asked if Conservation Authorities can access Municipal development charges. Access to development charges has been investigated in the past by other Conservation Authorities, with no success, however, I.Wilcox will make note to bring it up with Conservation Ontario staff.

It was suggested that recommendations two and three would be more appropriately dealt with at the June meeting, with the presentation of all the principals for consideration to inform the creation of the draft budget.

It was clarified that the use of funds from the investment is to be determined on a yearly basis as need arises. If the investments do not provide enough money to cover the full \$170,000, the money would come out of reserves.

B.Petrie moved – seconded by A.Hopkins:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors amend the first recommendation to include ‘that the Member municipalities be notified.’”

CARRIED.

B.Petrie moved – seconded by A.Hopkins:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the first recommendation as amended.”

CARRIED.

T.Jackson moved – seconded by B.Petrie:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors defer the second and third recommendations as presented in the report to the June Board meeting.”

CARRIED.

B.Petrie moved – seconded by N.Manning:-

“RESOLVED that AMO be notified that an option being considered by this Conservation Authority is a separate, provincially instigated municipal levy as a result of the budget cut.”

CARRIED.

- (d) UTRCA Comments Regarding ERO 013-5018 Modernizing Conservation Authority Operations
(Report attached)

Sandy spoke to all three reports commenting on Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) postings, and commented on the unusual approach of asking for approval after the comments were submitted. He clarified that the short commenting period and staff waiting for direction from Conservation Ontario caused the need to submit comments before they came before the Board for approval.

Due to the volume of ERO postings happening at once, staff were unable to comment on all of them. The three being presented for approval were deemed the most important.

Concerns were raised around the practice of asking for approval after the comments were submitted. Members felt the information should have been circulated electronically for comment. Staff will keep the comments in mind should this situation occur again. Suggestions included calling a special meeting, and using the email voting procedure, including a coordinating cover letter to outline the main points of the report.

B.Petrie moved – seconded by J.Salter:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors approve the recommendations as presented in the reports numbered 5d, 5e & 5f.”

CARRIED.

- (e) UTRCA Comments Regarding ERO Posting 013-4992 Proposed Amendment to Conservation Authorities Regulations for Development Permits
(Report attached)

The recommendation presented in this report was approved in agenda item 5d.

- (f) UTRCA Comments Regarding Bill 108, Schedule 5, ERO 013-5033 proposed Amendments to Ontario's Endangered Species Act
(Report attached)

The recommendation presented in this report was approved in agenda item 5d.

6. Closed Session – In Camera

There were no items for discussion in camera.

B.Petrie moved – seconded by J.Reffle:-

“RESOLVED that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors’ closed session minutes dated April 23, 2019 as posted on the Members’ web-site.”

CARRIED.

7. Business for Information

- (a) Administration and Enforcement – Section 28
(Report attached)

N.Manning moved – seconded by M.Blosh:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors receive the report as presented.”

CARRIED.

- (b) Environmental Targets Strategic Plan
(Report attached)

i) Orientation Presentation

S.Levin provided the back ground and history of the Strategic Plan. I.Wilcox gave his presentation, recognizing Cathy Quinlan, Karen Maaskant, Chris Harrington & Shauna Taylor for their work. I.Wilcox clarified that the work plan provided is a summary; the actual work plan provides greater detail. The progress report presented is a narrative, in the future the work plan will be the template for the progress report.

Questions were raised around the impact of the elimination of the 50 million tree program on the Targets. Staff are anticipating the decrease in available stock at nurseries due to the cut as well as fewer large scale plantings. Staff are looking to find other partners to help fund those larger

projects. A Board member suggested reaching out to Scouts Canada to investigate any potential funding opportunities and expanding the existing relationship with the UTRCA.

Tony Jackson and Larry Wight started a Rural Roots roadside planting program funded by West Perth, with help from John Enright. A shift in focus from planting forest habitat to tall grass prairie and pollinator habitat was suggested, given the growing restrictions, costs, and value of land. There was a request from Board members for a presentation on the Alternative Land Use Service (ALUS) program.

A. Westman moved – seconded by M. Schadenberg:-

“RESOLVED that the Board of Directors receive the reports as presented.”

CARRIED.

- ii) Targets 2018 Progress Report
(Report attached)

The Targets 2018 Progress Report was received in item 7)b)i).

- iii) Work Plan Summary
(Report attached)

The Work Plan Summary was received in item 7)b)i).

- 8. May FYI
(FYI attached)

The May FYI was presented for the Member’s information.

- 9. Other Business

D.Edmiston informed the Board the model used for the type of lottery he had been researching would not work for the UTRCA. He will continue his research.

The Children’s Water Festival was held May 14th to 17th and hosted four thousand students over the four days. There will be a report and presentation about the 2019 Children’s Water Festival at the June Board meeting.

S.Levin has met with the Mayor of St Marys and will be giving a presentation to Council next month. A meeting with the Mayor of Perth South, I.Wilcox, S.Levin and T.Jackson is currently being arranged.

M. Schadenberg announced the Oxford County Trails Council is hosting an open house at the Harrington Mill Pond 10am-4pm on Saturday June 1st.

B.Petrie announced the Ingersoll Rotary Club is having their annual kids fishing derby at Smiths pond, and the Safe Cycling Committee of Ingersoll is having their safe cycling day, both on June 1st.

D.Edmiston announced Tavistock will be hosting the world Crokinole Championship June 1st.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:03pm on a motion by A.Westman.



Ian Wilcox
General Manager
Att.

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Sandy Levin, Chair, Finance & Audit Committee
Date: 2 May 2019 **Agenda #:** 5 (a)
Subject: Approval of Audited Financial Statements for 2018 **Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT_MAIN.UT
RCA_PO.Finances:921.1

Recommendation:

That the Board accepts and approves the Audited Financial Statements for 2018 prepared by Deloitte as attached.

The Finance and Audit Committee met with Curtis Temple from Deloitte at our most recent meeting and reviewed the 2018 Draft Audited Financial Statements. The statements presented here for approval were dissected and discussed. Splitting a total of liabilities plus accrued liabilities into two lines in the Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) was the only amendment requested by the committee and is now incorporated in this draft.

2018 results in comparison to the 2018 budget highlight clearly how capital flood control expenditures can seem to affect results dramatically. Of note is the \$3M actual expenditures in flood control compared to the budgeted \$8.1M in expenditures for 2018. In note 6 on page 10, \$1,471,849 of expenditure occurred for completed flood control projects which became assets on the Statement of Financial Position and an additional \$3,455,550 was spent on projects which were not completed by year end but are considered on that same statement as “construction in progress”.

The committee also reviewed the audit findings report Deloitte supplied which includes the items they reviewed for audit risk. There were no items which the auditors found during the audit which exceeded the level of materiality they assigned or adjusted over the course of the audit.

Further to the commitment of Deloitte for a 5 year term during the RFP process carried out last year, the committee will proceed with confirming Deloitte to conduct the audit for 2019 for the Authority.

In addition to reviewing the draft audited statements, in March, the committee met with our investment advisor Phillips, Hager & North of RBC Wealth Management, the investment firm hired in early 2018 to handle our longer-term investments. The December 2018 annual statement of investments was reviewed and a general discussion held on the volatility in the market at present. At the end of March 2019, the return on the PHN account from inception is 5.6%.

Recommended by:

Sandy Levin,
Chair, Finance & Audit Committee

Prepared by:

Christine Saracino,
Supervisor, Finance & Accounting

Financial statements of Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

December 31, 2018



| | |
|---|------|
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Independent Auditor's Report

To the Members of
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (the "Authority"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2018, the statements of operations and accumulated net revenue, change in net financial assets, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes, comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, including schedules.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at December 31, 2018, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Matter

The financial statements of Upper Thames Conservation Authority as at and for the year ended December 31, 2017 were audited by another auditor who expressed an unmodified opinion on these statements dated May 22, 2018.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Authority or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Authority's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian GAAS, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
London, Ontario
April 10, 2019

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Statement of operations and accumulated net revenue
Year ended December 31, 2018

| Schedule | 2018 Budget \$ | 2018 Actual \$ | 2017 Actual \$ |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Revenue | | | |
| Municipal general levy | 4,988,777 | 3,914,548 | 3,519,701 |
| Dam and flood control levy | 2,358,078 | 1,324,939 | 1,324,926 |
| Conservation areas | 3,559,859 | 3,638,513 | 3,554,115 |
| Land and asset management | 888,117 | 1,078,167 | 1,119,674 |
| Fees for service | 2,132,128 | 2,268,355 | 2,215,006 |
| Provincial transfer payments | | | |
| Ministry of Natural Resources | | | |
| Section 39 grants | 351,020 | 351,020 | 351,020 |
| Other provincial grants | 2,331,946 | 1,172,735 | 1,549,784 |
| Donations | 21,291 | 81,033 | 91,133 |
| Federal program funding | 2,868,046 | 977,772 | 1,996,880 |
| Other revenues | 1,939,595 | 952,106 | 127,034 |
| | 21,438,857 | 15,759,188 | 15,849,273 |
| Expenditures | | | |
| Recreation | 4,544,804 | 4,202,551 | 3,895,270 |
| Flood control centre | 8,072,988 | 2,999,034 | 4,273,659 |
| Lands and facilities management | 3,002,499 | 2,820,464 | 942,361 |
| Watershed research, planning and monitoring | 1,036,483 | 1,087,042 | 979,875 |
| Community partnership program | 1,448,396 | 1,448,984 | 1,191,822 |
| Source water protection | 511,894 | 629,343 | 534,558 |
| Environmental planning & regulations | 1,346,694 | 1,172,799 | 1,108,502 |
| Soil and forestry programs | 1,689,792 | 1,486,329 | 1,590,538 |
| Environmental significant areas | 638,774 | 606,046 | 657,567 |
| Service cost centres | 104,368 | 43,925 | 143,719 |
| | 22,396,692 | 16,496,517 | 15,317,871 |
| Annual (deficit) surplus | (957,835) | (737,329) | 531,402 |
| Accumulated surplus, beginning of year | 44,024,528 | 44,024,528 | 43,493,126 |
| | 43,066,693 | 43,287,199 | 44,024,528 |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Statement of financial position

Year ended December 31, 2018

| | Notes | 2018 \$ | 2017 \$ |
|--|-------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Financial assets | | | |
| Cash | | 2,134,374 | 3,625,859 |
| Restricted cash | 3 | 112,551 | 266,266 |
| Accounts receivable | | 3,269,258 | 723,675 |
| Investments | 4 | 6,595,498 | 5,545,599 |
| | | <u>12,111,681</u> | <u>10,161,399</u> |
| Financial liabilities | | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities | | 2,833,357 | 1,531,146 |
| Deferred revenue | | 8,181,175 | 3,717,279 |
| Other liabilities | 5 | 59,202 | 64,571 |
| | | <u>11,073,734</u> | <u>5,312,996</u> |
| Net financial assets | | 1,037,947 | 4,848,403 |
| Non-financial assets | | | |
| Tangible capital assets | 6 | 42,141,333 | 39,064,166 |
| Prepaid expenses and deposits | | 84,295 | 84,626 |
| Inventories | | 23,624 | 27,333 |
| Accumulated surplus | 7 | <u>43,287,199</u> | <u>44,024,528</u> |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Approved by the Board

_____, Chair

_____, General manager

_____, Supervisor of Finance

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority**Statement of change in net financial assets**

Year ended December 31, 2018

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|--|--------------------|-------------|
| | \$ | \$ |
| Annual (deficit) surplus | (737,329) | 531,402 |
| Acquisition of tangible capital assets | (5,359,168) | (1,939,365) |
| Amortization of tangible capital assets | 905,431 | 829,258 |
| (Gain) loss on sale of tangible capital assets | (963,432) | 324 |
| Proceeds on sale of tangible capital assets | 2,340,001 | — |
| Change in inventories | 3,709 | (27,333) |
| Change in prepaid expenses and deposits | 330 | 36,226 |
| Change in net financial assets | (3,810,456) | (569,488) |
| Net financial assets, beginning of the year | 4,848,403 | 5,417,891 |
| Net financial assets, end of the year | 1,037,947 | 4,848,403 |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Draft

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Statement of cash flow

Year ended December 31, 2018

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| | \$ | \$ |
| Operating activities | | |
| Annual (deficit) surplus | (737,329) | 531,402 |
| Adjustment for: | | |
| Amortization of capital assets | 905,431 | 829,258 |
| Changes in non-cash operating working capital | | |
| Accounts receivable | (2,545,583) | 1,127,001 |
| Prepaid expenses and deposits | 331 | 36,226 |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities | 1,302,211 | 280,092 |
| Inventories | 3,709 | (27,333) |
| Deferred revenues | 4,463,896 | 1,798,438 |
| Other liabilities | (5,369) | (178,887) |
| | <u>3,387,297</u> | <u>4,396,197</u> |
| Financing activities | | |
| Restricted cash | 153,715 | 213,878 |
| Payment of term loan | — | (423,954) |
| | <u>153,715</u> | <u>(210,076)</u> |
| Investing activities | | |
| Loss of sale of tangible capital assets | (963,432) | 324 |
| Proceeds on sale of tangible capital assets | 2,340,001 | — |
| Acquisition of tangible capital assets | (5,359,168) | (1,939,365) |
| Change in investments, net | (1,049,899) | (1,526,699) |
| | <u>(5,032,498)</u> | <u>(3,465,740)</u> |
| Increase in cash | (1,491,485) | 720,381 |
| Cash, beginning of year | 3,625,859 | 2,905,478 |
| Cash, end of year | <u>2,134,374</u> | <u>3,625,859</u> |

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Notes to financial statements

Year ended December 31, 2018

1. Description of the business

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (the "Authority") is established under the Conservation Authority Act of Ontario to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources, other than gas, oil, coal and minerals for the watersheds within its area of jurisdiction.

2. Significant accounting policies

The financial statements of the Authority are prepared by management in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for organizations operating in the local government sector as recommended by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Chartered Professional Accountants Canada. Significant aspects of the accounting policies adopted by the Authority are as follows:

Reserves:

Appropriations are made to reserves for future expenditures and contingencies for such amounts as required by various cost sharing arrangements, provincial restrictions and are deemed appropriate, and upon approval of the Board of Directors.

Government transfers:

Government transfer payments are recognized as revenue in the financial statements in the year in which the payment is authorized and the events giving rise to the transfer occur, performance criteria are met, and a reasonable estimate of the amount can be made. Funding that is stipulated to be used for specific purposes is only recognized as revenue in the fiscal year that the related expenses are incurred or services performed. If funding is received for which the related expenses have not yet been incurred or services performed, these amounts are recorded as a liability at year end. To the extent that stipulations by the transferor give rise to an obligation that meet the definition of a liability, government transfers are recognized as revenue as the liability is extinguished.

Deferred revenue:

Certain grants are received for which the related services have yet to be performed or were used in the construction of capital assets. These amounts are recognized as revenue in the fiscal year the related expenditures are incurred or over the course of the useful life of the asset constructed.

Tangible capital assets:

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost which includes amounts that are directly attributable to acquisition, construction, development or betterment of the asset. The cost, less residual value, of the tangible capital assets, excluding land are amortized on a straight - line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

| | Useful life, years |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Land improvements | 10-25 |
| Buildings | 15-50 |
| Infrastructure | 20-50 |
| Furniture and fixtures | 7 |
| Vehicles | 5-10 |
| Flood control structures | 50-80 |
| Computers and communications | 3-7 |

2. Significant accounting policies (continued)

Tangible capital assets (continued)

Amortization is charged in the year of acquisition and in the year of disposal. Construction in progress is not amortized until the asset is available for productive use.

(i) Contributions of tangible capital assets

Tangible capital assets received as contributions are recorded at their fair value at the date of receipt and also are recorded as revenue.

(ii) Natural resources

Natural resources that have not been purchased are not recognized as assets in the financial statements.

Impairment of long-lived assets:

Long-lived assets, including equipment, are reviewed for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of an asset may not be recoverable. Recoverability of assets to be held and used is measured by a comparison of the carrying amount of an asset to estimated undiscounted future cash flows expected to be generated by the asset. If the carrying amount of an asset exceeds its estimated future cash flows, an impairment charge is recognized by the amount by which the carrying amount or fair value less costs to sell, and are no longer depreciated. The assets and liabilities of a disposed group classified as held for sale would be presented separately in the appropriate asset and liability sections of the balance sheet.

Contaminated sites:

Under PS 3260, contaminated sites are defined as the result of contamination being introduced in air, soil, water or sediment of a chemical, organic, or radioactive material or live organism that exceeds an environmental standard. This standard relates to sites that are not in productive use and sites in productive use where an unexpected event resulted in contamination.

Use of estimates:

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the year. Key components of the financial statements requiring management to make estimates include the depreciation rates for capital assets, accrual of payroll and vacation pay and accrual of insurance deductibles. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

3. Restricted cash:

Restricted cash consists of funding received from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change that has been restricted in its use by the funding Agency.

| | | 2018 | 2017 |
|---|-------|----------------|----------------|
| | Notes | \$ | \$ |
| Glengowan land disposition reserve fund | | — | 201,695 |
| Source water protection trust | 5 | 112,551 | 64,571 |
| | | 112,551 | 266,266 |

4. Investments

Investments are comprised of the following:

| | 2018 | | 2017 | |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| | Cost \$ | Market Value \$ | Cost \$ | Market Value \$ |
| Fixed income | 2,769,027 | 2,769,027 | 5,545,599 | 5,545,599 |
| Equity investments | 4,122,001 | 3,826,471 | — | — |
| | 6,891,028 | 6,595,498 | 5,545,599 | 5,545,599 |

Fixed income investments consist of term deposits and guaranteed investment certificates with maturities ranging from January 8, 2019 to December 10, 2019. Interest rates on the investments range from 1.83% to 2.20%. Fixed income investments are held on the Statement of financial position at cost.

Equity investments are held on the Statement of financial position at the market value as of December 31, 2018. Total losses on equity investments, inclusive of any dividends or interest earned during the year was \$295,530 (\$Nil in 2017).

5. Other liabilities

The Authority is the lead Agency in the three party arrangement whereby funds are received for the other parties to the arrangement. Each party is entitled to its pro-rata share of funding which is for the purpose of source water protection.

Funds received by the Authority for the other parties to the arrangement which have not been dispersed at December 31, 2018 amount to \$59,202 (\$64,571 in 2017). These amounts have been included in restricted cash.



Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Notes to financial statements
Year ended December 31, 2018

6. Tangible capital assets

The historical cost of capital assets employed by the Authority at December 31 is as follows:

| | Land \$ | Land improvements \$ | Buildings \$ | Infrastructure \$ | Furniture and fixtures \$ | Vehicles \$ | Flood control structures \$ | Computers and communication \$ | Construction in progress \$ | Total \$ |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Cost | | | | | | | | | | |
| Balance 2017 | 16,358,510 | 750,352 | 14,785,859 | 7,604,054 | 823,021 | 1,714,421 | 18,434,142 | 1,254,485 | 222,894 | 61,947,738 |
| Additions | — | 127,632 | — | 50,406 | 7,876 | 77,429 | 1,471,849 | 168,426 | 3,455,550 | 5,359,168 |
| Disposals | (1,376,571) | — | — | — | — | — | — | (569,210) | — | (1,945,781) |
| Balance 2018 | 14,981,939 | 877,984 | 14,785,859 | 7,654,460 | 830,897 | 1,791,850 | 19,905,991 | 853,701 | 3,678,444 | 65,361,124 |
| Amortization | | | | | | | | | | |
| Balance 2017 | — | 515,327 | 3,608,148 | 6,834,537 | 376,207 | 1,127,277 | 9,219,436 | 1,202,640 | — | 22,883,572 |
| Additions | — | 34,872 | 281,364 | 21,619 | 76,647 | 93,739 | 318,506 | 78,685 | — | 905,431 |
| Disposals | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 569,212 | — | 569,212 |
| Balance 2018 | — | 550,199 | 3,889,512 | 6,856,156 | 452,854 | 1,221,016 | 9,537,942 | 712,114 | — | 23,219,792 |
| Net book value | | | | | | | | | | |
| Balance 2017 | 16,358,510 | 235,025 | 11,177,711 | 769,517 | 446,814 | 587,144 | 9,214,706 | 51,845 | 222,894 | 39,064,166 |
| Balance 2018 | 14,981,939 | 327,785 | 10,896,347 | 798,304 | 378,043 | 570,835 | 10,368,049 | 141,587 | 3,678,444 | 42,141,333 |



Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Notes to financial statements

Year ended December 31, 2018

7. Accumulated surplus

| | 2018 | 2017 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| | \$ | \$ |
| Surplus | | |
| Invested in tangible assets | 42,141,333 | 39,064,166 |
| Unrestricted net assets | (5,297,992) | (2,220,825) |
| Total surplus | 36,843,341 | 36,843,341 |
| Reserve set aside for specific purposes of the Authority: | | |
| Operating and/or capital reserves (Schedule B) | 2,825,591 | 2,726,378 |
| Reserve funds set aside for specific purposes by the Authority: | | |
| Restricted reserves (Schedule B) | 3,618,267 | 4,454,809 |
| | <u>43,287,199</u> | <u>44,024,528</u> |

8. Pension agreements

The Authority makes contributions to the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System ("OMERS"), which is a multi-employer plan, on behalf of certain members of its staff. The plan is a defined benefit plan that specifies the amount of the retirement benefit to be received by the employees based on the length of service and rates of pay.

Contributions made by the Authority to OMERS for 2018 were \$1,270,557 (\$1,180,908 in 2017). As at December 31, 2018 the OMERS plan is 96% funded (94% in 2017). This deficit will be addressed through temporary contribution rate increases, benefit reductions and investment returns.

9. Financial instruments

Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Authority is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments.

The Authority's financial instruments include cash, restricted cash, accounts receivable, investments, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, deferred revenue and other liabilities. The fair values of these financial instruments approximate their carrying value due to the expected short-term maturity of these instruments.

Accounts receivable is recorded net of an allowance for doubtful accounts of \$ 3,132 (\$45,000 in 2017).

10. Contingencies

There are certain claims pending against the Authority as at December 31, 2018. The final outcome of these claims cannot be determined at this time. In management's opinion, insurance coverage is sufficient to offset the costs of unfavorable settlements, if any, which may result from such claims.

11. Comparative Information

The financial statements have been reclassified, where applicable, to conform to the presentation used in the current year. The changes do not affect prior year earnings.

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority**Schedule A - Service cost centres**

Year ended December 31, 2018

| | 2018 Budget \$ | 2018 Actual \$ | 2017 Actual \$ |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Recoveries from mission cost centres | 3,753,869 | 3,768,052 | 3,379,112 |
| Expenditures | | | |
| Occupancy | 531,337 | 555,291 | 515,423 |
| Information systems | 715,510 | 724,639 | 669,825 |
| Administration | 745,025 | 644,812 | 615,861 |
| Finance | 697,903 | 708,271 | 655,398 |
| Marketing and communications | 492,205 | 496,772 | 469,522 |
| Vehicles and equipment | 676,257 | 682,192 | 596,802 |
| | 3,858,237 | 3,811,977 | 3,522,831 |
| Deficit in service cost centre | (104,368) | (43,925) | (143,719) |

Draft

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority**Schedule B - Reserves and reserve funds**

Year ended December 31, 2018

| | 2017 | Appropriations to (from) reserves | 2018 |
|--|------------------|---|-------------------------|
| | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| Restricted reserves | | | |
| Flood control | 3,489,219 | (20,284) | 3,468,935 |
| Donor designated memorial forests | 26,357 | 5,966 | 32,323 |
| Harrington Grist Mill | 52,728 | (1,696) | 51,032 |
| Land disposition/acquisition reserve | 886,505 | (820,528) | 65,977 |
| | <u>4,454,809</u> | <u>(836,542)</u> | <u>3,618,267</u> |
| Operating and/or capital reserves | | | |
| Capital building, fleet and equipment replacement | 609,553 | 10,000 | 619,553 |
| General operating reserves | 417,435 | 32,400 | 449,835 |
| Defined purpose reserves | 1,699,390 | 56,813 | 1,756,203 |
| | <u>2,726,378</u> | <u>99,213</u> | <u>2,825,591</u> |
| | <u>7,181,187</u> | <u>(737,329)</u> | <u>6,443,858</u> |

Draft

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett, Manager
Environmental Planning & Regulations
Date: May 14, 2019
Agenda #: 5 (b)
Subject: Appointment of Jessica Schnaithmann as Officer Pursuant to Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*
Filename: C:\Users\annett\Documents\Group Wise\7740-1.doc

Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors designate Jessica Schnaithmann as a *Provincial Offences Act* officer pursuant to Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act* for the purpose of administering and enforcing the Ontario Regulation 157/06, Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation.

Background

Jessica Schnaithmann has been hired to fill the Land Use Regulations Officer position beginning on April 29th. During her previous employment at the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority she successfully completed the requirements to obtain her *Provincial Offences Act (POA)* designation consistent with the *Protocol for Conservation Authority Designation of a Provincial Offences Officer* endorsed by Conservation Ontario, February 2010. She completed the Conservation Authority Compliance Training and received her Provincial Offences Officer designation in 2014.

Refer to the following excerpt from the *Conservation Authorities Act*:

Regulations by authority re area under its jurisdiction

[28.\(1\)](#) Subject to the approval of the Minister, an authority may make regulations applicable in the area under its jurisdiction,

(d) providing for the appointment of officers to enforce any regulation made under this section or section 29;

(e) providing for the appointment of persons to act as officers with all of the powers and duties of officers to enforce any regulation made under this section. 1998, c. 18, Sched. I, s. 12.

Jessica will now be responsible to administer and enforce *Ontario Regulation 157/06, Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation* pursuant to Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Tracy Annett, Manager
Environmental Planning & Regulations

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Ian Wilcox, General Manager
Date: May 16, 2019
Subject: Provincial Section 39 Transfer Payment
Reduction: Recommendation

Agenda #: 5 (c)
Filename: ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT_MAIN.UT
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496.1

Recommendations:

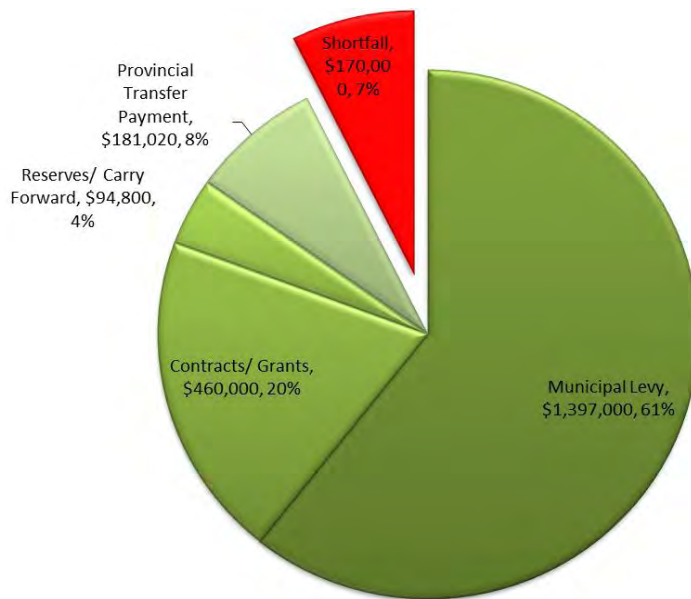
- 1. That the recently announced 50% reduction to the UTRCA's Section 39 Provincial Transfer Payment (\$170,000) be managed through a combination approach of anticipated investment income and deficit. Final allocations will be made at year-end to allow staff time to search for any further program cost savings, and evaluate year-end investment income balances.**
- 2. That lost transfer payment funding is included as a separate provincially instigated municipal levy in the UTRCA's 2020 budget.**
- 3. In consideration of mounting municipal funding challenges, it is recommended that the final year of Environmental Targets municipal levy investment (\$306,544 planned in 2020) instead be phased-in over two years (\$153,272 in each of 2020 and 2021).**

Introduction

The Provincial Budget was announced Thursday, April 11, 2019. UTRCA staff learned late on April 12th that the provincial transfer payment to all Conservation Authorities will be cut by 50% for 2019. This provincial funding is provided exclusively for hazard management (i.e., flood and erosion control) and equates to a \$170,000 reduction for the UTRCA.

As context, provincial funding to Conservation Authorities was reduced by 80% in 1996. Provincial funding for the UTRCA has remained fixed at \$351,000 since that time which is far below the cost of delivering the program, and far below the 50% share the province is supposed to pay matching the municipal contribution. Conservation Ontario, with support from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) has lobbied the province for years to increase funding levels to match actual costs, without success. This most recent funding cut simply exacerbates the financial position of a chronically under-funded core program. The hazard management program is now only 8% provincially funded (see pie chart below).

UTRCA Hazard Management Program Revenue (Flood and Erosion Control, Regulations) Total Budget: \$2.3 Million



The UTRCA is 1/3 of the way through its 2019 fiscal year making accommodating the reduction difficult. Options that were considered for managing the \$170,000 loss in revenue are provided below. Recommended actions are highlighted in yellow.

| 2019 Transfer Payment Cut: Options | Comments |
|--|--|
| 1. Cut Hazard Program expenditures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not recommended Core program, public safety, liability Expenditure categories: wages, taxes, insurance All program expenditures will again be reviewed for any possible savings |
| 2. Use investment income to cover all or a portion of the funding shortfall | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty regarding 2019 portfolio balance Short term solution only |
| 3. Cut other programs and shift revenue to the Hazards Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simply transfers the problem to another program |
| 4. Issue a 2019 supplemental flood control levy for an additional \$170,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible but challenging for municipalities Not recommended |
| 5. Recognize all or a portion of the funding reduction as a deficit for 2019 against reserves. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2019 option only Pushes issue to 2020 or beyond Reserves have limited capacity Limits options in case of further program cuts Shows actual impact of cut in financial statements |
| 6. Reduce capital expenditures and extend the life expectancy of assets, where possible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Careful and appropriate implementation could assist but comes with some risk of the end of the asset's life occurring before the asset is fully depreciated |

Background and Discussion Points:

1. The UTRCA's transfer payment reduction for 2019 is \$170,000.
2. A 2019 "bridge funding" plan is recommended as well as longer term strategy (2020-2023) for revenue replacement through the UTRCA's flood control levy. See below.

2019 Bridge Funding Plan:

3. Management does not recommend flood/ hazard program cuts. The program is a high priority as part of the UTRCA Environmental Targets Strategic Plan, has been chronically under-funded for more than 20 years, and is a "core, mandatory" program according to the Province. Further, the program is focused on public safety, is demanded by the public, must be adapted to address increased risk due to climate change, and carries significant liability.
4. The province has identified hazard management as a core program but is reducing its financial support. It appears the intent is to download costs to the municipal tax base and it is recommended that both the transfer payment reduction and any future levy should be characterized as such.
5. A supplemental 2019 levy could be issued. While possible, it is not recommended by management.
6. Existing 2019 Levy could be shifted from another program to hazards but that will lead to a shortfall in that program (1/3 way through year) that would have to ultimately be funded. It is more appropriate to manage any shortfall in the mission centre where it occurred to accurately portray impacts.
7. The most viable option for 2019 revenue replacement is to utilize reserves and/or investment income to offset losses and carry forward deficit against reserves. Management also suggests a portion of the funding reduction be carried forward as debt in recognition of the impact of the in-year cut.
8. Note: \$170,000 = 3.2% of the 2019 operating levy. (A 1% operating levy increase = ~\$53K)

Long Term Strategy

9. Given the province's position that hazard management is a core Conservation Authority program and that levying powers are to be retained for this work, it appears all Conservation Authorities are being positioned to replace lost provincial transfer payment revenue through a corresponding increase to the municipal flood control levy. This appears to be the only reasonable course of action and staff recommend this as part of the UTRCA's 2020 budget.
10. Other demands for municipal levy in 2020 and beyond include the final year of Environmental Targets investment (\$307K in 2020), cost of living (roughly 2% annually), and now the hazard management shortfall (\$170K).
11. In recognition of mounting municipal financial challenges, it is recommended that the planned 2020 Environmental Targets levy be spread over a two year period (2020-2021) instead of one.
12. It is recommended that \$170,000 be added to the 2020 budget as a special "downloaded" flood control levy. This levy should be positioned separately from any planned or regular levy increase to emphasize it is a product of provincial budgeting, not the Authority's.

Uncertainty

13. The Board should consider the possibility of a further transfer payment reduction in 2020 (remaining \$180K).
14. Organizational restructuring was planned for 2021. This effort may have to be deferred or reconsidered.
15. Uncertainty remains regarding additional provincial cuts in 2019: Source Water Protection, Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure funding, and the expected loss of provincial contract opportunities.
16. Of critical importance is uncertainty regarding proposed changes to Conservation Authorities Act including a narrowed scope of responsibilities and curtailing of levying powers. It is difficult to anticipate or plan for the degree of change which could be implemented.

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Ian Wilcox, General Manager
Date: May 16, 2019 **Agenda #:** 5 (d)
Subject: UTRCA Comments regarding ERO 013-5018 **Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT_MAIN.UT
Modernizing Conservation Authority RCA_PO.File_Centre_Library:121
Operations 569.1

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the UTRCA Board of Directors endorse the following submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) concerning proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act (ERO 013-5018).

Introduction

The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) has proposed unprecedented changes to the Conservation Authorities Act on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) as part of a 45 day public comment period. The proposal's title is **Modernizing Conservation Authority Operations - Conservation Authorities Act** and comments were to be received by May 21st. Given time constraints, UTRCA staff submitted the following comments including key messages developed through Conservation Ontario as well as remarks that are UTRCA specific.

It is recommended that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve this submission. While seeking approval after-the-fact is highly unusual, the short notice period did not permit Board approval prior to submission.

The attached report speaks specifically to the proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act. However, it is important to consider this proposal in the context of several other concurrent government actions affecting environmental programs and legislation in Ontario. Examples include:

- Funding cuts for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
- Funding cuts for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
- Proposed changes to the Planning Act
- Proposed changes to the Provincial Policy Statements
- Proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act
- Proposed changes to the Environmental Assessment Act
- Cancellation of the 50 Million Tree Program
- A 50% reduction in Conservation Authority transfer payments
- Restructuring of other public sector agencies including land ambulance and health units, as well as a planned downloading of costs to municipalities
- Warnings of 2020 reductions to municipal transfer payments
- Etc.

The speed and scale of change, the interconnected nature of these public programs, and the trend to download the costs of multiple services to the municipal level makes it difficult to ascertain the true impacts of individual proposals. UTRCA staff will continue to work with Conservation Ontario to communicate our concerns to the province, to explore options for managing programs and funding locally, and to keep the Board and member municipalities apprised of the impacts of these changes, including impacts on budgets and operations.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Ian Wilcox
General Manager
UTRCA

Key Recommendations and Comments Regarding Modernization of Conservation Authority Operations (ERO 013-5018) and Schedule 2 of Bill 108

**Submitted by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
May 17, 2019**

Recommendation 1: THAT Schedule 2 *Conservation Authorities Act* (CAA) of Bill 108 be deferred from enactment to provide CAs with an adequate opportunity to consult with their member municipalities

The Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) 45 day comment period and the introduction of amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act as part of the Housing Supply Action Plan (Bill 108) has not permitted adequate time for the UTRCA's Board of Directors to explore or fully understand the proposal's implications, nor to adequately communicate with member municipalities in a meaningful way. The issue has been further complicated by the operational pressures of the flood season and the unexpected announcement of an in-year provincial funding cut of 50% to the flood management program. The UTRCA is still trying to adapt to the loss of funding (and the ripple effects of other reductions such as the 50 Million Tree Program) and how that will impact member municipalities. The range and scale of proposed changes for the public services that the UTRCA and its member municipalities provide is unprecedented and we would urge the province to defer final decisions to allow for full consultation in the interest of quality decision making that supports the public's interest, rather than having to correct decisions in the future that were made in haste or with only a single purpose in mind.

Recommendation 2: THAT the mandatory programs and services [proposed Section 21.1 (1)] include an additional category: "Conserving Natural Resources"

The UTRCA is concerned about defining and limiting our core mandatory program to the items listed in the ERO and Bill 108 (i.e. natural hazards, conservation-owned lands, source water protection, Lake Simcoe watershed). This limited list fails to recognize the critical role that UTRCA plays as a watershed and natural resource management agency. As outlined in the *Conservation Authorities Act* (CAA), the objects of an authority are to "provide, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, programs and services designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources..." (Sec. 20(1)). Further, for the purposes of accomplishing its objects, an authority has the power to "study and investigate the watershed and to determine programs and services whereby the natural resources of the watershed may be conserved, restored, developed and managed" (Sec. 21(1)(a)). Watershed management has been the foundation for all CA programs and services since the inception of conservation authorities.

Residents of all watersheds rely on clean and sustainable drinking water, breathable air, green spaces and healthy rivers and streams for recreation, healthy soils, forests and wetlands that

provide habitat for wildlife, as well as public health and many other benefits. Being in nature restores people and helps them to stay active and healthy, reducing health care costs. The *Conservation Authorities Act* established in 1946 was predicated on responding to local issues on a watershed basis.

Including “Conserving Natural Resources” as a mandatory program would recognize the important role that the UTRCA and all conservation authorities play in protecting the function and resilience of natural resources at the watershed level. **This would be consistent with the “Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan”, which states that conserving natural resources is part of a CA’s core mandate.** CAs can assist the Province and local municipalities in addressing climate change and natural resource related issues at the watershed scale which is most cost efficient.

“Conserving Natural Resources” would include the key elements of watershed management such as water quality, quantity and vegetative cover monitoring and modelling on a watershed basis to support multiple objectives that are relevant to the watershed jurisdiction, including improvements to Great Lakes water quality, watershed resilience to climate change (e.g. flooding, biodiversity) and land use change (e.g. urbanization, agricultural intensification). It would also include other watershed scale programs such as rural and urban stewardship with local landowners and agencies that improves and protects water quality and quantity and watershed biodiversity through restoration, rehabilitation and green infrastructure.

NOTE: The UTRCA and all conservation authorities are the key collection agencies for core provincial monitoring programs including the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN), the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN) and the Ontario Benthos Biomonitoring Network (OBBN). Conservation authorities also report on changes in provincial environmental quality every five years through their standardized Watershed Report Cards. **Without the inclusion of a new category of “Conserving Natural Resources” the legislative changes as proposed on the ERO would preclude Conservation Authority participation in these core provincial monitoring programs resulting in their likely termination, and negative impacts on human health.**

Recommendation 3: THAT the government remove the requirements for individual Municipal Council budget agreement for watershed-based programs called “other programs and services”/ non-mandatory

AND THAT updates to the municipal levy regulation and training be developed in collaboration with conservation authorities and municipalities.

The ERO posting and Bill 108 propose to fundamentally change the CA/municipal funding relationship. As a general comment, it is agreed that CAs should be transparent in how they levy municipalities for both mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services. It is further agreed that CA budgets should be presented to their municipalities on an annual basis and distinguish levy funded programs from those that are not. **This has always been the standard practice of the UTRCA.**

The creation of conservation authorities recognized that water does not stop flowing at political boundaries and that there are economies of scale through cost sharing. Members of the Board of Directors are appointed by all involved municipalities, and this watershed management governance provides an essential multi-municipality perspective on which program investments will most benefit a watershed and should be supported by a municipal levy. The provincial

proposal limits use of municipal levy to “mandatory programs and services” (standards and requirements to be prescribed in regulation) related to Natural Hazards, Conservation-owned Lands, Drinking Water Protection, and to Lake Simcoe watershed protection. “Other programs and services”/non-mandatory identified by a CA Board for their watershed would need individual Municipal Council agreement on budget for them (21.1.2(2)) and accounting with each municipality that participates in order for a municipal levy to be applied.

CAs are already governed directly by municipalities through their appointees to the CA Board. The CA Board directly controls the extent, size and scope of programs and services, and the Authority’s budget, including levy. This governance structure already provides the means for member municipalities, collectively, to opt in or out of non-mandatory programs while maintaining the benefit of a watershed focus, and economies of scale through cost sharing. A new administrative instrument (mandatory and non-mandatory levy) is being proposed, presumably, to provide municipalities with a sense of control they feel they don’t currently have. This new administrative instrument appears cumbersome at best and prone to definitional challenges. It transfers components of budget decision making to municipal councils rather than with the Board of Directors. Given the timing of municipal budgets versus the passing of a CA budget, greater uncertainty is created. Instead the UTRCA encourages a review of current training for CA Boards and municipalities with an emphasis on member roles, powers and responsibilities, as a reminder that program and budget control is already fully within their power. The existing governance structure was designed for this level of control; it seems more efficient to maximize the effectiveness of the existing governance structure through training than to create a new administrative tool that will greatly complicate the process, as well as create an additional administrative burden. It is unclear why a government that wants to reduce red tape and improve efficiencies is creating such a complicated and time consuming administrative process for watershed management programs and services. The proposal will consume resources and may unintentionally lead to financial inefficiencies and poor management of watershed resources through the “opt-out” option. In effect it undermines the mandate, premise and financial efficiencies of the multi-municipality/watershed governance of conservation authorities.

Recommendation 4: THAT the Province continue to financially support core mandatory programs and services to be delivered by conservation authorities, as well as support CA eligibility for other provincial funding programs.

There are currently provincial transfer payments to all CAs for natural hazards (Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) and source water protection (Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks). The Province’s ‘Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan’ recognizes how issues such as climate change can impact and threaten Ontario’s economic prosperity and the well-being of its people; and states that addressing these challenges is a shared responsibility. However, the 2019 Ontario budget cut 50% of the natural hazards program funding to conservation authorities. The impact to the UTRCA is a direct loss of \$170,000 for core services, plus the ability to leverage additional funding to support those same programs, typically at a ratio of 3:1. The actual impact is closer to \$500,000. This funding reduction seems to be a contradiction to the Environment Plan commitments and is a concerning signal that the Province is on a path to transferring the remainder of its natural hazards financial support responsibilities to municipalities who, themselves, have also seen a reduction in their own provincial transfer payments as well as cuts to public health and other shared cross sector programs. This transfer of funding responsibilities from one level of government to another does not benefit the individual taxpayer and jeopardizes critical public services. The province is encouraged to continue its investment in these core mandatory programs and services.

Additionally, individual CAs are important on-the-ground delivery agents for numerous provincial programs through special contracts. For example the UTRCA's work has been supported by funding from the Canada- Ontario Agreement (Water Management Plan, water quality stewardship, low impact development), the Provincial Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, and Great Lakes Guardian Fund. The province should ensure that the eligibility of CAs for these other provincial funding opportunities continues.

Recommendation 5: THAT core mandatory programs may be applied to municipal levy or CAs could utilize other sources of revenue.

Given the instability of provincial transfer payments and additional pressures on municipal budgets from various provincial funding cuts, the CA/municipal budget relationship should retain the CA Board's ability to utilize user fee revenues. It is our request that these core mandatory programs may be applied to municipal levy or could utilize other sources of revenue. For example, CAs want the option of using self-generated revenue to support conservation (owned) land management, in addition to, or rather than, municipal levy.

Recommendation 6: That the inclusion of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act as a core program be supported and that the intent of that legislation be applied consistently across all conservation authority areas of jurisdiction.

We note that inclusion of Lake Simcoe Protection Act as a core program seems out of place geographically. However, the intentions of the Act are certainly supported and we would suggest similar legislation or intent in all conservation authority watersheds. The Lake Simcoe Protection Act is also consistent with the watershed management principles and range of programs currently delivered by conservation authorities. Fundamentally, if the province agrees this watershed management approach is appropriate for the Lake Simcoe Watershed, it seems appropriate that it be applied across the rest of the province.

Recommendation 7: That the province continue to financially support conservation authority responsibilities under the Clean Water Act.

We note that the ERO proposal allows for the inclusion of Source Water Protection costs as an eligible municipal levy expense. While the province is continuing to fund Source Water Protection costs for 2019, the UTRCA is concerned that future expenses may be expected to be recovered via the municipal levy. Any downloading of costs to municipalities will create an inconsistent application of policies within Source Protection Regions. Provincial oversight, science and policy standardization, and funding was the product of the Walkerton Inquiry and was to address policy and administrative inconsistencies that contributed to the Walkerton drinking water tragedy. The UTRCA is concerned any move to transfer responsibilities away from the province, including funding, could result in inconsistent application of policies and ultimately increase risks to Ontarian's drinking water supplies.

Other Proposals – Appointment of an Investigator (proposed Section 23.1 (4 – 8)); Duty of Members (proposed Section 14.1)

These proposals are supported. With regard to investigations, it suggested the costs of an investigation be borne by the Province to ensure recommendations are unbiased and independent of the Authority in question.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Ian Wilcox'.

Ian Wilcox, General Manager
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett
Date: May 17, 2019
Subject: Proposed Amendment to Conservation Authorities Regulations for Development Permits (ERO Posting #013-4992)

Agenda #: 5 (e)
Filename: C:\Users\annett\Documents\GroupWise\7747-1.doc

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the UTRCA Board of Directors endorse the following submission to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) concerning proposed amendment to Conservation Authorities Regulations for Development Permits (ERO Posting #013-4992)

SUMMARY

On April 5, 2019, the Province posted a proposal for “Focusing conservation authority development permits on the protection of people and property”. This proposal would create one new regulation for all conservation authorities and it will replace 36 existing individual Conservation Authority regulations under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

The province has noted that Conservation Authority regulations are a critical component of Ontario’s approach to reducing risks posed by flooding and other natural hazards and strengthening Ontario’s resiliency to extreme weather events. This renewed focus on natural hazards has been included in the *Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan*. It is proposed that a consistent regulation and approaches for conservation authority permits will support faster approvals while ensuring there are no impacts on natural hazards and public safety. The proposal includes exemptions for some low risk activities and other initiatives which will result in less costly approvals and allow conservation authority staff to focus on more complex applications to provide faster approvals.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of the Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) has proposed an amendment to Conservation Authorities Regulations for Development Permits (ERO Posting #013-4992). The proposal’s title is **Focusing Conservation Authority Development Permits on the Protection of People and Property** and comments were to be received by May 21st. Given time constraints, UTRCA staff submitted the following comments developed through collaboration with adjacent Conservation Authorities.

It is recommended that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve this submission. While seeking approval after-the-fact is highly unusual, the short notice period did not permit Board approval prior to submission.

The attached report speaks specifically to the proposed changes to the Regulation. (Additional Proposal details are below and the link can be found at https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4992?share=wqKxH7M9UXsfd_-whMFF8i9JsO_iZb818W9PDiQWDQg).

DISCUSSION

On April 5, 2019, the Province posted a Proposed Amendment to Conservation Authorities Regulations for Development Permits to create one regulation for all Conservation Authorities for development and alteration permits for natural hazards and public safety (ERO# 013-4992).

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is proposing to create a regulation further defining the ability of a conservation authority to regulate prohibited development and other activities for impacts to the control of flooding and other natural hazards. This is consistent with the province's proposal;

“Prohibited activities set out in Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act as amended by Schedule 4 of the Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017 include:

- *Development in areas related to natural hazards such as floodplains, shorelines, wetlands and hazardous lands (i.e. lands that could be unsafe for development because of naturally occurring processes associated with flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches or unstable soil or bedrock); and*
- *Interference with or alterations to a watercourse or wetland.”*

The province has stated that the proposed regulation will make rules for development in hazardous areas more consistent to support faster, more predictable and less costly approvals for the business sector. The proposal includes some local flexibility on regulation streamlining based on differences in risks posed by flooding and other natural hazards. At this time, a draft of the proposed regulation has not been provided.

UTRCA protects people, property and infrastructure from natural hazards through management of the natural environment, given our roles and responsibilities as outlined in the MNRF Policies and Procedures Manual for conservation authorities:

- Regulators under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*;
- Public commenting body under the *Planning Act* and *Environmental Assessment Act*;
- Representing the provincial interest in natural hazards for planning and development related matters (as per MOU with province, dated 2001);
- Service providers to municipal partners; and
- Landowners.

UTRCA has a long history of partnerships with the province, municipalities, watershed residents, development and consulting industries, and other agencies and watershed stakeholders. Together, we will continue to work collaboratively to protect people and property from flooding and other natural hazards, and to conserve natural resources.

IMPLICATIONS

The extent of financial impact of this proposal is unknown at this time. If approved, some activities that currently require a permit from the UTRCA may be exempt or subject to a permit by rule process with a reduced fee. The effect on revenue from application fees and expenses related to permit activities will need to be evaluated when the text of a new regulation is provided by the Province.

Environmental planning, natural heritage/watershed planning, engineering and geographic information systems programs support the UTRCA permit process and may be affected by this proposal.

PREPARED BY:
Tracy Annett, MCIP, RPP, Manager
Environmental Planning and Regulations

RECOMMENDED BY:
Ian Wilcox,
General Manager / Secretary Treasurer

Comments Regarding Focusing Conservation Authority Development Permits on the Protection of People and Property submitted to mnrwaterpolicy@ontario.ca

**Submitted by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
May 21, 2019**

The Ministry proposed changes and Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) responses are included below:

PROPOSED CHANGE 1 - Consolidate and Harmonize Existing CA Regulations

The Minister is proposing to consolidate and harmonize the existing 36 individual conservation authority approved regulations into one Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry approved regulation to ensure consistency in requirements while still allowing for local flexibility.

UTRCA response:

UTRCA is supportive of the proposal to consolidate and harmonize the existing 36 individual conservation authority regulations into one Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry approved regulation. The updated regulation should include schedules which outline the appropriate regulatory storm for all 36 watersheds. In the UTRCA watershed the regulatory storm is based on the 1937 Flood event.

To assist in improved coordination and consistency with managing development in areas containing natural hazards, it would be beneficial for the province to modernize and update guidelines provided by the province – in particular the technical guidelines published in 2002. These regulations and guidance documents need to give CAs the tools to incorporate climate change into our future proofing of communities.

In addition, UTRCA strongly supports utilizing S. 28 as one tool to address adapting to a changing climate. As part of the update to the S. 28 regulation, it is recommended that the Province include specific elements to address extreme weather events, including:

- Updating the technical guidelines to provide provincial direction on how to include climate change considerations. These guidelines should support CA decision-making for both planning and permitting functions;
- Standards and requirements to mitigate the impacts of climate change and provide for adaptation to a changing climate, including through increasing resiliency;
- Ensuring that the definition of “conservation of land” ties to the CA role in mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts.

PROPOSED CHANGE 2 – Update Definitions

The Minister is proposing to update definitions for key regulatory terms to better align with other provincial policy, including: wetland, watercourse and pollution.

UTRCA response:

UTRCA supports this proposal. Conservation Authorities through Conservation Ontario have encouraged the province to define these terms in relation to natural hazards to provide clarity and minimize variation across the province. In order to achieve a consistent interpretation of these terms it would be helpful to replace with existing definitions (e.g. wetlands as defined in the Provincial Policy Statement) as well as provide and/or update existing support materials (e.g. fact sheets or implementation guidelines). Working with existing definitions and guidance materials rather than creating new definitions will allow a more rapid incorporation into review and permitting processes. UTRCA will have additional more detailed comments upon receipt of draft definition(s).

It is noted that the legislation currently empowers MNRF to create definitions for “development activity” and “hazardous land”. It is recommended that the Province take the opportunity to update those definitions as well.

PROPOSED CHANGE 3 – Define Undefined Terms

The Minister is proposing to define undefined terms including interferences, conservation of land.

UTRCA response:

UTRCA supports the proposal to define key undefined terms to address not only the role CAs have in protecting life and property from natural hazards, but also in conserving natural resources to support natural hazard management and to ensure resilience on the landscape to mitigate the effects of climate change. It is recommended the definitions of Interference and Conservation of Land be consistent with the previous 1994 Mining and Lands Commission decision as well as existing guidance from Conservation Ontario – prepared in consultation with provincial staff (*Guidelines to Support Conservation Authority Administration of the Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation*, Conservation Ontario, 2008).

PROPOSED CHANGE 4 – Reduce Regulatory Restrictions

The Minister is proposing to reduce regulatory restrictions between 30m and 120m of a wetland and where a hydrological connection has been severed.

UTRCA response:

The UTRCA supports the reduction of regulatory restrictions between 30m and 120m from a wetland where;

- It has been demonstrated a reduction in the regulated area is warranted through a technical report;
- A constructed barrier or divide (e.g. linear infrastructure) exists between the wetland and proposed development with no wetland attributes on the ‘development’ side (i.e. hydrologically disconnected or severed); or
- The proposed development activity presents a ‘low-risk’ to impacting the hydrologic function of the wetland or public safety. Development that may present a higher risk to the wetland and its functions should maintain their regulatory restrictions.

UTRCA’s current permitting policies allow many low risk activities to be exempt from obtaining a permit, instead letters of clearance may be issued. Section 4.2.4B of the Environmental Planning Policy Manual (UTRCA, 2006) outlines the policy:

B. BETWEEN 30 & 120 METRES – LETTER OF CLEARANCE

The following uses may be permitted and will only require a letter of clearance, if proposed within 30 to 120 metres from the limit of a Provincially Significant Wetland or a wetland greater than or equal to 2 hectares in size:

- Single family residential dwelling*
- Swimming pools, decks, non-habitable accessory structures*

- iii) *Minor additions to existing residential and agricultural buildings/structures*
- iv) *Residential septic systems*

It's important to note that there are activities that should not be considered low risk activities such as large scale excess soil/fill placement and grading activities, major infrastructure (e.g. roads, servicing or utility corridor). In addition, clarity will be required on the condition "where a hydrological connection has been severed".

UTRCA currently applies this practice for areas where there is a road or significant infrastructure within 120m of a wetland once it has been confirmed that a hydrological connection has been severed. It would be beneficial to have this practice enabled in the Regulation and future policy guidance provided to outline criteria for its use.

PROPOSED CHANGE 5 – Exempt Low Risk Activities Drainage Act

The Minister is proposing to exempt low risk development activities from requiring a permit including certain alterations and repairs to existing municipal drains subject to the Drainage Act provided they are undertaken in accordance with the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act protocol.

UTRCA response:

The UTRCA supports the inclusion of this provision to enable the explicit exemption of some low risk activities. In some regulated areas, there are low risk activities that currently require a permit that could be considered for exemption. UTRCA policies currently include activities of this nature that occur outside of a wetland or some hazard areas such as minor landscaping or grading, replacement of service connections, small non-habitable accessory structures e.g. shed. The proposed exemption and other initiatives outlined in this proposal will result in less costly approvals and will also allow conservation authority staff to focus on more complex applications and provide faster approvals. UTRCA would be pleased to work with MNRF and other stakeholders to review activities that may be included for exemption.

UTRCA is also supportive of the proposal to exempt some low-risk development activities from requiring a permit, including certain alterations and repairs to municipal drains subject to the *Drainage Act* provided they are undertaken in accordance with the *Drainage Act* and *Conservation Authorities Act* (DART) Protocol. It is recognized that this proposed exemption would require an update to the DART protocol and it is recommended that the DART be re-convened for this purpose. When considering exemptions, the Province should contemplate the full range of tools embedded in the new S. 28 Regulation, including opportunities for permit-by-rule, adopting a document by reference and registration. For example, as drainage works have the potential to impact flood control, it is essential that CAs be notified of the proposed work in advance.

PROPOSED CHANGE 6 – Allow CAs to Exempt Low Risk Development Activities

The Minister is proposing to allow conservation authorities to further exempt low risk development activities from requiring a permit provided in accordance with conservation authority policies.

UTRCA response:

UTRCA supports this initiative to include a provision in the regulations to allow individual conservation authorities to exempt low risk activities from permitting where there is current technical information and mapping. Currently, it is unclear if the proposed regulation is to outright exempt specific low risk activities (i.e. provide a list of activities exempt from requiring a permit) or to implement a 'permit-by-rule' system. Permit by rule is used in other provincial legislation where the applicant agrees to a specific set of rules before they start a

specific regulated activity in a defined area. The applicant may be required to register their activity with the UTRCA and inspections may be required.

The MNRFC should consider the requirements that will need to be in place for the implementation of this provision such as regulation maps that are current and a regular maintenance process is in place. Provincial investment in updating components of the natural hazard maps may be necessary (e.g. floodplain, erosion and wetland mapping). Current and reliable maps are a key part of the successful implementation of this option so the public can use the conservation authority regulation maps to identify where an exemption may or may not be applicable and avoid enforcement issues. UTRCA regulation policies would need to be updated and approved by the Board of Directors in order to be clear on the type of activities and what type of an exemption may apply. Currently, UTRCA policies recognize certain activities that fall under “minor works” that are expedited permit processes as well as exemptions (e.g.. minor landscaping, structures exempt from requiring building permits due to their size).

It is recommended that the MNRFC should also provide implementation support materials to provide the policy framework for exempting low-risk development activities. Finally, it should be acknowledged that any exemptions put an unfunded compliance burden on conservation authorities. Conservation authorities will have to give consideration to this issue when developing policies for low-risk development activities.

PROPOSED CHANGE 7 – Transparency of CA Regulatory Policy

The Minister is proposing to require conservation authorities to develop, consult on, make publicly available and periodically review internal policies that guide permitting decisions.

UTRCA response:

UTRCA supports this proposal. UTRCA’s current permit policies, approved by the UTRCA’s Board of Directors, have been in place since 2006 and were developed through a comprehensive consultation process. These policies are public documents and are posted on the UTRCA website at;

<http://thamesriver.on.ca/planning-permits-maps/utrca-environmental-policy-manual/> .

Updates to our policies have been awaiting completion of the Conservation Authorities Act amendment process. To ensure greater consistency across the province, it is recommended that the MNRFC should provide implementation support materials for CAs to base their internal policies upon.

PROPOSED CHANGE 8 – Require Public Notification of Mapping Changes

The Minister is proposing to require conservation authorities to notify the public of changes to mapped regulated areas such as floodplains or wetland boundaries.

UTRCA response:

UTRCA supports this proposal to include a provision in the regulation that the public must be notified of changes to mapped regulated areas. The UTRCA Board of Directors previously endorsed the Conservation Ontario document titled *Procedure for Updating Section 28 (Regulation Limit) Mapping* in August 2018. Generally, the CO Mapping Update Procedure 2018 outlines that the level of public consultation and notification is dependent on the extent of the update. Where mapping updates are deemed minor, then notification to the Board of Directors and/or posting a notice on the CA website is suggested to be sufficient as a best management practice. For more major mapping updates, it is suggested that an increased level of public consultation is appropriate, including at least one public meeting to provide information and receive comments. Examples include;

- Where a municipality is undertaking a land use planning approval such as a secondary or community plan or environmental assessment and new or updated natural hazard mapping is available, the UTRCA considers the public to be notified of these changes through the municipal consultation process. This avoids duplicate public processes.
- Many updates to mapping are the result of site specific planning or permit applications and the landowner is notified as part of the process. These are considered minor housekeeping updates and are undertaken from time to time. Since effected parties are involved and aware of the changes, additional public notification is not undertaken.
- Guidance on acceptable public notification processes would be helpful to outline options available to conservation authorities. The guidelines should consider factors such as the scale and scope of changes, alternative public notification opportunities to avoid duplication as well as the size of the watershed for comprehensive update.

Currently, the regulations are what is referred to as a “text based” regulation and not a “mapped based” regulation. While it is acknowledged and supported that CAs should notify the public of changes to mapped regulated areas it should be equally acknowledged that the text of the regulation prevails.

Additionally, the UTRCA suggest that the province require a more consistent and transparent notification process for the provincial wetland evaluation system – particularly when wetlands are evaluated on private lands and are to designated Provincially Significant Wetlands.

PROPOSED CHANGE 9 – Require Reporting on Service Delivery

The Minister is proposing to require conservation authorities to establish, monitor and report on service delivery standards including requirements and timelines for determination of complete applications and timelines for permit decisions.

UTRCA response:

UTRCA supports the province’s update to the regulation to require CA’s to monitor and report on service delivery standards – based on standardized timelines. The UTRCA Environmental Planning & Regulations Unit has a new database that will allow us to improve our monitoring and reporting on applications. The current Administration & Enforcement - Section 28 Board reports include information related to when the application was deemed complete and when the permit was issued. Tracking this information will allow us to report on our Service Delivery.

In addition, we are working with Conservation Authorities across the province to establish checklists and guidelines to focus the efforts of the development industry and CA staff on providing timely and clear pre-consultation criteria to encourage complete and thorough technical submissions. This effort to address complete applications and complex issues at the beginning of the land use planning or permit process to avoid delays through the process.

It should be noted UTRCA and other CAs are currently working in partnership with Conservation Ontario to develop a client-centric customer service training program – targeted on further improving CA client-service and accountability; increasing the speed of approvals; and reduce red tape and regulatory burden. UTRCA’s Board approved a set of actions for streamlining conservation authority activities at its meeting in April 2019.

Although the UTRCA is able to achieve success in meeting the provincial timelines, there are opportunities to improve the complete application process and improve the quality of technical submissions and achieve faster approvals. Technical guidelines and checklists are used for this purpose. UTRCA would strongly support an update to the 2002 Provincial Natural Hazard Guidelines including new information to address climate change.

PROPOSED CHANGE 10 - Once the regulation is established, the Province is also proposing to bring into force un-proclaimed sections of the CA Act associated with CA permitting decisions and regulatory enforcement.

UTRCA response:

The UTRCA supports proclaiming un-proclaimed sections of the Act related to non-compliance with Section 28 Regulations. During the 2017 CA Act review and amendments, substantial amendments were made to the Act to enhance enforcement mechanisms, i.e., the ability to stop work, the ability to enter privately-owned land (for the purposes of ensuring compliance with permit approvals and conditions and with reasonable grounds to believe an offence has occurred), and the ability to charge significantly higher (offence) penalties than those currently identified within the Act. These are important tools to allow CAs to enforce the conditions placed on permits and the address non-permitted activities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input on this important provincial initiative. Note that UTRCA will have additional more detailed comments upon the release and review of the draft amended regulation.

With regards,



Ian Wilcox, General Manager
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Chris Harrington, Manager, Watershed Planning, Research and Monitoring
Date: May 17, 2019 **Agenda #:** 5 (f)
Subject: UTRCA Comments regarding Bill 108, schedule 5, ERO 013-5033 Proposed Amendments to Ontario's Endangered Species Act. **Filename:** WP #1639

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the UTRCA Board of Directors endorse the following submission provided to the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) concerning proposed changes to Ontario's Endangered Species Act (ERO 013-5033).

Changes proposed to the Ontario Endangered Species Act by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) will limit or eliminated current protections for Species at Risk and reduce the likelihood of species recovery.

Recovery efforts for Species at Risk in the Thames River watershed have been ongoing for over two decades through work with landowners, community members, and various levels of government. These efforts have brought great success and recognition in species recovery coupled overall improvements to watershed health. The attached submission on the posting outlines concerns with the proposed changes and how this erodes decades of recovery effort in the Thames watershed. The short notice period required comments on the proposed changes be provided by May 21st and did not permit Board approval prior to submission, hence the unusual request for endorsement after the comments were submitted.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Chris Harrington
Manager, Watershed Planning, Research and Monitoring

Scott Gillingwater
Species at Risk Biologist

"Inspiring a Healthy Environment"

May 17, 2019

Public Input Coordinator
Species Conservation Policy Branch
300 Water Street
Floor 5N
Peterborough ON K9J 3C7

Re: Upper Thames River Conservation Authority comments on the 10th Year Review of Ontario's Endangered Species Act: Proposed Changes (ERO 013-5033)

The Upper Thames River Watershed lies within one of the most heavily altered areas of Ontario, as well as one of the most important areas for plant and wildlife biodiversity in Canada. For many decades, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) has worked with landowners, community members, other Conservation Authorities and various levels of government in order to improve the local environment. Part of this effort has focused on Species at Risk. The UTRCA is a leader in both environmental education to showcase the importance of ecosystem health, as well as on-the-ground efforts to recover habitats, recover species and increase the potential for the long-term health of these systems and species.

Based on decades of experience in this field, the UTRCA feels that the proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) would cause permanent losses to populations of vulnerable species, further fragment habitat and create opportunities to circumvent much needed species and habitat protections. We are concerned that economic influence could detract from using the best available science on the species being assessed and, that regardless of assessment legislated protections may not be given.

Delisting, or listing species at a lower level based on northern extent of range, or more abundant populations outside of Ontario, is a short-sighted approach. This is contrary to the Government's Made in Ontario Environment Plan which states on page 51, "We are committed to ensuring that the legislation provides stringent protections for species at risk, while continuing to work with stakeholders to improve the effectiveness of the program." There has been no consultation with Conservation Authorities, an important stakeholder. This change could limit or end protection for many species, and could significantly undermine opportunities for long-term recovery. Such actions could limit the potential of a species' northern egress due to climate change, ignores the important evolved traits northern populations possess and puts control of wildlife conservation in the hands of neighbouring states/provinces. This would also be a disservice to residents of Ontario that care deeply about our natural environment.

Globally, we are witnessing overwhelming changes to local environments, significant species declines, extirpations and extinctions. Protections for plants, wildlife and their habitats should be increasing, not decreasing. In many instances, Species at Risk recovery efforts positively influence countless other species through habitat protection and awareness. Research on at-risk species in Ontario has shown the scale of threats occurring, and informs biologists, government and the public on the severity of impacts to our local natural systems. If at any time in human history we needed to put more effort into the protection of the natural world and the species within it, this is the time.

Around the world, Ontario's current Endangered Species Act is seen as one of the most significant legislative tools for species protection. Highlighted in the "Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan" is reaffirmation of commitment to protect Species at Risk through stringent protections. To decrease protections; fail to list, or down-list species based on geography or neighbouring provincial or state populations; allow increased ministerial oversight; or to delay habitat protections will



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irreparably harm Ontario's species. We need to maintain the protections outlined in the current ESA, and if anything, increase the strength of the Act with stricter protections through enforcement.

The IUCN (international Union for Conservation of Nature) based criteria used for listing species through the ESA via COSSARO (Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario) has been refined over decades. Through COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Canada), a rigorous peer review process through stakeholders, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge, Provincial and Federal governments and multiple scientists occurs before COSSARO are even involved. The status of species in Ontario is given one of the most comprehensive reviews of any species world-wide through this process. There should be little doubt as to the robustness of the review and the protections necessary for the species that are assessed. The integrity of this process must be maintained, and scientists knowledgeable on the taxa need to be the deciding factor, not outside influences. Influence from individuals, groups or organizations without the explicit scientific expertise in the given taxa, or those that would negate the best available information on the species being assessed, should not play any role in the assessment.

Ontario is changing rapidly, and opportunities for habitat and species protection, maintenance and recovery are precarious at best in many circumstances. Ontario has a responsibility to preserve and protect all species in the province, and increased efforts need to be put forward in order to slow and eventually prevent declines of the most vulnerable species. Through changing climate, increased pressures such as human population growth, decreased habitat availability and quality, increased infrastructure development and road networks, increasing non-native species and diseases that impact native fauna and flora, changing climate and degradation of environmental health, all result in a greater need for ongoing, and increased protection. The UTRCA is a leader in ecosystem health, with decades of Species at Risk research, recovery and stewardship. We have witnessed the positive results from our efforts, not only in species recovery, but also in awareness and appreciation for Ontario's natural heritage within the communities we work. People of all ages, backgrounds and interests have come forward to fight for species and habitat protection.

The UTRCA does not support changes to the ESA that will:

- decrease or delay protections for species assessed in Ontario;
- decrease the role of the scientists assessing species through COSSARO (this includes allowing those with close ties to industry/development to participate as a member), the process should be based solely on the best available science, and conducted by those with detailed taxa expertise;
- limit protections based on geography (i.e. northern extent of range species);
- Increase ministerial oversight (The assessment and protection for Species at Risk needs to be based on the best available science).

Industry and development can still continue to occur as it has under the existing legislation, but in today's world, the protection of our remaining natural areas and the species that inhabit them must be a high priority. The ESA is one of the few tools that currently protect declining species, and we need the protections it offers to remain intact.

Sincerely,

Ian Wilcox
General Manager

c.c. UTRCA Board of Directors

To: Chair and Members of the UTRCA Board of Directors

From: Tracy Annett, Manager – Environmental Planning and Regulations

Date: April 15, 2019 **Agenda #:** 7 (a)

Subject: Administration and Enforcement – Sect. 28 Status Report –
Development, Interference of Wetlands and Alteration to
Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation **Filename:** Document
ENVP 7682

The attached table is provided to the Board as a summary of staff activity related to the Conservation Authority's *Development, Interference of Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation* (Ont. Reg. 157/06 made pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act). The summary covers the period from April 13, 2019 to May 20, 2019.

Reviewed by:

Tracy Annett, MCIP, RPP, Manager
Environmental Planning and Regulations

Prepared by:

Karen Winfield
Land Use Regulations Officer

Mark Snowsell
Land Use Regulations Officer

Brent Verscheure
Land Use Regulations Officer

Jessica Schnaithmann
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SECTION 28 STATUS REPORT SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS



DEVELOPMENT, INTERFERENCE WITH WETLANDS AND ALTERATIONS TO SHORELINE AND WATERCOURSES REGULATION ONTARIO REGULATION 157/09

Period of Report: April 13, 2019 to May 20, 2019

| Permit Application | Municipality | Address/Location | Application Type | Project Description | Application Complete | Permit Issued | Regulations Staff |
|--------------------|------------------|---|-----------------------|---|---|---------------|-------------------|
| 189-17 | Middlesex Centre | 65 Young Street, Delaware | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed Single Family Residence, Attached Garage, Septic System, New Pool, Pool House & Shed | 01/04/2019 | 23/04/2019 | Winfield |
| 192-18 | Stratford | Quinlan Road and Mornington Street, Stratford | Municipal Project | Proposed Construction of Two (2) Forcemains Undercrossing the McNamara Municipal Drain (Dam & Pump) and the Court Municipal Drain (High Pressure Directional Drilling). | 21/03/2019 | 11/05/2019 | Winfield |
| 37-19 | Ingersoll | Bell Street, Ingersoll | Utilities/Services | Proposed HDPE Fibre Optic Conduit Installation undercrossing Sutherland Creek along Bell Street | 23/04/2019 | 23/04/2049 | Winfield |
| 54-19 | London | 946 Longworth Road, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of new Single Family Residence | 01/04/2019 | 17/04/2019 | Verscheure |
| 60-19 | Perth South | Road 125 at Otter Creek, Perth South | Municipal Project | Proposed Repairs to Bridge/Structure 75 crossing Otter Creek | 04/02/2019 (*Permit held until pre-con meeting 02/04/2019) | 24/04/2019 | Winfield |

| Permit Application | Municipality | Address/Location | Application Type | Project Description | Application Complete | Permit Issued | Regulations Staff |
|--------------------|------------------|--|-----------------------|---|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 63-19 | London | 1577-1687 Wilton Grove Road, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of new food processing plant | 01/04/2019 | 17/04/2019 | Snowsell |
| 71-19 | London | Colonel Talbot Road, London | Utilities/Services | Installation of new sanitary forcemain | 15/04/2019 | 01/05/2019 | Verscheure |
| 73-19 | London | 22 Kensington Avenue, London | Construct/Reconstruct | House Addition within West London Proposed SPA | 15/04/2019 | 17/04/2019 | Snowsell |
| 74-19 | London | 1377 Rideau Gate, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of a replacement pool shed | 15/04/2019 | 16/04/2019 | Verscheure |
| 75-19 | Middlesex Centre | 68 Atkinson Court, Delaware | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed Inground Pool, Patio and Associated Pool House | 03/05/2019 | 03/05/2019 | Winfield |
| 76-19 | Middlesex Centre | Elgin Street to Sir Robert Place, Arva | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed Water and Wastewater Servicing Installation | 03/04/2019 | 18/04/2019 | Winfield |
| 77-19 | Middlesex Centre | (Lot 2) Sir Robert Place, Arva | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed Construction of Single Family Residence adjacent Medway Creek and the Colbert Award Drain. | 15/04/2019 | 11/05/2019 | Winfield |
| 80-19 | Zorra | Part Lot 6, Concession 11, Zorra | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed Channel Realignment (Unnamed Tributary of the Middle Thames River) | 23/04/2019 | 02/05/2019 | Winfield |
| 81-19 | Middlesex Centre | 83 Atkinson Court, Delaware | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed Deck | 24/04/2019 | 03/05/2019 | Winfield |
| 85-19 | London | Colonel Talbot Road, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of a new wastewater pumping station | 15/04/2019 | 02/05/2019 | Verscheure |

| Permit Application | Municipality | Address/Location | Application Type | Project Description | Application Complete | Permit Issued | Regulations Staff |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|---------------|-------------------|
| 86-19 | Zorra | 41st Line, Zorra | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed construction of new pipeline valve station associated with upgrades and expansion to the natural gas transmission system for the Union Gas Stratford Reinforcement Project. | 01/05/2019 | 07/05/2019 | Winfield |
| 87-19 | Thames Centre | 2603 Dorchester Road, Dorchester | Construct/Reconstruct | Phase 1, Phase 1A - Proposed site grading, installation of servicing and construction of a stormwater management facility associated with the Szucs - Boardwalk at Mill Pond Subdivision. | 19/02/2019 (***But awaiting Planning Act approval) | 15/05/2019 | Winfield |
| 89-19 | Middlesex Centre | 179 Union Avenue, Komoka | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of a new two story single family residence | 08/05/2019 | 15/05/2019 | Verscheure |
| 90-19 | London | 530 Oxford Street West, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Interior renovation and small exterior upgrades to existing retail development | 01/05/2019 | 02/05/2019 | Snowsell |
| 91-19 | London | 2656 Dingman Drive, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of a new swimming pool and pool shed | 30/04/2019 | 02/05/2019 | Verscheure |
| 92-19 | Middlesex Centre | 20628 Franks Lane, Middlesex Centre | Construct/Reconstruct | Minor house addition and shed construction | 02/05/2019 | 02/05/2019 | Snowsell |
| 93-19 | London | Fox Hollow Subdivision, London | Municipal Project | Construction of final component of Fox Hollow SWM facility | 16/04/2019 | 02/05/2019 | Snowsell |
| 94-19 | London | 81 Oxford Street West, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of addition of existing commercial building within potential West London SPA | 03/05/2019 | 10/05/2019 | Verscheure |
| 96-19 | London | 147 Paul Street, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of two storey addition to rear of existing residence within potential West London SPA | 06/05/2019 | 10/05/2019 | Verscheure |
| 98-19 | London | 220 Rathnally Street, London | Construct/Reconstruct | Construction of two storey addition to rear of existing residence within potential West London SPA | 07/05/2019 | 10/05/2019 | Verscheure |
| 102-19 | City of Woodstock | Lot 18 Masters Drive | Construct/Reconstruct | Proposed single family residence and attached garage adjacent to Sally Creek | 11/05/2019 | 13/05/2019 | Winfield |
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MEMO

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Ian Wilcox, General Manager
 Chris Harrington, Manager, Watershed Planning, Research and Monitoring.
Date: May 16, 2019 **Agenda #:** 7 (b) ii
Subject: 2018 Environmental Targets Progress Report **Filename:** Admin #3313

The UTRCA’s Environmental Targets Strategic Plan was approved in June 2016 making 2018 the second year of implementing target actions. The second annual progress report summarizing work in 2018 is attached.

The progress report highlights great success in using municipal levy funding approved as part of the 2018 budget to leverage and secure significant contract funding. Landowner contribution for stewardship work on private lands followed with the increased opportunity of incentive funding included with the contracts. Overall total funding expectations were on track in 2018 yet the mix in funding sources continued to lack stable forms of transfer payment funding from senior levels of government.

Objective measures of progress are inherent in the environmental targets, however during the early years of implementation such measures are not yet appropriate. For example, increased actions to increase vegetation cover will take time and can only be quantified on five year cycles through the interpretation of digital aerial photography when it becomes visible. Early efforts and progress therefore focus on program development, promotion, staff capacity, work planning and information preparation. These program inputs will dominate early years of implementation with more measurable outcomes anticipated later (Figure 1).



Prepared by:

Ian Wilcox
 General Manager

Chris Harrington
 Manager, Watershed Planning, Research and Monitoring

Strategic Plan

PROGRESS REPORT

Environmental Targets
2018





Environmental Targets Strategic Plan: 2018 Progress Report

1.0 Background

The UTRCA's Environmental Targets Strategic Plan was approved at the June 2016 Board of Directors Meeting. The impetus for the Plan was information from the UTRCA's Watershed Report Cards which clearly shows that environmental improvements in the UTRCA Watershed have stalled with status quo being the best outcome during the past 30 years. Other concerns

including outdated flood mapping, and an interest in maximizing public access to conservation lands were also motivation for the strategic plan.

The approved Environmental Targets Strategic Plan recommends the most significant programming change in the UTRCA's nearly 70 year history. The Plan is designed to advance achievement of the UTRCA's goals of:

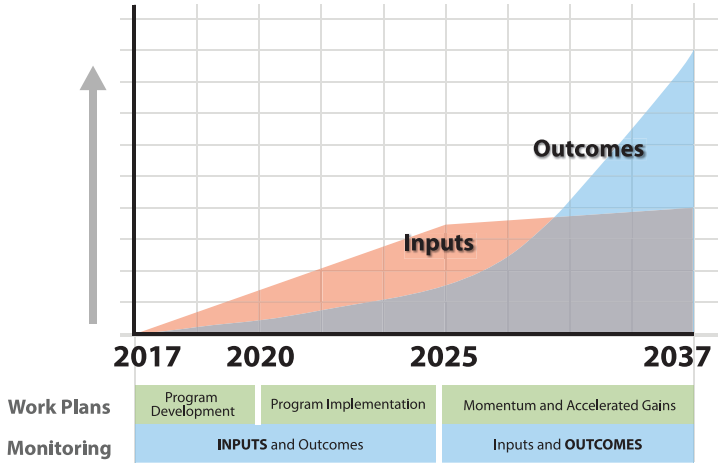
- Protecting people and their property from flooding and erosion,
- Improving water quality,
- Protecting and expanding natural areas, and
- Expanding outdoor recreation/ education opportunities.

The UTRCA Environmental Targets Strategic Plan outlines four aggressive but realistic environmental targets. These targets are a statement of how healthy and resilient the Thames River watershed can be by 2037, with adequate resources and strong partnerships.

The UTRCA's Environmental Targets are:

1. Improve each subwatershed's water quality score by one letter grade, as measured by the UTRCA Watershed Report Cards, by the year 2037.
2. Establish and restore 1,500 hectares of natural vegetation cover, windbreaks and buffers by 2037.
3. Reduce flood and erosion risk by updating flood models and hazard mapping for all UTRCA subwatersheds by 2020, and then integrate climate change scenarios into the updated models and develop climate change adaptation strategies by 2030.
4. Instill conservation values by supporting outreach to one million people annually by 2037, through visits to CA owned and managed lands as well as hands-on environmental experiences.

This report summarizes progress in advancing the UTRCA's Environmental Targets during 2018. With this being the second year of the Plan's implementation, much of the effort has focussed on program development including promotion, adding staff capacity, information preparation, and work planning. Given the 20 year schedule for Targets implementation, it is expected that progress during the firsts several years will be tracked as program inputs, with measurable outcomes accelerating during the last decade (see chart).



Environmental Targets: Progress & Reporting



2.0 Targets Funding 2018

Additional funding for 2018 for target related efforts were proposed as follows:

- \$300,000 from senior government in the form of a transfer payment,
- \$270,716 in municipal levy,
- \$145,119 from contracts, and
- \$70,000 from user fees (including landowner contributions).

The UTRCA Board of Directors approved the 2018 Municipal Levy contribution of \$270,716 as part of the Authority's budget. This critical funding allowed for additional staff capacity to start program development, and enabled staff to leverage funding from other sources, the most notable being Environment & Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Canadian Adaptation Council (CAP) funding towards water quality target initiatives to expand rural stewardship.

Contract funding sources are identified throughout this report. Highlights include:

- ECCC multi-year (4) funding (\$200,000/year) in support of rural best management practices implementation.
- CAP multi-year (3) funding (\$200,000/year) for cover crop demonstration project in the Medway Creek subwatershed.
- Continued funding from the National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP) with approximately \$300,000 directed towards the flood management target in 2018.

While contract revenue exceeded what was anticipated, transfer payments from senior levels of government have not been secured and are anticipated to continue to be a challenge. With the change in provincial government and ministry reorganization, there is continued uncertainty regarding provincial transfer payments in the future. In addition, some recurring and anticipated contract funding through provincial ministry programs did not materialize, resulting in scaling back in some program areas.

Success in securing contract funding was possible given the additional municipal levy for targets was used as matching contribution required by the funding programs. Contract funding represented the largest portion of funding towards increased target efforts but is short term in nature, uncertain, and requires significant effort to secure and manage. A significant contribution by landowners towards rural stewardship initiatives was also key to expanding rural stewardship efforts, with approximately \$525,000 towards projects on private lands.



3.0 Progress by Targets 2018

Progress on the targets in 2018 included efforts across all targets with the main focus on expanding programs and projects related to the Water Quality (3.1) and Flood and Erosion Risk (3.3) Targets. Additionally, staff undertook work planning and expanding efforts into other target areas, in preparation for the phasing in of efforts related to the Natural Cover Target (3.2). The progress is identified for each target below and follows the “Conceptual Monitoring and Reporting Program” approved at the June 15, 2017 UTRCA Board of Directors Meeting.



3.1 Target: Improve each subwatershed’s water quality score by one letter grade as measured by the UTRCA Watershed Report Cards, by the year 2037.

The Environmental Targets Strategic Plan called for increased effort toward the Water Quality Target for 2018, with \$149,000 in municipal levy and a goal of \$220,000 in new transfer payments and user fees. Additional levy funding to support this target is included in the 2019 budget. Work related to this target continued in 2018 with significant contract funding towards stewardship projects from ECCC, the CAP, and private funders. In addition, efforts associated with the long running Clean Water Program continued through 2018 with support directly from municipalities, private funders and landowners to offset project costs. Summaries are provided below.

Target Action: Double Existing Rural Stewardship Program

Clean Water Program

UTRCA stewardship staff continued to offer technical and financial assistance to landowners and community groups through 2018. More than 100 projects were carried out, along with a number of research, demonstration, and education/awareness efforts, under the Clean Water Program (CWP) umbrella. Through this program, municipalities and corporate/private donations helped to fund cost-sharing best management practices (BMPs). The CWP supplied more than \$115,000 in cost-share funds, while landowners contributed more than \$325,000 to implement BMPs on their properties.





Medway Creek Priority Subwatershed Project

The Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLASI) wrapped up in early 2018. The project was a huge success with much new knowledge gained and considerable past conservation efforts verified through the intensive water quality monitoring program. The project also helped lead into three additional projects, including two based in the Medway Creek watershed. In 2018, \$30,000 was provided to complete the final reports.

Medway Creek Watershed Phosphorus Reduction Initiative

Through funding from ECCC, BMP implementation efforts are being expanded to the whole Medway

Creek watershed. A key component is continuing work in the Upper Medway Creek subwatershed through wide-spread cover crop promotion. Expanded water quality monitoring efforts will help to test the impacts of BMPs. The overall project value is \$1,513,700 over four years. ECCC provides \$200,000 each year matched with approximately \$175,000 from partnering landowners each year.

Medway Creek Watershed Demonstration Project for Phosphorus Reduction

A grant has been acquired from the CAC through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program. The project is based around the demonstration of planting over 75% of the Upper Medway Creek subwatershed to cover crops, while maintaining a rigorous water quality monitoring program to test the impacts. Through the GLASI, it was recognized that most of the phosphorus loading into the Thames River from agricultural land occurs during the non-growing season. Cover crops, which are grown in rotation between cash crops, can protect the soil against erosion, improve soil health, and retain nutrients to supply subsequent crops. Data collected from agricultural plot research has indicated that cover crops may reduce winter and spring nutrient



loss in runoff. The overall project value is \$690,910 over three years. CAP provides funding based on the uptake of BMPs, with an average of almost \$200,000 annually matched with landowner contributions of approximately \$30,000 annually.





Subwatershed Monitoring

Conservation Services staff have partnered with researchers from ECCC in Burlington to monitor six local subwatersheds. This partnership will ensure that data collection continues at the Upper Medway station, which was set up in 2016, and will add three new stations to the network. The stations collect water quantity and quality data, which will be coupled with surveys of local farming practices. These monitoring stations will allow us to see what changes have occurred since monitoring in these areas began in 1985. A budget of \$27,000 is provided by ECCC to carry out the sampling and manage the data.

Wetland Creation

For the second year in a row, an anonymous funder has provided \$20,000 towards the creation and restoration of small wetlands across the Upper Thames watershed.

Target Action: Expand Urban Stewardship Program

2018 Low Impact Development (LID) Projects

With funding support from the Great Lakes Commission (GLC), the UTRCA participated in the Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Pilot Program for LID School Installations and Stream of Dreams Program. The program formalized a working relationship between the UTRCA as mentee and the Credit Valley Conservation Authority as the mentor organization, and successfully facilitated increased learning and communication. The GLC provided \$15,000 in funding for the project. The main objective of the UTRCA's pilot project was to increase awareness and understanding of how LID/green infrastructure can slow and reduce the amount and improve the quality of stormwater reaching storm sewer systems, the Thames River, and the Great Lakes, through the installation and interpretation of two schoolyard LID pilot demonstration projects and through a school-based education program, within the City of London.

LID Demonstration Projects

Two schoolyard projects were designed to serve as stormwater management LID demonstration sites. The first was located at Northbrae Public School (PS) where a swale was constructed in the school yard, next to a parking lot between Northbrae and Louise Arbour French Immersion PS. The swale is designed to slow the runoff from the impervious parking lot and filter pollutants before the runoff enters the municipal stormwater sewer system and eventually flows into the Thames River, which is approximately 500 metres away. At the second site, located at Jeanne Sauve French Immersion PS, a portion of the asphalt playground was removed and a rain garden installed. The rain garden is designed to hold runoff for a period of time before discharging it into the existing catch basin and the stormwater sewer system. The sewer eventually flows into the Thames River, approximately 200 m from the site.





Stream of Dreams Stormwater Education Program

In partnership with the Thames Valley District School Board and the three participating schools, UTRCA Community Education staff provided all three schools with the Stream of Dreams stormwater education program. UTRCA staff presented every class from the three schools with an age and curriculum appropriate lesson about the local watershed, rivers and streams, and the connection of storm drains to their waterways. This lesson helped students understand how their actions impact the health of our waterways. During an art session, each student painted their own wooden

“dreamfish” to be mounted in murals installed on the fences around the school properties. Leveraging the funding received from the GLC, support was provided from the federal NDMP (a portion of the \$36,600 awarded) to fund the development of Stream of Dreams post-program lesson plans and packages.

Parkview LID Project

During the spring of 2018, UTRCA staff facilitated the final phase of the newly constructed backyard rain gardens in Komoka’s Parkview development by engaging students from Parkview PS to help plant flowers and grasses in the rain gardens. The students received an in-depth lesson from UTRCA Community Education staff on stormwater and how to protect stormwater quality. The rain gardens were constructed by Sco-Terra Consulting Group Ltd. as part of an innovative approach to deal with residential runoff.



Communication Tools and Information Sharing

LID handouts were updated in 2018. Work continues on developing, formatting and posting LID resources on the UTRCA website. Information sharing took place through an Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop in March and a LID Treatment Train Tool Workshop in April.

Target Action: Expand Comprehensive Monitoring

Water Quality and Stream Health Monitoring

In 2018, the UTRCA expanded water quality monitoring to fill data gaps and ensure a similar monitoring regime for all 28 subwatersheds. This program provides important consistency to the data used for the UTRCA Watershed Report Cards and tracking progress on targets. New monitoring involved adding sampling at 15 locations to ensure all 28 subwatersheds have monthly water chemistry and bacteria data. The additional samples collected are analysed through a private lab. Other samples continue to be analysed through a partnership with the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks (MECP) Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN). Monitoring has also been expanded to include five winter sampling locations to better understand water quality conditions year round.



Water Quality Data Management using WISKI

Compiling water quality data in a standardized and comprehensive manner has been identified as a priority among watershed management partners to facilitate better collection, sharing and reporting of environmental information. Work to assemble water quality and ecological data sets in a standardized data management and analysis software package (WISKI) continued in 2018. Work included importing current provincial, municipal, and UTRCA led water quality monitoring program data into WISKI, including PWQMN, Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network, City of London Data, UTRCA Benthic Monitoring, and long-term programs for reservoir and in-stream monitoring. New monitoring sites and programs were added for BMP monitoring programs which involved expanded use of SKED (rating curve development tool) and water quality/quantity integration such as phosphorus loading. Fish and mussel program data, and corresponding taxonomic tree components, have been imported and developed within the biology module of WISKI. Tablet-based field sheets have been developed for benthic monitoring in order to increase the efficiency of data entry and fieldwork. New reporting has been developed for all aquatic programs for internal use, external data requests, and data sharing with the Ontario

Benthic Biomonitoring Network. Initial training and development of the WISKI Launchpad tool has begun to promote user-friendly staff access to reports and other WISKI features, including data exporting, graphing and analytical tools. This work was supported through the remaining \$15,000 of funding provided by the MECP Canada-Ontario Agreement for the project as part of a 2017-2018 agreement. Funding was anticipated to continue through the same provincial program for the entire year but was not secured.





3.2 Target: Establish and restore 1,500 hectares of natural vegetation cover, windbreaks and buffers by 2037.

The Environmental Targets Strategic Plan called for modest investment and effort toward the Natural Cover Target for 2018, with a goal of \$50,000 in new contract revenue and \$25,000 in user fees. Additional levy funding to support this target is included in the 2019 budget. Work planning by staff was undertaken in 2018 to expand efforts in 2019.

Target Action: Increase Technical Outreach and Restoration

Hodge's Pond

The goal of this project, which began in 2016, is to restore natural channel characteristics and function to the Cedar Creek corridor, as it flows through the Cedar Creek Swamp. A bypass of the Hodge's Pond dam was constructed in 2016/17, and draw-down of the impoundment continued through 2018. This newly free-flowing stretch of Cedar Creek will now benefit from a series of projects along its length, to enhance the stream bottom features, stabilize the creek banks, re-naturalize the riparian zone, and add species diversity to some adjacent wetland pockets. Gunn's Hill Limited Partnership and ECCC were new funding partners that came aboard in 2018 to support these efforts with \$105,000 for 2018/19. Tree and shrub planting and bioengineering will reduce erosion on the banks of the newly established channel. Re-establishing riffle/pool sequences through the restored stretch will increase dissolved oxygen and improve in-stream habitat, and nest boxes will provide bird habitat. These projects, combined with efforts to establish an interpretive





hiking trail loop on the property, should establish this property as a productive natural heritage feature and a destination for nature enthusiasts, recreational walkers/ hikers, and school field trips. In 2018, 480 native trees and shrubs were planted and a riffle constructed.

Burgess Park

Burgess & Standard Tube Park is a 96 hectare parcel of land owned by the UTRCA and City of Woodstock. The park is a mix of river, forest, wetland, and fallow farm fields with about 9 km of recreational trails. The Burgess & Standard Tube Park Master Plan (2014) outlined a five year naturalization plan for the 19

ha of retired farm land within the parcel. The UTRCA, in partnership with the City, has been implementing the recommendations of that plan since 2015. To date, more than 5000 trees and shrubs have been planted by local students and community members, countless more planted by machine, and more than 2 ha of native tall grass prairie established. In 2018, additional partners in World Wildlife Fund, Stewardship Oxford, and TD Bank were brought on-board, leading to an additional 1000 trees planted, construction of two new wetlands, and creating of two underground snake hibernacula. These efforts were supported by over 400 students and community volunteers. New trails signs will be installed in 2019 to highlight the completed projects and provide interpretive elements for the thousands of Oxford County residents who enjoy this trail system every year.



Pittock CA Land Naturalization

In partnership with the City of Woodstock, the opportunity arose in 2018 to naturalize UTRCA land adjacent to Pittock Reservoir. The resulting project spanned five days, involved 450 students from five local schools, and saw 1300 native trees and shrubs planted to expand the forested buffer around the reservoir.

CAMI Reforestation Project

2018 saw the continuation of an extensive reforestation project on GM Canada lands adjacent to the CAMI Automotive Plant in Ingersoll. This partnership began in 2013, turning agricultural land within the CAMI land parcel into new forest, involving local schools and GM staff. In 2018, three planting days were undertaken. Approximately 250 Ingersoll students planted 750 trees and shrubs, pushing the six year totals to 9550 trees and shrubs, 3200 students and staff participating, and 6 ha of new forest created.

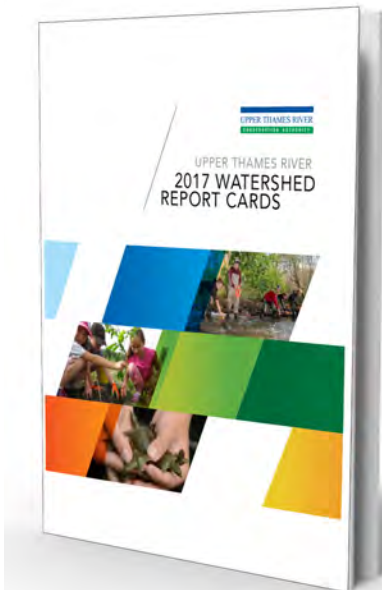


Target Action: Advocate For Natural Heritage Restoration and Protection

Natural Heritage Systems Studies

The Perth County Natural Heritage System Study was completed early in 2018 and provided to the County of Perth to support natural heritage planning. Specifically, the study will inform development of natural heritage policies in the current work to update of the County of Perth Official Plan. In 2018, the UTRCA began working with the County of Elgin to develop the Elgin Natural Heritage Systems Study (ENHSS), a first for the county. The County of Elgin Official Plan is also approaching its five-year review, at which time the County wants to consider findings from a natural heritage system study to ensure it is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. Work on the ENHSS will wrap up in 2019. Funding to support its development in the amount of \$60,000 was secured with half dedicated to work in 2018 and half in 2019. Developing a natural heritage

systems study for the County of Elgin ensures a consistent methodology for natural heritage planning in and around the watershed.



Watershed Report Cards and Watershed Forest Loss

Staff presentations highlighting the findings of the 2017 Watershed Report Cards continued in 2018. Disheartening forest loss calculation results, completed in 2017 through development of the report cards, were highlighted and presented in detail, tailored to local areas reflective of the audience. In some cases, specific forest loss statistics in a municipality were the focus of dedicated presentations at municipal council meetings.

Target Action: Conduct Comprehensive Monitoring

Spatially-Based Tracking of Vegetation Cover Change

There were ongoing efforts to maintain, update and share detailed standardized natural heritage spatial data in GIS, based on updated air photography that is provided in five years cycles. This data supports numerous UTRCA and partner projects including Watershed Report

Cards, natural heritage systems studies and quantifying forest losses or gains. In-house expertise in this updating process has provided an opportunity to expand this work to update natural heritage data and models beyond the watershed boundary using the newest 2015 air photography. Proposals to work in partnership with neighbouring conservation authorities and municipal partners (Perth, Middlesex, and Oxford) were developed and completed for the County of Perth and Oxford County in 2018. A total of \$17,000 in financial support to support this work was secured to facilitate natural heritage policy development.



3.3 Target: Reduce flood and erosion risk by updating flood models and hazard mapping for all UTRCA subwatersheds by 2020, then integrating climate change scenarios into the updated models and developing climate change adaptation strategies by 2030.

The Environmental Targets Strategic Plan called for a focus of efforts on this target in 2018 with \$121,716 in new municipal levy and \$145,119 in transfer payments and contracts. No further increases in levy funding are included for this target in the 2019 budget. Progress on this target has been accelerated with greater than anticipated matching funding provided by senior levels of government, as highlighted below.

Target Action: Update and Modernize Hydraulic and Hydrologic Models and Hazard Mapping

Flood Hazard Models are used to understand the areas impacted by flooding. These models can be used to update regulatory hazard mapping, as well as for flood forecasting, warning and preparedness planning. For work planning and progress reporting, the process of updating the models and mapping is broken into the tasks below. The regulated areas in the UTRCA have been divided into 41 study areas: five associated with reaches of the Thames River, 10 associated with urban watersheds, and 26 associated with rural watersheds. Each task is being undertaken in each study area. Following is a brief synopsis of the progress in each task and study areas where significant progress was accomplished by the end of 2018.

Two Water Resources Project Specialists and a GIS Water Resources Project Specialist were hired to update flood risk modelling and mapping. Survey crews are hired annually to collect cross section and bridge/culvert data. In 2018, four surveyors were hired for just over six months. Existing staff were partially redeployed (total of approximately two full time equivalents) to focus on this initiative. In addition to the municipal levy, City of London special project funding (\$70,000) and NDMP funding (\$252,000) were directed towards completing 2018 work on these tasks.

Work Planning

Work planning is being undertaken at various levels including at the project, task and study area levels. It is substantially complete in most of the Thames River reaches and in progress or substantially complete in most of the urban subwatersheds. Work planning for the rural subwatersheds will follow substantial completion of the urban and Thames study areas.

Compile/Assemble Appropriate Digital Elevation Models

Digital Elevation Models (DEM) provide a three dimensional representation of land and are a key component for use in hazard modelling. Technology advances have made it possible to produce much higher resolution, more accurate DEM. Work began early on the Thames River through London where appropriate DEM were available. Issues with 2010 DEM in some study areas delayed work in those areas; however, the availability of DEM based on 2015 photography has since allowed work to continue. In 2018, we received LIDAR based DEM for much of the watershed and began using it where appropriate. DEM is complete in approximately half of the urban and Thames River study areas.



Undertake GPS Survey of Channels, Cross Sections and Bridges

Geographic Positioning System (GPS) surveys are necessary to augment DEM and are especially important under tree canopy and around buildings. This information is also needed to define, in the models, the watercourse below the water (bathymetry). This step also includes the collection of information on bridges and culverts so they can be properly represented in models. In 2018, two crews were hired. GPS surveys have been completed in most of the urban and Thames River study areas and are in progress for a couple of the rural study areas.

Update Hydraulic Model

Information from the DEM and GPS surveys and other mapping is used to represent the watercourse in a hydraulic model. The initial focus of the model updates was on the Thames River in London where this information was critical in planning maintenance activities on the London Dykes. As a result, the hydraulic modelling of the Thames River study areas in London is substantially complete. Hydraulic modelling in Mud Creek was also completed previously as part of a City of London Environmental Assessment (EA). Modelling in the Thames River study areas upstream of London is also substantially complete. In 2018, hydraulic modelling efforts were focused on urban subwatershed study areas. Trout Creek in St. Marys, Cedar Creek in Woodstock, and Dingman Creek are now substantially complete, and tributaries in Ingersoll are in progress.

Undertake Hydrologic Assessment

Flow is an important input to the hydraulic models. Statistical flow analysis can be used where historical flow data is available or where that flow information can be transposed to similar areas. Where sufficient historical data is not available or does not represent the uniqueness of a watershed, hydrologic models are used to determine flows for hydraulic modelling. Hydrologic modelling is generally used in urbanizing areas where sufficient historical data is not available or conditions are changing such that the historical data would not adequately represent the watershed. Hydrologic analysis is in progress or initiated in most of the study areas, and is complete in Mud Creek. In 2018, much of the focus in this task was on the Dingman Creek watershed.



Map Flood Plains

Modelling results are used together with the DEM to map the extent of the floodplain. This floodplain mapping can be combined with mapping of erosion hazards and wetlands to illustrate regulated areas. Mapping is in progress in most of the Thames River study areas, Trout Creek in St. Marys, Cedar Creek in Woodstock, and Dingman Creek and Mud Creek in London.

Map Erosion Hazards and Other Regulated Areas

Work is planned to update erosion hazard mapping considering stream morphology and slope stability. This work is being initiated in 2019 utilizing the new GIS Natural Hazards Technician hired at the end of 2018.



Complete Peer Review of Modelling and Mapping

It is important that the technical aspects of the modelling and mapping be peer reviewed to ensure that the work has been completed to best practices and appropriately uses best available information. Peer review of modelling in 2018 is substantially complete for Mud Creek and has been initiated for Dingman Creek.

Document Work and Results

Documentation of the technical work, peer review and consultation is an important part of updating modelling and mapping. Proper documentation will improve understanding of the models as well as facilitate ongoing maintenance of the models; it is also important for use of the models by others. Documentation has been substantially completed for Mud Creek and is in progress for Dingman Creek.

Consult with Public

It is important to engage the public at appropriate stages in the modelling and mapping updates. Consultation will follow the guidance documented in the Procedure for Updating Section 28 Mapping: Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (Conservation Ontario, April 2018). Consultation will be focused around clusters of study areas as work is planned and undertaken in those areas. Stakeholder feedback will be considered along with appropriate best practices in finalizing the mapping. Where appropriate, EA consultation may allow for timely and targeted stakeholder consultation. In London, Mud Creek and Dingman Creek have been the subject of broad EAs that include updates to the flood hazard modelling.

Municipalities are a key stakeholder in the update of the hazard modelling and mapping. Planning and building departments are engaged in the update process through ongoing staff level discussions on site specific applications. The ongoing updates to the modelling and mapping are critical to facilitate timely and efficient land use planning approvals. Formal consultation with these groups will be important when the work reaches the point where results from the work can be illustrated. This proposed consultation process will be documented and reviewed with the provincial Section 28 Regulations Committee, which can provide advice regarding the appropriate nature and extent of public consultation.

Dingman Creek: An Example of Flood Modelling Updates

As a first step to updating the hazard mapping, the UTRCA has initiated comprehensive updates to its hazard modelling. The Authority and the City of London have worked in partnership to provide updated flood plain modelling to inform the Dingman Creek Subwatershed Stormwater Servicing Class EA process. As such, the Dingman Creek subwatershed became a priority for hazard modelling updates.

The City of London website states:

The recommendations of the Dingman EA are intended to mitigate the impact of future development on water resources and to remediate the subwatershed, with consideration for current and potential flooding, erosion concerns, as well as wildlife/aquatic habitat and natural corridor enhancement. The focus of the study will be providing stormwater management solutions to facilitate development in South London for lands within the Urban Growth Boundary for the next 20 years.

The concept of a “complete corridor” will be evaluated as part of the EA process to promote the movement of stormwater, wildlife, and people. The recommended strategy is intended to be a showcase project for South London as well as a fiscally responsible approach to stormwater management in the subwatershed. This study also includes an MECP Pilot Project to streamline stormwater approvals and reduce future study costs.

In parallel with the Dingman EA, the UTRCA has undertaken a comprehensive review of the floodplain hazards within the subwatershed. The UTRCA Regulatory Floodplain Update is expected to have implications on the limits of the flood plain and, as a result, planning and development applications within the flood plain are determined through the update. The UTRCA has developed a preliminary hazard lands “screening area” for the Dingman Creek Subwatershed. This map is intended as a tool to identify the screening area where further review and refinement will continue as options for engineered flood mitigation and/or policy solutions are assessed through a subsequent phase of the Dingman EA.

Target Action: Expand Flood Control Capital Plan

Hydrometric Monitoring Network

Part of this target includes extending the Flood Control Capital Plan to include the hydrometric monitoring network. In 2018, work continued on making improvements to the precipitation gauges for worker safety. These updates are nearly complete and will allow for the ongoing maintenance and calibration of this important part of our monitoring network. For Water Survey of Canada gauges, ECCC develops and maintains rating curves which convert water level to flow. Until 2018, UTRCA lacked the equipment to allow maintenance of rating curves at our own gauges, especially on larger watercourses and under high flow conditions. Acquisition and training on use of an acoustic Doppler current profiler was completed in 2018 and it is being used to develop and maintain rating curves for UTRCA gauges. The Water and Erosion Control Structures 20 Year Capital Plan was updated in 2018 to reflect work undertaken over the past two years and plan for work in 2019. In addition to annual updates to this plan, the hydrometric monitoring network will be incorporated into the plan so that the UTRCA can plan for capital maintenance of monitoring infrastructure.

A Water Resources Assistant was hired to assist the Water Resources Technician and Dam Maintenance Mechanics (approximately 0.5 FTE) to undertake the work related to this activity, with funding from the municipal levy and \$54,000 from the NDMP.





3.4 Target: Instill conservation values by supporting outreach to one million people annually by 2037, through visits to UTRCA owned and managed lands as well as hands-on environmental experiences.

The Environmental Targets Strategic Plan called for no additional increase in levy funding for this target. The Strategic Plan proposed funding support from contracts and user fees in 2018.

Target Action: Undertake Market Analysis

A Research and Communication Assistant position was supported through target funding. This position has been instrumental in assisting with completing background studies, an electronic survey project, and investigating visitation trackers. This staff person focused on three main projects in 2018.

CA Visitation Survey

In November 2018, an online survey was created and promoted through UTRCA's tourism and community partners, as well as UTRCA social media, e-newsletter and email lists. The aim was to engage the public and gather feedback about Fanshawe, Pittcock and Wildwood Conservation Areas (CAs). The 16 question survey generated 838 responses from a diverse age demographic, with most responses coming from within four key areas (London, Stratford, Woodstock, St. Marys). When asked what had prevented respondents from visiting the CAs in the past, 84% indicated that they did not know about our parks. Other findings included that most people enjoy the passive recreation education programs as well as water sports, equipment rentals, and trails. Respondents also provided ideas for new programming or enhancements to current programming.

The survey showed that our CAs have appealing assets, and we need to continue being creative in promoting activities to reach those that may not be aware of all the CAs offer. Information collected from the survey will be used to direct the Master Plan process, which is set to commence in 2019.

Visitation Tracking

Staff investigated options for visitor counters to track pedestrian, cycling and vehicular traffic, with options for permanent and mobile installation on site. Staff reached out to other users (including other Conservation Authorities, Parks Canada and the Region of Waterloo) to better understand their experiences in using the various counters. Each agency provided very helpful suggestions for optimal implementation, issues and opportunities, as well as how they use the data collected. Staff identified the best option for our requirements and will initiate the purchase and installation of counters for 2019 at the CAs, Environmentally Significant Areas, and other UTRCA lands as appropriate.

Marketing the CAs New 2018 Portable Pass

For 2018, the windshield sticker version of the annual CA season pass was replaced with a new portable rear-view mirror hanger pass. The portable pass enables customers to transfer the pass to other vehicles, as opposed to mounting a sticker in one vehicle for the season. Marketing efforts related to the portable pass, including specific promotional advertisements, began before the CAs opened via social media and radio. Similar advertising was completed before Christmas, promoting the UTRCA gift card to use in 2019. The new pass was well received by visitors with a noticeable increase in passes purchased.



Target Action: Develop and Implement Property-specific Marketing and Education Plans

Oxford Children's Water Festival Public Event

In May 2018, more than 3,400 students from Oxford, Elgin, and Middlesex Counties participated in the Oxford Children's Water Festival at Pittock CA. This four day educational and interactive event brings awareness of water conservation, protection, technology, and science to students in grades 2 through 5. For the first time, the festival committee hosted a free Thursday evening "Public Night," attended by more than 600 people. Many community organizations joined in, including the Oxford Canoe & Kayak Club, Woodstock Dragon Boat Club, Woodstock Public Library, and Trash Theatre to host this new audience for the Festival.



Wildwood Dam Tours

In June 2018, UTRCA staff showcased the Wildwood Dam for 70 Wildwood campers. The tour began with an overview of the workings of a watershed and the function of the dam through a series of displays and a virtual reality sandbox, before walking to the dam. Along the way, tour leaders highlighted the history of Wildwood and how the dam came to be. Inside the dam, participants watched a short video about the structure and visited the control room, generator room, and the tunnel that houses the gate hoists. The campers had many excellent questions which we will incorporate into the next round of tours. The response was very favourable, and everyone appreciated the opportunity to better understand the dam's function.

Reintroduction of Community Education Programming for CA Visitors

UTRCA Community Education staff offered free, experiential educational programs at Fanshawe, Pittcock and Wildwood CAs during the 2018 summer months. The programs were family-friendly and open to the public. The goal was to bring new and existing patrons to the parks to enjoy nature and learn something about the local environment. Staff also used the opportunity to talk about the UTRCA and the programs and services it provides to the community. Programs included traditional activities such as Night Hikes and Learn to Canoe sessions and new opportunities such as Guided Canoe Hikes, Groundhog Day in July, and a Turtle Talk/Stream Safari. Education staff also promoted the UTRCA's upcoming fall stewardship events. The summer educational programs attracted the attention of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), which was researching ways to involve people in conservation activities. The WWF approached the UTRCA to partner with them and use the UTRCA summer programs to research the types of conservation activities that attract participation, and provided \$6,000 in funding support.

Target Action: Expand and Improve Environmental Experiences

Land Management Agreement with City of Woodstock

After many years of discussions, in 2018 the UTRCA and the City of Woodstock were able to finalize and approve a new Land Management Agreement. This agreement replaces the outdated South Shore Agreement and provides free access to both the south and north shore (day use area) of Pittcock CA. The ultimate goal is to link the two areas by creating a pedestrian crossing via Pittcock Dam. Staff plan to track visitation in 2019 to monitor the impact of this change.

Watson Porter Pavilion Accessibility Design

Infrastructure within the CAs is outdated and needs investment. The Watson Porter Pavilion, located in the Fanshawe CA day use area, is used by visitors and as a location for Community Education programs. Without investment, we are at risk of not being able to accommodate users, particularly in regards to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. In 2018, we retained a design build firm to create a plan for refurbishing the washroom facilities to comply with current building code and legislative requirements. In 2019, staff plan to move forward with the tendering process to make the necessary changes. The new design will include green infrastructure components (e.g., low flow toilets, energy efficient lighting).

Fanshawe Pond Accessible Dock

A new accessible dock was installed at the Fanshawe CA pond during the summer of 2018. The dock allows CA and Community Education staff to offer a more inclusive outdoor education experience to students and visitors. The dock is one component of a pond restoration project which aims to increase the pond's accessibility, reduce negative human impacts, and restore the wetland to a more natural state. Funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (\$9,300) was secured for the dock and educational supplies.



Oxford County Trails Council

The UTRCA's partnership with the Oxford County Trails Council continued in 2018, and saw the opening of two new trails in Oxford County. The Hickson Trail, a 9+ km trail utilizing an abandoned rail corridor to link the village of Hickson to Woodstock, opened after a successful local fundraising campaign raised money to install two small bridges. A new 2 km trail loop on the Toyota Woodstock lands extends the existing trail at Vansittart Woods to Toyota property and through a beautiful upland forest. Both of these new trails provide Oxford County residents and visitors with more opportunities to experience and appreciate the natural heritage features of the County while enjoying the health benefits of hiking, walking, running, and cycling.



GM GREEN Education Program

In partnership with GM Canada, the UTRCA

provides this year-long educational opportunity to two Woodstock and two Ingersoll grade 7 classes each year (approximately 100 students). The goal is to develop environmental youth leadership by:

- Leading student-driven inquiry into local environmental issues,
- Planning field trips to investigate local natural features and municipal water and waste facilities,
- Facilitating discussion between students and local stakeholders and experts,
- Helping students choose an issue and develop a project to positively influence their issue, and
- Helping the students amplify their message throughout their community.

With the funding support of a local GM dealership in 2018, the UTRCA was also able to provide the program to a school in Stratford. GM Canada provided \$10,000 in funding for the Oxford program and \$5,000 for the Stratford program.

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Ian Wilcox, General Manager
Shauna Taylor, Special Projects Support

Date: May 17, 2019

Agenda #: 7 (b) (iii)

Subject: Environmental Targets Work Plan
Summary

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The Environmental Targets Strategic Plan has set aggressive but realistic goals that are to be achieved during the next 18 years. The plan calls for an expansion of existing program capacity as well as new initiatives. UTRCA staff have worked over the past six months to develop a detailed work plan that will guide these programming changes. A summary of that work plan is provided here for your information.

Please note that all work plans have to be flexible to allow for unexpected influences. A work plan spanning 18 years has to be even more adaptable. What is presented in this Work Plan Summary is based on current thinking, priorities and capacity. As conditions change, we will adapt the work plan to take advantage of new opportunities and, where challenges arise, we'll modify the plan to mitigate any delays.

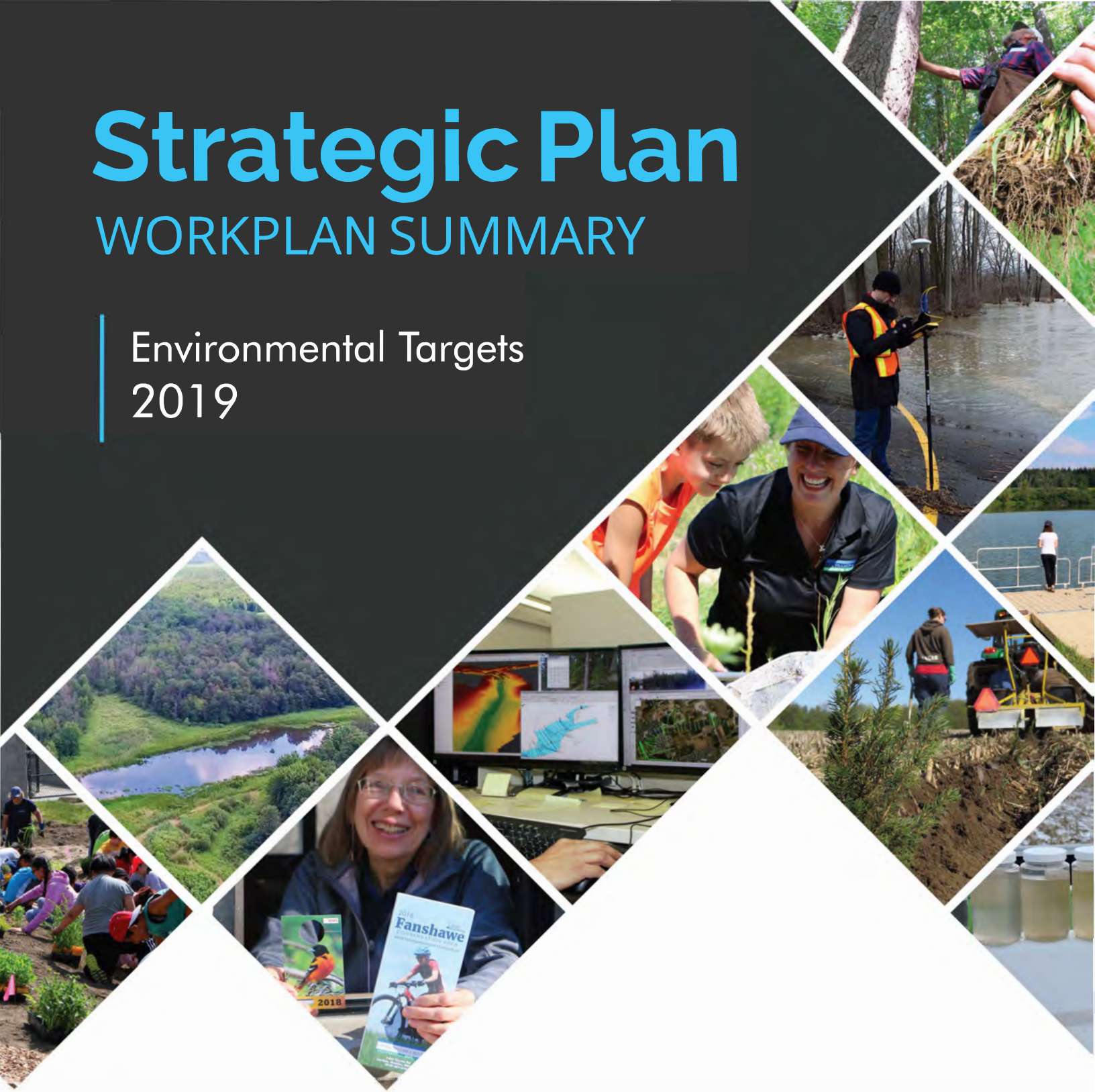
Prepared by:

Shauna Taylor
Ian Wilcox

Strategic Plan

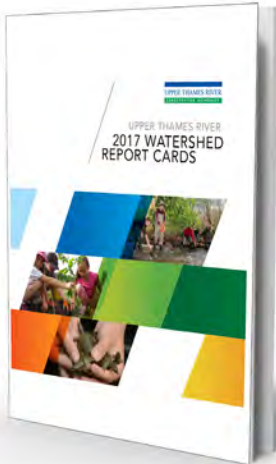
WORKPLAN SUMMARY

Environmental Targets
2019



Environmental Targets Strategic Plan: Work Plan Summary May 2019

The core business of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) is to work on behalf of its member municipalities and in cooperation with other government agencies, local not-for-profit groups, landowners, and motivated individuals to protect and improve the health of our local watershed. For decades, this group has collaborated to deliver programs and services that improve the quality of our local environment. However, while these combined efforts have been tremendous, our collective progress in terms of measurable health improvements has been slow, largely due to a lack of capacity. **Monitoring data from the past 30 years has made clear that environmental problems persist: poor water quality, habitat loss, soil erosion, flooding and drought, and an increase in the frequency of severe weather events.**



While the UTRCA's Watershed Report Cards (2001, 2007, 2012, 2017) give our water quality and forest health an average grade of D, the watershed has the potential to be much healthier. Hazard risks from flooding and erosion have been effectively managed but we must now consider the significant impact of a changing climate. Public use of natural areas is impressive, but there is room for growth and an opportunity to use outdoor connections to encourage new approaches to old problems.

In June 2016, the UTRCA's Board of Directors responded to these concerns by approving the UTRCA's Environmental Targets Strategic Plan, which outlines four aggressive but realistic environmental targets. These targets are a statement of how healthy and resilient the Thames River watershed can be by 2037, with adequate resources and strong partnerships.

The UTRCA's Environmental Targets are:

1. Improve each subwatershed's water quality score by one letter grade, as measured by the UTRCA Watershed Report Cards, by the year 2037.
2. Establish and restore 1,500 hectares of natural vegetation cover, windbreaks and buffers by 2037.
3. Reduce flood and erosion risk by updating flood models and hazard mapping for all UTRCA subwatersheds by 2020, and then integrate climate change scenarios into the updated models and develop climate change adaptation strategies by 2030.
4. Instill conservation values by supporting outreach to one million people annually by 2037, through visits to CA owned and managed lands as well as hands-on environmental experiences.

The full Environmental Targets Strategic Plan can be found at <https://thamesriver.on.ca/wp-content/uploads//Targets/EnvironmentalTargets-June2016.pdf>.

Achieving the Environmental Targets will take significant on-the-ground effort from UTRCA staff and partners. During 2018 and into 2019, UTRCA staff developed a comprehensive Environmental Targets Work Plan which organizes and focuses current on-the-ground efforts. It also provides a guide for future work and projects. Presented here is a comprehensive work plan summary as of 2019.

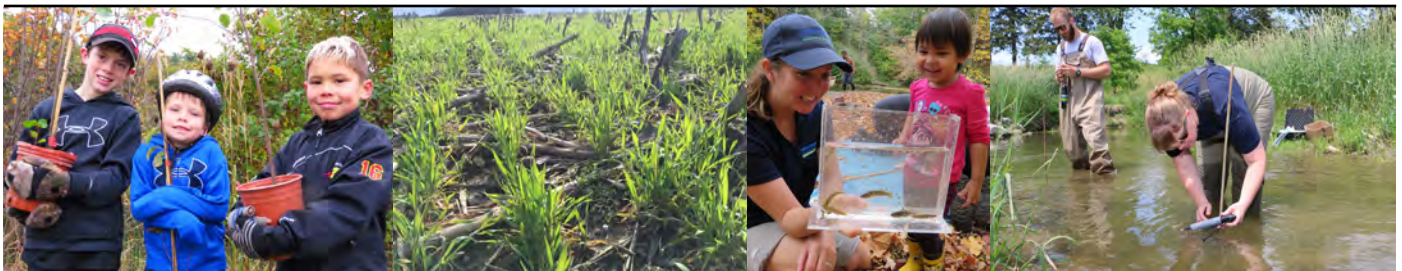
The Work Plan Summary is divided into five sections. The first four sections describe key activities for each of the four Environmental Targets. The fifth section is the Corporate Targets Work Plan, which describes overarching activities necessary to ensure the Strategic Plan is effectively structured and implemented, that progress is communicated to staff and key partners, and that the work is adequately funded.

This Environmental Targets Work Plan was produced from decades of UTRCA staff technical experience and relationships with other environmental organizations and landowners. It presents activities that build on current programs and services, identify critical new areas of effort, and rely on strong relationships and assistance from municipalities, other levels of government, and watershed residents. The activities are ambitious but necessary if we expect to achieve our stated targets.

The work plan must also be flexible. Key activities will be monitored to ensure they are contributing to the targets, and modified as needed to ensure success. We anticipate new opportunities, technologies and relationships during the next 18 years and we will ensure the Strategic Plan can benefit.

We also anticipate challenges. The first two years of the plan's implementation have been incredibly successful in terms of municipal, provincial and federal support. Much has been accomplished; however, 2019 is presenting unique circumstances including a 50% reduction in provincial transfer payment funding for Conservation Authorities and a review of the Conservation Authorities Act, with the intent of narrowing the scope of the organization's mandate. It is unclear what impact these changes might have on the plan's implementation schedule but the UTRCA will work to minimize any delays.

Uncertainty always makes planning difficult. As a result, this work plan will be updated annually to ensure it takes advantage when there are opportunities and that negative influences can be mitigated.



Target 1: Improve each subwatershed’s water quality score by one letter grade, as measured by the UTRCA Watershed Report Cards, by the year 2037.

This target aims to improve the water quality in each of the 28 subwatersheds in the Upper Thames watershed by one grade. Staff analyze river monitoring data every five years to determine a grade of A to F for each subwatershed, according to provincially standardized watershed report card guidelines. Three indicators of water quality and aquatic health are used to determine the grades: total phosphorus, bacteria, and benthic invertebrates. The grades reflect the impacts from surrounding land use activities in each subwatershed. Current water quality scores average a D grade.

Using best available science and local knowledge, key activities to meet the target will be prescribed in each subwatershed to provide the greatest benefits to local stream health and water quality. The work plan recognizes that activities are a shared responsibility across sectors and stakeholders, and encompasses both rural and urban focused activities.

Definition: Green infrastructure is an approach to water management that protects, restores, or mimics the natural water cycle. It incorporates both the natural environment and engineered systems to provide clean water, conserve ecosystem values and functions, and provide a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife.

Green infrastructure solutions can be applied on different scales, from the house or building level, to the broader landscape level. On the local level, green infrastructure practices include rain gardens, permeable pavements, green roofs, infiltration planters, trees and tree boxes, and rainwater harvesting systems. At the largest scale, the preservation and restoration of natural landscapes (such as forests, floodplains and wetlands) are critical components of green infrastructure.

| Key Activity | | Start Date |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Green Infrastructure | | |
| 1 | Formalize staff team to develop UTRCA green infrastructure program to support new and existing development. | 2019 |
| 2 | Develop green infrastructure professional development opportunities for municipalities, developers, contractors, and consultants. | 2018 – ongoing |
| 3 | Develop and implement green infrastructure education and awareness programs for students. | 2017 – ongoing |
| 4 | Pursue student education opportunities with municipalities regarding green infrastructure. | 2019 – 2023 |
| 5 | Install one low impact development (LID) demonstration site in each municipality and conservation area. | 2017 – 2027 |
| 6 | Document the economic benefits, maintenance requirements, and effectiveness of existing green infrastructure installations. | 2020 |
| 7 | Identify a number of pre-qualified consultants and contractors for green infrastructure design and installation, to help ensure quality installations and long-term functionality. | 2019 – 2025 |
| 8 | Advocate for the development of Provincial green infrastructure requirements and standards. | 2019 |
| 9 | As new official plans are updated, advocate for stronger municipal green infrastructure targets, with the intent of strengthening policies to require implementation of green infrastructure in new development proposals. | 2019 |
| 10 | Update UTRCA Environmental Planning Policies to include water quality benefits (e.g., determine minimum depth of rainfall to capture onsite to assist with meeting Thames River total phosphorus reduction target). | Over the next 15 years |
| Sediment and Erosion Control | | |
| 11 | Update UTRCA policies, procedures and Section 28 permit submission requirements with the latest sediment and erosion control science and practices. | 2019 |
| 12 | Host sediment and erosion control professional development opportunities for drainage engineers, drainage superintendents, UTRCA staff, municipal staff, and developers. | 2020 |
| 13 | Work with municipalities and Provincial and Federal agencies to improve sediment and erosion control monitoring and compliance. | 2020 |
| 14 | As part of watershed planning and habitat protection, identify erosion prone areas that may influence future development. | 2020 |

| Key Activity | | Start Date |
|--|---|----------------|
| Urban Residential Pollutants | | |
| 15 | Encourage municipalities to utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) related to stormwater pond cleanouts, through education and information distribution. | 2019 |
| 16 | Develop an awareness and outreach program to reduce residential pollutants reaching watercourses (e.g., fertilizer, oil, road salt/chlorides, detergents/car washing). | 2020 |
| Agricultural Cover Crops and Winter Residue Cover | | |
| 17 | Use the Upper Medway subwatershed project as a case study to advocate for cover crops and winter residue cover. | Ongoing |
| 18 | Promote winter residue cover/reduced tillage on cropped fields with a target of 60% winter coverage. | Ongoing |
| 19 | Increase work and improve coordination with key partners (e.g., custom operators, Certified Crop Advisors, other Conservation Authorities, 4R Nutrient Stewardship Program, etc.) in delivering agricultural conservation services. | 2019 |
| 20 | Determine methods to measure annual winter cover in the watershed. | 2019 |
| 21 | Evaluate cover crop programs for effective uptake ideas. | 2019 / 2020 |
| 22 | Create a “Thames River Cover Crop Committee” to advocate for expanded implementation of cover crops. Activities will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting economic benefits, • coordinating demonstration days and peer-to-peer learning, • pursuing external funding, and • distributing information materials. | 2020 |
| Buffers | | |
| 23 | Establish a “Thames River Buffer Team” to advocate for expanded implementation of buffers. | 2019 |
| 24 | Work with partners to build the capacity to increase buffers watershed-wide (e.g., Clean Water Program, Alternative Land Use Services). | 2020 |
| 25 | Advocate through the <i>Drainage Act</i> and <i>Nutrient Management Act</i> for compliance with existing regulations related to buffers. | 2020 |
| 26 | Determine methods to measure progress in expanding buffers across the watershed. | Ongoing |
| Other Conservation Practices | | |
| 27 | Promote comprehensive conservation services for landowners to address property specific needs (e.g., soil erosion control, grass waterways, filter strips, buffers, etc.). | Ongoing |
| 28 | Advocate for proper manure management including no winter spreading. | 2019 |
| 29 | Assess dams and barriers in the watershed and determine priorities for removal. | 2020 |
| 30 | Evaluate conservation practices on UTRCA owned lands to lead by example (e.g., cover crops/winter residue cover, buffers). | 2020 |
| Comprehensive Monitoring | | |
| 31 | Assemble water quality and ecological data sets in a standardized data management and analysis software (WISKI). | 2016 |
| 32 | Add 15 water quality monitoring sites to fill sampling location gaps and ensure a similar monitoring program for all 28 subwatersheds and provide consistency to the data used for the UTRCA Watershed Report Cards and tracking target progress. | 2018 – ongoing |
| 33 | Increase resources to support expanded field monitoring, sample analysis costs, data management, and analysis efforts. | 2019 |

Target 2: Establish and restore 1,500 hectares of natural vegetation cover, windbreaks and buffers by 2037.

Significantly expanded planting and restoration programs will improve the health of the watershed, as measured every five years for the UTRCA Watershed Report Cards. Forest health grades are based on three indicators related to the sustainability of natural heritage systems: percent forest cover, percent forest interior, and percent riparian zone forested. Current forest health scores average a D grade.

This target aims to establish 1000 hectares of new natural vegetation cover and restore or improve 500 hectares of existing vegetation cover. Key activities to achieve this target will be prescribed for each subwatershed based on best available data and local knowledge to determine optimal placement. Achieving this target will create wildlife habitat, recover species at risk, shade streams, reduce soil erosion, facilitate carbon sequestration for climate change, and improve water and air quality.

| Key Activity | | Start Date |
|--------------|--|----------------|
| 34 | Measure, map, and track all planting and restoration projects by area. | 2018 - ongoing |
| 35 | Develop planting and restoration plans for UTRCA lands. | 2019 |
| 36 | Advocate for bylaws or agricultural Best Management Practices that encourage buffers and windbreaks. | 2019 |
| 37 | Increase advocacy to prevent habitat loss with a focus on municipal partners (e.g., Environmental Impact Study Guidelines, replanting compensation, woodland conservation bylaws). | 2019 – ongoing |
| 38 | Upper Thames Natural Heritage Enhancement Strategy – Create a plan to identify new landowners and places to plant (e.g., hydro corridors, rural non-farms, gravel pits). | 2019 / 2020 |
| 39 | Implement Pittock and Glengowan land management, acquisition and divestment plans. | 2019 / 2020 |
| 40 | Prioritize invasive species work on UTRCA lands with a focus on Phragmites, buckthorns, Giant Hogweed, Scots Pine, etc. | 2020 |
| 41 | Undertake feasibility studies on establishing new restoration services for private landowners related to invasive species and expanded site preparation and maintenance. | 2020 |
| 42 | Create a marketing plan to identify ways to better market our programs. | 2020 |
| 43 | Work with Perth County to explore options for incentive programs in the county. | 2020 |
| 44 | Activate UTRCA Seed Collection Program and work with private sector vegetation suppliers to plan for stock availability (native hardwood trees, shrubs, wildflowers, etc.). | 2021 |
| 45 | Pursue a watershed wide land acquisition plan that prioritizes areas with restoration potential. | 2022 |
| 46 | Increase available grants for private landowner planting projects. | Ongoing |



Target 3: Reduce flood and erosion risk by updating flood models and hazard mapping for all UTRCA subwatersheds by 2020, then integrating climate change scenarios into the updated models and developing climate change adaptation strategies by 2030.

The UTRCA has a legislative responsibility to reduce flooding and erosion risks. Current flood plain models are dated and must be modernized with current information, including the significant impact of climate change. Renewal of the flood and erosion hazard program was initiated in 2012 with the initial focus on modernizing flood forecasting and warning tools. The focus has shifted to updating hydraulic and hydrologic computer models used for hazard mapping and implementation of our regulatory program. Models currently in use were originally developed in the 1980s and many factors have changed significantly since then. The models need to be updated to reflect current land use, frequency analysis, modelling technology, and a better physical definition of watercourses.

Efforts to meet this target will be integrated with the ongoing renewal of flood forecasting and warning information management. In addition, an expanded water and erosion control capital maintenance plan is needed that includes all flood control assets including monitoring systems and software.

The second phase of this target will use the updated models to consider climate change scenarios and impacts on flood hazards, develop adaptation strategies, and incorporate these strategies into policy.

| Key Activity | | Schedule |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|
| Data Collection | | |
| 47 | Complete GPS surveys – watercourse cross sections and bathymetry. | 2012 – 2021 |
| 48 | Complete GPS surveys – bridge and culvert geometry. | 2012 – 2021 |
| 49 | Develop digital elevation model for use in hydrologic and hydraulic models. | 2012 - ongoing |
| Hydraulic Modelling | | |
| 50 | Update HEC-RAS Model – watercourse cross sections. | 2012 – 2021 |
| 51 | Update HEC-RAS Model – bridges and culverts. | 2012 – 2021 |
| 52 | Complete 2D hydraulic modelling. | 2019 – 2023 |
| Hydrology | | |
| 53 | Develop hydrologic flow statistics and regional analyses. | 2012 – 2020 |
| 54 | Prepare hydrologic model setup. | 2014 – 2020 |
| 55 | Complete hydrologic model calibration and verification. | 2018 – 2020 |
| Mapping | | |
| 56 | Develop draft flood plain mapping. | 2019 – 2021 |
| 57 | Develop erosion hazard and other regulated areas mapping. | 2019 – 2021 |
| 58 | Develop other mapping products where appropriate (e.g., flood access considerations, depth and velocity, flood risk). | 2019 – 2025 |
| 59 | Report and document methods and mapping development process. | 2015 – 2025 |
| 60 | Peer review of technical work. | 2016 – 2021 |
| 61 | Public notice and consultation regarding technical work and mapping products. | 2015 – 2021 |
| 62 | Adoption of mapping as prescribed by provincial regulation. | 2021 – 2022 |
| 63 | Incorporation of updated hazard mapping into Official Plans and Zoning By-Laws. | 2022 – TBD |
| 64 | Ongoing hazard modelling and mapping maintenance. | 2021 – ongoing |
| 65 | Identify and model priority climate change scenarios. | 2020 – 2030 |
| 66 | Expand Flood Control Capital Plan to include all water and erosion control structures. | 2017 – 2020 |

Target 4: Instill conservation values by supporting outreach to one million people annually by 2037, through visits to CA owned and managed lands as well as hands-on environmental experiences.

Outdoor experiences and hands-on learning offer opportunities to educate and promote conservation among the public for the watershed’s natural environment. This target will be achieved through public access to UTRCA owned and managed recreational lands, as well as hands-on environmental experiences that allow for exposure to conservation messages, services and education programs. Outdoor experiences and education provided by the UTRCA are an opportunity to instill conservation values to a large audience.

Activities to achieve this goal include expanding existing conservation, education, and recreation programs as part of attendance strategies for all UTRCA owned and managed lands that provide recreational opportunities. These programs aim to influence the participants to change their own behaviour to improve watershed health.

| Key Activity | | Start Date |
|---|--|----------------|
| Marketing | | |
| 67 | Implement marketing strategies to reach new audiences (e.g., property/ conservation area specific marketing, social marketing, specific promotion of Targets, Green Fleet, etc.). | 2019 |
| Parks and UTRCA Lands | | |
| 68 | Develop a 25 year operational plan for each of the three CAs (examine past reports, current customer surveys, and future outdoor recreation forecasts/projections). | 2019 – 2021 |
| 69 | Identify new hands-on environmental experiences that can be offered at the CAs to attract new and repeat visitors (e.g., customer surveys, dam tours, self-guided signage, free admission days, offseason activities, etc.). | 2018 – ongoing |
| 70 | Work with the City of London to manage land use impacts around Fanshawe CA while having regard for attendance targets (e.g., Veteran’s Memorial Parkway extension, Sifton subdivision development, possible park entrance relocation). | 2019 – 2025 |
| 71 | Monitor change in Pittock CA attendance numbers given shift to new management agreement with the City of Woodstock and free public day use access. | 2019 |
| 72 | Finalize protocols/methods for annual attendance counts (Conservation Area lands, Environmentally Significant Areas, and Community Education programs). | 2019 / 2020 |
| 73 | Examine local population trends to anticipate future client interests and needs (e.g., new Canadians). | 2019 / 2020 |
| 74 | Review and/or create management plans for UTRCA owned lands (e.g., rural CAs, Glengowan, Ellice Swamp) to ensure they consider opportunities for achieving the attendance Target. | 2020 |
| 75 | Work with municipalities to count and promote greater use and public value of Environmentally Significant Areas. | 2020 |
| 76 | Develop a UTRCA Asset Management Plan with consideration for attendance targets and conservation messaging (e.g., one AODA accessible washroom at each CA, AODA accessible trails, visitor’s centre, special events pavilion/stage). | 2020 |
| Empowering Local Communities | | |
| 77 | Promote UTRCA expertise and services to “Friends of” groups to support their on-the-ground efforts. | 2016 – ongoing |
| 78 | Establish and promote regular volunteer opportunities. | 2016 – ongoing |
| 79 | Expand our outreach to organizations who may be interested in partnering for programs, events, etc. | 2016 – ongoing |
| Providing Hands-on Environmental Experiences | | |
| 80 | Maintain and, where possible, expand hands-on environmental experiences for students which support the Targets and related programs. | 2016 – ongoing |
| 81 | Collaborate with watershed school boards to provide curriculum-based, hands-on environmental experiences. | 2016 – ongoing |

Corporate Targets Work Plan

The UTRCA is using the Environmental Targets Strategic Plan to focus efforts, allocate resources, and engage all units and staff, as well as to pursue specific government funding. The Corporate Targets Work Plan includes high level activities related to staffing, marketing, and progress reporting.

| Key Activity | | Start Date |
|---|---|----------------|
| Staffing | | |
| 82 | Continue staff support position regarding work plans and implementation. | 2019 |
| 83 | Rewrite UTRCA job descriptions incorporating Targets. | 2020 |
| 84 | Consider an organizational structure update to better support Targets. | 2022 |
| 85 | Maintain and, if possible, expand marketing and communications capacity to support implementation of Targets work plan. | 2019 |
| Targets Information Distribution | | |
| 86 | Prepare an annual Environmental Targets Progress Report. | 2017 – ongoing |
| 87 | Develop work plan summary for UTRCA Board and municipal partners. | 2019 |
| 88 | Develop and revise the Targets work plan and budget annually. | 2019 |
| Lobbying and Marketing | | |
| 89 | Municipal government outreach (municipal council presentations and tours, marketing). | 2017 – ongoing |
| 90 | Senior government outreach (presentations and tours, marketing, funding applications). | 2017 – ongoing |
| 91 | Implement a practice/policy of including Environmental Targets as context for all funding applications and public communications. | 2017 – ongoing |
| 92 | Develop marketing approaches for alternative sources of funding (e.g., private, corporate, charitable). | 2019 |
| 93 | Ensure education and awareness programs supporting Targets and related programs continue. | 2017 – ongoing |
| 94 | Update UTRCA communications and marketing products to incorporate Targets objectives and messaging. | 2019 |



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May 2019

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Common Yellowthroat, courtesy R Battison

Wet Weather Brings Demand for Erosion Control Projects

For about 40 years, Conservation Services staff have worked with rural landowners to design and install erosion control structures on farmland. With recent wet weather and damaging runoff events, staff are seeing a spike in the number of requests for technical services.



on farmland. With recent wet weather and damaging runoff events, staff are seeing a spike in the number of requests for technical services.

The evidence is in the field: After wet weather and runoff events, staff survey fields where erosion control structures could help landowners alleviate soil loss.



These structures are installed when management practices cannot otherwise control erosion from steep slopes or large watershed sizes. After plans are drawn, staff work with local contractors to ensure structures are properly constructed on the farms.

Contact: Michael Funk, Agricultural Soil & Water Quality Technician

Thames Valley Science & Engineering Fair – Conservation Award

In April, UTRCA Community Education staff were on the judging panel for the Thames Valley Science & Engineering Fair at Althouse College in London. For the past five years, the Upper Thames, in conjunction with the Lower Thames Valley and Kettle Creek Conservation Authorities, have judged and presented a Conservation Award to the Junior Division (grade 6-8) project that best explores conservation with a local focus.

The winners of this year's award were Antara Gandhi and Reema Rawal from Orchard Park Public School. Their project, titled "Bloom Be Gone," tested the impacts of different fertilizers (organic and synthetic) on algal growth in a controlled



Antara Gandhi and Reema Rawal, Student Award Recipients, and Marianna Levogiannis, Kettle Creek Conservation Authority.

environment. The students each received a pair of binoculars and the Conservation Award Plaque, which will be displayed at their school for the next year.

Contact: Karlee Flear, Community Education Supervisor

Tree Planting at the New Cade Tract



On April 25, four local elementary school classes spent half a day each planting 300 native wildlife shrubs and trees at the UTRCA's newly acquired Cade Tract in South Perth. Grade 4/5 and 7/8 classes from South Perth School planted shrubs and trees in the morning, and two Grade 6 classes from Little Falls School in St. Marys planted in the afternoon. The project was coordinated by UTRCA Community Education staff.

Students learned how to plant correctly and why native plants are important to a healthy environment. The students also played "Sun Catchers," a game that demonstrates how everything in a forest is connected.

The tree planting took place on one of the former hay fields on the property. This future forest will bolster the existing woodland cover on the property and protect water quality in the Sommerville Drain and nearby North Thames River. Additional naturalization work on the Cade Tract is underway, as well.



In time, the former hay field where the trees and shrubs were planted will become part of the forest.



Members of the Cade family, which donated the property to the UTRCA, were on hand for the event, including Barnby Cade.

The Communities for Nature tree planting work was made possible by generous grants from Nature London and TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Contact: Cathy Quinlan, Terrestrial Biologist



Visitors from Afar



A delegation from Pakistan's Khyber Pukhtoonkhawa province, including Mushtaq Ghani, Speaker of the provincial legislature (KP Assembly) visited the UTRCA's Watershed Conservation Centre in April. The delegation was welcomed by General Manager Ian Wilcox.

Tracy Annett, Manager of Environmental Planning and Regulations, provided an overview of the role of the Conservation Authorities. Chris Tasker, Manager of Water and Information Management, gave a presentation on the UTRCA's flood control and mapping program. Imtiaz Shah, Environmental Engineer, focused on issues facing Pakistan related to climate change and the use of sustainable technologies for water resources. Discussions also included the UTRCA's role in managing and mitigating climate change and water resources issues.

Contact: *Imtiaz Shah, Environmental Engineer*

Helping Habitat & Water Quality



Local students planted native trees and shrubs near Hodge's Pond.

The UTRCA and partners are restoring the headwaters of Cedar Creek, at Hodge's Pond. To date, the project has included removing a small dam to improve water quality and habitat, creating wetlands, building a snake hibernaculum, and planting native trees and shrubs. Future work will include planting aquatics, building a trail, and installing bird boxes.

The project partners are Oxford County, the Oxford County Trails Council, Stewardship Oxford, the Thames Valley District School Board, and the UTRCA. The funders for the current phase are Environment & Climate Change Canada, and the Oxford Community Energy Cooperative.

Contact: *Brad Hertner, Community Partnerships Specialist*

Being Flood Ready!



UTRCA Community Education staff participated in London's Emergency Preparedness Week with messages about water safety and how to prepare for flooding.

Emergency Preparedness Week is an annual event in May. It is an opportunity to encourage Canadians to take actions to be better prepared to protect themselves and their families during emergencies.

Contact: *Steve Sauder, Marketing Specialist*

Board of Directors - On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be on May 28, 2019, at the Watershed Conservation Centre, located in Fanshawe Conservation Area. Draft agendas and approved minutes are posted on the "Board Agendas & Minutes" page at www.thamesriver.on.ca.

- Environmental Planning Unit Orientation Presentation
- Audited Financial Statements
- Appointment of Officer
- Administration and Enforcement - Section 28
- Targets 2018 Progress Report Presentation
- Targets Work Plan Summary
- Transfer Payment Cut Strategy
- ESA Changes Letter for Endorsement

Contact: *Michelle Viglianti, Administrative Assistant*