

Board of Directors

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority



Spirit Horses at Wildwood

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors'
Meeting Agenda
September 26, 2023 at 9:30 A.M

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Modifications to the Agenda

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

4. Presentations/Delegations

5. Administrative Business

- 5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: August 29, 2023
- 5.2. Business Arising from Minutes
- 5.3. Correspondence – Hamilton Conservation Authority

6. Reports – For Consideration

- 6.1. Upper Thames Barrier Position Paper – BoD-09-23-45
- 6.2. UTRCA Encampment/Unhoused Position Paper – BoD-09-23-46
- 6.3. Updated Strategic Plan – BoD-09-23-47
- 6.4. 2024 Forestry Service Fees – BoD-09-23-48
- 6.5. Cost Apportionment Agreement Update and Quarterly Progress Report – BoD-09-23-49

7. Reports – In Camera

8. Reports – For Information

- 8.1. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report
BoD-09-23-50
- 8.2. Projects Status Updates – BoD-09-23-51
- 8.3. 2024 Preliminary Budget Discussion – BoD-09-23-52
- 8.4. Children’s Safety Village Progress Update – BoD-09-23-53
- 8.5. [September For Your Information Report](#)

9. Reports – Committee Updates

- 9.1. Finance and Audit Committee
- 9.2. Hearing Committee

10. Notices of Motion

11. Chair’s Comments

12. Member’s Comments

13. General Manager’s Comments

14. Adjournment

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tracy Annett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tracy Annett, General Manager

HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MOTION

Board of Directors: September 7, 2023

MOVED BY: Brian McHattie

SECONDED BY:

Whereas over the past several years the Provincial Government has amended the Conservation Authorities Act to reduce the effectiveness of Conservation Authorities in protecting natural heritage (i.e., Bill 23, and;

Whereas, the Provincially Significant Wetland Evaluation System has also been changed leading Conservation Ontario to estimate that over 80% of the wetlands that currently receive protection will lose this status, and;

Whereas, legislative changes implemented January 1, 2023 to Conservation Authority roles related to Natural Heritage and review under prescribed Acts as well changes to the Ontario Wetland Evaluation System, as well as remaining legislative changes regarding Conservation authority development regulations that have not yet come into effect, if implemented, would have serious unintended consequences, and;

Whereas recent reports by the Provincial Auditor-General and the Integrity Commissioner have raised serious concerns on the bias and lack of transparency and fairness in the Greenbelt removals, drawing conclusions that the changes unfairly benefitted private landowners, and;

Whereas, the role of Conservation Authorities in protecting natural heritage and mitigating/ adapting for climate change has never been more important in light of the 6th Mass Extinction in biodiversity and the increasing possibility that Canada and the world will not meet the Paris Accord greenhouse gas target limiting temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius, and;

Whereas the Hamilton Conservation Authority's ability to provide comments on natural heritage to the City of Hamilton is critical and must be restored.

Therefore:

That the Hamilton Conservation Authority Board of Directors respectfully request that:

- a) the Province of Ontario reverse recent changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and Provincially Significant Wetland Evaluation System that adversely affect natural heritage protection, and;

- b) the Province of Ontario's Auditor General undertake an investigation into the processes that were followed to make the above policy decisions, and whether this decision-making structure and its outcomes provide Ontarians with value for money, and;
- c) That the Hamilton Conservation Authority Board requests that City of Hamilton Council provide similar direction to the Province of Ontario and;
- d) That a copy of this Hamilton Conservation Authority Board of Director's motion be shared with local Members of Provincial Parliament, Conservation Ontario and all conservation authorities in Ontario.

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Chris Tasker, Manager, Water and Information Management
Brad Glasman, Manager, Integrated Watershed Management
Date: September 14, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-45
Agenda #: 6.1
Subject: Upper Thames Barrier Position Paper

Recommendation

That the Board of Directors adopts the following position for the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority;

"It is the position of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) that a free-flowing river offers the healthiest environmental condition. Therefore, on watercourses within the UTRCA watershed, when constructed barriers, specifically weirs and dams, no longer serve a valid purpose or their negative impacts outweigh their benefits, the UTRCA encourages and supports decommissioning these barriers to improve watercourse health and reduce the risk of failure and resulting impacts."

Background

Dams and weirs in the UTRCA watershed serve various purposes, including flood control, water augmentation, power generation, stormwater management, and recreation. However, many of these structures are aging and require rehabilitation or major maintenance to continue to safely operate. In some cases, they may no longer be needed or no longer fulfill their intended functions. In such cases, decommissioning barriers can restore natural river conditions and enhance environmental flow as well as eliminating the need for ongoing operation and maintenance efforts. Unless there is a strong justification for retaining a dam, decommissioning can significantly improve the health of the watercourse.

Reasons to Decommission a Barrier

Decommissioning of a barrier may include removal of all or part of the structure, bypassing the structure, and restoring the watercourse. Decommissioning barriers in river systems offers several compelling benefits:

- **Restoring the range of native species:** Many barriers disrupt natural river flow and hinder the movement of native fish and aquatic organisms. Decommissioning such barriers can restore the natural range of native species, promoting ecosystem health and preserving biodiversity.

- **Improving aquatic habitat:** Dams and weirs can alter the natural flow patterns of rivers and create impoundments that can lead to problems such as temperature fluctuations and nutrient and sediment accumulation.
- **Reducing water pollution:** Barriers can create stagnant water conditions, promoting algae growth and pollutant accumulation. Decommissioning barriers can help reduce water pollution by allowing for better water circulation and improving the overall water quality within the watershed.
- **Sediment transportation interruption:** Barriers can cause sediment to accumulate upstream. This deprives downstream areas of sediment, leading to bank erosion and reduced channel stability and negatively impacting fish spawning grounds.
- **Impoundments:** Artificially impounded rivers have altered characteristics that can lead to temperature fluctuations, nutrient accumulation, and algae blooms, and create favourable conditions for invasive species. Structure failure could lead to downstream damages, water quality impairment, massive sediment release, habitat loss and other impacts.
- **Seasonal flow disruption:** Riverine plants and animals rely on seasonal flow fluctuations for various life stages, such as reproduction and growth. Barriers can disrupt this natural variation, affecting floodplain ecosystems and aquatic habitats.
- **Impacts to river-adapted species:** The Thames River watershed supports diverse aquatic, semi-aquatic, and riparian-dependent species. Native species are vulnerable to changes caused by damming, potentially leading to their disappearance from impacted areas.
- **Species at Risk impacts:** Barriers are identified as one of the primary threats to many At-Risk reptiles, mussels and fish in Species at Risk recovery strategies and management plans, including the Recovery Strategy for the Thames River Aquatic Ecosystem (draft 2004).
- **Safety-related considerations: Barriers may become unsafe due to age and lack of maintenance which can heighten the risk of failure.** They may also **become too costly to maintain** properly. These **barriers** may present **safety concerns, elevated flood risk, and potential liabilities.**

Reasons to Retain a Barrier

Some barriers serve beneficial purposes, such as preventing the spread of invasive species, protecting sensitive upstream species, creating recreational opportunities not possible without the impoundment created by the dam, or providing flood control, flow augmentation, or hydropower generation. Where purposes such as these are still valid, these should be weighed against the environmental improvements that could be realized if the dam were decommissioned.

Linkages to other UTRCA policies, management plans, and strategies

The Thames River (Deshkan Ziibi) Shared Waters Approach to Water Quality and Quantity (2019)(SWA) is a 20-year plan aimed at improving the ecological condition of the Thames River and its connected lakes. The plan is a collaboration of First Nations,

Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Governments, and Conservation Authorities. The SWA recognizes barriers as threats to aquatic communities and emphasizes barrier removal projects for water quality improvement and stream health.

Permitting

There are permitting and legislative requirements when decommissioning a constructed barrier. Property owners must obtain permits for dam decommissioning. Environmental impacts of decommissioning must be mitigated.

Conclusion

The UTRCA previously adopted a position that a free-flowing river offers the healthiest environmental condition. Therefore, technical staff recommend that the UTRCA encourages and supports decommissioning constructed barriers, specifically weirs and dams, when they no longer serve a valid purpose, or their negative impacts outweigh their benefits.

How UTRCA can encourage and support barrier decommissioning:

- Continue to assess and prioritize for decommissioning barriers owned and/or managed by the UTRCA.
- Continue to pursue opportunities to encourage and support owners in decommissioning constructed barriers.
- Continue to provide barrier owners with technical advice on proper operation and maintenance of constructed barriers.
- In collaboration with partners, develop educational materials on barriers and their impacts.

Investigate methods to mitigate environmental impacts of barriers that are not decommissioned.

Recommended by:

Chris Tasker, Manager, Water and Information Management

Brad Glasman, Manager, Integrated Watershed Management

Prepared by:

Erin Carrol, Aquatic Biologist

Case Study: Hodges Pond Dam, Oxford County



Photo: Cedar Creek Restoration at the former Hodges Pond site.

In 2016-2018, the UTRCA worked with Stewardship Oxford, Ducks Unlimited, and Oxford County to decommission the Hodges Pond Dam, located on Cedar Creek near Woodstock. Built in the 1800's, the concrete dam was originally part of a mill. The 3.3 meter high dam created a barrier within the 95 km² watershed. Its decommissioning re-established the aquatic connection between approximately 90 km of Cedar Creek upstream of the site, and the Thames River downstream.

Originally built as a mill pond, the reservoir had become a sediment-filled shallow lake with low oxygen levels and a high bacteria count.

Cedar Creek now bypasses the dam structure, which remains as a cultural reminder, partly buried with earth. A stable cascade was created along the new channel using stones. The stone cascade also acts as a deterrent for invasive species such as Eurasian Carp, preventing them from moving upstream. Woody and herbaceous vegetation has been planted to protect the streambanks and shade the creek.

The restoration efforts undertaken over the past few years have resulted in a remarkable transformation of the area. Cedar Creek has been restored to its original watercourse, and strategically placed rocks and logs now provide shade for fish and basking spots for turtles. Through the gradual removal of accumulated silt, the pond has been converted into a series of connected pools adorned with native plants. Decommissioning the dam has allowed Cedar Creek to flow freely, leading to cooler water temperatures, enhanced pollution absorption, and improved aquatic habitat.

Overall, the restoration efforts have been a success, significantly improving water quality and revitalizing the natural ecosystem. As a result, a diverse range of aquatic species in the area has benefited from these positive changes.

Video links are provided showing the [dam bypass construction](#), [student involvement](#), [trees and in-stream improvements](#), and the [on-going transformation](#) of Hodges Pond to improve water quality.

Case Study: Springbank Dam Failure and the Benefits to Eastern Softshell Turtles

Located on the main branch of the Thames River in London, Springbank Dam was constructed at this site in 1929 to replace a dam that had washed out several years before. While the original dam had been built to provide water power, the 1929 dam had a recreational function, creating a reservoir for boating and fishing for six months of the year.

In 2008, a hinge on Springbank Dam failed during commissioning following a lengthy rehabilitation project, rendering the dam inoperable. With the structure no longer creating a seasonal barrier, the Thames River resumed its natural flows within the footprint of the former reservoir. A free-flowing system formed, allowing sediment to mobilize and a low-flow channel to become better defined. Lateral sand bars developed along the margins of the river. Mid-channel bars in wider, multi-threaded sections of the river formed island features that divert flows and accumulate sediment under low-flow or normal flow conditions.

Council voted to permanently decommission Springbank Dam.

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Brandon Williamson, Land Management Coordinator
Date: September 19, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-46
Agenda #: 6.2
Subject: UTRCA Encampment/Unhoused Position Paper

Recommendations

- 1) That staff be directed to move forward with the recommendations outlined in this report to draft a policy to manage encampments/unhoused on UTRCA owned/controlled lands.
- 2) That this position paper and draft policy be shared with stakeholder groups within the UTRCA watershed for consultation and feedback.

Purpose

This report serves as a discussion paper intended to initiate the development of a UTRCA encampment/unhoused policy as it relates to UTRCA owned/controlled lands. The report identifies some of the past, current and potential future challenges that highlight the need for policy development, and outline next steps in the process.

It is important to consider that the UTRCA manages land across a large area of the watershed, in both an urban and rural context. The geographical extent of our landholdings alone, present a substantial challenge. However, an even greater challenge is the multiple levels of municipal governance within the watershed, as it relates to drafting a policy that encapsulates the subtleties of each municipality's position on encampments and the unhoused.

Background and Policy Context

Staff has identified a substantial increase in encampments and unhoused individuals on UTRCA owned and managed lands in recent years. These encampments present a number of health and safety concerns for staff including biohazards and sharps, individuals with mental health issues, as well as an increase in workload including hiring contractors, budgetary impacts and environmental impacts.

The development of an encampment/unhoused policy will provide staff direction on how the UTRCA will manage encampments and unhoused individuals on UTRCA owned and managed lands moving forward. Since the unhoused crisis is not exclusively a

UTRCA issue, our efforts will require engagement of many partners throughout the watershed. The UTRCA will need to work with member municipalities, local police services of jurisdiction, and various social services agencies to draft a policy that maintains flexibility to be implemented across the UTRCA watershed. We need to consider that each municipality may approach encampments and the unhoused quite differently; therefore our approach must reflect those nuances between municipalities.

Considerations and Recommendations

The intent of this report is to provide the key challenges for consideration by the Board as the authority considers how our response dovetails with the approach taken by member municipalities and other Conservation Authorities.

UTRCA staff are trained in various disciplines that are integral to managing this type of land management activity however, working with the unhoused requires a whole suite of expertise beyond what the UTRCA can offer. While our Provincial Offences Officers are trained and equipped to work through most enforcement related occurrences, there is a substantial need for additional mental health awareness training required. This mental health training is likely better suited to specialized agencies.

UTRCA lands staff are hired based on their environmental and ecological management expertise including, ecological restoration, invasive species management, risk management, trail management and tree risk assessment and hazard tree mitigation. Although removal of abandoned encampments and refuse is an integral part of the work plan, the substantial increase along with the associated hazards, reduces our ability to focus on environmental conservation and enhancement initiatives.

Recommendations

- **develop a list of risk factors as a result of encampments/unhoused on UTRCA owned and managed properties, and associated risk thresholds for each factor**
- **survey CA's of similar capacity re; encampment/unhoused policies/strategies**
- **partner with member municipalities and local social service agencies on strategies to coordinate response to encampments and the unhoused**
- **draft an encampment/unhoused policy framework that reflects each municipality's approach**

Next Steps

Once the UTRCA is able to identify the risk factors associated with encampments and the unhoused, staff will measure those factors against our risk thresholds for these occurrences on Authority owned and managed lands. Simultaneously, we will survey similar encampment/unhoused policies/strategies from other CA's to guide and inform our approach. Once we have this background information, the UTRCA will facilitate discussions with member municipalities and local social services to develop a draft policy framework. Upon completion of the encampment/unhoused policy, we will work closely with municipal staff and local social services to identify areas where urgent attention is required and how this policy corresponds to existing land management agreements. This policy should be reviewed annually as the needs in the community change and funding becomes available.

Prepared and Recommended by:

Brandon Williamson, Land Management Coordinator

Jason Belfry, Land Management Supervisor

Brent Verscheure, Manager, Lands, Facilities and Conservation Areas

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett, General Manager
Date: September 19, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-47
Agenda #: 6.3
Subject: Updated Strategic Plan

Recommendation

THAT the Board direct staff to engage a consultant to develop an updated strategic plan to define the Authority's values and direction, as well as to support the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy.

Background

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority's (UTRCA) most comprehensive strategic plan was completed in 1994. An update was undertaken in 2010, followed by the Environmental Targets: Strategic Plan in 2016.

Current work to develop the Watershed-based Resources Management Strategy (WMS), to comply with provincial requirements, has highlighted the need for updated strategic priorities and guiding principles for the Authority. While the Environmental Targets are still relevant and valid, a new, comprehensive strategic plan is needed to guide the UTRCA moving forward. The targets also do not reflect the new operating environment or recent staff reorganization, which was undertaken in response to changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and associated legislation, combined with many staff changes and retirements.

A new strategic plan will build on previous plans and move the Authority forward so we can modernize how we operate, become more innovative, and be better positioned to partner with others to respond to new challenges and opportunities.

Discussion:

Senior staff met on June 19, 2023, to review the background information being gathered to complete the WMS. It became apparent that the UTRCA is not operating in the same environment as in 2016 when the Environmental Targets were set, and the principles guiding the WMS work needed to be re-visited.

Staff reviewed the Guidance on the Conservation Authority Mandatory Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy, the UTRCA's past strategic plans, and recently completed strategic plans by other Conservation Authorities. They identified the following priority areas around which to frame the WMS:

Natural hazards and water,

- Science, conservation, and restoration,

- Empowerment and engagement,
- Nature and parks,
- Organizational sustainability and innovation,
- People and talent.

These priority areas also reflect and support the UTRCA's updated organizational structure and operating environment.

A new, comprehensive strategic plan developed around these priority areas will provide clear objectives and goals that consider the current context, including:

- Legislative changes impacting workload and work planning in the short and long term,
- Legislative changes influencing how work is completed and funded,
- Compensation, recruitment, and related human resources issues that impact how the organization provides staff satisfaction and retention,
- The large number of new staff in the organization and the desire to include them in an updated plan to instill a shared sense of responsibility and ownership,
- The lingering impacts of the pandemic and remote work on the organizational culture and internal communications,
- Recognition of the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations, and the need to consider Indigenous knowledge and land-based learning in our work,
- The need to incorporate climate change into all program areas.

Staff will engage a consultant to develop the updated strategic plan. Development of the plan will include consultation with the Board of Directors, staff, key partners, and the public.

Recommended by:
Tracy Annett, General Manager

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Brad Glasman, Manager Integrated Watershed Management
Date: September 15, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-48
Agenda #: 6.4
Subject: 2024 Forestry Services Fees

Recommendation

THAT the proposed 2024 Forestry Services fees be approved by the UTRCA Board of Directors for implementation following approval.

Background

A detailed review and assessment was conducted on the UTRCA Forestry Services, specifically Tree Planting Program fees. Although annual reviews and adjustments take place, staff is of the opinion that fees have not accurately reflected the costs required to fully deliver the Tree Planting Program. The updated fees for 2024 will assist with recovering the costs of administering and delivering the program. The proposed fees follow the principles established for Forestry Services Fees in the UTRCA's Fees Policy.

Proposed Fee Changes

Changes to tree prices

Prices for 2024 are proposed to offset supplier price increases. Mark-ups on trees have increased at a steady rate annually, but are not keeping pace with price increases from the nurseries or increased costs for handling, storing trees and administering the tree sales program.

Changes to planting fees

The proposed planting fees better reflect 2024 staff and equipment costs required to deliver the Tree Planting Program. The changes incorporate staff time spent on activities such as site plan development, planting, tending and necessary post plant assessments. They also include time and expenses for all equipment for planting and tending offered through the program. A distinction in costs, based on number of trees, was observed during the assessment and therefore a scale or range of fees is proposed for 2024. The tables below outline all proposed changes to the Forestry Service fees.

2024 Fee Changes (proposed)

Tree Costs (+ cost of tree from nursery)		2023
Seedling Mark Up	\$ 0.40	\$ 0.15
Conifer Potted Mark Up	\$ 6.00	\$ 2.00
Hardwood Mark Up	\$ 9.00	\$ 6.50
Shipping and Handling Fee	\$ 40.00	\$ 30.00

Planting Fees	500-1000 Trees	1000-2500 Trees	> 2500 Trees	
Seedling Machine	\$ 3.00	\$ 2.40	\$1.35	\$ 1.00
Seedling Hand	\$ 3.00			\$ 1.00
Largestock Potted	\$ 18.00			\$ 16.00
Largestock Bareroot	\$ 42.00			\$ 36.00

2024 Updated Forestry Services Fee Schedule

Stock		Fees (+HST)	
		2024	2023
Large Stock Trees	Coniferous Trees	\$17.00 - \$20.00*	\$12.50 - \$16.00*
	Deciduous Trees	\$34.50 - \$46.50*	\$32.00 - \$38.00*
	Shrubs	\$14.00 - \$24.50*	
	UTRCA Planting Fee - Coniferous Trees - Minimum order 50 trees	\$18.00 + Cost of tree	\$16.00 + Cost of tree
	UTRCA Planting Fee - Deciduous Trees Minimum order 25 trees	\$42.00 + Cost of tree	\$36.00 + Cost of tree
	Landowner Planting- Minimum order 25 trees		
Seedlings	Coniferous Seedlings (18-40 cm)	\$1.45 - \$1.75*	\$1.10 - \$1.35*
	Deciduous Seedlings (26-90 cm)	\$1.80 - \$2.20*	\$1.35 - \$2.10*
	Wildlife Shrubs (20-35 cm) - Minimum order 50 seedlings	\$1.75 - \$2.50*	\$1.35 - \$2.10*
	UTRCA Planting Fee - Seedlings 250- 1000 Trees or Handplanting - Includes 2 applications of herbicide	\$3.00 + Cost of seedlings	\$1.00 + Cost of seedlings
	1000- 2500 Trees - Includes 2 applications of herbicide	\$2.40 + Cost of seedlings	\$1.00 + Cost of seedlings
	> 2500 Trees - Includes 2 applications of herbicide	\$1.35 + Cost of seedlings	\$1.00 + Cost of seedlings
	Landowner Planting Administration Fee - Minimum order 50 seedlings - Seedlings must be ordered in lots of 10	\$40.00	\$30.00

*Price dependent on species

Cost-share opportunities will continue to play a vital role in the delivery of the Forestry Program. Current funding programs will offset the total costs to landowners while working towards a better cost recovery strategy. The changes in fees will not ensure full cost recovery and will still require additional financial support in order to continue to provide this full service program.

Recommended by:

Brad Glasman, Manager Integrated Watershed Management Unit

Prepared by:

Tatianna Lozier, Stewardship Services Coordinator

Rob Davies, Forestry and Restoration Supervisor

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett
Date: September 18, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-49
Agenda #: 6.5
Subject: Cost Apportioning Agreements Update and Quarterly Progress Report

Recommendation

THAT the October 1, 2023 Progress Report be received; and further that Staff be directed to request an extension to the January 1, 2024 deadline to execute Cost Apportioning Agreements with all member municipalities.

Background

As a requirement under Ontario Regulation 687/21, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) developed and approved a Transition Plan (December 17, 2021) and Inventory of Programs and Services (February 28, 2022). The Inventory of Programs and Services is based on the three categories identified in the Regulation. These categories include (1) Mandatory, (2) Municipally requested, and (3) Other (Authority determines are advisable).

As required under Ontario Regulation 687/21 and identified in UTRCA's Transition Plan, the UTRCA is providing its final Progress Report. Under the regulation the progress reports must include the following;

- Any comments or other feedback submitted by a municipality regarding the inventory
- A summary of any changes that the Authority has made to the inventory to address comments or other feedback, including a copy of the amended inventory and description of changes
- An update on the progress of negotiations on cost apportioning agreements with participating municipalities
- Any difficulties that the Authority is experiencing might affect the ability of the Authority to enter into cost apportioning agreements with participating municipalities by the transition date.

Discussion:

Progress made since the first quarterly report are summarized below:

1. Municipal Comments and Feedback

- a. No additional comments have been provided regarding the inventory. Staff received input on the draft agreement from Thames Centre, Middlesex Centre, Oxford County and City of London. Circulation of the Draft Agreement has

occurred with the remaining municipalities and discussion will occur in the coming weeks.

2. Summary of Changes to Inventory of Programs and Services:

- a. No revisions to the Inventory of Programs and Services have been made since the last report.

3. Update on Progress of Negotiations with Participating Municipalities on Category 2 and 3 Programs and Services:

- a. UTRCA staff have worked collaboratively with the Southwest Conservation Authorities on finalizing a Cost Apportionment Agreement for Category 2 and 3 Programs and Services. Feedback is being sought from municipal staff.
- b. Staff have been collaborating with neighbouring CA's (where feasible) to schedule further discussions with participating municipalities.
- c. At this time agreements have been fully executed with Thames Centre and Middlesex Centre. The City of London plans to include the agreement to the agenda of council in early October. Oxford County will be taking the 'final draft' version of the agreement to the Area Municipalities in the coming weeks for their information and endorsement with a report to county council in November. Draft agreements have been circulated to the remaining municipalities with discussions anticipated in October.

4. Difficulties Reaching Transition Plan Date:

- a. As noted in the previous reports, discussions have been initially delayed due to the municipal elections and more recently delayed as a result of uncertainty raised by the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and regulations.
- b. While UTRCA anticipates signed agreements with its remaining member municipalities prior to the January 1, 2024 deadline, reports are still working their way through council agendas. As resolutions remain outstanding from some municipalities UTRCA is advising the Ministry that an extension to the January 1, 2024 deadline may be required to facilitate council schedules and further negotiations if necessary. However, UTRCA is making every effort to ensure compliance with the regulatory deadline. Staff estimate that an extension until March 31, 2024 would be sufficient.

The quarterly progress report will be posted on the UTRCA website and submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in accordance with Ontario Regulation 687/21.

Prepared by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Jenna Allain, Manager, Environmental Planning and Regulations
Date: September 19, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-50
Agenda #: 8.1
**Subject: Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report –
*Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and
Watercourses Regulation (O.Reg.157/06)***

Recommendation

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Background

The attached tables are provided to the Board as a summary of staff activity related to the Conservation Authority's *Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation* (Ontario Regulation 157/06 made pursuant to Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act). The summary covers permits issued between August 1, 2023 and August 31, 2023.

To date, 172 permit numbers have been assigned this year with 138 of those permits issued before August 31st. A further thirteen permits have been issued in 2023 where the permit number was assigned in 2022, and one permit has been issued in 2023 where the permit number was assigned in 2021. This brings the total number of permits issued in 2023 to 152. Nineteen permit extensions have been issued in 2023, and 16 notices of violations have been sent, where works have been undertaken within UTRCA regulated areas, without Section 28 approvals. During the month of August, UTRCA Regulations staff issued 49 clearances for regulated properties where proposed development was reviewed and determined not to require a Section 28 permit.

Information about permits in progress has been provided in the table below in a tally format. As noted above, 172 permit numbers have been assigned in 2023, with 138 of those permits having been issued by August 31st. To date, a further 11 permits have been issued in September, the details of which will be included in the next Section 28 Board report. We have had two permits cancelled this year, which leaves 21 remaining 2023 permit applications that are currently in progress. We also have an additional 3 permit applications from 2022 that are still in progress. For all three of these applications, we are awaiting additional information from the applicant. In total, we have 24 permits in progress which have been split out by municipality and application type in the table below.

Table 1. Permits in Progress Tally

Municipality	Major	Minor	Routine	Total
City of London	4	4	0	8
Municipality of Middlesex Centre	0	2	1	3
Municipality of Thames Centre	1	0	1	2
Township of Lucan-Biddulph	0	0	0	0
Township of Blandford-Blenheim	0	0	0	0
Township of East-Zorra Tavistock	0	0	1	1
Town of Ingersoll	0	0	0	0
Township of Norwich	0	0	0	0
Township of South-West Oxford	1	0	0	1
City of Woodstock	1	1	1	3
Township of Zorra	0	1	0	1
Township of Perth East	2	0	0	2
Township of Perth South	0	1	0	1
Town of St. Marys	0	0	1	1
Municipality of South Huron	0	0	0	0
City of Stratford	0	0	1	1
Municipality of West Perth	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	9	9	6	24

Recommended by:

Jenna Allain, Manager, Environmental Planning and Regulations

Prepared by:

Jessica Schnaithmann, Land Use Regulations Officer

Ben Dafoe, Land Use Regulations Officer

Cari Ramsey, Land Use Regulations Officer

Mike Funk, Land Use Regulations Officer

Brad Dryburgh, Land Use Regulations Assistant

Karen Winfield, Planning and Regulations Resource Specialist

SECTION 28 STATUS REPORT
SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS FOR 2021

DEVELOPMENT, INTERFERENCE WITH WETLANDS AND ALTERATIONS TO SHORELINE AND WATERCOURSES REGULATION
ONTARIO REGULATION 157/06

Report Date: August 2023

[Client Service Standards for Conservation Authority Plan and Permit Review \(CO, Dec 2019\)](#)

Permit #	Municipality	Location/Address	Category	Application Type	Project Description	Application Received	Notification of Complete Application	Permit Required By	Permit Issued On	Comply with Timelines	Staff
123-23	London	Windermere Road	Minor	Municipal Project	Culvert Replacement	05-Jun-23	01-Aug-23	22-Aug-23	02-Aug-23	YES	Funk
128-23	London	101 Meadowlily Road South	Major	Complex	88-unit condo development	06-Jul-23	02-Aug-23	30-Aug-23	02-Aug-23	YES	Funk
30-23	Middlesex Centre	Hog Back Close	Major	Municipal Project	Slope Restoration and Erosion Repair of SWM Outlet Following Large Bank Failure	02-Feb-23	28-Jul-23	25-Aug-23	03-Aug-23	YES	Winfield
119-23	Thames Centre	4963 Catherine Street	Minor	Development	Proposed Rebuild of Garage on erosion hazard	19-Aug-22	04-Aug-23	25-Aug-23	08-Aug-23	YES	Ramsey
149-23	London	1938 & 1964 Commissioners Rd E	Major	Complex	Victoria on the River - Phase 6 - Site Alteration Works	12-May-23	31-Jul-23	28-Aug-23	09-Aug-23	YES	Schnaithmann
115-23	London	41 Riverview Ave	Minor	Development	Proposed Replacement of Existing Addition and Deck	05-May-23	08-Aug-23	29-Aug-23	10-Aug-23	YES	Schnaithmann
111-23	Zorra	235408 23rd Line	Major	Development	Removal of Unpermitted ARU s (2) and Construction of New SFR	03-Nov-22	04-Aug-23	01-Sep-23	17-Aug-23	YES	Dafoe
151-23	Middlesex Centre	236 Edgewater Boulevard (Lot 81), Kilworth	Routine	Development	Proposed Pool, Poolhouse & Pool Deck	08-Aug-23	15-Aug-23	29-Aug-23	17-Aug-23	YES	Winfield

Permit #	Municipality	Location/Address	Category	Application Type	Project Description	Application Received	Notification of Complete Application	Permit Required By	Permit Issued On	Comply with Timelines	Staff
148-23	London	68 Albion Street	Major	Development	Construction of Two Storey Addition to Rear of Existing Residence	28-Jun-23	15-Aug-23	12-Sep-23	22-Aug-23	YES	Schnaithmann
152-23	Stratford	Court Drain undercrossing Quinlin Road	Minor	Utility Corridor	Linear Utility Crossing	16-Aug-23	22-Aug-23	12-Sep-23	22-Aug-23	YES	Dafoe
138-23	Woodstock	1100 Dundas	Major	Development	Replacement Manufacturing Facility, Office and Parking	20-Jul-23	26-Jul-23	23-Aug-23	23-Aug-23	YES	Dafoe
159-23	Thames Centre	20278 Fairview Road	Routine	Development	Attached garage, front porch and back deck	11-Aug-2023	24-Aug-2023	7-Sep-2023	25-Aug-2023	YES	Ramsey
155-23	London	3916 South Winds Drive	Minor	Development	Pool and Pool Shed	17-Aug-23	22-Aug-23	12-Sep-23	28-Aug-23	YES	Funk
150-23	Ingersoll	302 George Street	Minor	Development	Above Ground Pool	09-Aug-23	15-Aug-23	05-Sep-23	30-Aug-23	YES	Dafoe
161-23	Stratford	53 Worsley St.	Major	Development	Semi-Detached Residence	11-Aug-23	30-Aug-23	27-Sep-23	30-Aug-23	YES	Dafoe
154-23	Ingersoll	155 Charles St E	Minor	Development	Detached Garage	16-Aug-23	21-Aug-23	11-Sep-23	31-Aug-23	YES	Dafoe

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett
Date: September 19, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-51
Agenda #: 8.2
Subject: Project Status Updates

Recommendation

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Background

To assist the Board with previously discussed items the following status updates are provided. This report is updated and included at each meeting in order to identify project timelines and expected future reports.

Discussion

The table below provides progress and timelines associated with UTRCA projects and the strategies required to fulfil the requirements of O.Reg 686/21, Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation. Planned reports and updates at board meetings may change.

Report Back Items	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
Administrative By-Law update	June	Tracy and Michelle	Complete - By-Law updates provided for approval at June meeting
Wetland Compensation Policy (March 2023 meeting)	August update provided	Jenna and Sarah	In progress - Draft Wetland Compensation Policies initiated. Report to be provided once finalized, date to be confirmed
Hazard modelling and mapping update	August update provided	Jenna, Chris and Teresa	In Progress - Mapping and Modelling of the Thames River and communications plan are proposed in the first phase. A future report will include policies for spill areas, climate change as they are currently being developed.
Land Inventory;(Will include Glengowan Lands)	August update provided	Brandon, Phil, Cathy & Brent	In progress - To be included with Lands Strategy and a legislative requirement. Notes: The Planning Act was revised with Bill 23 – Section 53e) that changes CA requirements for land acquisitions. The Lands Inventory will inform the Lands management strategy and acquisition and disposition strategy. To

Report Back Items	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
			be completed December 31, 2024
Children's Safety Village (June 2022 meeting)	September	Brent and Teresa	In progress - Developing a Business Plan, report update to be provided in September
Cottage Program Update (March 2022 meeting)	September	Brent and Mike	In progress - Initial discussions with many cottagers have occurred, and a new agreement is being drafted. Staff will prepare a report outlining next steps for the cottage program
2024 Preliminary Budget Discussion Items	September	Teresa Christine Tracy	In Progress – Report back on: Communications Plan Staffing Needs Reserves
2024 Draft Budget and discussion items	October	Teresa Brad Christine Tracy	In progress – Report back Report back on status of contract discussions with Environment and Climate Change Canada. Provide updated numbers in October for the proposed Category 1 deficit and the proposed category three levy / cost apportionment
Hydro Plant	October	Chris and Brent	Overdue – Consultant to be engaged to determine potential issues and estimates to resolve the issues. Staff change has delayed the RFP process.

Legislative Requirements	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
Watershed Management Strategy	October	Tara & Brad	In Progress - Compiling background information. To be completed December 31, 2024
Operations and Asset Management Plans related to natural hazard infrastructure	October	Chris	In Progress – One component of overall group of assets within the UTRCA's Asset Management Plan. To be completed December 31, 2024.
Asset Management Plan	November 2023	Brent & Christine	In progress - May breakdown into Groups of Assets e.g. Fleet, Facilities etc.
Regulation Policy	November	Jenna	Not started - Once Section 28

Legislative Requirements	Planned report or update	Project lead(s)	Status
Updates	2023		Regulation is released, we may have to develop transition polices until such time as fulsome policies can be developed
Land Management Strategy	January 2024	Brent	Not started - Will be initiated after the Lands Inventory is complete. To be completed December 31, 2024
Land Acquisition and Disposition Strategy	January 2024	Brent	Not started - Complements the Land Management Strategy and Land Inventory. To be completed December 31, 2024.
Ice Management Plan	February 2024	Chris	Not Started – To be completed December 31, 2024

Definitions

Progress	Timeline
Not started	indicate project initiation date
In progress	anticipate completion date
Complete	date completed
Overdue	expected completion date and reasons for the delay
On Hold	other circumstances

Summary

The summary provided is intended to assist in tracking items requesting report updates back to the Board as well as project updates to meet our legislative requirements. The number of projects underway is significant.

Recommended by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Tracy Annett, General Manager
Date: September 19, 2023
File Number: BoD-09-23-52
Agenda #: 8.3
Subject: 2024 Preliminary Budget Discussion

Recommendation

That the Board of Directors receive this report for information.

Background

Staff were asked to report back on a number of items related to the Preliminary 2024 Budget including staffing needs beyond 2024, reserves, a Communications Plan, sale of lands, the status of the contract discussions with alternative funding sources, updated Category 1 deficit, and proposed Category 3 Cost Apportioning Agreement amounts.

At this time, updates related to staff needs and reserves are provided.

Staffing Needs

The following table highlights the staffing required to comply with the legislative changes.

Legislative Changes	2024	2025	2026	2027
Strategies: - Conservation Lands Strategy - Operations and Ice Management Plans - Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy	- Land Management Technician - Land Management Assistant - Asset Management Coordinator - Redistribution of work for Communications	-Land Management Technician -Land Management Assistant -Asset Management Coordinator - Redistribution of work for Communications	3 FTE's to continue in the to implement Land Management strategies and Asset Management	3 ongoing
Conservation Lands Strategy	1 -Land Management Technician 2- Land Management Assistant	1 -Land Management Technician 2- Land Management Assistant	1 -Land Management Technician 2- Land Management Assistant	2 ongoing

Legislative Changes	2024	2025	2026	2027
Operations and Ice Management Plans	Redistribution of work, no additional FTE's	Project will be complete in 2024	Project will be complete in 2024	Project will be complete in 2024
Watershed Based Resource Management Strategy	Asset Management Coordinator Redistribution work, significant effort required from Coordinator of Watershed Science	Project will be complete in 2024 however focus on Asset Management is needed, the Asset Management Coordinator position continues	Asset Management Coordinator position continues	1 ongoing
Section 28 Regulations (Hazard Modelling & Mapping)	4 Positions - Regulations Assistant -GIS -Water Resource Project Specialist -Communications	3 Positions to continue in 2025 1- Regulations Assistant 2-GIS 3-Water Resource Project Specialist	3 Positions to maintain up-to-date hazard mapping and modelling to reflect appropriate zoning limits to expedite the speed of approvals	3 ongoing
Bill 109 – Planning & Development Review	2 Positions -Regulations Coordinator -Environmental Engineer	2 Positions to continue beyond 2024 -Regulations Coordinator -Environmental Engineer	To meet the demand for additional time to devote to pre application consultations and meet new planning timelines	2 ongoing
Support	1 Position - IT Coordinator	1.5 Positions - IT Coordinator -.5 IT Assistant	2 Positions - IT Coordinator - IT Assistant	2 ongoing
TOTAL POSITIONS	10 (9.4 FTE estimated positions have various start dates)	9.5	10	10 ongoing

The table above outlines the staffing required to respond to the amendments made under the Conservation Authorities Act and our review and commenting responsibilities

related to natural hazards and planning and development applications prescribed through regulations. While the new staff are required to undertake responsibilities for mandatory programs and services, significant effort from existing staffing is also recognized. Once the hazard mapping consultations are complete, the additional communications contract staff will no longer be required.

Regulatory changes proposed for both updated hazard mapping and review and commenting on development proposal under Bill 109 require faster reviews and permit approvals. Additional staffing will be required on an on-going basis to maintain up-to-date mapping and to undertake technical reviews. Additional Information Technology staffing will be needed to support all of these efforts.

Reserves

The question was raised during discussion of the UTRCA’s preliminary draft budget about the use of reserves to cover deficits. For information, the UTRCA holds many, many reserves primarily as a result of the special benefitting levies for each of its flood control structures. The Authority also holds several operating reserves: for capital and lands purposes, for capital maintenance, and a series for memorial forests (being donor designated).

The Authority has not had a plan to specifically increase reserves. The UTRCA has had the ability to levy but has attempted to minimize the increases in levy request. As a result, the reserve balances have been low. In order to build more robust reserves, the Authority may need to develop a reserve policy. It should be noted that the Authority’s ability to levy will shortly be restricted to Category 1 activities.

At the start of 2024 we will be obliged to segregate our reserves differently into Categories 1, 2, and 3 with a further category tracking campground activity, to which levy is not directed.

Reserves at the end of 2022 total \$7,496,277 and are separated by Category in the table below. 2023 program and project surpluses and deficits will change those totals by the end of this year.

Reserves and Operating Expenses	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Campgrounds
Reserves	\$1,484,134 (general distribution) \$3,192,019 (special distribution)	None	\$359,473	\$2,460,651
Proportion of Operating Expenses	15%	These programs will be contract-based to break even	7.3%	44.9%
Months of Operating Costs	1.8 months	These programs will be contract-based to break even	.87 months	5.4 months

The Board requested an estimate of six months operating reserves. Approximately 15%

of the Authority's annual operating costs can be covered by existing Category 1 reserves; in other words, the Authority can operate for less than 2 months with the current operating reserves if absolutely no funding at all is received. By contrast, the campgrounds have built a reserve equal to 45% of those annual operating costs and, thus, could operate for just over 5 months by using only reserves.

Equating the number of operating months a reserve is "worth" is a very broad, generic, and imprecise guide to the real value reserves might have in an organization. In the absence of a reserve policy and plan for reserve management, the Authority has not analyzed a minimum requirement for reserves in total or by category (for 2024 and beyond). This information is normally guided by an asset management plan.

Prepared by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

Christine Saracino, Supervisor of Finance

To: UTRCA Board of Directors
From: Brent Verscheure, Manager, Lands, Facilities and Conservation Areas
Teresa Hollingsworth, Manager, Community & Corporate Services
Date: September 18, 2013
File Number: BoD-09-23-53
Agenda #: 8.4
Subject: Children's Safety Village – Progress Update

Background

At the end of 2021, the UTRCA concluded a 20 year land lease agreement with the Children's Safety Village of London Area (hereafter referred to as CSV). Amid financial challenges during and following the pandemic, UTRCA staff worked in cooperation with the CSV Board through a mutually beneficial arrangement to acquire the CSV building and all associated assets at no cost to the Authority.

Current Uses (2023)

The YMCA of Southwestern Ontario once again entered into an agreement with the UTRCA to hold its summer day camp program at Fanshawe CA, utilizing the main CSV building as their base for program pick up and drop off. Apportioned revenue from the 2023 lease agreement will be used to offset a majority of the annual cost of the building operating expenses. In September, staff commissioned a third-party appraisal that will identify current fair market value and an indication of value for insurance purposes.

General housekeeping and efforts to tidy and organize the main building have been completed. Through these efforts, a number of items have been donated and repurposed. Some examples of this include; 70 youth bicycles donated to Big Bike Giveaway, who as a volunteer repairs the bikes and gives them back to communities in need, and 44 youth electric jeeps donated to Children's Safety Villages throughout the province, including; Windsor, Hanover, Brant & Peel.

Maintenance and Repairs

As the strategic direction for this asset continues to be refined, operations staff have been performing regular maintenance duties that deliver specific outcomes, enabling staff to track and guide asset performance. An example of this is the retrofit of external LED lighting being completed with mechanical/electrical condition monitoring and reports being implemented.

In addition to ongoing monthly risk management inspections, a comprehensive buildings assessment was completed on each of the village accessory buildings for condition and performance. This provided the foundational data that informed and guided decision making on the future use of each accessory building. Through this internal assessment, it was concluded that 25 out of the 32 accessory buildings/structures were unfit for further use or development. Unfit buildings will be demolished to provide a vacant landscape for future opportunities and growth. At this point seven village structures will

remain until ongoing planning is complete and they are reviewed for opportunities to integrate into the accepted use and retrofitted into future programming activities.

Plans for Future Use

Using the working assumption that the Children's Safety Village (CSV) building and site would be renovated and reprogrammed as an Authority education and interpretive centre, a number of initiatives were completed over the summer months.

The UTRCA was able to obtain the assistance of a senior student from Huron at Western to investigate and collect approaches to climate change education and interpretation to inform the potential development of a climate change interpretive centre and programming in the CSV building and site. The intention of the project was that the programming, displays, and interpretation delivered at the centre capture the priorities of the climate change action plans of member municipalities and integrate the mission and programs and services of the Authority. This project identified overlapping priorities amongst municipal plans and those of the UTRCA (promoting a culture of energy conservation; understanding and awareness of climate change impacts; resiliency to extreme weather; empowering residents to take action; protecting, enhancing and encouraging green infrastructure including LID for storm water, etc.), collected examples of climate change education and interpretation from existing centres in Ontario, Canada and internationally, and developed a comprehensive list of potential funding sources to support implementation of a project at Fanshawe Conservation Area. In addition, the project collected examples of many park and natural area interpretive centres to assist with the integration of watershed and conservation area education and interpretation at the CSV site.

As opportunities arise, staff have been preparing funding applications to support both new programming and displays at the CSV site. Most recent is an application to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada PromoScience Program to support science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education programs and displays to be focused out of the CSV.

Work is also underway to "rename" or "rebrand" the CSV to better reflect the Authority's use of the facility and property within the Conservation Area.

Recommended by:

Brent Verscheure, Manager, Lands, Facilities and Conservation Areas
Teresa Hollingsworth, Manager, Community & Corporate Services