

**UPPER THAMES RIVER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING**

**AGENDA**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021 at 9:30 A.M**  
**Virtual Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic**

- 1. Approval of Agenda**  
Mover: D.Edmiston  
Seconded: A.Hopkins  
THAT the Board of Directors approve the Agenda as posted.
- 2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings: Thursday February 18, 2021**  
Mover: T.Jackson  
Seconded: S.Levin  
THAT that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' Annual General Meeting minutes dated February 18, 2021, including any closed session minutes, as posted on the Members' web-site.
- 4. Business Arising from the Minutes**
  - 4.1 Response Letter to Mayor Strathdee of St. Marys – A.Dale #124340  
Mover: N.Manning  
Seconded: H.McDermid  
THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the report.
- 5. Delegations**
- 6. Business for Approval**
- 7. Business for Information**
  - 7.1 Section 28 Status Report – T.Annett ENVP #9900  
Mover: P.Mitchell  
Seconded: A.Murray  
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.
  - 7.2 2020 Health and Safety Summary – C.Ramsey # 123305  
Mover: B.Petrie  
Seconded: J.Reffle  
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.

- 7.3 COVID-19 Programs and Services Response 2021 – Admin #3995  
Mover: J.Salter  
Seconder: M.Schadenberg  
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.
- 7.4 UTRCA Rental House/County of Perth OPA 193 Verbal Update – A.Shivas/B.Mackie
- 7.5 Natural Cover Presentation – C.Quinlan
- 8. March 2021 For Your Information Report**
- 9. Other Business (Including Chair and General Manager’s Concluding Remarks)**
- 10. Closed Session – In Camera**  
Mover: A.Westman  
Seconder: M.Blosh  
THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera to Discuss a Personal Matter about an Identifiable Individual
- 10.1 Personal Matter about an Identifiable Individual – Selection Committee Recommendation for the Position of General Manager – A.Dale  
  
Moved by: D.Edmiston  
Seconded by: A.Hopkins  
THAT the Board of Directors Rise and Report progress.  
  
Mover: T.Jackson  
Seconder: S.Levin  
THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the Closed Session report.
- 11. Adjournment**  
Mover: N.Manning



Ian Wilcox, General Manager

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

MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING  
Virtual Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic  
TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021

Members Present:	M.Blosh A.Dale – Chair A.Hopkins T.Jackson S.Levin N.Manning H.McDermid	P.Mitchell A.Murray B.Petrie J.Reffle J.Salter M.Schadenberg A.Westman
Regrets:	D.Edmiston	
Solicitor:	G.Inglis	
Staff:	T.Annett C.Harrington T.Hollingsworth J.Howley B.Mackie C.Quinlan	C.Saracino J.Schnaithmann A.Shivas C.Tasker M.Viglianti – Recorder S.Viglianti I.Wilcox

1. Approval of Agenda

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder for approval of the agenda were willing to let their names stand.

Mover: N.Manning

Secunder: A.Hopkins

THAT the 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  
February 18, 2021

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

Mover: T.Jackson

Secunder: S.Levin

THAT that the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated February 18, 2021, including any closed session minutes, as posted on the Members' web-site.

Carried.

4. Business Arising from the Minutes  
4.1 Response Letter to Mayor Strathdee of St. Marys

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

Mover: N.Manning

Secunder: H.McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the report.

Carried.

5. Delegations

There were no delegations.

6. Business for Approval

There was no business for approval.

7. Business for Information

7.1 Section 28 Status Report  
(Report attached)

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

Mover: P.Mitchell

Secunder: A.Murray

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.  
Carried.

7.2 2020 Health and Safety Summary

(Report attached)

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

Board members requested follow up information on the lost time incident.

Mover: B.Petrie

Secunder: J.Reffle

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.  
Carried.

7.3 COVID-19 Programs and Services Response 2021

(Report attached)

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

The Board shared concerns regarding the potential loss of dedicated volunteers because of a second year of cancelled community events due to the pandemic. Staff will provide a follow up report on this subject, summarizing proposed ideas for involving volunteers and Friends Of groups safely in outdoor projects this spring and summer.

Mover: J.Salter

Secunder: M.Schadenberg

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.  
Carried.

7.4 UTRCA Rental House/County of Perth OPA 193 Verbal Update

(Report attached)

Staff provided a verbal update regarding the official plan amendment application related to UTRCA properties within the County of Perth. County planning staff did not support the application, as the UTRCA did not fit the criteria required for surplus farm severances. After the

second time before Council, the application was approved. During the 20 day appeal period the UTRCA was made aware that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing had filed an appeal. The Board asked that staff further examine land disposition options and include feasible options when reporting back on matters related to the appeal.

Mover: S.Levin

Secunder: P.Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors receive the verbal update and ask staff to come back with a further update regarding the severances and other options.

Carried.

#### 7.5 Natural Cover Presentation

Staff provided a presentation on natural cover in the UTRCA watershed.

The Board discussed the presentation and the importance of sharing the presentation and data with member Municipalities and the public.

The Board asked staff to report back on the impact of the gypsy moth on UTRCA lands and the UTRCA watershed.

Mover: A.Hopkins

Secunder: J.Salter

THAT the Board of Directors receive the presentation.

Carried.

#### 8. March 2021 For Your Information Report

The March FYI was presented for the Member's information.

#### 9. Other Business (Including Chair and General Manager's Concluding Remarks)

The General Manager reported that UTRCA staff will be meeting with staff from the both the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, and Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry on Thursday March 25<sup>th</sup> regarding the St. Marys Golf Course.

The General Manager informed the Board that Conservation Ontario is coordinating an appeal for all Conservation Authorities who received money from the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program but were later advised they did not qualify.

#### 10. Closed Session – In Camera

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

Mover: A.Westman

Secunder: M.Blosh

THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera to Discuss a Personal Matter about an Identifiable Individual.

Carried.

#### 10.1 Personal Matter about an Identifiable Individual – Selection Committee Recommendation for the Position of General Manager

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

#### Progress Reported

The Chair confirmed the mover and seconder were willing to let their names stand.

Mover: P.Mitchell

Secunder: A.Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors approve the recommendation as presented in the Closed Session report.

Carried.

The Board rose from closed session and announced that Tracy Annett had been chosen to be the new General Manager of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

#### 11. Adjournment

The Chair confirmed the mover was willing to let their name stand. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:41 am on a motion by N.Manning.



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Ian Wilcox

General Manager

Att.

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**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Alan Dale, Chair  
**Date:** March 12, 2021  
**Subject:** Business Arising from the Minutes:  
Response Letter to Mayor Stratthdee of St.  
Marys

**Agenda #:** 4.1  
**Filename:** ::ODMA\GRPWISE\UT\_MAIN.UTRCA  
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**Recommendation:** That the attached letter be forwarded to Mayor Al Stratthdee of St. Marys, as requested, on behalf of the UTRCA.

#### **Discussion**

The attached letter has been prepared in response to a request from the Mayor of St. Marys. If supported by the Board, the letter will be sent immediately following the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Recommended By:

Alan Dale, Chair



March 23, 2021

Town of St. Marys  
175 Queen Street East,  
Mail: P.O Box 998,  
St. Marys, ON. N4X 1B6

**Attention: Mayor Al Strathdee**

Dear Mayor Strathdee,

**Re: Letter Response**

I am writing to you today as a follow up to our telephone conversation of February 26, 2021 and letters authored by yourself (September 19, 2019) and former UTRCA Board Chair Sandy Levin (September 11, 2019).

As I stated during our call, there was a delay in responding to your communication, and I was under the impression that a response had been previously sent. I agree that you did ask questions in your letter and that you expected and waited a long time for a response to those questions. I understand the concerns that you raised regarding the tone expressed by our former Chair. As I stated to you, this has been an on-going and frustrating issue for all parties involved and this frustration is apparent in these past communications.

To be clear, the Chair of the UTRCA, under its by-laws, does not have the authority to unilaterally direct staff. The UTRCA has engaged in meaningful dialogue with the St. Marys Golf and Country Club and the Town of St. Marys over many years regarding the operation of Wildwood Dam, its purpose, limitations and benefits. We have repeatedly explained the issues and multiple factors that we must follow in serving and protecting all businesses and residents throughout the Trout Creek and Thames River Watershed. Further to this, we have spent considerable staff time on this file, reiterating this information and defending against accusations, as well as responding to calls, questions and requests during critical flood events. Despite communication challenges, I can assure you that the Wildwood Dam has continued to be operated and has performed as designed for more than 50 years and has afforded much needed flood protection for the Town, local businesses, and downstream properties, as well as benefiting water quality from St. Marys to downstream of London through flow augmentation.

The UTRCA enjoys a positive working relationship with numerous businesses and community partners. We will continue to operate with transparency and accountability.

Sincerely,

Alan Dale  
Chair  
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

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**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Tracy Annett, Manager – Environmental Planning and Regulations  
**Date:** March 16, 2021 **Agenda #:** 7.1  
**Subject:** Administration and Enforcement - Section 28 **Filename:** D:\Users\annett\Documents\GroupWise\9900-1.doc  
*Status Report – Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation (O.Reg157/06)*

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**Section 28 Report:**

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 reports for January 1, 2021 to February 28, 2021.

**Recommended by:**

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

**Prepared by:**

Cari Ramsey  
Environmental Regulations Technician

Jessica Schnaithmann  
Land Use Regulations Officer

Brent Verscheure  
Land Use Regulations Officer

Karen Winfield  
Land Use Regulations Officer

## 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: January and February 2021

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

EX=Extension

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
EX-08-19	London	Pond Mills SD	Major	Development	New Gas Main to Service Future Pond Mills SD	20-Jan-2021	20-Jan-2021	17-Feb-2021	5-Feb-2021	YES	Verscheure
128-20	St Marys	86 Robinson Street	Major	Development	Proposed Reconstruction of Existing Single Family Dwelling including Detached Garage, Retaining Wall and Front Yard Terracing	10-Jul-2020	11-Nov-2020	9-Dec-2020	5-Jan-2021	NO	Schnaithmann
166-20	London	14 Mount Pleasant Avenue	Minor	Development	Proposed Construction of Replacement Garage	20-Sep-2020	18-Feb-2021	11-Mar-2021	25-Feb-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
184-20	London	2 Cadeau Terrace	Minor	Restoration/ Creation	Proposed Site and Slope Remediation following Directional Drilling Incident where drill struck a 2" irrigation main line at top of slope - works completed without UTRCA review/approval	20-Nov-2020	20-Nov-2020	11-Dec-2020	1-Feb-2021	NO	Verscheure

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
195-20	Stratford	870 O'Loane Avenue	Major	Development	Proposed Tear Down and Rebuild of a Single Family Residence, Garage and Septic System	7-Dec-2020	21-Jan-2021	18-Feb-2021	10-Feb-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
199-20	London	Existing Hydro One Transmission Line, South London	Minor	Utility Corridor	Proposed Transmission Line Refurbishment along a 5.6 km portion of Existing Hydro One Transmission Line	15-Dec-2020	24-Dec-2020	14-Jan-2021	5-Jan-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
201-20	St Marys	481 Water Street South	Minor	Development	Proposed Excavation of Parking Area and Installation of Retaining Wall	21-Dec-2020	16-Jan-2021	6-Feb-2021	21-Jan-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
1-21	London	205 South Street	Minor	Municipal Project	Proposed Replacement of Existing Storm Sewer	12-Nov-2020	15-Jan-2021	5-Feb-2021	15-Jan-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
2-21	Stratford	North Shore of Lake Victoria (Waterloo Street North and James Street)	Minor	Restoration/Creation	Proposed shoreline restoration project - installation of crib bank treatment and installation of proposed fish habitat 'shoals' associated with the north shore of Lake Victoria (the Avon River)	11-Jan-2021	11-Jan-2021	1-Feb-2021	13-Jan-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
3-21	Zorra	261 Orchard Avenue	Major	Development	Proposed Demolition of Existing Single Family Residence and Construction of Replacement Bungalow with Attached Garage, Relocation of Existing Garage and Carport	20-Jan-2021	9-Feb-2021	9-Mar-2021	9-Feb-2021	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
4-21	London	1151 Richmond Street	Minor	Development	Proposed TD Stadium Renovations and Improvements	15-Dec-2020	15-Dec-2020	5-Jan-2021	20-Jan-2021	NO	Verscheure
5-21	London	545 Fanshawe Park Road West	Minor	Development	Proposed Pedestrian Pathway connection	20-Jan-2021	20-Jan-2021	20-Jan-2021	20-Jan-2021	YES	Verscheure
6-21	West Perth	Road 140 crossing Ballantyne Drain	Minor	Municipal Project	Proposed Repairs to the Bridge at Road 140	8-Dec-2020	5-Feb-2021	26-Feb-2021	17-Feb-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
8-21	London	64 Albion Street	Major	Development	Proposed Construction of Detached Garage	19-Jan-2021	19-Jan-2021	16-Feb-2021	26-Jan-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
9-21	Zorra	13th Line and Cobble Hills Road, north of Road 74	Routine	Utility Corridor	Sun Canadian Pipeline Integrity and Maintenance Dig within a protected wetland/woodland.	22-Jan-2021	27-Jan-2021	10-Feb-2021	27-Jan-2021	YES	Winfield
13-21	London	1738, 1742, 1752, 1754 Hamilton Road - Old Victoria East (OVE) Phase 2	Major	Complex	Site Alteration and Overall Site Erosion Control Plan	13-Dec-2019	4-Feb-2021	4-Mar-2021	10-Feb-2021	YES	Verscheure

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
14-21	London	1176 Meadowlark Ridge - Meadowlily SD	Major	Complex	Grading and General Servicing, Erosion and Sediment Controls (Retroactive Permit Application for works completed prior to approval following expiration of original Section 28 Permit #77-17 )	31-Jul-2020	29-Jan-2021	26-Feb-2021	11-Feb-2021	YES	Verscheure
15-21	London	Foxwood Avenue and Fanshawe Park Road West	Routine	Utility Corridor	Proposed 3" Conduit Installation Undercrossing Snake Creek	22-Jan-2021	16-Feb-2021	2-Mar-2021	16-Feb-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
17-21	Woodstock	Parkinson Road	Routine	Municipal Project	Proposed Rehabilitation of Existing Single Span Concrete Bridge on Parkinson Road Crossing Cedar Creek	12-Nov-2020	2-Feb-2021	16-Feb-2021	10-Feb-2021	YES	Winfield
18-21	Woodstock	Parkinson Road	Routine	Utility Corridor	Proposed Replacement/Relocation of Existing Rogers Communications Cable/Conduit on Parkinson Road Crossing Cedar Creek	16-Dec-2020	14-Jan-2021	28-Jan-2021	10-Feb-2021	NO	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
20-21	Woodstock	South Shore Pittock Reservoir – 2 Locations (Roth Park (Highland Drive) and Lansdowne Avenue (Lampman Municipal Drain))	Minor	Restoration/Creation	Proposed Erosion Protection and Shoreline Stabilization Project adjacent the Pittock Reservoir.	10-Feb-2021	10-Feb-2021	3-Mar-2021	23-Feb-2021	YES	Winfield
21-21	Zorra	6012, 6038 Cobble Hills Road	Major	Development	Proposed Expansion of Existing Livestock Facility	3-Feb-2021	3-Feb-2021	3-Mar-2021	23-Feb-2021	YES	Winfield
22-21	Thames Centre	16365 Wyton Drive	Routine	Restoration/Creation	Proposed Excavation/Expansion of Existing Pond	1-Feb-2021	12-Feb-2021	26-Feb-2021	16-Feb-2021	YES	Winfield
23-21	London	West Limit of Saunby Street	Routine	Municipal Project	Proposed Replacement of Existing Storm Sewer	10-Feb-2021	12-Feb-2021	26-Feb-2021	26-Feb-2021	YES	Schnaithmann

# MEMO

**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors

**From:** Cari Ramsey, Health and Safety Specialist

**Date:** March 15, 2021

**Agenda #:** 7.2

**Subject:** 2020 Health and Safety Summary

**Filename:** #123305

**Report Purpose:**

This report is to inform the Board of the general Health and Safety issues that were present in 2020. The report will cover a first aid summary, general training across the authority, near misses and lost time accidents and COVID related issues.

**2020 First aid Summary**

INJURY CATEGORY	% OF TOTAL INJURIES	COUNTED FIRST AID REPORTS
Body, Neck, Shoulder & Back Injuries	17	3 (1 wasp sting)
Legs, Ankle, Knee or Foot Injuries	22	4 (1 wasp sting)
Face and Head Injuries		0
Hand/Finger, Wrist & Arm Injuries	56	10 (3 wasp stings)
Eyes		0
Ears	5	1

\*15 total reports – 18 injuries due to multiple injuries on one report, 2 wasp swarms affecting multiple areas on the body

**2019 First Aid Summary**

INJURY CATEGORY	% OF TOTAL INJURIES	COUNTED FIRST AID REPORTS
Body, Neck, Shoulder & Back Injuries	8	3 (1 wasp sting)
Legs, Ankle, Knee or Foot Injuries	19	7
Face and Head Injuries	8	3 (1 wasp sting)
Hand/Finger, Wrist & Arm Injuries	56	20 (3 wasp stings)



<b>Eyes</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Full Body</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>

**\*36 reports**

**2018 First Aid Summary**

<b>INJURY CATEGORY</b>	<b>% OF TOTAL INJURIES</b>	<b>COUNTED FIRST AID REPORTS</b>
<b>Body, Neck, Shoulder &amp; Back Injuries</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Legs, Ankle, Knee or Foot Injuries</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Face and Head Injuries</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hand/Finger, Wrist &amp; Arm Injuries</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Eyes</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ears (noise)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**\*36 total reports – 6 injuries affected more than one body part**

**2017 First Aid Summary**

<b>INJURY CATEGORY</b>	<b>% OF TOTAL INJURIES</b>	<b>COUNTED FIRST AID REPORTS</b>
<b>Body, Neck &amp; Back Injuries</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Legs or Foot Injuries</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Face and Head Injuries</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hand/Finger &amp; Arm Injuries</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Eyes</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ears (noise)</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2</b>

**\*32 total reports**

**2016 First Aid Summary**

<b>INJURY CATEGORY</b>	<b>% OF TOTAL INJURIES</b>	<b>COUNTED FIRST AID REPORTS</b>
<b>Body, Neck &amp; Back Injuries</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Legs or Foot Injuries</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Eye, Face and Head Injuries</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Hand/Finger &amp; Arm Injuries</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>27</b>

**\*44 total reports**

## **2020 Injury Summary**

- Reports are down due to the fact we did not have all staff working in the field during COVID-19
- In 2020 the #1 type of injury was on hands, arms, shoulder.
- In 2020 wasp sting was the most common injury. Two swarms equaled 20+ stings
- In 2020 we had 1 “lost time injury”
- 0 “near miss” reports in 2020.
- No accident investigations were done in 2020

## **2020 Training**

The following items were types of training UTRCA staff obtained in 2020.

- WHMIS on-line (all staff receive WHMIS 2015 training yearly).
- Health and Safety Orientation (all new staff, volunteers, students receive this training, as well as staff that have been away for more than a 3 month period). This was done through HR Downloads, as well as by supervisors
- Canoe and Kayak ORCKA Training was not done in 2020 due to COVID-19
- Staff was required to read new Standard Operating Procedures written due to COVID-19
- No outside training was done in 2020 due to COVID-19, but we were still in compliance in all areas
- We now have 13 staff members trained in Mental Health First Aid.

## **2020 COVID-19 Updates**

- 20+ new procedures were required to be written
- Framework for Resuming Operations document created
- Preventing Infectious Disease in the Workplace Policy created
- New signage created for all buildings
- New personal protective equipment purchased for staff
- New sanitizing supplies purchased and protocols created
- Working from Home policies created
- COVID-19 weekly staff updates created to keep staff informed

Recommended by:

Ian Wilcox  
General Manager

Prepared by:

Cari Ramsey  
Health and Safety Specialist

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**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Ian Wilcox, General Manager  
**Date:** March 15, 2021  
**Subject:** COVID-19: Programs and Services Response 2021

**Agenda #:** 7.3  
**Filename:** D:\Users\vigliamentim\Documents\GroupWise\3995-1.doc

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## Introduction

COVID-19 is continuing to influence how the UTRCA's programs and services will be delivered in 2021. Policies and procedures have been implemented during the past year that have allowed most of the Authority's work to proceed with modifications that protect the public and staff. We expect these modifications to continue through most of 2021. The following summarizes key adjustments planned for this year.

## Community and Corporate Services

Administration, human resources and finance staff have created procedures to ensure all support roles for staff and for the Board of Directors could continue during COVID. Phone support, virtual interviews, online payments and virtual Board meetings are examples of the new normal. The Community Partnerships unit has largely pivoted community and educational programming from face-to-face to virtual. Friends of Groups meetings are being held on-line, restoration projects are scheduled for implementation in 2021 and any site visits and field work are following safe operating procedures. Low Impact Development (LID) professional development opportunities have been initiated and demonstration projects are in the design phase to be implemented over 2021 and 2022. Board of Education partners have appreciated the Authority's ability to create online programming and demand for support has been overwhelming. The GREEN Leaders Initiative Program, High School and Remote Learners Virtual Field Trips, EcoSchools Certification Support and the Water is Life program are all examples of environmental education programming developed for virtual presentation. In response to demand from watershed residents, a Nature School, designed to allow families and children to safely explore the outdoors, is being offered at both Wildwood and Fanshawe. The Community Partnership unit is also involved in facilitating a Lake Erie virtual learning program and two Citizen Science programs designed to involve watershed residents.

## Conservation Areas

The CA Unit is anticipating an extremely busy season based on current nightly reservation numbers. For comparison, in 2020 nightly camping reservations opened on February 1<sup>st</sup> and by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 539 reservations had been made. In 2021, nightly camping reservations didn't open until February 15<sup>th</sup> and by March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1196 reservations had been made.

Similar to last year, the pandemic will require modifications to continue with respect to the way we do business. This will include:

- Seasonal camper registration by appointment
- Some reduced programming i.e. overnight camping 75% capacity, no rental program

- Scheduling of staff i.e. staggered lunch breaks for staff
- Modified training programs using virtual training methods as well as on line activities and smaller group training activities
- Continuing to develop and implement standard operating practices during a pandemic

Fortunately, lessons learned in 2020 are being applied to preparation for the 2021 season. Staff has taken advantage of the last 5 months to revisit operating procedures, staffing plans and budget to ensure we are able to meet the demand of what is shaping up to be a great summer for outdoor enthusiasts.

### Conservation Services

Private Land Forestry demands are 'excitedly' high level this spring. It is expected that the seedling and large stock programs should go as normal with around 55 sites being planted by UTRCA staff and over 200 requests for trees and shrubs. A smaller number of tree planters will be hired this year and the machine seedling planter will undertake some modifications, both as a result of the pandemic.

The five Memorial Forest Programs will see the planting of almost 600 trees throughout the watershed. These programs are not impacted by the pandemic. The Communities for Nature Program on the other hand, continues to be impacted due to the restrictions and uncertainty of school group and community gatherings. Planting will still take place at nine sites, with a combination of UTRCA staff and selected volunteers from the various communities. Despite the challenges, there will still be 2500 new trees planted, as well as 5000 wildflower and aquatic plants.

Technical services delivery including the Clean Water Program and demonstration and research projects are not being impacted to any degree, with the exception of some outreach events such as participation in the London Farm Show and the annual Landowner Workshop.

### Environmental Planning and Regulations

Over the past year Section 28 permits and Planning Act application have shifted to electronic circulations and submissions. This poses unique challenges as the work load remains extremely busy and staff relies on input from various disciplines to inform decision making. Staff are being trained on the full functionality of Microsoft Teams to assist with collaboration between the multi-disciplinary staff expertise needed for complex projects (engineering, ecology, hydrogeology, GIS etc).

It is expected that the trends seen in 2020 related to building activity are anticipated to continue. Of note, inquiries related to swimming pools and inquiries from home improvements have increased significantly. Construction activities and the development approvals are essential services, especially projects initiated or related to infrastructure. Virtual meetings with municipalities, consultants and applicants have become the norm. Some delays are experienced, as the nature of some projects require the submission of information over longer periods of time (i.e. plans of subdivisions). It is challenging as past details may have been provided in paper form and staff need access to files to respond. Overall, agencies have been flexible and are understanding of the situation. In addition, Source Protection Planning and Risk Management services have also adapted in order to continue work in these program areas.

### Lands and Facilities

As in 2020, an increase of visitors to our natural areas and rural CA's for day use activities including; hiking, fishing, picnicking & hunting is expected in 2021. Staff will continue to enhance and protect these natural areas however with this increase comes the potential for prohibited

activities on our lands. Household renovations & waste dumping, off road vehicles and illegal hunting occurrences have increased in frequency and continue to rise in the first quarter of 2021.

Continuous monitoring and assessment to mitigate exposure is completed within our risk management framework. Evaluating through consistent priority setting lets staff attain their short term as well as long term targets, ultimately providing a positive experience for our user groups. Implementation of health and safety policies and procedures have provided the proper PPE for staff to maintain on-site operations, however allocated time & costs to complete daily tasks or projects have increased including time to assist our rural community groups/associations. All permits, agreements, and online meetings with partners/community groups continue to be accessed online.

### City of London ESA Management

Since March 2020 we have continued to operate within the management framework, under the contract agreement with the City of London. However it was not without significant changes to daily operations and how we actually perform the duties/tasks. In 2020 we witnessed a major increase in use of the ESA's, with people wanting to get outside for recreation or simply to connect with others. With the increase in trail users, it brings a whole suite of stressors to the ESA's. Consequently those stressors were additional challenges for a reduced number of staff.

Now that we are early into 2021 we are seeing a similar amount of activity in the ESA's, and expecting that to continue into the summer months. The increase in use brings about many issues we must adapt to. Increased use means more garbage and vandalism. There continues to be an increase in encampments and drug paraphernalia. Increased trail use puts pressure on the trail system itself and contributes to trail widening, worsening trail conditions in wet areas, damage to structures and more off-trail use.

All of this puts additional pressure on staff to try and mitigate the impacts, while keeping up with all the other projects in our agreement. The health and safety of staff is paramount, so we are using additional vehicles and more PPE, which leads to higher costs. Compliance with local public health regulations has forced us to decrease the number of seasonal staff. This will impact our ability to take on additional capital projects, and likely reduce the scope of some current capital work. In addition, we are having issues meeting the requirement of operation hours in the contract. Areas of operations such as enforcement hours are likely to be especially impacted due to the close contact with people, inherent with those duties.

The measures taken to protect staff and maintain a high standard of health and safety are critical. However the cost of managing the ESA's to the standard we are used to is very high, and will likely continue throughout 2021.

### Water and Information Management

Increases in Environmental Planning and Regulations (EPR) applications and inquiries have also increased volume of work in our Hazard Mapping and Modelling team. Increased capacity in the EPR are likely to further the workload/capacity issues in this program area. Field data collection for the 2021 season will need to be increased to make up for the reduced field season and crew size last year. In 2021 vacancies left vacant last year are being filled to ensure our Hydrometric Monitoring Programs continue to be maintained and developed.

COVID-19 has also had an impact on Information Management. There has been an increased demand for more expensive laptops to facilitate remote work for staff who until now had less expensive desktop computers (or thin clients). Some staff moved their desktop computers home to allow for remote work, but some staff are not able to do this. Supporting staff working remotely has required additional time and effort, including supporting software installation, configuration and troubleshooting on personal home computers and troubleshooting issues likely resulting from home internet connectivity.

Implementation of Microsoft Teams has been initiated in 2020 and will continue into 2021. This is far more challenging than implementing other virtual meeting tools due to our use of an incompatible email system and its broader collaboration tools integrated into other Microsoft software. Entirely electronic submissions have resulted in receiving large document and drawing packages electronically and redistributing those files internally. This has put added pressures on our email system, resulting in a significant increase in email volume requiring changes to archival schedules and considering alternative distribution methods.

#### Watershed Planning, Research and Monitoring

Staff have adapted well to working from home since closure of the office in March 2020 and this format of work is continuing in 2021. While imperfect, the use of online tools to meet virtually and share files makes it possible for most work to continue and staff is maintaining contact with project teams internally and externally. Challenges associated with field work related to monitoring, research and stewardship have been met with changes in operating procedures. These changes were implemented in 2020 and are anticipated to continue in 2021. In general these result in less efficient field work as a result of increased precautionary measures. Specifically some examples include the need to use more vehicles when multiple staff are traveling to work sites, modified work and increased cleaning procedures resulting in work taking longer, limits on staff allowed in the UTRCA wet lab at one time slowing processing of turtle hatchlings (SAR) and the loss of volunteer support that has provided significant contribution to SAR work in the past.

Prepared by:

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Horned Lark

## What's happening in the Medway Creek watershed

The UTRCA is partnering with the Friends of Medway Creek to offer their first ever webinar, on Tuesday, March 16 at 7 pm.

Tatianna Lozier, UTRCA Agricultural Soil and Water Quality Technician, will be discussing stewardship practices to help reduce erosion from the farm. With the days getting longer and the snow melting, this topic is very timely!

While the webinar will focus on residents of the Medway Creek watershed, everyone is welcome!

[Click here to register.](#)

Contact: [Julie Welker](#), Community Partnership Specialist

## Virtual Field Trip to Fanshawe Dam for Remote Learners in TVDSB

Fanshawe Community Education staff launched their first virtual field trips for the Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB) this month. Nearly 300 grade 5 students participated in the new "Fanshawe Dam - Form, Function and Forces" virtual field trips designed specifically for remote learners.



Teachers were provided with a Teacher's Guide, lesson plan, and additional resources to lead their students through an engaging, curriculum-based program focused on the Fanshawe Dam and flood management in our watershed. The lesson included a video tour of the dam featuring Kim Gilbert, who highlighted the history of flooding in our watershed and the role the Fanshawe Dam plays in protecting residents from the forces of floods. Kim also identified and described the forces that act on the Fanshawe Dam. In other videos, Alexis Stupich conducted experiments with our flood plain model to help students visualize the role that groundcover, such as wetlands, and dams and dykes play in flood management and prevention.

After participating in the teacher-led lesson and watching the videos, students were given instructions on how to complete a STEM Challenge design at home. Students were tasked with using natural and/or household materials to create a strong, stable structure to manage flooding while withstanding various outdoor, environmental forces. Students were very creative in their choice of materials and in their designs, and many students chose to incorporate wetlands and other natural, permeable groundcover in their final design. Once students built their design, they conducted three experiments on their model - a wind test, a rain test, and a flood test - and made adaptations to their design as necessary, to ensure it worked well in managing flooding and was able to withstand forces.



*An example of a grade 5 student's STEM Challenge design for the virtual field trip*

As the culminating activity for this field trip, classes participated in a one hour synchronous learning video session with Julie Read via Microsoft Teams. Julie continued the conversation about flood management and mitigation in our watershed, introducing innovative engineering solutions and Low Impact Development (LID) designed to help "slow the flow." Julie then led a "Sharing Slideshow" which featured photos and videos of the students' STEM Challenge designs. Students had an opportunity to explain the design of their structure, share how it held up to the various tests, and give feedback on other students'

designs. The synchronous video session ended with Julie answering students' questions and students sharing their reflections.

Staff have received very positive feedback from students and teachers alike for this new virtual program. One teacher wrote, "Thank you for the amazing session! My students LOVED it! I appreciate all the time and effort behind the creation of this field trip!" A student wrote, "I'd like to say that learning about the Fanshawe Dam was fun and I really enjoyed the experiments like the wetlands and the water one. I hope to see the Fanshawe Dam in person when I can."

Fanshawe Community Education staff are thankful for the opportunity to continue to engage directly with students during the pandemic. Sincere thanks go to Erin Mutch, TVDSB Learning Coordinator for Environmental Education, Science and Experiential Learning, for her help in coordinating this virtual program. Contact: [Julie Read](#), Community Education Supervisor (Fanshawe)

## **Fusion Landscape Professional (FLP) Program**

Stormwater Low Impact Development (LID) uses designs and landscape features to infiltrate, filter, retain, and slow down runoff, in order to reduce the impacts of increased stormwater runoff and pollution. Rain gardens, downspout disconnects, absorbent landscapes, permeable pavement, and green roofs are all examples of LID.

The [UTRCA's stormwater LID program](#) facilitates the promotion and implementation of green infrastructure, including LID, to mitigate climate change impacts by improving water quality and delaying runoff into the Thames River. The program, which includes education, outreach, and LID maintenance and monitoring, is targeted at watershed municipalities and residents.

The basis for this LID program is the water quality target in the [UTRCA's Environmental Targets: Strategic Plan](#): "Improve each subwatershed's water quality score by one grade, as measured by UTRCA Watershed



Report Cards, by the year 2037.” The actions to achieve this target include creating an Urban Stewardship Program that focuses on reducing stormwater and nutrient runoff by promoting widespread adoption of LID through education, demonstration, and technical support.



*Rain gardens and bioswales installed at The Enclave at Victoria Hills, in Ingersoll*

In the last few years, UTRCA and City of London staff have received many inquiries from watershed residents asking if we could recommend local landscape contractors with experience installing LID features on residential properties. Seeing a need in the residential market for landscapers with LID experience, staff investigated programs that would meet this need in the landscape industry.

Discussions with Credit Valley Conservation identified the [Fusion Landscape Professional \(FLP\)](#) program as a way to work with watershed municipalities to increase the uptake of residential LID features and reduce residential stormwater runoff. The FLP program also allows the UTRCA to act as a liaison between municipalities, homeowners, and the landscape sector.

Landscape Ontario developed the FLP program in partnership with the Region of Peel and the Regional Municipality of York. The program helps communities address stormwater at the lot level to relieve some of the stress being placed on the existing infrastructure -- stress caused by

the increase in impervious surfaces (more urban areas), water demand (growing population), and stormwater runoff (more frequent intense storms due to climate change).

The long-term goal of the program is for healthy and water efficient landscapes that utilize stormwater to become a standard practice in the landscape industry, and to promote FLP certified companies as leaders in the industry.

Fusion landscaping combines the art and science of horticulture with the science of hydrology to design, build/install, and maintain aesthetically pleasing, water efficient landscapes. These landscapes optimize lot level stormwater management by using established design principles including form, function, and the environment. LID technologies, such as rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration trenches, and permeable pavers, are installed to capture and use rain water on site, instead of it being directed away from the property.

The UTRCA recently offered the FLP Certification Program at a subsidized rate to members of Landscape Ontario who are located in the UTRCA watershed, in partnership with the City of London and with funding from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. Ten landscape professionals, three UTRCA staff, and one City of London staff participated in the virtual training. This was the first time that the FLP program has been offered to the landscape industry outside of the GTA. Positive reviews were received from all participants! After successfully completing the exam, UTRCA staff Vanni Azzano, Julie Welker, and Brandon Williamson are now certified Fusion Landscape Professionals.



The UTRCA will maintain a list of local certified Fusion Landscape Professionals which can be used by watershed residents. Staff will continue to partner with the City of London and Landscape Ontario to deliver the FLP program in the UTRCA watershed on an annual basis.  
Contact: [Vanni Azzano](#), Community Education Supervisor (Wildwood)

### Ontario Volunteer Service Award



Imtiaz Shah, UTRCA Senior Environmental Engineer, was recognized with an Ontario Volunteer Service Award at a virtual ceremony on February 17th. This award recognizes

volunteers for providing committed and dedicated service to an organization.

The Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries presented Imtiaz with a 10 years award for his continued services with Professional Engineers Ontario - London Chapter. Imtiaz chaired the London Chapter for two years, and was vice chair for another two years.

Congratulations, Imtiaz!

### Bloodroot – A Sign of Spring

Just when you doubt spring will ever arrive, you spot a small cluster of Bloodroot emerging from the brown leaf litter on the forest floor. Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) flowers in mid to late April and is one of our earliest blooming native flowers. It blooms, is pollinated, sets seed, and dies back by the time the trees leaf out and shade the forest floor.

Bloodroot is found in fertile deciduous woods from the Great Lakes east to Nova Scotia and south to Florida. It is named for the orange-red juice that comes from the rhizome (underground

stem) if it is broken. The Latin name also refers to the juice - *Sanguinarius* means “bloody”. The juice is used as a dye by Indigenous peoples. The rhizomes and leaves are bitter and toxic and so are not often eaten by wildlife. The rhizomes grow longer each year and branch out to form colonies of plants.

The plant produces a single white flower with 8-10 petals. The flower is short-lived, blooming for only a day or two before dying. It is pollinated by small bees and flies. The flower emerges directly out of the ground on a short stem, wrapped in a large basal leaf which gradually opens up, reaching full size when the flower wilts. The leaves have a distinctive wavy, lobed margin. They go dormant in mid to late summer, which is later than some other spring ephemerals.



*The beautiful white flower and distinctive leaf of a Bloodroot plant.*



*A colony of Bloodroot plants.*

Bloodfruit fruit is a spindle-shaped capsule, about 1 inch long, containing 10-15 seeds. The seeds have a fleshy organ called an elaiosome that attracts ants. The ants take the seeds to their nest, where they eat the elaiosomes and put the seeds in their nest debris, where they are protected until they germinate.

Enjoy the Bloodroot flowers while they last, knowing the blooming of other spring forest flowers is not far behind.

Contact: [Cathy Quinlan](#), Terrestrial Biologist

## On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be held virtually on March 23, 2021.

- Review and Approval of the Factual Certificate
- Section 28 Status Report
- 2020 Health and Safety Summary
- COVID-19 Programs & Services Response 2021
- Perth County Official Plan Amendment
- Natural Cover Presentation

Please visit the “Board Agendas & Minutes” page at [www.thamesriver.on.ca](http://www.thamesriver.on.ca) for draft agendas, audio/video recordings, and approved minutes. Contact: [Michelle Viglianti](#), Administrative Assistant