

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors'  
Meeting Agenda  
Tuesday September 28, 2021 at 9:30 A.M

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Virtual Meeting Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

**1. Approval of Agenda**

Mover: P.Mitchell

Seconder: A.Murray

THAT the Board of Directors approve the Agenda as posted.

**2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meetings: Tuesday August 24, 2021**

Mover: B. Petrie

Seconder: J.Reffle

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated August 24, 2021, including any closed session minutes, as posted on the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority web-site.

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes**

**5. Delegations**

**6. Business for Approval**

6.1. 2022 Budget Concepts – T.Annett/C.Saracino Admin #4185

Mover: J.Salter

Seconder: M.Schadenberg

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

**7. Business for Information**

7.1. Administration and Enforcement - Section 28 Status Report –  
Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines  
and Watercourses Regulation (O.Reg157/06) – J.Allain ENVP #10800

Mover: A.Westman

Seconder: M.Blosh

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.

7.2. Conservation Authorities Act Inventory and Transition Plans – T.Annett

Admin #4190

Mover: T.Jackson

Seconder: M.Lupton

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.

7.3. Team for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity – J.Welker/J.Howley CA #9829

Mover: N.Manning

Seconder: H.McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented.

**8. September 2021 For Your Information Report**

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

9.1. Vaccination Policy – T.Annett (Verbal)

9.2. Proposed Conservation Authorities Act Regulations Update – T.Annett (Verbal)

**10. Closed Session – In Accordance with Section C.13 of the UTRCA Administrative By-Law – none (at this time)**

**11. Adjournment**

Mover: P.Mitchell



Tracy Annett, General Manager

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

**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Tracy Annett, General Manager  
**Date:** September 14, 2021  
**Filename:** Admin #4185  
**Agenda #:** 6.1  
**Subject:** 2022 Budget Concepts

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## Recommendation:

That the Board of Directors approves the following recommendations as guidance for staff development of the 2022 Draft Budget:

1. That the 2022 Draft Budget reflects a “status quo” budget in terms of service delivery except where funding is received from other sources than levy.
2. That an inflationary increase of 3.5% on most costs be included.
3. That the final \$172,500 municipal levy request in support of the Environmental Targets Strategic Plan be deferred until 2023.

## Discussion

Staff are seeking high level budget direction from the Board as guidance for the 2022 draft budget’s development. This guidance is not binding; the Board will review the full draft budget during the fall, and consider final adjustments based on feedback and approval at the Annual General Meeting in February. Changes are possible and expected at each stage of the budget’s development and through consultation with our member municipalities.

The 2022 budget will be affected by several issues and Board direction is needed. These issues are reviewed in detail below with recommendations highlighted in bold font.

## 2022 Budget Considerations:

- 1) **Municipal Funding**- Typically staff recommend a municipal levy increase that balances program needs with public support. For 2022 staff are suggesting that municipal levy needs will be based on maintaining service levels, but that an inflationary increase be included (discussed below). The following must also be considered as context for any municipal levy increase:
  - a) Municipal Budgets:
    - St. Marys target of no more than 2% tax increase
    - Stratford have directed staff to target between 2-3% tax increase

- Middlesex Centre tax levy target of approximately 2% but will be considering consumer price index
- Oxford County- Unknown tax levy target but staff expect it will be low.
- West Perth- No direction to staff yet but anticipate an alignment with the consumer price index, no more than 3%.
- City of London- Approved 2.0% levy increase as part of multi-year budget approval  
City direction: All civic service areas and agencies, boards & commissions will be required to remain within their 2022 operating budget allocation approved during the 2020 to 2023 Multi-Year Budget.
- Consistent messages from municipal staff have emphasized status quo budgets with minimal levy increase as political interest will be minimizing increases for rate payers. The same approach will be expected from outside Boards and Commissions.
- While many member municipalities received COVID relief funding in 2020 and 2021, we remind the board that the Authority did not.

a) Conservation Authorities Act Regulations

- It is likely 2022 will be the final year for Conservation Authorities to levy for the full range of current services. Amendments to the CA Act, separates our programs into mandatory and non-mandatory programs. Negotiated agreements will be required for non-mandatory services with municipalities deciding if they want or are willing to pay for those services. At the time of writing this report regulations to implement the CA Act changes have not yet been finalized
- Once the Regulations are finalized it is expected negotiations for non-mandatory services will take place during 2022 for the 2023 budget year. These agreements are expected to be negotiated with multi-year terms.
- Board support and alternative funding sources will be needed for non-mandatory programs to continue. This support and long term agreements may be jeopardized by an aggressive UTRCA 2022 budget that conflicts with current municipal interests and financial priorities.

Given the above, staff recommend that the 2022 Draft Budget reflects a “status quo” budget in terms of service delivery except where funding is received from other sources than levy. Overall budget costs are expected to increase (inflation, pandemic response costs, etc.) however limited service growth will be planned.

- 2) **Inflation**- The UTRCA’s current practice is to use the April- April consumer price index (CPI) for Ontario as a guide for an annual inflationary increase for wages. This value for 2021 is 3.3%. The average annual inflationary increase during the first seven months of 2021 for Ontario was **2.6%; May, June and July recording 3.7, 3.2 and 3.5% respectively.** Canada’s August CPI is **4.1%** higher than 12 months earlier and though the Bank of Canada targets 2% as the stable inflation rate, with a range between 1% and 3%, it has indicated it is expecting and willing to allow the actual rate of inflation to float higher than 2% for the next year. As

such staff recommends an inflationary increase of 3.5% for the 2022 draft budget where it is otherwise not known or can be predicted more exactly.

- 3) **Impact of COVID-19 on 2022 Revenues** - Based on experience from 2021, user fee revenue forecasts will be consistent with 2021 revenues for conservation areas, education programs, stewardship programs and some property leases. While difficult to predict, contract opportunities are expected to be similar to 2021 levels for 2022.
- 4) **2022 COVID-19 on Expenses**- These expenses relate to costs as part of the UTRCA's Pandemic response. e.g., cleaning, PPE, extra vehicle use, engineered controls, extra IT, etc. that is expected to continue in 2022. While investment has been made during 2021, additional costs are anticipated to continue in 2022. Effort will be made to manage these costs within existing budgets.
- 5) **Fees Review** – A comprehensive fees review will be undertaken to establish appropriate revenues to meet service delivery requirements.
- 6) **Environmental Targets Strategic Plan**- \$230,000 of new municipal levy identified in the Strategic Plan was initially deferred from 2020 and was to be included in the 2021 budget. This was to be the final installment of municipal funding to support the organization's Environmental Targets. As directed by the Board, 25% of the amount was included in the 2021 budget and the remaining 75% or \$172,500 was deferred to the 2022 budget. Given the recommendation above supporting a status quo budget for 2022, **staff are recommending deferral of the final \$172,500 in Environmental Targets funding until 2023.** This recommendation is also made with the understanding future funding for some elements of Environmental Targets may be through negotiated municipal agreements as required in Regulation rather than general levy funding.
- 7) **Asset Management Planning** - Asset Management Planning efforts have not progressed until a funded plan can be developed and when staff can be dedicated to the project.
- 8) **Capital Projects**- Work will proceed in 2022 for capital projects. Previously deferred capital spending will need to take place in order to continue to deliver programs. Vehicles in particular will need to be replaced.
- 9) **Section 39 Hazard Management Provincial Transfer Payment** - Funding is assumed to be status quo for 2022.
- 10) **Insurance** – we expect insurance costs to increase as we have experienced previously.
- 11) **Compensation Review Implementation** – We have engaged a consultant to initiate a compensation review. Recommendations for salary adjustments are unknown at this time however it is expected to result in increases in wage expenditures which will be included in the draft budget as estimates and likely revised by next February.
- 12) **Mission Centre Investment**- As disclosure, additional funding is required to support existing hazard management efforts, specifically flood forecasting and warning (\$200,000). Continued reliance on reserves is unsustainable. Other potentially “core” programs are similarly under-funded (e.g., education, monitoring) however, despite this need, a request

for additional funding will be deferred until 2023 in recognition of current financial challenges resulting from the Pandemic.

- 13) **Health and Safety** – A risk assessment was undertaken that identified additional training, focusing on de-escalation and mental health awareness as well as updated procedures. Costs related incorporating these measures will be included into the 2022 budget.

**Note:** The provincial funding formula that apportions levy across member municipalities will change again in 2022. The formula uses MPAC’s Current Value Assessment of municipal properties within each CAs jurisdiction to calculate proportional costs. 2022 changes to CVA apportionment are less dramatic than in previous years with several rural member municipalities benefitting from slightly lowered CVA rates. Nevertheless, increases in levies will be felt particularly among those municipalities with benefitting percentages on the large dam structures due to capital repairs and safety studies.

### **2022 Budget Development Schedule**

**September 2021:** Board Direction regarding Budget Concepts

**October 2021:** Draft Budget Board Approval

**November 2021:** Municipal Input sessions with Senior Staff

**November- February 2022:** Draft Budget circulation to member municipalities for comment

**January 2022:** Board review of municipal comments and budget reconsideration

**February 2022:** Budget review and approval

### **Summary**

Staff have been successful at finding additional sources of revenues through contacts, service agreements and funders. Feedback to further guide overall budget preparation is requested to finalize our draft budget.

Recommended & Prepared by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

Christine Saracino, Supervisor, Finance and Accounting

**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors

**From:** Jenna Allain, Manager, Environmental Planning and Regulations

**Date:** September 20, 2021

**Filename:** ENVP #10800

**Agenda #:** 7.1

**Subject:** Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 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 August 1, 2021 to August 31, 2021.

**Recommended by:**

Jenna Allain, 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

Ben Dafoe, 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: August 2021

[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
38-21	Woodstock	Oxford County Road #9 (Ingersoll Road)	Routine	Municipal Project	Proposed Rehabilitation of Bridge 9342 Crossing Cedar Creek. Construction Access and Project Dewatering on Adjacent UTRCA Owned Land Additionally Required a Construction Access Agreement from our Properties Staff	25-Mar-2021	29-Jul-2021	12-Aug-2021	9-Aug-2021	YES	Winfield
46-21	Woodstock	(Phase I) - Lansdowne Avenue from Springbank Drive to County Road 4	Major	Municipal Project	(Phase I) - Oxford County Road 4, County Road 17 and Lansdowne Avenue Watermain Installation Project adjacent the Pittock Reservoir. Anticipated That Project Will Involve Closure of Lansdowne Avenue (City Owned) Access to the Pittock Trail from August 9th through November 12th.	22-Mar-2021	5-Aug-2021	2-Sep-2021	11-Aug-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
53-21	St Marys	752 Queen Street East	Major	Alterations to Wetlands & Watercourses	Proposed New Development including Stormwater Management, Outlet and Retaining Wall	25-Sep-2020	30-Jul-2021	27-Aug-2021	9-Aug-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
65-21	London	14 Mayfair Drive	Minor	Development	Proposed In-Ground Pool Installation	23-Jul-2021	5-Aug-2021	26-Aug-2021	6-Aug-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
69-21	Zorra	154889 15th Line (Part Lot 20, Concession 1 North Division)	Major	Development	Proposed Site Grading (Earthworks), Modifications to Existing Stormwater Management Facility, Installation of Servicing and Installation of New Roads Associated with the Thames Springs West Subdivision	3-May-2021	7-Jul-2021	4-Aug-2021	3-Aug-3021	NO	Winfield
84-21	Stratford	42 St. Vincent Street South	Major	Development	Proposed Construction of an Addition to Existing Dwelling	4-Jun-2021	19-Jul-2021	16-Aug-2021	5-Aug-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
97-21	St Marys	Park Street Between Water Street and Thomas	Routine	Municipal Project	Proposed Repairs to the Bridge at Park Street	22-Jun-2021	26-Jul-2021	9-Aug-2021	20-Aug-2021	NO	Schnaithmann
98-21	London	62 Albion Street	Major	Development	Proposed Construction of a Detached Garage	6-Jun-2021	26-Jul-2021	23-Aug-2021	23-Aug-2021	YES	Schnaithmann
107-21	Middlesex Centre	178 Edgewater Boulevard	Major	Development	Proposed Single Family Residence & Attached Garage	14-Jul-2021	14-Jul-2021	11-Aug-2021	4-Aug-2021	YES	Winfield
116-21	Perth South	3247 Line 20	Routine	Development	Proposed low level stream bed crossing	16-Jul-2021	30-Jul-2021	13-Aug-2021	3-Aug-2021	YES	Dafoe
119-21	Stratford	TJ Dolan Trail	Routine	Municipal Project	Proposed Trail Improvements	19-Jul-2021	16-Aug-2021	30-Aug-2021	16-Aug-2021	YES	Dafoe

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
121-21	London	37 Riverview Avenue	Minor	Development	Proposed Renovation and Rear Yard Deck Replacement	28-Jul-2021	13-Aug-2021	3-Sep-2021	13-Aug-2021	YES	Verscheure
126-21	London	85 Oxford Street	Minor	Development	Proposed Rebuild of Duplex in potential West London SPA	29-Jul-2021	16-Aug-2021	6-Sep-2021	18-Aug-2021	YES	Verscheure
129-21	London	76 Grand Avenue	Minor	Development	Proposed Interior Renovations and Addition to existing Duplex	18-Aug-2021	25-Aug-2021	15-Sep-2021	30-Aug-2021	YES	Verscheure
62B-21	Zorra	South of Thamesford along 15th Line, 17th Line, 19th Line and Township Road 64	Routine	Utility Corridor	Proposed Quadro Communications Thamesford Feed Project (SOUTH - Part II) - HDPE Conduit Installation for Telecommunications Fibre Optic Installation.	25-May-2021	25-May-2021	8-Jun-2021	13-Aug-2021	NO	Winfield
131-21	Norwich	708 Pattullo Ave	Minor	Restoration/Creation	Pond Expansion	10-Aug-2021	15-Aug-2021	5-Sep-2021	30-Aug-2021	YES	Dafoe

**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Tracy Annett, General Manager  
**Date:** September 14, 2021  
**Filename:** Admin #4190  
**Agenda #:** 7.2  
**Subject:** Conservation Authorities Act Inventory and Transition Plans

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**Recommendation:**

That the staff report be received for information.

**Purpose:**

To present to the Board of Directors with a draft timeline outlining a work plan for the establishment of an Inventory of Programs and Services and Transition Plan to comply with 21.1.4 (2) of the Conservation Authorities Act as outlined in the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' (MECP) Regulatory Proposal Consultation Guide Regulations Defining Core Mandate and Improving Governance, Oversight and Accountability of Conservation Authorities (Guide: Phase 1).

**Report Summary**

- According to the MECP's Regulatory Proposal Consultation Guide Regulations Defining Core Mandate and Improving Governance, Oversight and Accountability of Conservation Authorities (Guide: Phase 1) the unproclaimed regulation requires each CA to develop a transition plan including an inventory of programs and services for municipal consultation by December 31, 2021 to ensure that the new proposed financial structure for CAs will be in place for the municipal fiscal year of 2023.
- Phase 2 of the proposed regulation including a levy regulation was expected to be released this fall.
- Staff feel that they require the benefit of the Phase 2 Consultation Guide and associated levy regulation before finalizing any inventory of program and services for presentation to the Board for approval and/or member municipalities.
- While much is still unknown, in anticipation of a tight timeline, staff are presenting a draft work plan for development and communication of the proposed inventory of programs and services in keeping with the proposed December 31, 2021 timeline. However, significant change and delay is expected which may impede the ability to meet the proposed timeline.

**Discussion**

As outlined in MECP's Guide Phase 1, the unproclaimed regulation will include a prescribed date after which a Conservation Authority can only use the municipal levy, in whole or in part, to fund non-mandatory programs and services that the authority determined were advisable for its jurisdiction with agreements in place with municipalities that agree to pay for these non-mandatory program and services.

The Ministry is proposing January 1, 2023 as the prescribed date by which municipal agreements must be in place for non-mandatory programs and services.

Given the process required to achieve this funding structure the following process is proposed in the Consultation Guide Phase 1 (see Figure 1):

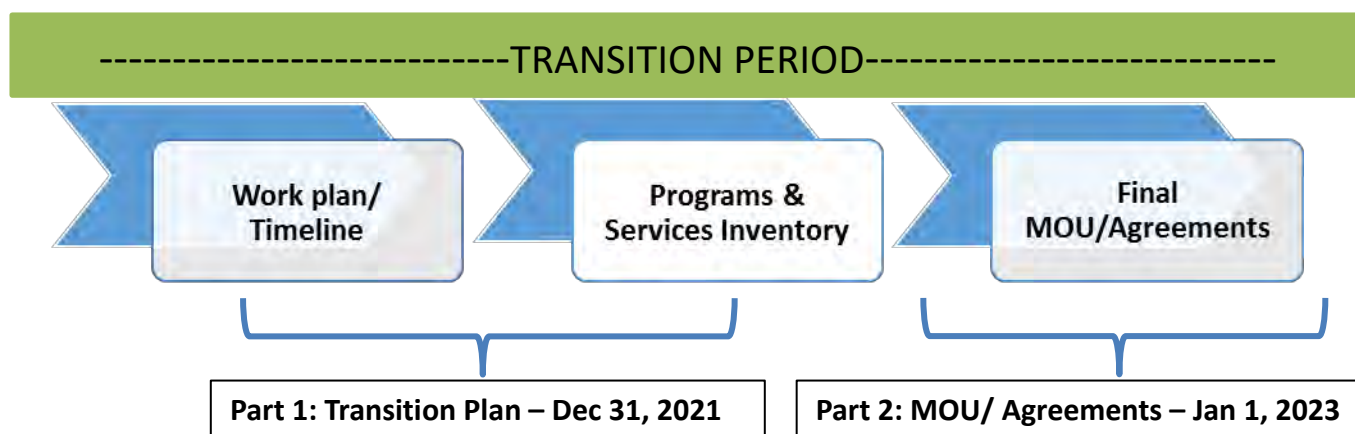
Part 1: Transition Plan - by December 31, 2021

- Inventory of programs and services to be completed identifying which of the authority's non-mandatory programs and services require agreements with participating municipalities to continue financing in whole or in part with municipal levy
- Consultation with member municipalities on the inventory
- List of steps (work plan) to be taken to establish agreements
- Transition materials circulated to Minister

Part 2: MOU/Agreements - January 1, 2023

- All municipal agreements in place and transition to new funding model implemented in Authority's 2023 budget.

The Ministry may allow for granting extensions to the prescribed date for entering into municipal agreements provided that the request is made with the support of one or more member municipalities and includes the length of the extension requested, steps the CA has taken to implement a transition plan and the rationale for the extension.



**Figure 1.** Timeline and components of the Transition Plan as part of the Transition Period.

**The focus of this report is on Part 1: Transition Plan as a general timeline. Each step may be refined to include additional detail as necessary.**

Staff are recommending that the inventory of program and services not be released to member municipalities until at least the Phase 2 Guide has been released and reviewed by UTRCA's Board of Directors, but ideally not until the Regulations themselves have been released. This will ensure that the Program and Services Inventory can accurately detail both UTRCA's current mandatory programs and services but also those mandatory programs and services that are not currently being implemented by UTRCA but may be prescribed by regulation.

With the provincial government prorogued until October 4, 2021 Federal Election, staff continue to expect delays in the release of the Phase 2 Consultation Guide.

Consequently, the below workplan/timeline may be adjusted substantially but should illustrate the tight timeline required to meet MECP's expectation of December 31, 2021 for a transition plan and inventory submission.

### **September - October**

- Consultation with neighbouring CAs on approach to member municipalities and establish similar terminology/approach where possible in coordination with CO.
- Establish/confirm municipal staff leads/contacts for any preliminary discussion on the details of the inventory
- Consultation with member municipality staff leads to confirm expectations with regards to delegations/reports to Councils. This will be completed in coordination with UTRCA meetings and submission timelines
- Draft programs and services inventory based on current understanding and expectations of proposed regulation based on Guide: Phase 1
- Calls and/or meetings with municipality CAO / assigned staff leads to discuss any initial questions, concerns or issues.

### **Following release of Phase 2/November**

- Present programs and services inventory and proposed work plan/timeline to UTRCA Board of Directors for approval
- Circulate workplan/timeline (e.g. Gantt chart) and inventory to municipalities, for information and provide an opportunity for comments within 10 days.
- Presentation of final transition plan and any comments/concerns raised by member municipalities at a Board meeting to be held in December (yet to be scheduled)
- Submit transition plan to Provide by end of December
- Transition plan will be made available to the public on our Website.

Although the focus of this report is related to Part 1 of the Transition Period, an approach proposed by the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority to be compliant with timelines established for having Part 2 MOU/municipal agreements in place is outlined in the attached letter. The motion of the LTVCA Board was to:

LTVCA staff approach Member Municipalities and neighbouring Conservation Authorities regarding a 2-year agreement to maintain the current levy approach to allow for proper negotiations of the new levy protocol.

**Further,** That this request be forwarded to the province.

This approach will be discussed with UTRCA municipalities and neighbouring conservation authorities as consultations are undertaken this fall. Feedback received will be reported to the board at a future meeting. It is also noted that additional consultation on the inventory will occur as part of the 2023 budget approval meetings/process in 2022 and as agreements are negotiated through Phase 2 of the Transition period.

Recommended by:

Tracy Annett, General Manager

Enclosure: Correspondence from LTVCA dated August 19, 2021

Tracy Annett, General Manager/Secretary-Treasurer  
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority  
1424 Clarke Road  
London, ON N5V 5C2

September 10, 2021

Dear Ms. Annett,

During the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority (LTVCA) Board of Directors meeting of August 19, 2021, the board passed the following motion.

**BD-2021-32 H. Aerts - C. Cowell**

**Moved that** LTVCA staff approach Member Municipalities and neighbouring Conservation Authorities regarding a 2-year agreement to maintain the current levy approach to allow for proper negotiations of the new levy protocol.  
**Further,** That this request be forwarded to the province.

At the meeting, staff provided a draft 8-month work plan to allow the LTVCA to come into compliance with new levy requirements of Bill 229. This bill revises the methods in which the conservation authority will levy funding from member municipalities. The presentation resulted in discussion and the above resolution was brought to address a number of concerns related to the work plan.

The concerns related to the motion were as follows:

1. The board expressed concerns with a funding agreement signed by municipal councils at the end of their terms. Concerns were expressed that councils would / should not be asked to sign a long-term commitment that would have future councils bound by this long-term decision. If left to the new councils, new councilors may not have the background to consider a long-term agreement. The timing is wrong.
2. It was felt that municipalities should have a strategic plan based on the period of the agreement that shows what the CA is planning to accomplish during the duration of the agreement. Given the timing of the first agreement (by June 2021), it was felt that a strategy with proper consultation would not be possible.
3. The timing is also short given the unknowns (regulations describing details of the requirements have not been provided to date). It was felt a properly negotiated agreement was not feasible given this issue.
4. The new timing recommended in the motion would match current strategic financial planning at the City of London.

Due to the fact that many municipalities are members of multiple conservation authorities and that each conservation authority will be approaching municipalities to negotiate levy arrangements, the Board felt that it was important that neighboring conservation authorities be aware of how the LTVCA will be moving forward.

Thank-you for your consideration of this motion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Peacock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "P".

Mark Peacock, P. Eng.  
C.A.O./Secretary-Treasurer  
Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority  
100 Thames Street  
Chatham, ON N7L 2Y8  
519-354-7310 ext.224  
mark.peacock@ltvca.ca

**To:** UTRCA Board of Directors  
**From:** Julie Welker, Source Protection Project Coordinator  
Jennifer Howley, Manager, Conservation Areas  
**Date:** September 14, 2021  
**Filename:** CA #9829  
**Agenda #:** 7.3  
**Subject:** Team for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

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## **Background**

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) is committed to providing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment and workplace that is free of racism. The UTRCA recognizes that there may be systemic barriers affecting participation in our programs, access to our parks, and employment at our workplaces, caused directly by the UTRCA's practices and policies.

Systemic barriers are often caused by hidden biases in policies, practices, and processes that provide privilege or disadvantage to people based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, or socioeconomic status. It can be the result of doing things the way they've always been done, without considering how they may impact groups differently.

Systemic barriers may be an unintended form of racism that occurs when an institution creates or maintains racial inequity for Black people, Indigenous peoples, and people of colour (BIPOC). This inequity is usually unintentional and does not mean that people within an organization are racist.

Identifying and eliminating systemic barriers will improve the delivery of the UTRCA's programs and services, which should be available and accessible to all populations within our watershed. Removing barriers will also help the UTRCA achieve its Environmental Strategic Targets (2016), particularly the following target: "Instill conservation values by supporting outreach to one million people annually by 2037 through visits to CA owned and managed lands, as well as hands-on environmental experiences."

## **UTRCA Team for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (TIDE)**

In March 2021, the UTRCA created the Team for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (TIDE). TIDE currently has 12 staff and welcomes any staff who wish to join.

Each TIDE member has their own understanding and perspectives and it is important to establish a brave space for members to discuss concerns, identify and remove barriers, and implement proactive measures. Effective communication with managers and other staff is also critical for TIDE to be successful in its objectives and outcomes.



Staff from other Conservation Authorities (Credit Valley and Toronto Region) has helped guide TIDE in creating our Terms of Reference, by sharing their time, resources, and documents.

**TIDE Mission Statement:** Working to eliminate barriers and advance inclusion, diversity, and equity in the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, the UTRCA watershed, and the conservation field.

**TIDE Purpose:**

- Identify and implement proactive measures to make inclusion, diversity, and equity awareness and advancement an integral part of the UTRCA's practices and values; and
- Identify and remove barriers, both systemic and non-systemic, based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, religion, socioeconomic status, or education, in the UTRCA's practices, policies, decisions and programs.

**September 30<sup>th</sup> – National Day of Truth and Reconciliation**

As part of the Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action, the Federal Government has announced that September 30, 2021 will be the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (National Orange Shirt Day) and a statutory holiday for federal employees.

While declaring statutory holidays is beyond the scope of TIDE, the team is committed to ensuring staff are able to share the stories of the residential schools survivors, families, and communities as the primary purpose for the dedicated day.

TIDE will be sending out an email with resources to encourage staff to join in quiet reflection and self-education, as we recognize and commemorate the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools. We are committed to engaging in these actions not just on this one day, but as an ongoing practice. TIDE will also encourage staff to wear an orange shirt on this day. As you may know, September 30<sup>th</sup> was known previously as Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters, to recognize the Indigenous children who were taken to residential schools.

For staff who would like to take further action to support local Indigenous communities, TIDE will highlight Atlohosa Family Healing Services. This non-profit organization formed in 1986 and is dedicated to strengthening the community through Indigenous-led programs. They offer support for individuals and families across Southwestern Ontario, providing strengths-based healing and wellness supports, using trauma-informed and harm reduction approaches. UTRCA staff can contribute to Atlohosa by purchasing authentic items created by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artisans from the gift shop at <https://www.atloh sagifts.com> or by donating directly at <https://atloh sa.com/donate/>.

Prepared by:

Julie Welker, Source Protection Project Coordinator  
Jennifer Howley, Manager, Conservation Areas

# fyi

September 2021



**Dog-day Cicada**

[www.thamesriver.on.ca](http://www.thamesriver.on.ca)

Twitter [@UTRCMarketing](https://twitter.com/UTRCMarketing)

Facebook [@UpperThamesRiverConservationAuthority](https://www.facebook.com/UpperThamesRiverConservationAuthority)



## Tree Power Comes to Perth South

London Hydro, Festival Hydro (Stratford), and now Perth South have all adopted the Tree Power program! The Tree Power concept was initiated in 2011 by Bill Kunz, an employee of London Hydro. The goal was to encourage homeowners to plant shade trees to reduce energy consumption and fight climate change. Today, this goal is more important than ever.




On Tuesday, September 14, the [Perth South Tree Power website](https://www.thamesriver.on.ca/perth-south-tree-power) opened for ordering.

Residents of Perth South are going online to order one of five native hardwood tree species: American sycamore, basswood, red maple, swamp white oak, and river birch. These 150 cm potted trees range in price from \$20-25. A total of 300 trees were available. As of mid-September, the maples and oaks have sold out!

**CLICK ON A SPECIES TO ORDER**

5 species of native hardwood trees in pots available:

\*Please refresh page if order form does not show

		
American Sycamore	Native Red Maple	Swamp White Oak
		
Basswood	River Birch (multi-stem)	

Residents who purchase trees can pick them up on Saturday, October 2, from 8 am to 3 pm, at the Perth South Township Office in St. Pauls. Township Councillors and UTRCA staff will be on hand to help homeowners load their trees, using COVID-19 protocols.

**Contact: [John Enright](mailto:John.Enright@utrc.on.ca), Forester**



### St Marys Memorial Forest

On Saturday, September 11, a local St. Marys family planted 200 trees in memory of Dan Hoodless, who passed away just over a year ago. The large family, now all fully vaccinated, was able to get together for the first time to honour Dan’s memory and chose to do so by improving our local environment, in partnership with Tree Canada and the UTRCA.



Thank you to the Hoodless and Reinhart families, from generations to come.  
**Contact:** [Karen Pugh](#), Resource Specialist

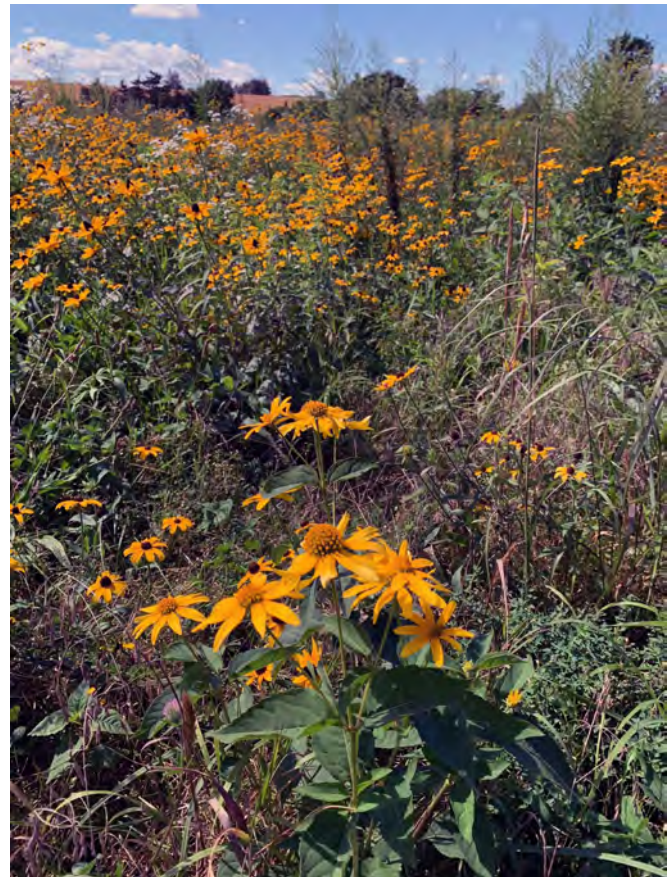
### Prairie Flowers Emerging at Cade Tract

Staff’s efforts to convert two hay fields at the [Cade Tract](#) to tallgrass prairie are starting to show results! This UTRCA property is located west of the Town of St. Marys, at 4695 Perth Road Line 5.

**[The fields were seeded with a native tallgrass prairie mix in September 2020.](#)** Many prairie grasses and flowers concentrate their energy into root growth for the first year or two, so annual weeds are often seen first.

In early September 2021, the field in the southwest corner of Cade Tract was a sea of

yellow; the faster growing Black-eyed Susan, Sweet Ox-eye, and Tall Sunflower were already blooming and attracting pollinators. Other prairie species, especially the tall grasses, should start showing themselves in the next year or two. These heat-loving, warm season perennial grasses need extra time to put down roots that can reach 4 metres in depth!



*Sweet Ox-eye (foreground) and Black-eyed Susan are flourishing at the Cade Tract.*

The second field in the northeast corner of the Cade Tract is not as successful so far, so continued management (e.g., mowing the weeds) is needed.

Funding for this restoration project was provided by Nature London, a private funder, and UTRCA. Once established, the prairies should provide habitat for grassland birds such as Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark in the spring, and bees and butterflies in late summer.

The Cade Tract is open to the public for walking and is a great opportunity to explore nature



Bees visit a Tall Sunflower in the Cade Tract.

close to home. Please enter the property at the small parking lot by the address sign. There are no formal trails and the vegetation can be dense, so dress appropriately. Please take garbage and pet waste back home with you. ATVs and other motorized vehicles are prohibited.

Providing natural spaces and passive recreational opportunities at properties such as the Cade Tract supports the UTRCA's Environmental Target of instilling conservation values by supporting outreach to 1 million people annually through visits to UTRCA owned and managed lands, as well as hands-on environmental experiences.

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

## Native Sunflowers

When we think of sunflowers, we often picture the domesticated Common Sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) with its huge nodding flowers, growing in gardens or farm fields, prized for its edible seeds and oil.

The wild *Helianthus annuus* is native to the USA west of the Mississippi, but there are several other sunflowers native to the tallgrass prairies and savannas of southern Ontario. These sunflowers are also very tall, but they produce numerous, smaller flowers per plant.



Tall Sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*)

Woodland Sunflower (*Helianthus divaricatus*) is a species that grows in dry open woods to a height of 6 feet tall (3m) with flowers up to 3 inches wide. Tall or Giant Sunflower (*H. giganteus*) grows to 10 feet tall in damp to moist thickets with flowers up to 2½ inches wide.

Our local sunflowers are not only beautiful, but are an important source of pollen for bees and butterflies in late summer. Look closely to see the unique flower structure: large, yellow rays surround a central disc containing some 60 small disc florets, visible in the photo below.



Tall Sunflower (*Helianthus giganteus*)

The UTRCA often includes native sunflowers in its prairie and pollinator projects. Sunflowers can spread by rhizomes, forming dense vegetative colonies that provide good ground cover for many kinds of wildlife. The seeds are eaten by Bobwhite, American Goldfinch, and other birds and mammals.

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

## On the Agenda

The next UTRCA Board of Directors meeting will be held virtually on September 28, 2021. The following items are on the draft agenda:

- 2022 Budget Concepts
- Administration and Enforcement: Section 28 Status Report – Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation
- *Conservation Authorities Act* - Inventory and Transition Plans
- Team for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

Please visit the “Board Agendas & Minutes” page at [www.thamesriver.on.ca](http://www.thamesriver.on.ca) for agendas, reports, audio/video links and recordings, and minutes.

**Contact:** [Michelle Viglianti](#), Administrative Assistant