

## Minutes

### Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

#### Board of Directors Meeting

9:30am Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 1424 Clarke Rd,  
London (Hybrid Meeting)

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Brian Petrie, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:31am.

#### Members Present:

Jean Coles

Jim Craigmile

Peter Cuddy – Online

Anna Hopkins

Sandy Levin

Skylar Franke

Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar - Online

Brian Petrie – Chair

Mark Schadenberg

Dean Trentowsky

Scotty Zehr - Online

George Way

Regrets: Tom Heeman

UTRCA Solicitor: Grant Inglis

#### Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Laura Biancolin

Huda Ghadhban

Brad Glasman

Joe Gordon

Eleanor Heagy

Teresa Hollingsworth

Aisling Laverty

Christie Kent

Mike Knox

Tatianna Lozier

Graeme Shaw

Chris Tasker

Tara Tchir

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

Brandon Williamson

Authority Solicitor: Grant Inglis

## 1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair read the territorial acknowledgement.

## 2. Modifications to the Agenda

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT agenda item 7 be moved prior to item 6.1.

Carried.

## 3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

## 4. Delegations/Presentations

There were no delegations or presentations.

## 5. Administrative Business

### **5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: November 26, 2024**

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the minutes, including any closed session minutes, dated November 26, 2024.

Carried.

### **5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

### **5.3. Correspondence**

On December 12<sup>th</sup> Conservation Authorities received correspondence from Minister Smith to freeze the fees for all of 2025 for program or service related to reviewing and commenting on planning and development related proposals or land use planning policies, or for permits issued by Conservation Authorities.

The Chair thanked Mayor Josh Morgan and Anna Hopkins and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) for their support in the UTRCA's advocacy work to end the freeze on fees. He noted disappointment in the decision of the Minister but had hope going forward.

## \*7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera.

Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session at 9:38 am in accordance with Section C.12 of the UTRCA Administrative By-Law to discuss a matter involving litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunal affecting the Authority.

### **7.1 Litigation or Potential Litigation Including Matters Before Administrative Tribunals Affecting the Authority**

The Board rose from closed session at 9:58am and the meeting reconvened at 10:03am.

## 6. Reports – For Consideration

### **6.1. Strategic Plan Update**

Members noted that the comments from Mike Wallace of the London Development Institute (LDI) would be addressed in the implementation of the Watershed Management Strategy.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: George Way

That the results of the Strategic Plan Input Sessions be received and staff be directed to finalize the vision, mission and values to be incorporated into the Watershed Management Strategy.

Carried.

### **6.2. Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy (Watershed Strategy)**

Tracy Annett and Tara Tchir provided an overview presentation appended to the minutes.

Staff confirmed that implementation plans are being developed and there are no additional increases in levy in 2025. Staff confirmed that, through a gap analysis, no conflicts with Municipalities were identified, only alignment with some of the gaps.

The Board thanked staff for their work on this and all tasks assigned by the Province.

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Jean Coles

THAT the UTRCA Board of Directors approve the attached Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy (Watershed Strategy).

Carried.

### **6.3. Natural Hazards Infrastructure Asset Management Plan**

A member suggested adding graphics similar to those used by the City of London in their asset management plans.

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

That the Board approves the attached Natural Hazards Infrastructure Asset Management Plan (AMP) recognizing that staff will continue to review and improve this AMP as it is being implemented and as asset management practices evolve and processes mature within the organization.

Carried.

### **6.4. Erosion Control Operational Plan**

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

That the Board of Directors receive the attached Erosion Control Operational Plan, and that staff proceed to post on our website.

Carried.

### **6.5. Environmental Planning Policy Manual Update and Interim Response Mechanisms**

S. Levin raised concerns around opening up the discretionary decision making so widely and proposed an amendment that focused the interim discretionary decision-making to wetland management policies and dry access requirements.

Proposed amendment: THAT the Board of Directors authorize the Administrative Review Officers to exercise discretionary decision-making regarding **certain** policies within the Environmental Planning Policy Manual (Revised 2017), **on an interim basis and that this discretionary decision-making be limited wetland management policies and certain floodplain management policies relating to dry access requirements;**

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report with attached Discussion Paper 1 – Overview and Discussion Paper 2 – Wetland Management Policies for information;

THAT the Board of Directors authorize the Administrative Review Officers to exercise discretionary decision-making regarding certain policies within the Environmental Planning Policy Manual (Revised 2017), on an interim basis and that this discretionary decision-making be limited wetland management policies and certain floodplain management policies relating to dry access requirements;

AND THAT staff report back to the Board of Directors no later than March 31, 2025 summarizing the instances and outcomes associated with the Administrative Review Officers' use of interim authority, and that the report indicate how these outcomes will be reflected within the updated Environmental Planning Policy Manual.

Carried.

## 7. \*Reports – In-Camera – moved to prior to 6.1

## 8. Reports – For Information

### 8.1. Project Status Update

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

### 8.2. Thames River Current – December Edition

The December edition of the Thames River Current was presented for the member's information.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

## 9. Reports – Committees

### **9.1. Finance and Audit Committee**

There was no report from the Finance and Audit Committee.

### **9.2. Hearing Committee**

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried

## 10. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion for the next meeting.

## 11. Chair's Comments

The Chair thanked the Board and staff for their time this month and all their hard work over the last year. It was a monumental day with all the deliverables completed.

## 12. Member's Comments

Hugh McDermid wished the staff and Board members a merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Anna Hopkins thanked Chair Brian Petrie for his leadership and hard work over the last year.

## 13. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager asked that any members whose Councils would like a draft Budget presentation to please reach out to their Municipal clerk and herself to set up a date.

The General Manager thanked Managers and key staff who were involved with all the deliverables.

The General Manager noted how much the support of the Board is felt and appreciated by staff. She wished everyone happy holidays full of rest and relaxation.

#### 14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01am on a motion by Skylar Franke.

Tracy Annett, General Manager  
/mv





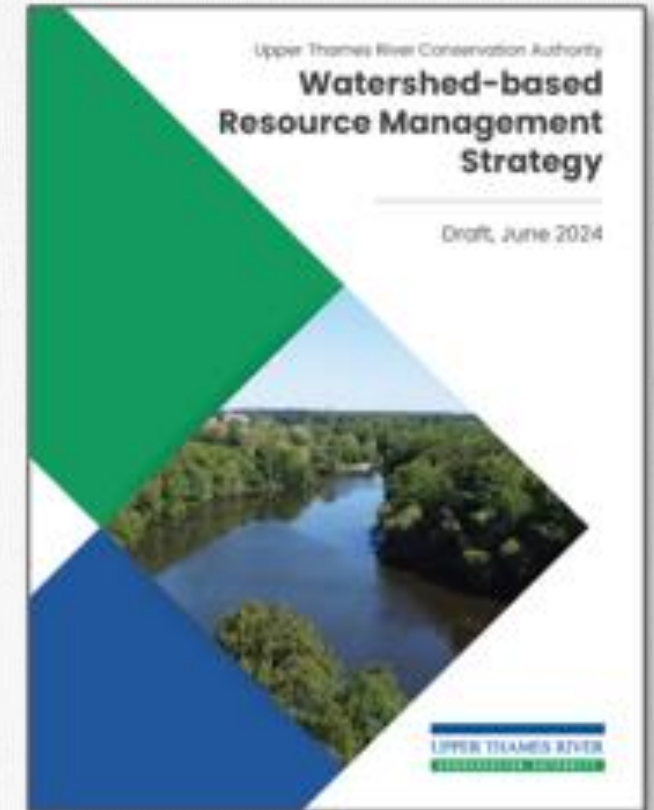
# Watershed Strategy

## Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy

Board of Directors Meeting  
December 17, 2024



# UTRCA's Strategic Planning Hierarchy



# Watershed Strategy Background

## Regulatory Requirements

- Mandated by the Province
  - Section 21.1(1) of the Conservation Authorities Act
  - Section 12 of Regulation 686/21686/21 (Mandatory Programs and Services)
- “Consult with municipalities, Indigenous peoples, community partners and the public in a manner the authority considers advisable”
- Must be posted on website by December 31, 2024
- Range of approaches to the Strategy and to consultation across all conservation authorities, based on varying starting points and scope and content of the strategies





# Watershed Strategy Engagement

- 756 visits to the page (637 unique visitors)
- 85 contributions (11% engagement rate): 72 further explained their answers.
- 71% of contributors are general public (CA areas or education / partnerships)
- 53 downloads of the draft strategy pdf

## Watershed Strategy

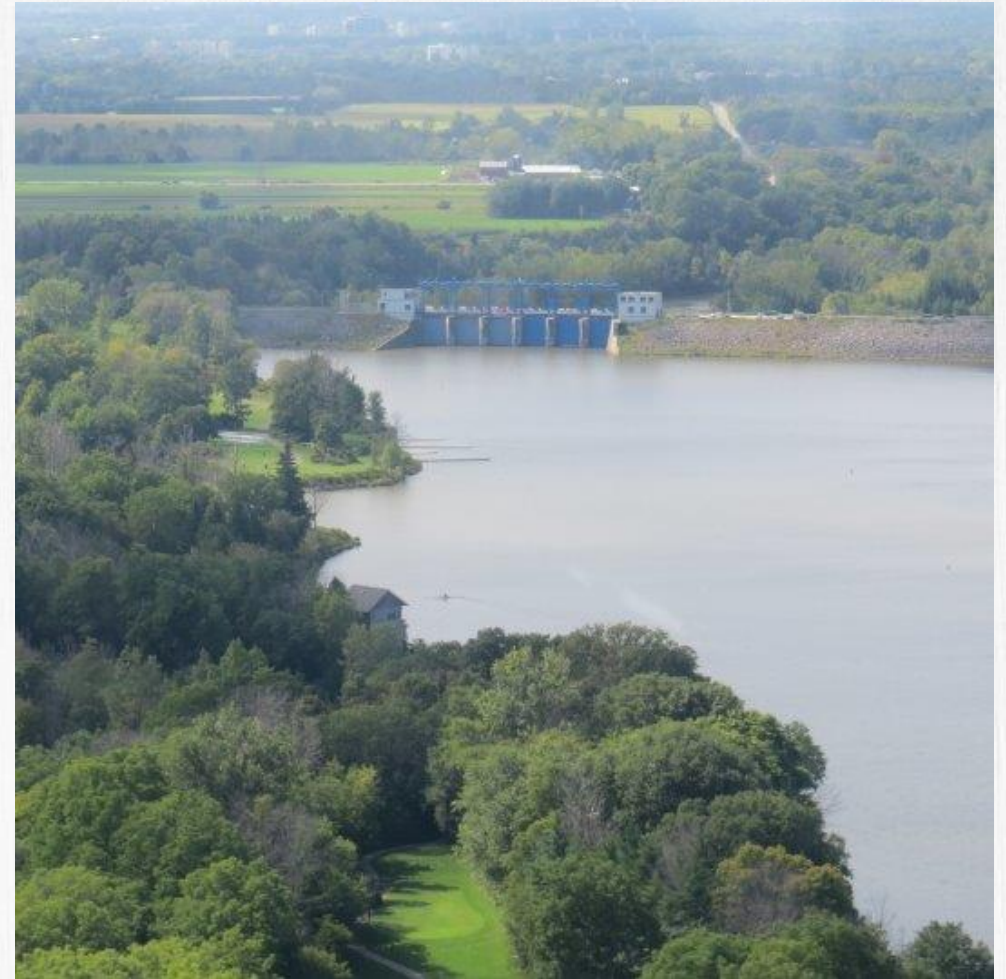
Help improve the effectiveness of UTRCA programs and services - share your feedback today!

+ Follow



# Purpose of Watershed Strategy

- Improve efficiencies and effectiveness of:
  - **Mandatory Programs and Services (Category 1)**
  - **Municipal (Category 2) and**
  - **Other/ Authority Programs and Services (Category 3)**, where relevant agreements allow (Sections 21.1.1, 21.1.2 Conservation Authorities Act)
- Guide the development and delivery of programs and services that ensure natural hazards and natural heritage issues, challenges, and risks within the watershed are addressed
- Summarize existing information on natural resources that informs mandatory program delivery





# Categories of Programs and Services

## Category 1 – Mandatory

Programs and services that the Province deems mandatory. Municipal levy can be used without an agreement (see Figure).

## Category 2 – Non-Mandatory (municipally funded)

Municipality requests a CA to deliver a program or service on their behalf pursuant to a MoU or Agreement.

- Examples: London ESA management, Dingman Creek water quality sampling

## Category 3 – Other

Programs and services that a CA deems advisable to implement in their watershed. Agreement required if municipal funds (cost apportioning) are used.

- Examples: Campgrounds, environmental education

### Mandatory Programs (Section 2.1 CAA)

Natural  
Hazards

Drinking  
Water  
Source  
Protection  
(CWA)

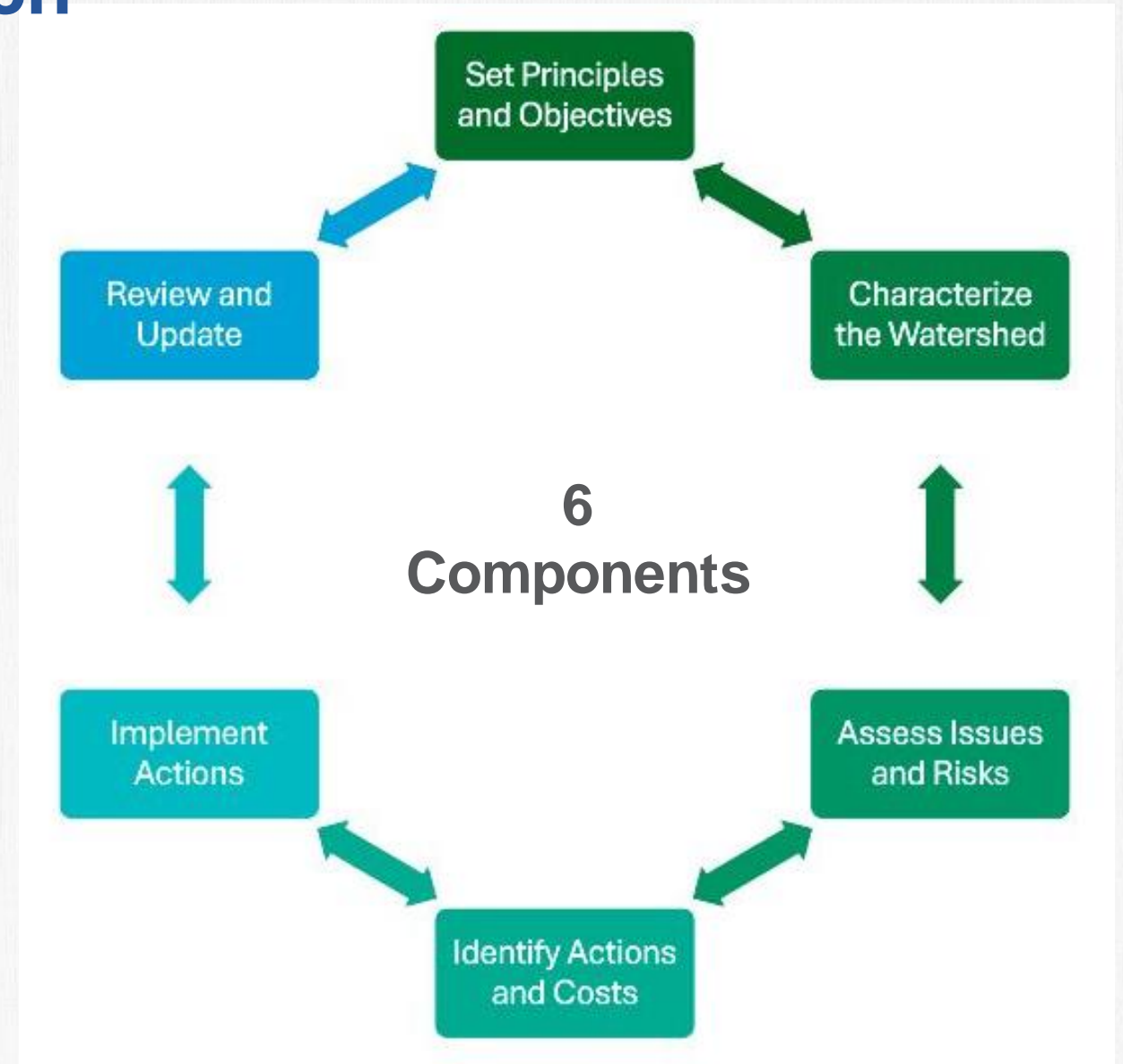
Conserv-  
ation,  
manage-  
ment  
of Lands  
owned by  
the  
Authority

Prescribed  
by  
Regulation  
PWQMN  
PGMN

# Watershed Strategy Approach

Iterative Approach:

- **Iterative:** each step builds on another
- **Iterative:** began with Principles and Objectives but they may be updated once this process has been completed
- **Review:** opportunity to review and update after the completion of the strategic plan

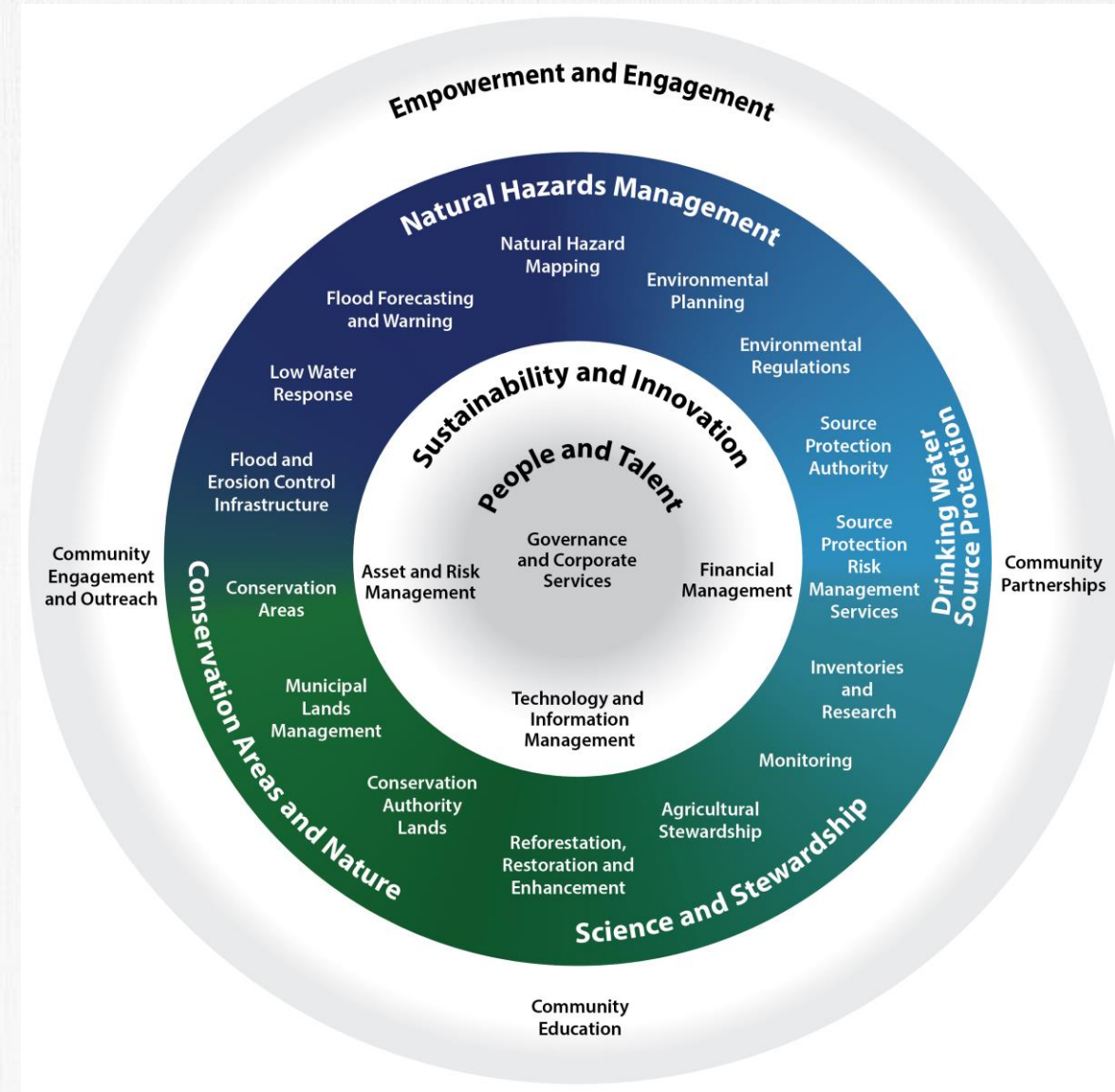




# Description of UTRCA Program Areas

Identified program areas for each of the six objectives:

1. People and Talent
  - Governance
  - Corporate Services
2. Organizational Sustainability and Innovation
  - Asset and Risk Management
  - Technology and information Management
  - Financial Management
3. Natural Hazards Management
  - Flood and Erosion Control Infrastructure
  - Natural Hazard Mapping
  - Flood Forecasting and Warning and Low Water Response
  - Environmental Planning
  - Environmental Regulations
4. Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP)
  - DWSP Source Protection Authority
  - DWSP Risk Management Services



# Program Areas of UTRCA

## 5. Science and Stewardship

- Provincial Water Quality Monitoring
- Provincial Groundwater Monitoring
- Monitoring Municipal Subwatersheds
- Afforestation, Restoration and Enhancement
- Agricultural Stewardship
- Monitoring Other Programs (water quality / ecological)
- Inventories and Research

## 6. Conservation Areas and Nature

- Conservation Authority Lands
- Municipal Lands Management
- Conservation Areas

## 7. Empowerment and Engagement

- Community Engagement and Outreach
- Community Education
- Community Partnerships





# Activities of UTRCA

- Developed a spreadsheet of activities for each program area ( some activities under **Objective 5: Science and Stewardship – Program Area: Monitoring Other Programs – water quality**)

Activity	Description	Cat	Legislation/ Guidelines	Related Activity ID
UTRCA Long-term Groundwater Quality and Quantity Monitoring (addition to provincial)	UTRCA collects long-term groundwater quality and quantity samples at groundwater monitoring sites throughout the watershed as part of the Environmental Targets: Strategic Plan 2016 (referred to as Targets Monitoring) in addition to provincial monitoring programs. As of 2023 sampling has changed with 5 wells to be sampled every 2 years instead of annually. Currently funded through levy.	3*	CA Act s.21(1)(a) 2018 Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement 2019-2023 Lake-wide Action & Management Plan Lake Erie SWA Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program (IWMP) for Water Quality, Water Quantity and Natural Heritage * Supports the provincial PGMN program by providing complementary groundwater quality information	Environmental Data Management  Watershed Report Cards
UTRCA Long-term Surface Water Quality Monitoring	Water quality samples collected as part of the Environmental Targets: Strategic Plan 2016 (referred to as Targets Monitoring) in addition to provincial monitoring programs. Covers all 28 subwatersheds at key stationary locations. ensures consistency in samples and data are collected from each of the subwatersheds.	3*	CA Act s.21(1)(a) 2018 Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement 2019-2023 Lake-wide Action & Management Plan Lake Erie SWA Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program (IWMP) for Water Quality, Water Quantity and Natural Heritage * Supports the Provincial PWQMN program by providing complementary surface water quality information to cover watersheds not sampled through PWQMN.	Environmental Data Management  Watershed Report Cards

# Activities of UTRCA

Activity	Description	Cat	Legislation / Guidelines	Related Activity ID
Harmful Algal Blooms Monitoring & Management Plan	Supplemental monitoring to reservoir quality monitoring with a focus on algal blooms monitoring and identify control strategies.	3*	CA Act s.21(1)(a) 2018 Canada-Ontario Lake Erie Action Plan 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement 2019-2023 Lake-wide Action & Management Plan Lake Erie SWA Integrated Watershed Monitoring Program (IWMP) for Water Quality, Water Quantity and Natural Heritage * Supports the provincial program by providing supplementary surface water quality information	Environmental Data Management
Phosphorus Legacy	Partner with academics to study the accumulation of phosphorus in the soil that is not immediately available for plant uptake	3	CA Act s.21(1)(a)	Environmental Data Management
Municipal Funded Subwatershed Water Quality Studies (e.g. Dingman Creek)	Water quality monitoring that can assist municipalities in meeting EA requirements (e.g. Dingman). May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• surface water quality and quantity</li> <li>• benthics</li> <li>• fish</li> <li>• vegetation</li> <li>• land cover change</li> <li>• SAR, etc.</li> </ul>	2		Environmental Data Management

# Watershed Challenges, Issues and Risks

- Nine watershed challenges, issues and risks were identified and prioritized through consultation.
  - i. **Land Cover, Land Use Change, and Increased Development Pressure (Land cover change)**
  - ii. **Water Quality – Phosphorus (H<sub>2</sub>O Phosphorus) and Contaminants (H<sub>2</sub>O Contaminants)**
  - iii. **Watercourse and Wetland Alteration (WW Alteration)**
  - iv. **Severe Weather**
  - v. **Invasive Species, Pests, and Pathogens (Invasives)**
  - vi. **Disconnection to Nature (Disconnect)**
  - vii. **Environmental Injustice**
  - viii. **Overuse of natural areas**





# Activities and Watershed Challenges

- Each activity was then assessed to determine if it could contribute to the mitigation of the **watershed** challenges, issues and risks (some activities under **Objective 5: Science and Stewardship – Program Area: Monitoring Other Programs**)

Activity	Land cover change	Water Quality	Watercourse and Wetland Alteration	Severe Weather	Invasives	Disconnect with Nature	Env. Injustice	Overuse of Nature
UTRCA Long-term Groundwater Quality and Quantity Monitoring (addition to provincial)	X	X	X	X				
UTRCA Long-term Surface Water Quality Monitoring	X	X	X	X	X			
Harmful Algal Blooms Monitoring & Management Plan	X	X	X	X		X		
<b>Phosphorus Legacy</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>				
Municipal Funded Subwatershed Water Quality Studies (e.g. Dingman Creek)	X	X	X	X				



# Activities and Watershed Challenges

- A description of the rationale for how the activities would mitigate each **watershed** challenge, issue and risk was then undertaken(example of severe weather and invasives for some activities under **Objective 5: Science and Stewardship – Program Area: Monitoring Other Programs**)

Severe Weather	
Activity	Description
UTRCA Long-term Groundwater Quality and Quantity Monitoring (addition to provincial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Can consider changing methodology to ensure changes to climate can be detected</li><li>Data collected may help understand impacts of severe weather</li></ul>
UTRCA Long-term Surface Water Quality Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Can consider changing methodology to ensure changes to climate can be detected</li><li>Data collected may help understand impacts of severe weather</li><li>Data collected may help determine if prevention or mitigation activities are working.</li></ul>
Harmful Algal Blooms Monitoring & Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Data collected may be used to determine relationship of climate to where and why HABs occur and how HABs can be managed</li></ul>
Phosphorus Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Data may be used to determine the relationship of climate on the accumulation of phosphorus in the soil</b></li></ul>
Municipal Funded Subwatershed Water Quality Studies (e.g. Dingman Creek)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Can consider changing methodology to ensure changes to climate can be detected</li><li>Data collected may help understand impacts of severe weather</li><li>Data collected may help determine if prevention or mitigation activities are working.</li></ul>
Invasives	
Activity	Description
UTRCA Long-term Surface Water Quality Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Data may detect presence of invasive species that influence water quality parameters (e.g. zebra mussels)</li></ul>

# Corporate Challenges, Issues and Risks

Seven corporate challenges, issues and risks were identified and prioritized through consultation.

- i. **Legislative / Regulatory Changes (Regulation change)**
- ii. **Sustainable Funding (Funding)**
- iii. **Staff Retention, Expertise and Capacity (Staffing)**
- iv. **Sustainable Long-term Monitoring (Monitoring)**
- v. **Reputational Risk (Reputation)**
- vi. **Information Technology, Cyber Security and AI (IT)**
- vii. **Management of Open Data (Open Data)**

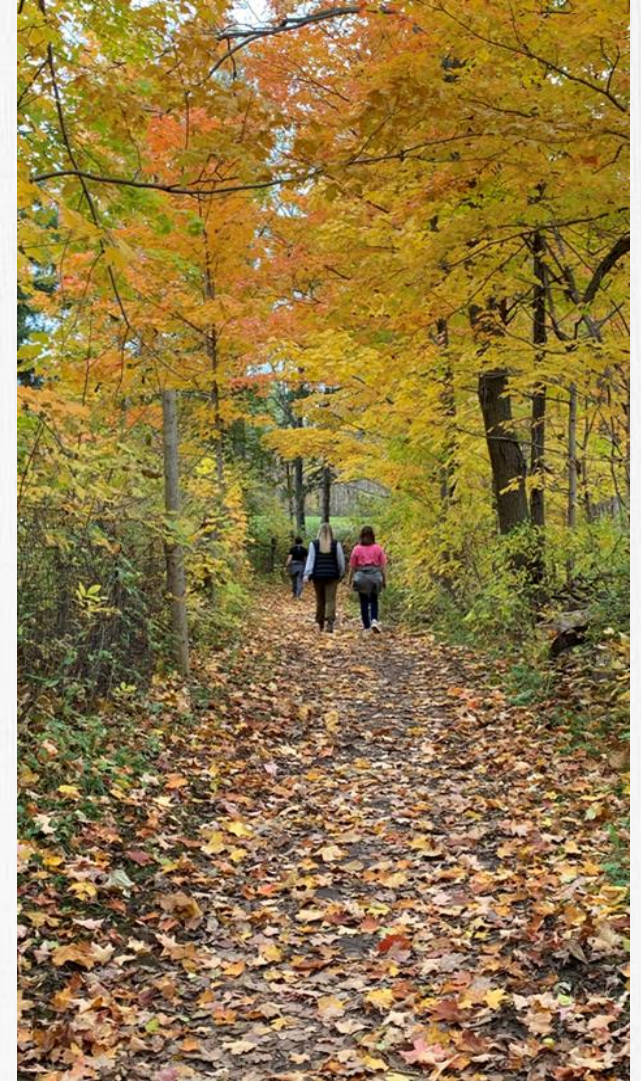
Similar review was undertaken for these Challenges, Issues and Risks and will be further discussed with partners through the Strategic Plan update.





# Integration into Strategic Plan and other strategies

- The description of all activities will be incorporated into several corporate areas such as:
  - Budgeting software
  - Position descriptions
  - Funding applications, etc.
- Consultation with municipalities, Indigenous Peoples, Community groups and other interest holders will continue to occur as part of the Strategic Plan.
- Identification and prioritization of the challenges, issues and risks, as well as the analysis that identified what activities could mitigate them, will be considered in setting priorities and developing the operation plans in the Strategic Plan.







# Thank You!

**Tracy Annett, General Manager**  
**Tara Tchir, Watershed Science Coordinator**