



FRIENDS OF MEDWAY CREEK

Terms of Reference

November 2009

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Background

The Medway Creek subwatershed is one of 28 subwatersheds within the Upper Thames River watershed. The Medway Creek subwatershed encompasses approximately 205 square kilometres, with 133 sq km (65%) within the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, 40 sq km (20%) within the Township of Lucan-Biddulph, 20 sq km within the City of London and 12 sq km within the Municipality of Thames Centre.

The subwatershed includes tributaries to the Medway Creek such as Cook Drain, Elginfield Drain, Edgewood Drain, White-Fitzgerald Drain, Risdon Drain, Mills-Guest Drain, Colbert Award Drain and Snake Creek. Approximately 83% of the subwatershed is agriculture, 11% is wooded and 6% is urban.

In 2007, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) published watershed report cards and Medway Creek was given grades of 'C' surface water quality and 'D' for forest conditions. The UTRCA selected Medway Creek as a priority area for the development of a Community-based Watershed Strategy with the hope in improving these environmental conditions. The UTRCA hosted a public meeting in May 2008 to seek public involvement in the project. From this meeting, 13 people volunteered to be a part of the local advisory committee, the Friends of Medway Creek.

Purpose

The purpose of the Friends of Medway Creek (FoMC) is to collaborate with various landowners, municipalities, and other agencies to identify potential restoration activities or sites and to engage the broader Medway Creek community in best management practices.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the Friends of Medway Creek is:

Community members promoting the protection and improvement of the Medway Creek watershed.

Medway Creek Community-based Enhancement Strategy

The UTRCA initiated development of a community-based watershed strategy in early 2008. Watershed strategies build partnerships among community stakeholders to identify local environmental concerns, develop enhancement strategies to address these concerns, and initiate work to implement recommendations.

The first step was to create a Technical Advisory Team (TAC) to research the watershed and the community. The TAC included:

- Watershed municipalities (Middlesex Centre, Lucan Biddulph, City of London and Thames Centre),
- University of Western Ontario,
- Ontario Ministries of Natural Resources and the Environment, and
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

The TAC prepared a technical background summary that provides an overview of abiotic (non-living), biotic (living) and cultural aspects of the Medway Creek watershed. A public open house/meeting was held to share information, gather more input, and invite interested stakeholders to join a local advisory committee, which became the Friends of Medway Creek.

An enhancement strategy was prepared by the TAC and the Friends of Medway Creek in 2009. It is hoped that the strategy will provide an important reference tool for the Friends of Medway Creek and local municipalities, as well as a communications tool to use with the public.

Technical Background Summary

A technical background summary (see Section 3.0) was prepared in 2008 by the TAC. The technical summary provides an overview of abiotic (non-living), biotic (living) and cultural aspects of the Medway Creek watershed.

The research for the summary built on previous work for the 1995 City of London Subwatershed Studies (Group 1 – Medway, Stanton and Mud Creeks) undertaken by the UTRCA and the City of London, and the UTRCA's 2001 and 2007 Upper Thames River Watershed Report Cards.

Community Involvement

In addition to the FoMC, the Medway Creek community at large was involved with the strategy development through various means, including a community meeting, questionnaire, newsletters and presentations.

The Friends of Medway Creek has had and will continue to have a key role in implementing the strategy, including:

- Liaising with landowners and helping to promote the strategy and enhancement activities,
- Identifying possible project locations and partners,
- Assisting with project funding proposals,
- Helping with enhancement projects,
- Helping to evaluate and update the enhancement strategy as needed.

Issues

The summary of current issues, as defined at the May 28, 2008 public open house, is:

- Improve forest and riparian cover;
- Improve water quality;
- Limit impact on natural environment,
 - balance recreation with nature,
 - limit development in floodplains;
- Involve and engage the agricultural community.

Committee Structure

The Friends of Medway Creek will oversee the following.

Duties

- Set targets,
- Set timelines,
- Set measurable,
- Prioritize projects,
- Monitor uptake,
- Monitor outcomes,
- Report to council/groups on progress,
- Recommend additional study/work needed.

Membership

Members are volunteers who reside within the Medway Creek subwatershed boundaries. Any interested persons wishing to join the committee are welcome. This may include stakeholders and/or community members.

Role of Members

Members of the FoMC represent their community and the views therein. Members are expected to communicate back with their groups for feedback. Members shall work cooperatively with each other, respecting the varying views that may emerge. Decisions will be made on a consensus basis.

Meetings

Meetings will be held on the last Thursday of every month with the exception of July, August and December. All meetings will begin at 7:00 pm and adjourn by 9:00 pm at the latest. Other meetings (face-to-face or conference calls) will be scheduled on an ad hoc basis as required.

Detailed minutes of each meeting will be recorded and distributed to all committee members who have email within two weeks after a meeting.

Participation

Members are expected to attend meetings when they can and carry out any task that they volunteer for.

Chair

The Chair of FoMC will hold a one year term. In that time, they will assist the UTRCA Community Partnership Specialist when needed. Possible duties may include:

- Assisting with funding applications,
- Assisting with presentations to various groups/organizations,
- Contacting fellow FoMC members about meetings,
- Communicating with the media.

Vice Chair

The Vice Chair of FoMC shall assist the Chair in all ways possible and act as Chair in the absence of the Chair. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are not present at a meeting, the Committee may elect an Acting Chair to chair the meeting.

Recorder

The UTRCA Community Partnership Specialist will record meetings unless otherwise noted.

Communication

All media contact will be coordinated through the Chair and a representative of the UTRCA.