

UTRCA presentation to HACA



JANUARY 10, 2022

Presentation Outline



- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
- Revised Conservation Authority Act and Regulations
- Harrington Dam Class Environmental Assessment
- Harrington Master Plan
- Heritage Studies
- Dam Safety Study
- Loop Trail



Conservation Authorities

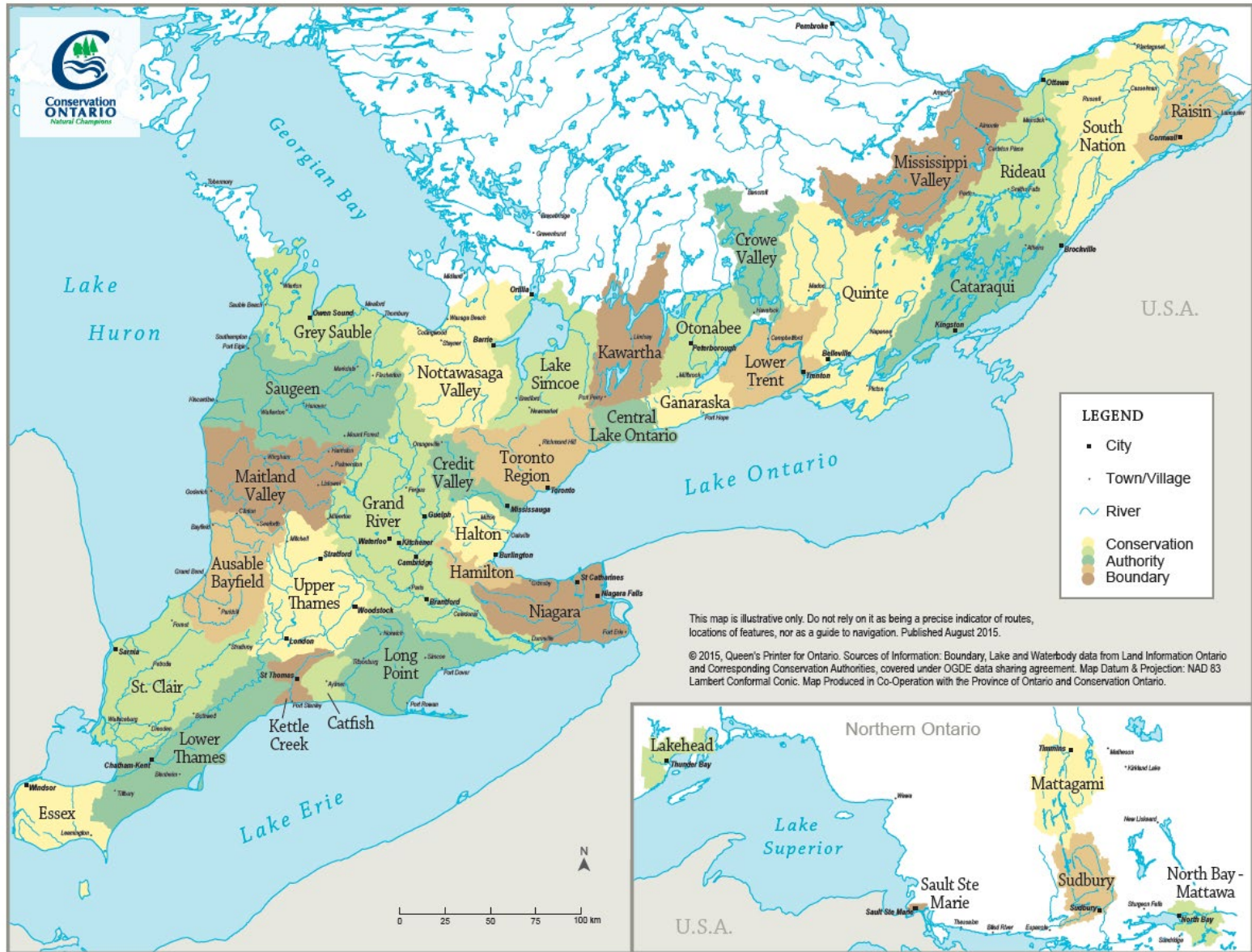


- The Conservation Authorities Act first passed in 1946
- Alignment of post-war employment concerns with growing concerns about poor land use practices and decisions
- Conceived as Provincial/Municipal “Partnership”

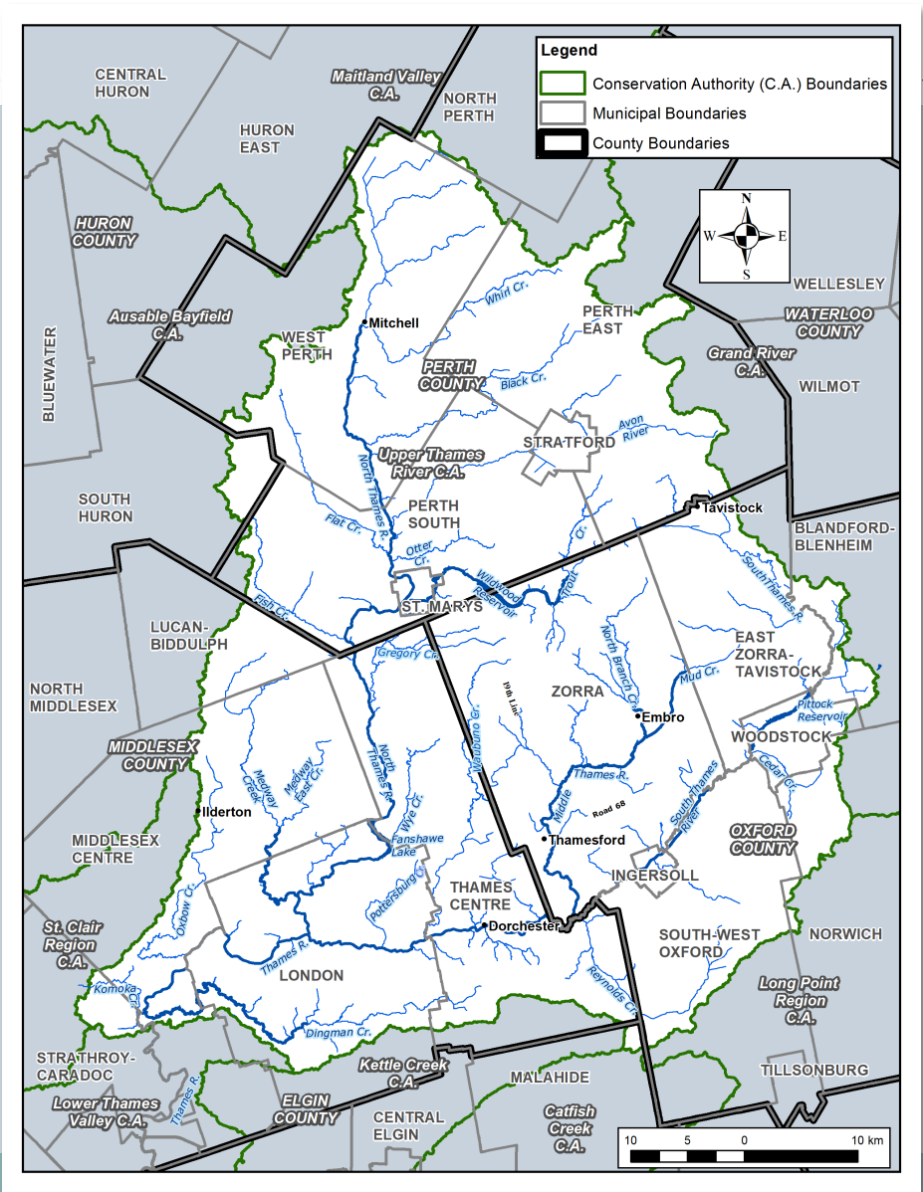


London, April 1937

ONTARIO Conservation Authorities



Upper Thames River Watershed



UTRCA Vision: Inspiring a Healthy Environment



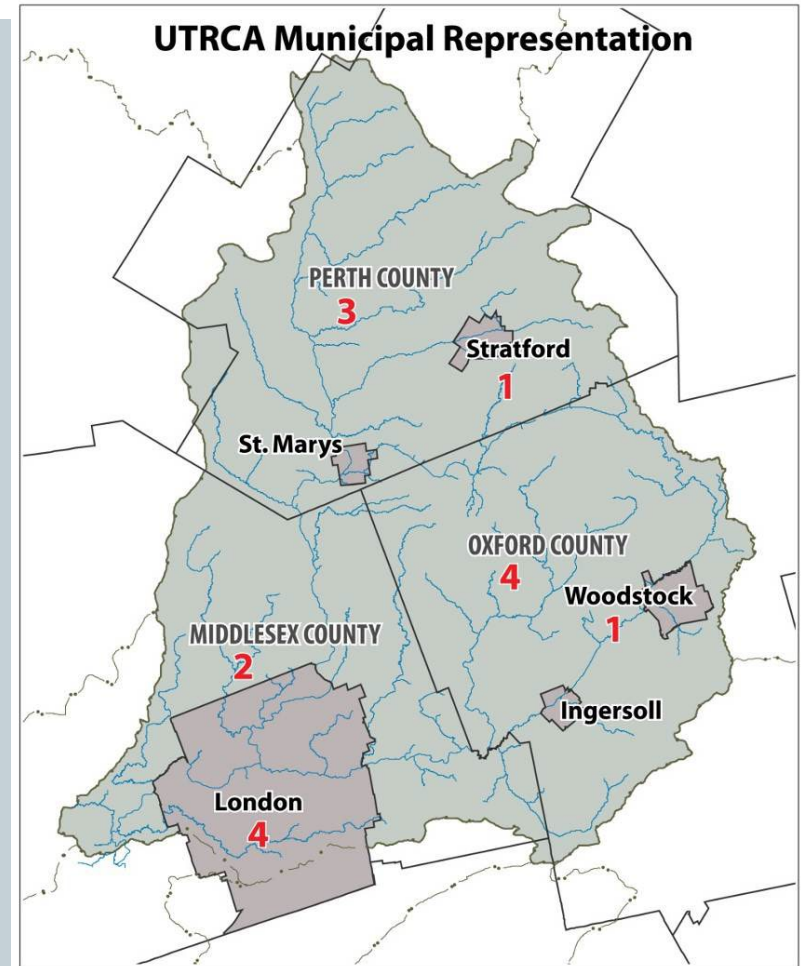
- Mission
 - To protect life and property from flood and erosion
 - To protect and enhance water quality
 - To preserve and manage natural areas
 - To provide outdoor recreation and education opportunities



UTRCA Board of Directors

Conservation Authorities are governed by a Board of Directors appointed by Member Municipalities

- UTRCA has 15 Board Members
- Elected and citizen appointments
 - B of D sets overall policy direction
 - Responsive to local issues and concerns
 - Meet on a monthly basis
 - Day to day operations by staff within the overall policy set by the Board

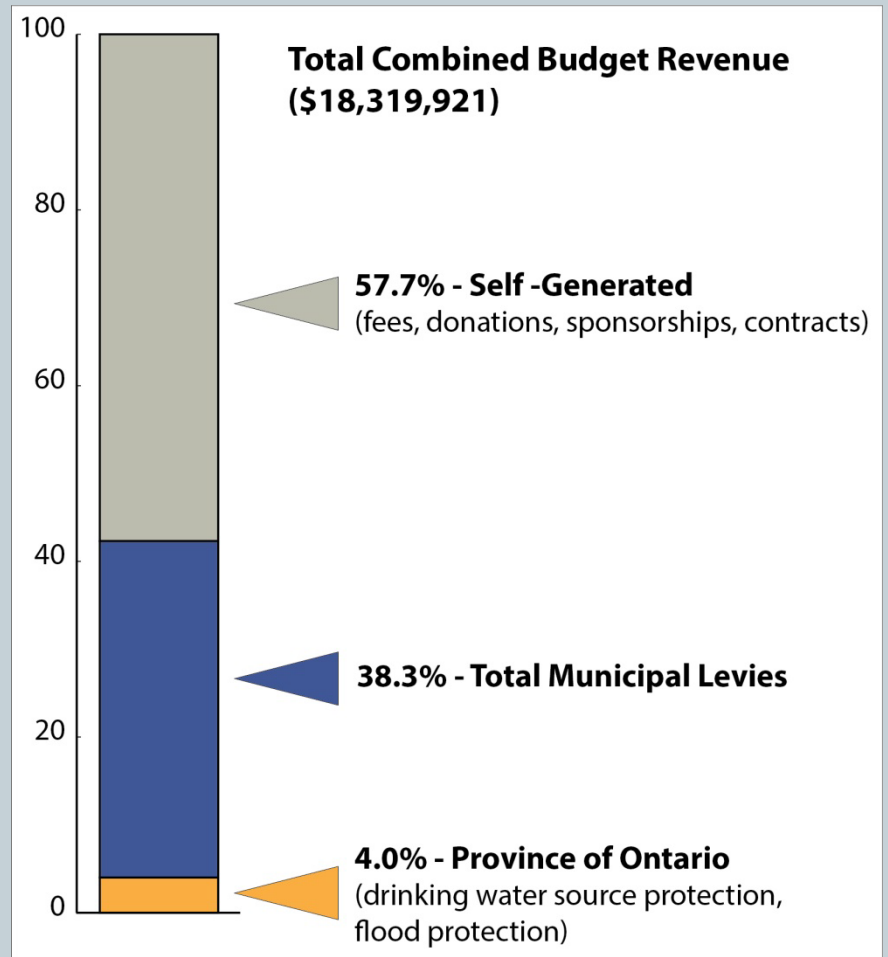


2022 Draft Operating Budget - Revenues

Conservation Authorities are funded through:

- the member municipalities (levies),
- self-generated revenues such as permit and camping fees, and contract funding that we apply and compete for
- a transfer payment from the Province

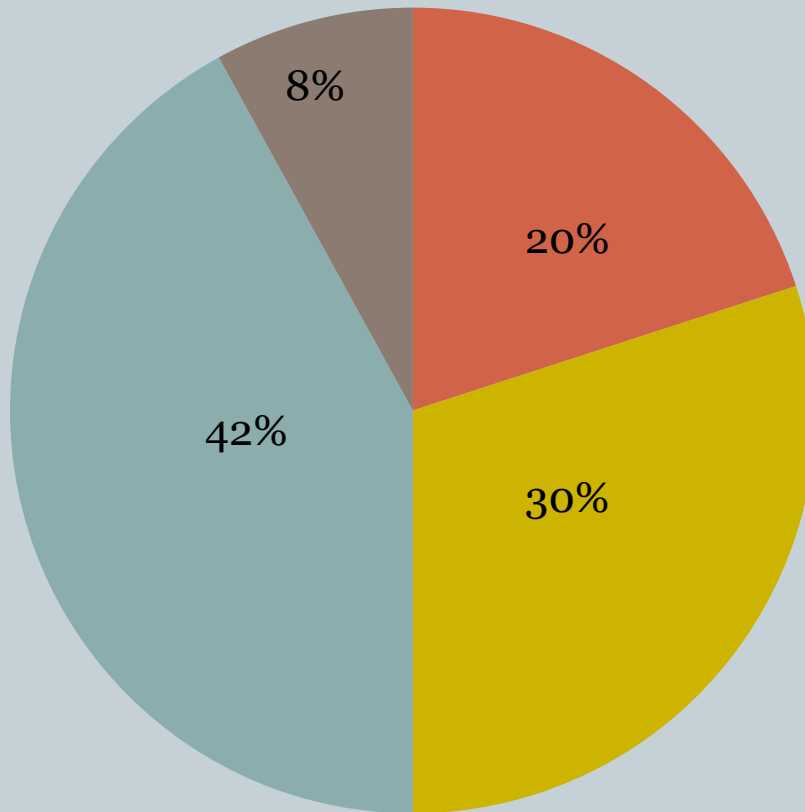
The Authority works to leverage the investment made by the local municipalities to provide the programs and services that watershed residents support







Community Partnerships - Example



Community Partnerships



-  User Fees
-  Contracts
-  Levy
-  Deferred Revenue

Community Education

- Access to environmental and conservation information and to instill a conservation ethic
- 20,000 students annually
- Over 40 curriculum-based educational programs
- 2 Nature Schools
- Outdoor, in class and virtual programs, within the CAs and in the community

WILDWOOD OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

JUNIOR

Habitats & Communities

Discover what every living thing 'needs'. Create 'hotel' habitats for our forest friends. Discover the natural life cycle by looking at some rotting logs!

Grade 4 Science and Technology - Understanding Life Systems: Habitats and Communities

Species at Risk

'Meet' some of the many species at risk that live right here in our own 'backyard'! Try not to become extinct throughout the hike. Help the 'turtles' get over their hurdles. Learn about 'bioaccumulation', and work some 'mussels'.

Grade 4 Science and Technology - Understanding Life Systems: Habitats and Communities

Animal Survival Game

Note: This game involves running and chasing through various terrain. Long pants and sturdy shoes are recommended.

Role-play an animal. Make sure to find a mate, locate food and water, and hide from enemies. Avoid the elements and disease that naturally occur in nature. Interact with the human who may be beneficial or detrimental to survival.

Grade 4 Science and Technology - Understanding Life Systems: Habitats and Communities

Grade 6 Science and Technology - Understanding Life Systems: Biodiversity

Grade 4 - 6 Health and Physical Education - Active Living

MapQuest

Navigate using a map to guide you through the forest while questioning some 'big ideas'. Next, tackle how to use a compass to get around the conservation area.

Grade 5 Social Studies - People and Environments: The Role of Government and Responsible Citizenship

Grade 5 Science and Technology - Understanding Earth and Space Systems: Conservation of Energy and Resources

Grade 6 Social Studies - People and Environments: Canada's Interactions with the Global Community

Grade 5 - 6 Health and Physical Education - Active Living

Capture the Flag - GPS Style

(LIMITED DATES AVAILABLE)

Learn how to use a GPS unit and apply those skills in a unique version of 'Capture the Flag'.

Grade 5 - 6 Health and Physical Education - Active Living

Biodiversity Blast

Participate in team building activities to learn how to prevent loss of diversity. Be part of a wetland habitat that's getting smaller. Watch out for alien invasions! Learn how an increasing population is decreasing biodiversity. Work together to keep biodiversity in balance!

Grade 5 Science and Technology - Understanding Earth and Space Systems: Conservation Of Energy and Resources

Grade 6 Science and Technology - Understanding Life Systems: Biodiversity

Grade 6 Health and Physical Education: Active Living (Group Dynamics)

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Grade 6 Health and Physical Education: Active Living (Group Dynamics)



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Bookings:

For more information or bookings, please call (519) 284-2828 ext. 422 or 423. You can also email us at azzanov@thamesriver.on.ca or mckeearn@thamesriver.on.ca

Cost:

\$7.00/student/half day
\$14.00/student/full day
\$120.00 minimum charge/half day for groups with less than 17 students

No charge for teachers or volunteers

Program Length:

Programs are approximately 2 hours in length.

Adult Supervision:

Adult to student ratios should be in accordance with your school board's out of class ratio policy.

Weather Policy:

To ensure safety for all, we reserve the right to reschedule/modify programs due to weather or unsafe conditions. We do not offer any indoor programming in the event of inclement weather.

All-Terrain Wheelchair:

An all-terrain wheelchair is available. Please let us know in advance if it is required.

Special Needs:

Please let us know in advance if you have a student with any medical and/or mobility and/or other concerns. We will do our best to accommodate their needs and make the trip enjoyable for everyone.

Location:

Wildwood Conservation Area,
3895 Line 3, R.R. #2,
St. Marys, Ontario N4X 1C5



"Inspiring a healthy environment"

www.thamesriver.on.ca

Sharing nature with children for over 35 years!

Conservation Authorities Act

O. Reg 687/21



- Bill 229, Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act – December 8, 2020
- Phase 1 Regulations – Transition Plan and Agreements Regulation (October 1, 2021)
 - To provide conservation authorities and municipalities time to address changes to the budgeting and levy process based on the delivery of mandatory programs and services (Category 1), municipal program and services (Category 2), and other programs and Services (Category 3) and to reach agreements



Mandatory Programs and Services

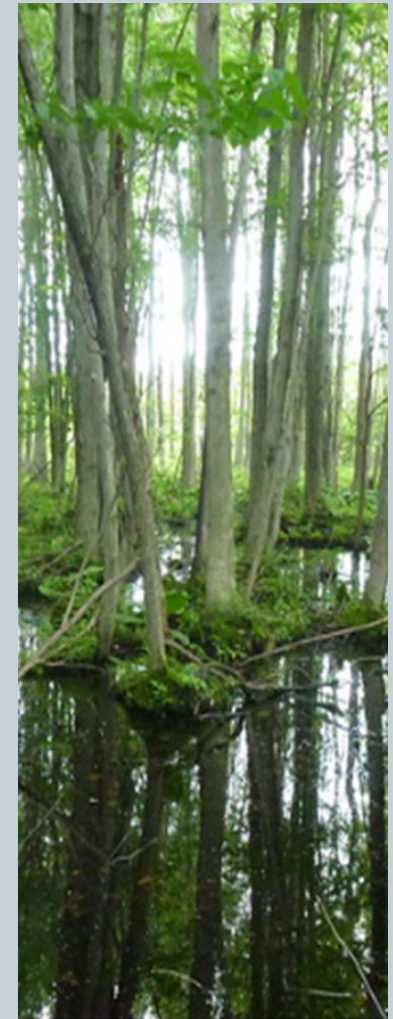
– O. Reg. 686/21:



Conservation authorities must provide the following mandatory programs and services:

Category One Programs and Services:

- Risk of Natural Hazards
- Conservation and management of lands owned or controlled by an Authority
- Other Programs or Services
 - Continuing to implement Provincial stream and groundwater monitoring
 - Duties, functions and responsibilities as a source protection authority Clean Water Act, 2006
 - Prescribed in Regulation: Core Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy



Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation

Conservation and Management of CA Lands

CAs must implement programs and services for the management and maintenance of CA-owned or controlled lands, where the CA determines advisable, for:

- Securing a CA's interests in its lands, including monitoring and enforcement to maintain property integrity, reduce liability and risk associated with use and protect the resources on the properties
- Offering passive recreation on CA owned lands (i.e., trails, facilities and amenities that support public access and recreational activities in conservation areas that can be provided without direct support or supervision of CA staff)
- In its capacity as an owner of land, to make applications or comment on matters under the *Planning Act*
- Protecting, conserving, rehabilitating and managing natural heritage, including the planting of trees (excluding commercial logging)
- Development of policies regarding acquisition and dispositions of CA owned land

Conservation and Management of CA Lands



CA must develop a **conservation area strategy**, prepared on or before **December 31, 2024** that includes:

- Objectives established by the authority that will inform the authority's decision-making related to the lands it owns and controls, including decisions related to policies governing the acquisition and disposition of such lands.
- Identification of the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned and controlled by the authority, including the sources of financing for these programs and services.
- An assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the authority may,
 - i. augment any natural heritage located within the authority's area of jurisdiction, and
 - ii. integrate with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority's area of jurisdiction.
- The establishment of land use categories
- A process for the periodic review and updating of the conservation area strategy by the authority, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process.

UTRCA Lands



The UTRCA owns and/or manages more than 5,790 ha (14,300 ac) of land within the Upper Thames River watershed, spread across some 40 properties

- Fanshawe, Pittock and Wildwood Conservation Areas
- Beachville CA, Dorchester CA, Dorchester Mill Pond, Embro CA, Fullarton CA, Harmony CA, Harrington CA, Shakespeare CA
- Beachville Tract, Cade Tract
- Dorchester Swamp, Ellice and Gads Hill Swamp
- London ESAs

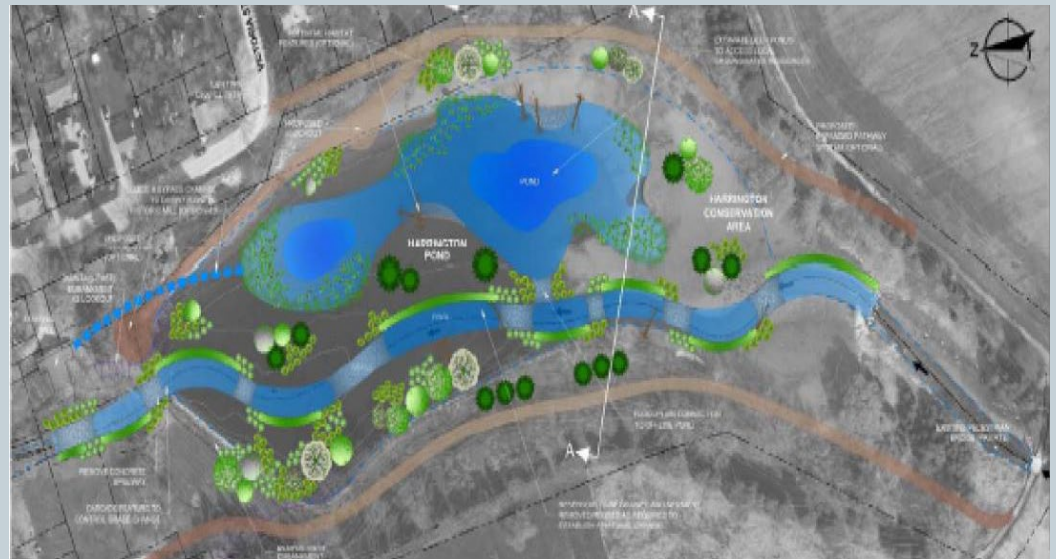
The completion of the Conservation Areas Strategy is a legislative requirement that will provide overarching policy direction moving forward



Harrington Dam Class Environmental Assessment (EA)



- Previous studies identified significant concerns related to the structural integrity and hydraulic capacity of the Harrington Dam and embankment.
- Objective of EA
 - to identify, evaluate, and ultimately to recommend an alternative that will allow the UTRCA to move forward with a plan to address the safety concerns.
- Preferred alternative
 - Remove dam and replace with offline pond(s)
 - Draft is available on web site with all alternatives
 - not yet finalized by board (or considered by council)
 - rationale behind selection of preferred alternative has not changed



Environmental Assessment Status



- EA initiated by UTRCA (proponent and owner of the Dam/CA)
- Engaging community and council throughout
- Still draft (posted on web site in 2017)
- Currently Awaiting
 - Heritage studies completion
 - Master planning (MP) for the Harrington Conservation Area to the point where it could inform the alternatives being considered in the EA
 - Updating the EA project file to include above and other necessary updates



Harrington CA Master Planning Process



- Toward the end of the EA process HACA brought forward many plans/proposals for the use of the Mill and CA,
- Many not fully vetted through CA (owner) or fully documenting feasibility, liability, sustainability, owners interests, etc
- MP was proposed as a way to engage community in determining and documenting appropriate use of the property
 - Would include the formation of a Community Liaison Committee
 - Would be an opportunity for all stakeholders, including HACA, local residents, others with an interest in the CA and dam (Environmental, First Nations, Municipal, etc.)
- MP would inform the EA and preferred alternative

Harrington CA Master Planning

(from discussion in late 2017)



- The MP would :
 - ✓ Summarize and refer to documentation on the Mill Restoration and Living Museum Plans
 - ✓ Identify additional information and documentation;
 - ✓ Summarize the ongoing operation and maintenance of the CA;
 - ✓ Document and/or establish ongoing roles in the operation and maintenance of the Mill, pond and CA;
 - ✓ Establish encouraged and discouraged uses of the CA;
 - ✓ Document any future plans for CA development (including such things as fish hatchery, washrooms, annual events held at the CA; and
 - ✓ Consider opportunities and constraints on the proposed plans for the Mill, pond and CA.
- Community Liaison Committee may be beneficial for MP and through to completion of EA

Heritage Studies

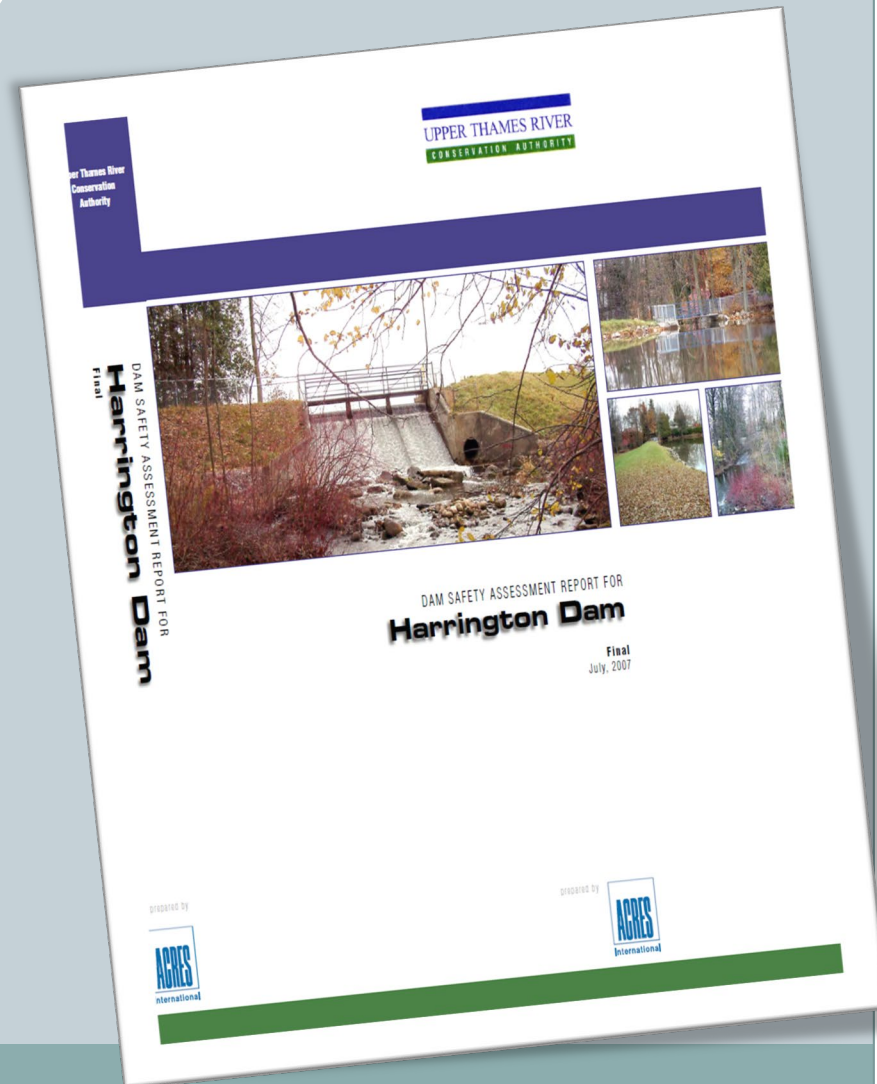


- Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) and Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)
 - generically called Heritage Studies (HS)
 - considers potential heritage value of the Harrington CA and the potential heritage impacts of any future changes that may occur to the Harrington Dam deriving from recommendations emerging from ongoing EA
 - Makes recommendations as to how the heritage can be preserved with each of the alternatives, including the proposed preferred alternative
- Draft going to Board
 - Posting on web site
 - Available to HACA and others
- Remain committed to sharing with HACA and look forward to receiving comments as soon as possible



Dam Safety

- Dam Safety Review completed in 2007 which identified safety concerns which led to the EA
- DSR are subject to regular review/update - commencing review of all UTRCA dams
- Priority on the high-risk dams
 - Fanshawe and Pittock underway
 - Wildwood to start in 2022
 - Due to the risks associated with Harrington it may be one of the priority dams considered in the next phase (beyond 2022)
- May make recommendations on changes in the operation to reduce the risks while EA can be completed due to the delays in completing the EA



Environmental Assessment Next Steps



- ✓ Finish Heritage Studies
- ✓ Incorporate Heritage Studies into EA, review EA to determine what other aspects will need to be updated
- ✓ Complete CAS
- ✓ Harrington MP
 - Identify stakeholders
 - Form Community Liaison
 - Scope the MP
 - Determine resources necessary for the MP
 - Complete the MP
- ✓ Update EA to reflect MP and any other necessary updates
- ✓ Engage Council, Board on EA prior to final posting
- ✓ Post EA for final review and comment
- ✓ Budget and secure funding
- ✓ Implementation



Loop Trail Crossing



- New loop trail crossing may be impacted by the EA preferred alternative
- Initially thought it may be premature to consider without confirmation of preferred alternative for Dam
- Willingness to consider
 - Solutions which have flexibility to be adapted to EA outcomes
 - Assisting to evaluate what solutions might work
- Need to meet normal regulatory consideration (not impact flooding, etc)
- May need to be modified as part of outcomes from EA,
 - May not be reasonable to delay until outcomes confirmed
 - Limited risk that a crossing at the extreme upstream end of property would be significantly impacted by implementation of any of the alternatives in the EA.



Questions

