

Terms of Reference Submitted

Following resolutions from the three Source Protection Authorities, the Terms of References for the St. Clair, Upper Thames and Lower Thames Source Protection Areas were submitted by the December 22 deadline. The Terms of Reference includes a work plan that will guide the source protection planning process for the next four years. It outlines who does what, when it will happen and how much it will cost. It will guide us through the completion of the Assessment Report and the Source Protection Plan itself.

Extensive consultation took place in the development of the Terms of Reference. Notices were posted in local newspapers and on our region's website announcing the consultation for the draft proposed Terms of Reference documents. The draft proposed Terms of Reference documents were also made available on the website and at each of the Conservation Authority offices. Letters were sent out to all municipalities, First Nations, Great Lake agencies and neighbouring Source Protection regions as well.

In the first two weeks of September, four public open houses were held in Ridgetown, St. Marys, Wyoming and London. In addition, three municipal forums were held in Ridgetown, St. Marys and Wyoming. These led to the formal Public Meeting held in London on September 9. Approximately 20 people attended the public meeting.

In addition, two public and two band council forums were held specifically for the eight First Nation communities in the region. These were well attended and generated much discussion.

Peer Review Committees to be Established for Vulnerability Assessment

To provide for a peer review of the vulnerability assessment work in the Thames-Sydenham and Region (TSR), the TSR Source Protection Committee is establishing a peer review committee. This committee will work together with the technical leads and their consultants to complete the peer review process laid out in a terms of reference. Technical studies in the TSR have been largely completed and draft reports are available. In some cases the work is yet to be completed and will be subjected to the peer review process once complete. Some changes are also required based on the recently released technical rules.

The purpose of a peer review is to provide a scientific review of a draft technical document (or other work) by peers of the individual or group that undertook the work.

Peer review has been encouraged as a way of ensuring that the work done through Drinking Water Source Protection is based on sound science. Although the province has yet to require that vulnerability assessment be subjected to a peer review process, source protection regions have been encouraged to proceed with such a process.



The purpose of the Clean Water Act is to protect existing and future sources of drinking water. In this area, the Upper Thames River, Lower Thames Valley and St. Clair Region Conservation Authorities have partnered together to coordinate the development of Source Protection Plans for our watersheds.

We are committed to work with our municipalities, other stakeholders and the public to develop Source Protection Plans that serve to protect our drinking water while taking into account the other needs of our communities.

Calendar Created Recognizing First Nations

In cooperation with the eight First Nations in our region, the Thames-Sydenham Region produced a calendar which highlights the value of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. Featuring a beautiful artwork by Dave George, the calendar includes a list of special events taking place at various First Nations in the region. Everyone is welcome to partake in these traditional gatherings, competition pow wows, cultural celebrations and other events of historical significance.

The calendars will be distributed throughout the region to the area First Nation Administration offices; municipal offices, offices of the Lower Thames Valley, Upper Thames River and St. Clair Region conservation areas, Ska-Nah-Doht Village and Museum and from Derekica Snake, First Nations Liaison/Source Protection Technician at the Longwoods Road Conservation Area.

The calendars explain the value of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK); that it is a wealth of historic and 'living' knowledge of the connections between all the elements of the environment including water and how peoples can interact within it.



"All life depends on water to live. Water is one of the four sacred elements of life. In the Ojibway tradition the women looked after the water and the men looked after the fire. This was the balance of nature. Water is a life force that has the ability to put out a fire so it is therefore, a stronger sacred element of life and all Nations lived by this relationship. Everything in the Natural World is alive; and that we humans, are related to everything. Everything is related and we depend on the River in order to live. Grandmother Moon shows her face every 28 days and when she does the water from the bottom of the river, lakes, oceans goes to the surface and the water on the surface goes down to the bottom so that the water is purified. That is one of the sacred instructions of Grandmother Moon. She is still following her sacred instruction by purifying the water." – Dan Smoke

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