

Lake Huron Southeast Shore Executive Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

November 4, 2010

Introduction

The Southeast Shore Area of Lake Huron (between Sarnia and Tobermory) has seen ongoing issues with water quality of both Lake Huron and the corresponding tributaries which has prompted various complaints from the public over the years. One of the key concerns in the area is the impact on recreational uses within the area which includes ongoing beach postings (from pathogens) and algal fouling along the beaches in various locations. These problems stem from ongoing inputs which include land use (agriculture, cottage development along shoreline, some urban inputs) and wildlife but are also potentially impacted by the changing shoreline ecology and impacts from climate change.

This area has been identified as a domestic priority under the Lake Huron Binational Partnership as well as a priority area under the 2010-2011 COA extension and as part of the Healthy Great Lakes, Strong Ontario Strategy.

A great deal of work has already occurred and more work is currently underway in the southeast shores area to address these issues. Initiatives have included studies into causes, as well as remediation efforts through Best Management Practices and improved planning approaches with a variety of agencies and stakeholders having participated in the work. However, even with all of this work, water quality issues along the nearshore persist. The Lake Huron Southeast Shores Executive Steering Committee is comprised of various government agencies and local resource managers who will work together to provide direction and support in development and implementation of action plans to address these issues within the Lake Huron Southeast Shore area.

Project Purpose

The purpose of the project will be to develop an integrated plan with various stakeholders to improve nearshore and tributary water quality which will contribute to reducing impacts on recreational uses such as beach postings and nuisance algal growth along the shoreline. The plan will be developed through the identification of priority subwatersheds (pilots) within the Lake Huron Southeast Shore area and the development of implementation plans in which remedial actions are identified to improve water quality. Efforts to address improving communication between shoreline residents and inland property owners to better understand issues and strategies needed to address them will also be an important part of this project.

Project Objectives

- To cooperate and work in partnership to provide information in support of setting priorities, undertaking integrated planning, decision-making and the implementation

of projects which will contribute towards improved water quality within identified priority Lake Huron Southeast Shore tributaries and watersheds which should help to reduce postings and nuisance algae growth at the beach.

- Explore and develop funding mechanisms which will help to support local priority implementation needs and any identified research needs.
- Develop and implement communication plans and outreach materials to educate and inform the public and stakeholders on key issues and activities in the area of interest.
- provide a forum for addressing other coastal zone/shoreline management issues in a coordinated fashion

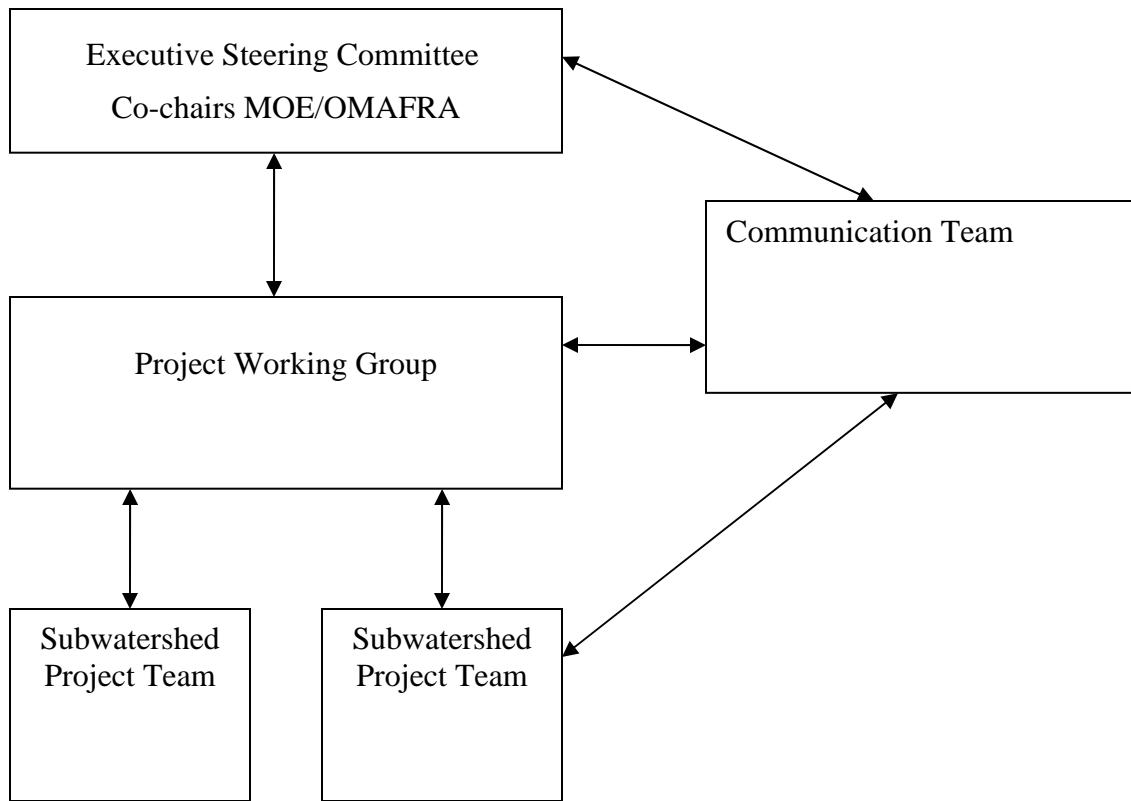
Area of Interest

The area of interest for this committee is the shoreline of Lake Huron's main basin between Tobermory and Sarnia, Ontario, including the watersheds of all tributaries along this stretch of shoreline, and its corresponding nearshore zone, which is the area beginning at the shoreline extending out to water depths that are usually less than 10 metres.

The initial focus of the work will concentrate on developing and implementing action plans within a small number of priority subwatersheds in which efforts can be evaluated to determine effectiveness.

Governance Framework

The purpose of this governance framework is to provide for better coordination of Lake Huron Southeast Shores management issues so that decision makers can efficiently and effectively focus their efforts and resources. This framework also enables participants to have a greater opportunity for consistent interaction and representation at all levels.



Executive Steering Committee Purpose

The Executive Steering Committee is responsible for providing comprehensive coordination and direction to the project, as well as for ensuring linkages with key stakeholders and setting priorities for the upcoming period. Representatives on this committee will champion the project within respective agency or organization and where possible ensure adequate resources are in place for planned projects and activities. This Committee will also provide a forum for addressing other coastal zone/shoreline management issues in a coordinated fashion.

Membership

Representatives from the following agencies/organizations make up the core of the Executive Steering Committee. This membership is based on identified local resource managers.

- Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority
- County of Bruce
- County of Huron
- Department of Fisheries and Oceans

- Environment Canada
- First Nations
- Grey-Bruce Health Unit
- Grey-Sauble Conservation Authority
- Huron County Health Unit
- Lambton County
- Lambton County Community Health Services Department
- Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
- Ontario Ministry of Environment
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- Parks Canada
- Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority
- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority

Chairperson

The Executive Steering Committee will be co-chaired by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs. The responsibility of the Co-chairs is to ensure that meetings are scheduled as required and organized efficiently and effectively. The Co-chairs ensure that meetings are conducted fairly and equitably so that all views can be expressed and considered in decision-making. The Co-chairs ensure that agendas are prepared for each meeting and that important decisions and action items are recorded in minutes and circulated to each organization.

Decision Making

Issues will be resolved by consensus of the members.

Frequency of Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Steering Committee will be held as deemed necessary by the members - with the intention to meet at least 2 -3 times per year. These meetings can either be face to face, via teleconference or webcasts.

Term

The Executive Steering Committee will continue to meet for a minimum of 5 years. A review of the committee and its work will be undertaken in 2015 to determine next steps.

Reporting

An agenda will be prepared for each meeting by the Co-chairs. Minutes will be prepared following each meeting by the Co-chairs or the Project Manager. The agenda and the previous minutes will be circulated to all committee members, prior to each scheduled meeting.

Communications Team

The Lake Huron Southeast Shore Communications Team will provide support with respect to communications and outreach activities for the Southeast Shore project and coordinating committees.

The Communications Team which is made up of communication staff from agencies represented on the Executive Steering Committee and reports directly to them will work to develop an overall communications strategy and will work directly with project teams to ensure that stakeholder groups and the general public are informed about ongoing activities as part of this project.

The Communication Team will also ensure effective communication between project teams.

A separate Terms of Reference will be developed for the Communications Team.

Working Group

The working group which will be comprised of local resource agency staff, key stakeholder and organization representatives as determined by the Executive Steering Committee. The working group will be responsible for completing the key project deliverables through the direction and approval of the Executive Steering Committee.

A separate Terms of Reference will be developed for the Working Group.

Subwatershed project teams will report directly to the Working Group.

These deliverables may include;

1) Determine project scope

- Accumulate baseline watershed scientific evaluations, identify priority watersheds and set targets to be achieved.

2) Develop an integrated watershed plan to achieve established targets.

- Identify priority remedial actions and sites

- Include a long term monitoring plan
- 3) Implementation of plan based on priorities, capacity, available funding
 - 4) Track projects, funding and results
 - 5) Evaluate program

Subwatershed Project Teams (Pilots)

Subwatershed Project Teams will be developed based on identified priority subwatersheds within the Lake Huron Southeast Shore Area. These teams will be comprised of key subwatershed partners (and may include identified members from the Working Group) required to develop and implement the action plan for the subwatershed.

