

Section I – Items for Regional Watershed Alliance Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance
Meeting #1/18, Wednesday, May 23, 2018

FROM: Gary Bowen, Watershed Specialist, Duffins-Carruthers

RE: **THE CARRUTHERS CREEK WATERSHED PLAN: PHASE 2**

KEY ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to update the Regional Watershed Alliance on the Work Plan and the Communications and Consultation Strategy to be implemented as part of Phase 2 of the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan and to direct members to the project website to find background information and provide feedback on the Vision and Management Philosophy for the Watershed Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the report and staff presentation be received for information.

AND FURTHER THAT members be encouraged to provide input during this stage of consultation via the project website.

BACKGROUND

On April 1, 2015, Durham Region Council authorised Regional staff to engage the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) in a consulting capacity to update the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan on the Region's behalf.

The Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan is being completed in two Phases over a four-year period. Phase 1 of the project involved data gathering in the field and desktop analyses, and culminated in the completion of seven peer-reviewed technical reports characterising the watershed's existing conditions in late 2017. As outlined in the presentation, staff are now in Phase 2 of the Watershed Plan development process, which includes public and stakeholder consultation. The current stage of consultation focuses on reviewing the Vision and Management Philosophy.

In early 2018, a project website was launched (<https://yoursay.ca/carruthers-creek>) to provide background information on the watershed and the Watershed Plan to the public and stakeholders, including the technical reports from Phase 1, and a project time line. The website is also set up to share information and gather feedback at key stages throughout the plan development process through the use of a project email list, an online survey, and an email address for staff to receive comments for the duration of the project.

RATIONALE

The Regional Watershed Alliance is an advisory committee to TRCA and will be consulted throughout the Watershed Plan development process, including the final draft Watershed Plan. Further, Dr. Neil Burnett who is a citizen representative on the Alliance from the Town of Ajax was the Chair of the Carruthers Creek Task Force during the process to develop the 2003 Watershed Plan for Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek. As such, he brings a unique perspective and is a

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resource for Alliance members and staff regarding our previous Watershed Planning exercise, and the history of the Carruthers Creek watershed.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

In accordance with the approved work plan, Phase 2 of the Watershed Plan consists of seven major components of work over a two-year period, scheduled to be completed by late 2019. Similar to Phase 1, the work completed in Phase 2 will be subject to a peer review process.

A detailed description of the tasks comprising these components is provided in the presentation. The technical studies will be iterative and non-linear, summarised as follows:

- Establish updated Goals and Objectives for the watershed.
- Based on the conditions observed through Phase 1 and other watershed health assessments, develop Targets for the watershed and identify the Management Actions required to achieve the Goals and Objectives.
- Establish watershed response methodologies / assessments to measure how the watershed could be expected to respond to changes in land use and other factors, such as climate change.
- Develop, model, and evaluate five scenarios for the watershed, consisting of historic conditions, existing conditions, approved development per current Official Plans, approved development and an enhanced Natural Heritage System, and a scenario with prospective development post-2013 and an enhanced Natural Heritage System.
- Formulate and evaluate candidate Management Actions to achieve the desired state of watershed health.
- Develop Management Recommendations and an Implementation Strategy.
- Deliver the final Watershed Plan.

In support of the Phase 2 technical work, TRCA will undertake extensive stakeholder and public consultation. A Communications and Consultation Strategy has been prepared outlining the proposed consultation activities, which include the following:

- Maintain and update a project website dedicated to the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan containing information on the project scope, timeline, and key milestones.
- Utilise a project specific email address to receive and respond to inquiries and maintain a mailing list for project updates.
- Conduct online survey(s) to gather input related to the Watershed Plan.

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- Utilise media and social media communications to provide updates on the project and study deliverables.
- Create and distribute outreach and communication tools at public locations/events.
- Conduct in-person outreach through the use of pop-up displays, and potentially Public Information Centres.
- Conduct stakeholder outreach through small group meetings, including presentations to various advisory committees.
- Continue to report to the Region of Durham Council at key milestones. Update the Authority Board annually, or more frequently as necessary.
- Conduct staff to staff meetings with representatives from the Region of Durham, the Town of Ajax, and the City of Pickering.

Consultation will occur in stages throughout Phase 2. The first stage of consultation will engage stakeholders and the public on the Vision and Management Philosophy, the next stage of consultation will solicit feedback on the draft management recommendations, and the final stage of consultation will focus on the draft final Watershed Plan. Staff will continue to update the Regional Watershed Alliance during the next two stages of consultation, and feedback from Alliance members is welcome at any time.

Report prepared by: Maryam Nassar, extension 5937

Emails: mnassar@trca.on.ca

For Information contact: Maryam Nassar, extension 5937

Emails: mnassar@trca.on.ca

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