

*Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Watershed*

# **A Canadian Framework for Community Action**



## **Think Tank 3 Summary**

# **Discussing Opportunities to Promote a Healthy Lake Huron**



*November 5- 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008  
Blue Mountain Resort  
Town of Blue Mountains*



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## Preamble

On November 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008, forty five people representing various agencies and interests from across the Lake Huron watershed met at Blue Mountain Resort to provide advice on future programs and initiatives to be considered for future implementation under the principles of the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Watershed – A Canadian Framework for Community Action.



During a warm-up Information Session on November 5<sup>th</sup>, people exchanged ideas and presented overviews of current programs, activities and initiatives in the watershed. They also created an initial list of recommendations and advice for future programs and initiatives across Lake Huron and Georgian Bay (see Appendix 1, page 17).

On the following day, November 6<sup>th</sup>, the participants focussed their discussions on:

- Future direction for the future of the Lake Huron program at various scales and timeframes;
- Ideas for projects, activities and initiatives to be considered;
- Increasing awareness among Lake Huron agencies and people about the Bi-national partnership, the Charter and community involvement; and
- Engaging new potential partners to commit to the vision, network, program and projects within the watershed.

During the Think Tank discussion on day two, the participants transformed their initial thoughts from day one into 18 key projects and opportunities. The following are the synthesized results of discussions from both sessions.

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# 1 Introduction

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Lake Huron Binational Partnership (see [www.binational.net](http://www.binational.net)) has been active since 2002 and many activities have taken place to build awareness, support community efforts, restore and protect the lake and its watersheds and to research and monitor the state of the lake ecosystem. It is time to review what has been accomplished and to think collectively about what needs to be done in the future.

The purpose of the Think Tank was to gather ideas and comments from people across the watershed representing various perspectives (e.g., agencies, non-government organizations, municipalities, cottagers, community groups, individuals) about program needs, priorities and opportunities to be considered for the short term (5 years) and long term (25-100 years) that will help restore and protect Lake Huron and its watershed. The discussions generated a list of potential projects and direction to be considered by both government (e.g., research and monitoring) and non government organizations (e.g. community action) in their future work planning.

This is the third Think Tank:

- Think Tank 1 was held in 2005 to determine what was needed to coordinate and share activities across the Lake Huron watershed. The result was the first draft of the Canadian Framework for Community Action.
- Think Tank 2 was held in 2007 to test drive the draft framework. The final Canadian Framework for Community Action was prepared and released at the Latornell Conference in November 2007.

Over the past year a number of projects have been initiated and supported through the efforts of the Lake Huron Framework Steering Committee. Some examples include: three pilot projects (Nottawasaga, North Bayfield and Eastern Georgian Bay), two environmental Youth Summits for high-school students, and a website [www.lakehuroncommunityaction.ca](http://www.lakehuroncommunityaction.ca).

Through interactive and facilitated discussion the following questions were addressed:

1. What needs to be done to create awareness, improve communication, and enhance education, knowledge and capacity among Lake Huron communities and stakeholders?
2. What needs to be done to gain support for the Charter, improve networking, and engage people?
3. What are the priority actions to protect and restore Lake Huron and its watershed?
4. What information is needed to identify, inventory and track environmental, socio-economic status, trends, activities and achievements in the Lake Huron watershed, and how should this information be collected and reported?

The following reflects the general discussions of the participants.

## 2 Summary of Opportunities

The following eighteen opportunities were identified to address the four Principles of the Lake Huron – Georgian Bay Framework.

### Principle 1 – Build Awareness and Capacity

1. Marketing/Communication Strategy \*
2. Community Projects and Training
3. Enhanced Education Opportunities
4. Sustainable Funding \*
5. Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Toolbox

### Principle Two – Support Community Involvement

6. Charter Co-ordinator
7. Reconnect Existing and Establish New Networks
8. Define Collaborative Governance Model \*
9. Incentives to Promote Community Engagement

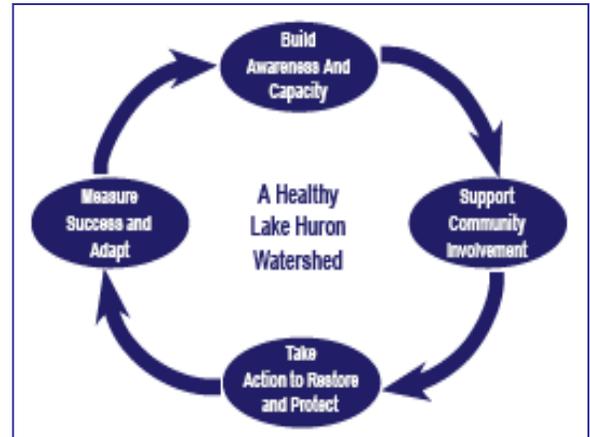
### Principle Three – Take Action

10. Lake Huron Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
11. Coordinate Monitoring and Research Activities \*
12. Economic Assessment of Ecological Values \*
13. Lake Huron Watershed Management Plan \*
14. Network of Protected Natural Areas
15. Restore Priority Degraded Areas

### Principle Four – Measure Success and Adapt

16. Prepare Stewardship Database
17. Initiate Governance Watch
18. Watershed Report Cards

There are several opportunities marked with an asterisk (\*) that may be inclusive with several or all four principles and will provide multiple benefits.



### Some of the Current Programs Mentioned...

- Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
- Volunteer-based Aquatic Plant Surveys (Coastal Wetlands)
- Biodiversity Conservation Strategy
- International Blue Flag Program – Blue Flag Beaches
- Pine River Watershed Improvement Program
- Water Quality Bio-monitoring
- COA Projects
- Natural Heritage Planning
- Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation
- Watershed Report Cards
- Land Securement
- Lake Huron Cooperative Monitoring
- Youth Summit 2007 and 2008
- Lake Huron Shoreline Stewardship Manual
- Lower Nottawasaga River Stewardship Pilot Study
- North Gullies Subwatershed Pilot Study
- Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve Stewardship Strategy

## Principle 1 – Build Awareness and Capacity

The Lake Huron Framework identifies the need to ‘Build Awareness and Capacity’ through communication, education and knowledge and capacity building.

<b>Principle 1</b>  <b>Build Awareness and Capacity</b>	<b>Communications</b> <i>Create awareness about Lake Huron and its watershed, sustainable living and community action by communicating with people through a range of options.</i>
	<b>Education and Knowledge</b> <i>Provide educational opportunities to increase knowledge about the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay watershed's ecosystems and its stressors. Work with scientists from government, non-government organizations and academic institutions to translate current environmental knowledge and information and share with everyone. Integrate scientific-based knowledge, aboriginal traditional knowledge, and local knowledge and perspectives into management and policy to promote conservation of natural and cultural values.</i>
	<b>Capacity Building</b> <i>Build the capacity of community groups and people by providing tools and improving knowledge and skills. Hold meetings, workshops, conferences, and provide information and technology transfer opportunities to enhance local management of environmental issues.</i>

The following are opportunities to Build Awareness and Capacity:

### 1. Marketing/Communication Strategy

The purpose of a ‘Marketing/Communication Strategy’ is to create more media attention and to provide key messaging to the community, stakeholders and politicians, and to integrate Lake Huron-Georgian Bay issues in local decision-making. A Communication Strategy may also create a catalyst for obtaining administrative support and funding.

The Communication Strategy should consider the following:

- a) Identify strategic issues and develop an Ontario based framework for a Marketing/ Communication Strategy (Plan) that will provide basin-wide information, including regional and local messaging that is relevant to the target audience and will encourage meaningful involvement. The Plan can be disseminated via municipalities, Think Tank partners and other people.

Messaging should be meaningful and relevant to the audience to create a sense of ownership of the Framework and engage participation.

- b) Key messaging should include a compendium of what is going on in the watershed (i.e. all the activities that are occurring in the basin, (see Principle 4, Stewardship Database), including ground-up and top-down efforts to identify key priorities that will help set direction, and build on the sense of urgency for the protection and conservation of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. The messaging should connect with the audience on a personal level by making it meaningful and relevant, especially communities that don't live near the lake. A key purpose of the messaging is to create a sense of ownership of the Framework in order to engage the community and build understanding of the issues and solutions, e.g., water quality protection.
- c) Create a brand, logo, slogan:
- 'There is only one Lake Huron-Georgian Bay'
  - 'It is easier to protect and save it than it is to restore it'
  - 'If we don't make efforts to protect the watershed this is what we will lose and this is what it will cost to restore it'

Examples to work from include the Lake Superior campaign (Superior Watershed Partnership and Lake Superior Conservancy and Watershed Council) and John Austin's The Vital Connection: Reclaiming Great Lakes Economic Leadership, March 2008

[www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/0324\\_greatlakes\\_canada\\_austin.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2008/0324_greatlakes_canada_austin.aspx)

and

<http://invest.wri.gvsu.edu/projectecosystems/servicesone.html>

- d) Appoint a communication steering committee to facilitate the Marketing/ Communication Strategy and designate local champions to bring key messages to the non-converted and local governments. The steering committee will need to identify key levers for the LHGB framework in order to develop a communication plan and hire a coordinator or communication specialist to write the strategy.
- e) Information has to be accessible through a viable and ongoing access point (e.g., internet).
- f) A toolkit of marketing strategy products can be produced in collaboration with stakeholders and agencies and delivered by local group leads. Some of these products include:
- Press release developed by all non-government stakeholders, with messaging that is both regionally and locally significant, i.e., area specific, and has government consent.
  - A one page fact sheet "About Lake Huron – getting to know your local watershed" for all non-government organizations and community groups, including youth forums, to present to local council, school boards, and the "unconverted" stakeholders.

- Radio, television and Internet infomercials/spots and competitions, e.g., LHGB trivial pursuit on you-tube and/or “Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader” competition.
- Signage and mapping at strategic locations along highways and on public property (trails, parks, boat launch, etc) to inform people that they are entering the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay watershed – an area where communities care about the lake and are working together to protect its future, and list the watershed features and values and local activities and where you can get more information.
- Biannual Conference Symposium/Workshops with Bi-national partners and the media to facilitate discussions and ensure public transparency.
- Cross marketing of each others programs.
- Develop sponsorship partnership with the commercial sector, e.g., Creemore's ‘Lake Huron Lager” or a brand for marketing – clothing, and high-profile eco-conscious organizations, e.g., CPAWS and Ontario Nature to deliver key messaging in their media products.
- Develop community-based communication tools (face-to-face meetings, workshops, newsletters, web-site) for local groups to deliver media messages to politicians and the unconverted.
- Hold special event days to promote key messaging.

## **2. Community Projects and Training**

Local government agencies and non-government organizations should create more voluntary watershed-based community projects and provide training opportunities by building on existing outdoor education programs in the watershed to encourage participation and stewardship, (e.g., wetland plant survey, water quality testing, benthic monitoring, fish habitat mapping and restoration, wildlife monitoring, etc). Any community project or training opportunity should consider:

- a) Building on existing community-based watershed programs by promoting the adoption of watershed projects across the basin particularly within communities that are currently active in stewardship initiatives and/or where the priority areas that have been identified by the biodiversity strategy are located.
- b) Develop family-friendly, community-based “know your lake” programs and training sessions, with field trip opportunities, to enhance local understanding and connectivity to the landscape and foster stewardship principles.
- c) Professional development days for teachers. Educators are important to keep the program alive.

## **3. Enhanced Education Opportunities**

The bi-national partners should facilitate the development of an education program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, school boards, teaching colleges/universities

and local schools that include curriculum development for grades 5 and up. These programs should also create a compendium of information about the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay watershed, and provide it to the local grade schools, high schools, college, university and teaching programs.

Create the Lake Huron University or a University-affiliated research campus/facility in a shoreline community (e.g. Goderich) to focus on the Great Lakes and fresh water ecosystems. A good approach to consider is the Cooperative Freshwater Ecology (Co-op) Unit in Sudbury. "The Co-op Unit is an innovative and highly effective partnership of scientists and communicators of science who collaborate on projects with community groups and with industry to ensure that our precious water resources will be protected for generations to come." (Contact Dr. John Gunn – Laurentian University)

An enhanced education program would build awareness at the local level and encourage collaborative learning and program involvement throughout the watershed. Develop a biodiversity atlas tool for incorporation into the school curriculum.

#### **4. Sustainable Funding**

The partnership needs to develop a strategy to obtain sustainable funding, administrative support and other resources for the following initiatives:

- a) Implementing the marketing/communication strategy.
- b) NGO's, community groups and youth councils to sustain and encourage basin-wide program involvement.
- c) Grants to local schools for research and continued education (e.g., to attend bi-national meetings and/or the Youth Summit).
- d) Transfer of science and technical information to municipalities and other decision-makers to facilitate the understanding of the linkages between the socio-economic and ecological conservation and land use planning decisions.
- e) Training sessions for volunteers, educators, politicians and decision-makers.
- f) Academic research programs to build on and transfer existing knowledge.
- g) Waste water infrastructure and restoration of degraded areas.
- h) Community-based best management practices and projects.
- i) Modelling the effectiveness of restoration projects.
- j) To steward long-term management and protection of the protected areas network.
- k) Monitor effectiveness of Framework and Charter and respond to needs.
- l) Mediums, e.g., web-based, to track and disseminate information to the community and decision-makers.

## 5. Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Toolbox

Create a toolbox to help disseminate information from all agencies while building on existing toolboxes (government agencies and non-government organizations) and supporting a variety of project goals. Tools should be prepared that improve municipal land use decisions and increase awareness of existing and established community-based projects. The Marketing Strategy will identify the types of tools to be prepared to deliver and support the key messages.

Some of these tools in the kit could include press releases, fact sheets about Lake Huron, examples of radio, television and Internet infomercials/spots and competitions (e.g., "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader") signage, branding and communication tools (e.g. face-to-face meetings, workshops, newsletters, web-site). See 1 f) on page 4 for more detail.

### Other Examples of Tools from Wetkit

Best Management Practices  
Case Studies  
Classification Systems  
Decision-making Analysis  
Evaluation Methods  
Events  
Field Guides  
Functional Assessment Methods  
Funds and Incentives  
Inventories and Assessments  
Legislation and Policies  
Technologies

...Wetkit

## Principle 2 – Support Community Involvement

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The framework identifies the need to 'Support Community Involvement' through the Lake Huron Charter, creating networks for collaboration and involving and engaging people.

<b>Principle 2</b>  <b>Support Community Involvement</b>	<b>Lake Huron Charter</b> <i>Obtain support for the Charter and seek a commitment to sustainable living practices and to value natural resources from all stakeholders in the watershed. Understand that economic activity and quality of life is made possible through our environmental assets and services. The Charter will help to ensure that our decision making considers all social, economic and environmental demands, and will remind us to balance the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</i>
	<b>Networks for Collaboration</b> <i>Improve collaboration between agencies and community groups. Create networks to share information and approaches and facilitate partnerships opportunities.</i>
	<b>Involve and Engage People</b> <i>Encourage and promote the involvement of individuals and groups in ongoing projects and new environmental initiatives. Establish pilot projects to demonstrate how individual and collective actions can improve our environment, grow into larger efforts, and attract interest and commitment from others.</i>

The following are opportunities to Support Community Involvement:

### 6. Charter Coordinator

A Charter Coordinator would ensure basin wide promotion of the Charter and be responsible for:

- a) Distributing the Charter throughout the basin and encouraging and engaging groups/communities to pursue/champion their own issues under the umbrella of the Charter.
- b) Link specific issues and stewardship activities to the Charter.
- c) Send out and map signatures. Invite high profile signings and form a Lake Huron Caucus.
- d) Track signed Charter and map commitments on the website.
- e) Send letters to Municipal Councils and involve MPs and MPPs during caucus to sign the Charter.
- f) Follow-up signing with recognition product.

- g) Provide information sessions on the Charter and Framework.

## **7. Reconnect Existing and Establish New Networks**

It is important to build on and use existing networks, e.g., watershed council, stewardship council, educational institutions, and youth summit ambassadors and establish new networks for implementing the Framework. Connecting the volunteer community, agencies and organizations to share success stories, celebrate local champions, and promote and distribute the Charter e.g., Lake Huron Day. Coordinated effort between partners will avoid duplication or gaps and promote sharing and merging of ideas and initiatives. Suggestions to improve network collaboration include:

- a) Mail-outs and personal contact to build relationships, awareness and opportunities, e.g., First Nations communities and the unconverted.
- b) Symposium to bring technical people together, e.g., Honey Harbour.
- c) Build alliance with tourism industry, e.g., eco-tourism and protected areas.

## **8. Define Collaborative Governance Model**

In order to involve and engage communities and agency sectors in the framework, a collaborative governance model is needed to explain who is doing what, how we work together, and how to engage new partners and the unconverted. The Governance model would

- a) Clarify roles and responsibilities.
- b) Identify new committee members and partners, e.g., youth ambassadors, First Nation communities, and community volunteers.
- c) Show the collective need for long-term administrative support.
- d) Consider industry and private sector sponsorship and incentive programs – demonstrate the economic and environmental benefits to fund stewardship projects.

### **Collaborative Governance Model:**

- Who is doing what in the watershed;
- Roles and responsibilities for managing the lake and its watershed; and
- How to engage other partners and the unconverted.

## **9. Incentives to Promote Community Engagement**

The following opportunities were suggested to promote community engagement and attract interest, encourage commitment and buy-in, and provide opportunities for stewardship involvement:

- a) Promote existing stewardship programs and manuals, e.g., FOCA and Blue Flag type programs for green cottages by local NGOs and municipalities, Lake Huron Shoreline and Eastern Georgian Bay Shoreline Stewardship Manuals.
- b) Recognition awards, e.g., SOLEC award, city mayors, educators, Lake Huron Heroes etc.

- c) Showcase demonstration projects or case studies and the existing interest in the watershed to share the vision, success stories and connect organizations.
- d) Create a Lake Huron Day and celebrate across the watershed.
- e) Connect local communities with the planning process and connect planning processes to the needs of Lake Huron.
- f) Student job creation program to engage communities and foster stewardship principles. An expansion of the Youth Ambassadors.
- g) Improve the Youth Summit, e.g., continued mentoring to connect students with local municipal counselors to facilitate Charter buy-in and 'Youth on Council' – municipal, LHGB framework steering committee, and local stakeholder groups to report on meeting and council progress to their local community.
- h) Establish a series of effective communication signs at strategic locations along highways to inform people that: i) they are entering the Lake Huron watershed, ii) this is an area where communities care about the lake are working together, and iii) where to obtain information.

## Principle 3 – Take Action

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The framework identifies the need to ‘Take Action’ through approaches to identify and inventory, protect natural areas and restoring degraded areas.

<b>Principle 3</b>  <b>Take Action</b>	<b>Identify and Inventory</b> <i>Use scientific research and monitoring information, local and traditional ecological knowledge to understand the environment. Ecosystem structure and function, and track trends over time. Seek consensus on issues, what needs to be done, priorities for action, and seize opportunities for projects and initiative when they arise.</i>
	<b>Protect Natural Areas</b> <i>Protect critical populations of fish and wildlife through species management, habitat conservation and stewardship. Work with landowners, communities and local governments on stewardship programs and plans and support projects aimed at preventing environmental damage. Work towards environmental sustainability, responsible decision making and effective planning.</i>
	<b>Restore Degraded Areas</b> <i>Where environmental quality has been degraded by human activity directly or indirectly, recommend and implement solutions to resolve problems, control or reduce sources of pollutants, rehabilitate shorelines, streams, wetlands and forests. Promote activities to restore or create new fish and wildlife habitat.</i>

The following are opportunities to Take Action:

### 10. Lake Huron Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

Develop, implement, and monitoring the success of basin-wide and local scale protection and restoration strategies that address biodiversity conservation priorities and adapt as needed. From this information, inform decisions made by coastal communities, landowners, developers and others by providing guidelines to protect, restore and monitoring important sites.

### 11. Coordinate Monitoring and Research Activities

Develop a monitoring framework, e.g., conceptual ecosystem model, and coordinate a 5 year cycle of bi-national monitoring and research activities to collect baseline information (e.g., state of the resource reporting) and establish temporal and spatial trends to identify indicators and thresholds for the development of local targets.

Watershed management principles should be used to assess the characteristics of the watershed and establish ecosystem drivers as indicators (e.g., “vital signs” of the ecosystem, and case studies, e.g., economic value/benefit of restoration) to make the issues more relevant to the public. All the information should be reported in a timely manner and

communicated in a user-friendly format to entice/solicit further involvement and support from local politicians and stakeholders.

The following are some examples of important research initiatives to better understand local ecosystem function and track trends over time to report on the status of the watershed's resources:

- a) Gap analysis of existing knowledge and maintain ongoing analysis to detect change and identify emerging issues, e.g., pharmaceuticals.
- b) Conduct land use inventory and up to date natural heritage systems (geospatial data) to assist local planning initiatives (official plans and zoning by-laws) and planning decisions.
- c) Assess the state of the sub-watersheds within the Lake Huron watershed, e.g., identify and prioritize natural and degraded areas for protection and rehabilitation. As part of this process, develop up to date natural heritage system mapping (GIS) to assist local planning initiatives (official plans and zoning by-laws) and planning decisions.
- d) Identify and map aquatic offshore and nearshore spawning habitat, and riparian habitat, especially for non Crown owned or protected lands.
- e) Biodiversity conservation strategy to identify major habitat and biodiversity investment areas and attach value to these features in order to facilitate the restoration and/or protection of these values.
- f) Coastal and connecting wetland evaluation (quantity and quality) and classification. Wetlands need to be assessed, mapped and amended to municipal documents for their long-term protection.
- g) Long-term changes from shifting communities as a result of invasive species introduction. Mapped location of invasive species and methods to prevent new introductions.
- h) Ecosystem-based impact studies on various techniques that propose eradication of specific invasive species.
- i) Impact study of water removal activity on fish population.
- j) Impact study of returning water levels to natural conditions or long-term averages.
- k) Near-shore sediment fluxes.
- l) Track phosphorus fluxes through the ecosystem.
- m) Inventory (geospatial) barrier dams, bed load traps and shoreline hardening index.
- n) Coastal man-made structures inventory and impact study of the effect on coastal processes.
- o) Municipal drain classification.
- p) Gather traditional knowledge.
- q) Economic Development Comprehension – historical and future scenarios of economic development within the watershed, including a retrospective of what

sustainable economic development will look like in light of changing land uses, climate change and the biodiversity index.

- r) Program and project effectiveness.
- s) Watershed Report Cards (both CA and non-CA).

Currently the bi-national Partnership and COA provide funding for: sub-watershed pollution tracking to identify priority areas and remediation strategies; species at risk rehabilitation; marine conservation initiative; and reporting on the State of the Lake.

## **12. Economic Assessment of Ecological Values**

We need to remind people of what we have lost in the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay watershed and emphasize the importance of protecting and/or restoring what remains of the watershed's ecological features and functions. Communities need to be engaged in order to inventory local "values" regarding the watershed's natural heritage/resources, including the intrinsic value of biodiversity, spiritual, social and cultural values.

An economic assessment of these ecological "values" of the lake and its watershed including a dollar value on the loss of important features (e.g., wetlands) and the cost-benefit analysis of protection and restoration projects should be initiated to affect proper planning decisions and engage local decision-makers, politicians and communities. This may also encourage protection and conservation efforts within the community, and facilitate behavioural change to encourage an ecological ethic and a shift in how we interact with the planet which may change how the politicians make decisions. As an example, there is a report on Lake Simcoe Basin's Natural Capital: The Value of the Watershed's Ecosystem Services.

## **13. Lake Huron Watershed Management Plan**

Develop a basin-wide sustainable management plan or strategy that engages and connects all communities and decision-makers through a coordinated and consistent adaptive management approach (e.g., A Provincial Plan according to the Planning Act and Provincial Policy Statement 2005). Its goal will be to highlight the connectivity relationship between sub-watersheds (a holistic view), develop resource conservation principles, incorporate existing policy, and identify priority actions through a work plan that will encourage the protection of Lake Huron-Georgian Bay's natural heritage features and functions (e.g., biodiversity, water quality, wetlands, shoreline corridors, and fishery, as well as encourage forward thinking and appropriate decision-making for the future). The Plan could link with PPS policy and development plans to establish appropriate planning within the watershed, in particular along the shorelines, and include modeling for climate change. The Watershed Management Plan may:

### **A Watershed Plan will:**

- Engage and connect all communities and decision-makers through a coordinated and adaptive management approach;
- Provide a holistic view, highlight the connectivity between sub-watersheds;
- Develop resource conservation principles;
- Incorporate existing policy;
- Identify priority activities;
- Encourage forward thinking; and
- Appropriate decision-making for the future.

- a) Facilitate the development of a provincial plan for the future vision of the lake's health, e.g., Oak Ridges Moraine Plan, Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, Greenbelt Plan.
- b) Encourage local communities to develop stewardship plans to address localized issues while supporting the framework's guiding principles and goals. This will create ownership.
- c) Facilitate the development of a basin wide shoreline integration plan to create connectivity and link coastal processes across municipal and agency boundaries (e.g., CA).
- d) Facilitate the development of individual shoreline management plans, as components of the lake wide plan.
- e) Promote the use of adaptive management principles.
- f) Reconnect overlay of land use policy and planning designation at the property level to affect more protection and conservation of natural features in order to reconnect land use policy at the property level, e.g., economic assessment of ecological values.

#### 14. Network of Protected Natural Areas

Establish a Network of Protected Natural Areas to identify and protect all those natural areas around the lake that represent the local heritage (natural, physical, social, cultural), and are supported by local communities. The more areas we have the more recognition we'll have for increasing protected lands and natural cover. Other ideas to create a network of protected natural areas include:

- a) Explore the opportunity to develop a Marine Conservation Area/Park for Lake Huron and Georgian Bay by 2015.
- b) Attach an economic value to these areas (beyond intrinsic values) to encourage protection.
- c) Create a sense of ownership and connection with the community so that they play a vital role in their protection.
- d) Rank priority areas.
- e) Prepare a feasibility study for the securement of priority natural areas (DFO, MNR, GBLT, Parks Canada, Conservation Authorities) – easements, agreements; and provide support dollars.
- f) Incorporate updated natural heritage system mapping and assessments, inclusive of climate change predictions and adaptive management, for local land use planning (Official Plans, Zoning By-laws).
- g) Establish a buffer lands network and promote private land stewardship initiatives to implement best management practices.
- h) Manage Crown land use.

**Natural areas** include: wetlands, forested woodlands, valleylands and riparian areas, shorelines, vegetated littoral areas, and wildlife habitat. These areas remain in a natural state because of intact habitat and their ecological function is occurring in a normal way.

- i) Utilize existing legislation (Planning Act, Public Lands Act, Section 28 Regulations CA Act) and adopt new legislation, if necessary, to protect all (i.e., provincially, regionally and locally significant) wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, shorelines and riparian buffer lands.
- j) Land securement of critical habitats.

## 15. Restore Priority Degraded Areas

The following are policy recommendations and locally-based solutions that may assist with restoring degraded areas and mitigating the creation of others:

- a) Prevention of new invasive species introductions.
- b) Develop regulatory policy to prevent salt water ship traffic from entering the Great Lakes system, and to ensure ballast water treatment and prevention of dumping.
- c) Remediation of current invasive species.
- d) Threat analysis to identify and prioritize degraded sites based on degree of threat(s) and plan implementation strategies accordingly.
- e) Undertake comprehensive planning (e.g. sub-watershed management plans) by using the best available science and community-based organizations and approaches to mitigate degraded areas and implement the Biodiversity Strategy priorities.
- f) Create small scale community-based stewardship projects that can be integrated into the larger basin, e.g., tributary work, letters to politicians, and adopt-a-watershed projects around the basin, based on the biodiversity strategy and where the community is currently active.
- g) Mandatory septic system inspection and review/upgrades programs.
- h) Integrated fisheries management including Walleye, Yellow Perch, Whitefish and Sturgeon population assessments and rehabilitation plans for pelagic and near-shore habitats, e.g., State of Reports.
- i) Prepare and implement Subwatershed Management Plans and Nutrient Management Plans to restore tributaries.
- j) Adoption of a long-term ecosystem based recovery plan to stimulate the food web (increase productivity) to facilitate fisheries recovery.
- k) Create alternate habitats when restoration is not possible.
- l) Application of nutrient reduction technology in Sturgeon Bay and other hot spots.
- m) Dam prioritization and decommissioning to improve stream habitat conditions (cautionary note – some dams afford protection from the exotic and invasive sea lamprey).
- n) Tributary focused projects to protect and/or rehabilitate high quality cold-water streams to increase a healthy stream corridor, e.g., Wild Rivers initiative.

A **degraded area** no longer provides intact or viable habitat because its ecological function has been altered and compromised by human activity or other forms of disturbance.

- o) BMP strategies at the local scale so that it relates to property level management.
- p) Review current water level management strategies and make new recommendations to accommodate impacts from climate change and an evolving ecosystem.
- q) Toll for using the lake, e.g., big ships, development offsetting or trading (e.g., carbon, phosphorus, water), and tax breaks.

## Principle 4 – Measure Success and Adapt

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The framework identifies the need to ‘Measure Success and Adapt’ by identifying targets and indicators and approaches to measure the success of community efforts and to continually adapt to new information and knowledge.

<b>Principle 4</b>  <b>Measure Success and Adapt</b>	<b>Measure Success</b> <i>Identify targets and indicators and develop public friendly reporting mechanisms such as report cards to track and report ecological monitoring results, achievements of stewardship and protection initiatives and provide this information to the community.</i>
	<b>Adapt</b> <i>Use common sense, experience and scientific and technical expertise to modify targets and indicators when necessary.</i>

The following are opportunities to Measure Success and Adapt:

### 16. Prepare Stewardship Database

Measuring success and adapting programs within the watershed should evolve from existing programs to avoid duplication, address information gaps, build on success stories, and provide program recognition basin-wide. Tracking and assessing agency and stewardship voluntary efforts, programs and projects in the watershed would provide a community profile of who is doing what and where, and lessons learned. As well, a review of existing programs (e.g., Southwestern Ontario Stewardship Demonstration Catalogue) would assist to determine successes and failures in order to better design a program that is easy to use by many people and agencies.

Success is an event or activity that accomplishes its intended purpose.

Community groups could upload their programs on line at a central repository, i.e., the Lake Huron-Georgian Bay Community Action website or a stewardship manual (see Principle 1, Communication Strategy) to share their experiences and contact information with others in the watershed.

Measuring success and adapting programs should consider the following recommended principles:

- a) Target and indicator selection needs to have relevance to stakeholders, such as:
  - Efficacy of governance on the lake.
  - Driver(s) that characterize the “vital signs” of ecosystem health, e.g., food web dynamics.
  - Quality of life (natural, physical, social, cultural).
  - Community-based common interests and socio-economic drivers of land use decisions.

- Property assessment values with regards to a reduction in ecological health.
  - Growth projections and demographics.
  - Changes in behavior/activities, e.g., volunteer hours and number of recreational days (creel surveys) over time.
  - Partnerships and leveraged funds quantified.
- b) Effectiveness monitoring of “management actions”, e.g., application at various management scales (comes from good monitoring design). Management strategies should be applicable or adaptable at various scales, and effectiveness monitoring should address these scales when reporting back to the local community in a user-friendly format.
- c) Public-friendly reporting should build on existing programs, e.g., watershed report card or state of the resource reporting, and be inclusive of new research and priority areas, including information on littoral areas and shorelines, as well as report on local and basin-wide project successes, partnerships and leveraged funding.
- d) Reach out to new Canadians to understand their values and present the Charter’s principles.

### **17. Governance Watch**

Establish an initiative to monitor and evaluate the activities and decisions of all scales of government (federal, provincial, municipal, conservation authorities) and other organizations in the Lake Huron watershed in order to track the big picture. Design an outreach program to congratulate those doing a good job, and work with those that need help. Present information about watershed linkages and provide options, solutions and opportunities to the politicians and decision-makers.

### **18. Watershed Report Cards**

Continue to promote and complete report cards for all Lake Huron and Georgian Bay sub watersheds.

### 3 Best Advice for Success

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During both the information session on November 5<sup>th</sup> and the think tank on November 6<sup>th</sup> the following general recommendations and advice were provided for consideration:

1. Success integrates the four principles of the Charter.
2. Build awareness through broad-scale education programs to encourage local involvement and stewardship, e.g., petition governments, protect/restore natural areas, and maintain septic system.
3. Develop a harmonized approach by involving all stakeholders, sharing information and integrating other initiatives, and building partnerships, which is instrumental to the success of this approach.
4. Build a community-based process with adaptive capacity and social-ecological resilience for community-based decisions through the creation of community-based projects to encourage partnerships and build buy-in, which leads to ownership.
5. Be welcoming, value opinions, recognize accomplishments, and celebrate contributions.
6. Know what you have (inventory), what you want (identify research needs) and where you need to go to get there.
7. Assess the scope of what's being done and identify gaps; prioritize efforts by engaging those interested communities first or where issues are most prevalent; provide sustainable long-term funding to support community initiatives; be flexible to accommodate for change – think about the unknowns and accommodate your plans accordingly; monitor success; and report back.
8. Develop strategies to stop invaders, protect critical habitat, identify biodiversity investment areas, provide resource enhancement and rehabilitation, and optimize, adapt science to initiatives (multiple barrier approach, communicate science, adapt programs, modify public expectations) to enhance monitoring and evaluation of BMPs, and improve regulations.
9. Information and technology has to be accessible with a viable and continuous feed (internet).
10. New projects and activities should build on existing programs and success stories and address information gaps.
11. Build awareness at the local level and encourage collaborative learning and program involvement throughout the watershed.

## **Appendix 1 – Recommendations from November 5th Information Session**

The following are the recommendations that were provided by the speakers at the information Session dated November 5<sup>th</sup>:

### ***Achieving the Blue Flag***

- Link activities under environmental management and education to broader conservation & protection goals of the area.
- How can Blue Flag support the goals of the Clean Water Act?
- How can Blue Flag support recommendations that are coming forward re: climate change?

### ***Georgian Bay Wetland Assessments:***

- Strong correlation between WMI and WQI allows us to use plants as surrogate for water quality variables
- Simple VAPS guide allows volunteers to assess and monitor their local wetlands
- Allows local residents to connect directly with their local wetland
- Need to improve the guide to include more “science” and to report research results

### ***Lake Huron Water Levels***

- Learn about ups and downs in Lake Huron water levels
- Consider them in your plans and activities

### ***Lake Huron Biodiversity Conservation Strategy***

- Development of a Lake Huron Biodiversity Atlas
  - Incorporation into school curriculum
  - Potential theme for future Youth Summit
- Use results for protected areas planning
- Expect results to influence priorities for projects and funding in such agencies as CAs, MNR, MOE, EC, DFO, PC, NCC, TNC, COA, MDEQ, MDNR

### ***Lake Planning***

- Its all about people and building their capacity
- Design a community friendly process
- Enrolling champions
- Making the community a PLAYER
- Recognition and success
- Community process for community based decisions
- Help the people own their actions!

### ***Collaborative Governance in Eastern Georgian Bay***

- We need to track the Big Picture (“Governance Watch”) for the Lake Huron Basin and landscapes/sub-systems within it.
- Assess the scope of what is being done, identify gaps, report on success of policies/programs & new partnerships.
- “State of the Bay” - social, economic, ecological profiles.
- Build adaptive capacity & social-ecological resilience.

### **Water Protection in Huron County**

- Integrating with community development
- Integration with land use planning
- Theme related WPSC meetings
- Continue to build/enhance relationships
- Improve communication of water protection activities

### **Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation**

- Continued Fish Habitat Enhancement Projects
- Rehabilitative Plantings
- Improved (additional) population monitoring and assessment
- Additional (regulation) protection where warranted.

### **Sturgeon Bay and Blue Greens**

Restore/Protect:

- Because Sturgeon Bay's problem has not clearly shown itself to be the fault of human development there appears to be a lack of engagement to fund/support remediation efforts.
- Consider remediation where it may not be all that clear because the science is seldom that clear.
- Continue to support a basin-wide stewardship ethic.
- Identify and Inventory:
- It is suggested by some that Sturgeon Bay is the 'canary in the mine shaft' for cyanobacteria/problem algal blooms (I.e. 12 Mile Bay, North Bay (Honey Harbour), Deep Bay (Carling Township).
- A basin wide assessment of other susceptible areas and the factors contributing to potential blooms in these areas would be useful.
- Consider trying a solution now to learn for the future.

### **Watershed Adoption and Planning**

Watershed Planning at the Relevant Scale

- Is this possible everywhere?
  - Work where there is community interest
  - Areas that need protection

### **OMAFRA Projects**

- Integrated Environmental Management Approach
  - Stewardship guide tools have been developed (ex. EFP, rural landowners)
  - Awareness and capacity built through workshops and training
  - Community involvement and action supported: Growing Forward negotiations proceeding to support another 5 years of Environmental Farm Plan education and cost-share programs
  - Take action - watershed collaboration involving all stakeholders; everyone vested in outcomes
  - Measure success and adapt; individuals → groups → watersheds
  - Assess agricultural priorities by geographic and issue focus for future OMAFRA Great Lakes Program efforts

- Understanding and learning from this Lake Huron information session feeds this process

### **Pine River Watershed Improvement (Adopt a Watershed)**

- The *flexibility* of the Adopt-A-Watershed grant ensured our success.
- We are wondering how we can pay a project coordinator in the future. Without Adopt-a-Watershed it will be a challenge.
- To progress to creating wider buffer strips along municipal drains and planting shelter belts, payment for ecological goods and services might have to be implemented.
- Environmental work in agricultural areas should involve farmers to have any degree of success – “farmers working with farmers”
- Flexibility is needed in working with individual farmers. Sometimes we can make a 60% improvement but not 100%. Which is better? 0% or 60%?
- Stewardship programs need to have consistent long term funding. The PRWIN has finally acquired credibility and expertise but it took a few years. Hopefully the committee can continue in the future. That will depend on available funding and reliable volunteers.

### **Taking Action through Direct Land Protection on Georgian Bay**

- Partnerships & people have been instrumental in allowing us get to the next level
- We aren't able to achieve success in taking action without the other three principles

### **MNR Projects**

- Continue to work with key partners in setting priorities for the Lake Huron ecosystem through Lake Huron Binational Partnership, Canadian Framework for Community Action, Binational Biodiversity Strategy etc.

### **E.coli and Pathogens in Beach Sand**

- Future Research Needs
  - sand: what, why, where, etc.
  - pathogens
  - selective survival and multiplication
  - new fecal indicator bacteria
  - faster analytical methods: PCR
  - modelling gw-lake-beach interface
- Adapt Science to Initiatives
- Multiple Barrier Approach:
  - reduce *E. coli* at source
  - modify *E. coli* pathways
  - monitor/predict *E. coli* levels
- Not a new concept; currently being done, but:
  - communicate science (to agencies, public)
  - adapt programs (e.g., no lawns, protect dunes)
  - modify public expectations (*E. coli* may never go away)
- What Can Residents Do?
  - protect/restore sand dunes and beach grass

- don't plant lawns next to beach
- don't encourage geese, seagulls, etc.
- maintain septic system
- educate neighbours, visitors
- petition governments for action
- be patient with the scientists working on this

### **Watershed Report Cards**

- A collaborative approach to watershed monitoring could...
  - Identify priority areas
  - Provide a overview of the health of the Lake Huron Georgian Bay watersheds
  - Provide a common communication tool between agencies, communities



## Appendix 2 – Agenda – Information Session

### Lake Huron Information Session 2008 Blue Mountain Resort, Grand Central Lodge, Summit Room November 5, 2008, 9:30 – 5:00 (reception to follow)

8:30 **Arrival** and coffee/tea/continental breakfast

9:30 **Welcome and Introduction**

- Opening remarks (*Janette Anderson, EC*)
- Welcome (*Ellen Anderson, Mayor, Town of Blue Mountains*)
- Session format and logistics (*Randy French, facilitator*)

9:40 **Lake Huron Binational Partnership and the Canadian Framework for Community Action** (*Janette Anderson, EC*)

**Lake Huron Binational Partnership and US implementation activities** (*Jamie Schardt, EPA*)

10:00 **Session 1: Building Awareness** (*Chair: Wendy Cooper, GBLT*)

- Lake Huron water levels (*Chuck Southam, EC*)
- Georgian Bay Wetlands (*Pat Chow Fraser, McMaster U.*)
- Ecosystem change (*Arunas Liskauskas, MNR*)
- Lake Huron Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (*Greg Mayne, EC*)
- Achieving the Blue Flag (*Sarah Winterton, Environmental Defence*)

11:15 **Break and Lake Huron Youth Summit slide show**

11:30 **Session 2: Supporting Community Involvement** (*Chair: Mari Veliz, ABCA*)

- Water Protection in Huron County (*Susanna Reid, Huron County*)
- Lake Planning (*Randy French, French Planning*)
- Lake Huron Framework Pilot Projects (*Ted Briggs, MOE*)
- Collaborative Governance in Eastern Georgian Bay (*Rebecca Pollock, GBBR*)

12:30 **Lunch in the Vista Room**

1:30 **Session 3: Taking Action** (*Chair: Arunas Liskauskas, MNR*)

- Pine River Watershed Improvement (*Anne Eadie, PRWIN*)
- Watershed Adoption and Planning (*Mari Veliz, ABCA*)
- OMAFRA's COA projects (*Stewart Sweeney, OMAFRA*)
- Taking action through direct land protection on Georgian Bay (*Wendy Cooper, GBLT*)
- Sturgeon Bay and blue greens (*Greg Mason, consultant to Archipelago Twp*)
- Lake Simcoe Natural Heritage (*Kim Baker, LSRCA*)
- MNR's COA projects (*Rebecca Zeran, MNR*)
- Spawning Habitat Rehabilitation (*Eric McIntyre, EGB Stewardship Council*)

3:30 **Break and Lake Huron Biodiversity Slide Show**

3:45 **Session 4: Monitor, Measure and Adapt** (*Chair: Stewart Sweeney, OMAFRA*)

- E. coli and pathogens in beach sand (*Allan Crowe, NWRI*)
- Watershed Report Cards (*Susanna Reid, Huron County*)
- 2007 Binational Cooperative Monitoring (*Jamie Schardt, EPA*)

4:30 **Session 5: Questions and Discussion** (*Facilitator: Randy French*)

5:00 **Closing followed by a Reception until 6:30**

### Appendix 3 – List of Participants – November 5 and 6

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