Steering Committee Notes: March 26, 2014

Location: Komoka Wellness Centre, 1 Tunks Lane

Attendees:
Ministry of Natural Resources: Amanda McCloskey & Heather Riddell
St. Clair Region Conservation Authority: Muriel Andreae, Melissa Deisley
Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority: Jessica Schnaithmann (representing Val Towsley)
County of Middlesex: Durk Vanderwerff
Municipality of Strathroy-Carodoc: Marc Bancroft
City of London: Sara Rowland (representing Andrew MacPherson)
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority: Tara Tchir, Jeff Brick, Cathy Quinlan, Terry Chapman & Tracy Annett

Regrets:
Municipality of Thames Centre: Stewart Findlater

No Response:
Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority: Geoff Cade
Kettle Creek Conservation Authority: Joe Gordon

Durk thanked everyone for attending and for their participation at this meeting. Introductions were provided.

Jeff gave an overview of the steps in the Natural Heritage Study process to date and where we are at today.

Jeff presented the new Provincial Policy Statement 2014, effective April 30th. Replaces PPS 2005.

- Natural Heritage Systems – includes connections in areas expected to change with development at the area plan level
- Proximity to water features maintains linkages and linkages is stressed in the PPS
- Hazardous fire risk; prairie are not really hazardous as they burn quickly; plantations in a dry summer are the most flammable habitat type. Although further direction from MNR would be appreciated.
- The MNHS provides the framework for local studies that may be needed when development is planned
- Section 6.0 Definitions of significance; wetland and woodlands are defined by MNR in the NHRM (written by Brent Tegler); ELC's woodland and forests merged together (says you can use ELC or Forestry Act definitions of 0.5 ha and 1.0 ha min, respectively); other habitats are defined municipally;
- The PPS provides minimum standards; municipalities can go further

Provide the presentation to Durk to post on the Middlesex website for this project.

Jeff presented the Tasks completed and budget to date.

Tara presented "Natural Heritage Mapping Rules, Significance Criteria and Next Steps"

Questions Raised

- Tara asked if Amanda could review Table 12 regarding the ELC communities and provide any comments / corrections.
- Road separations: Sara wonders if it will hurt future conservation efforts if we say 20m roads don't matter? Prefer we state "existing farm lanes' don't separate patches and new lanes still require further study to determine ecological disturbances. Jeff clarified that new development still would require an EIS to look at impacts, and new lanes, roads and trails would be considered new development and trigger the need for an EIS.
- Muriel wondered why Nature London and Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) were not invited on the Technical review as they were in the first study. The following are the list of invitees to the Technical Meeting;

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jeff Brick	UTRCA	Yes
Cathy Quinlan	UTRCA	Yes
Tracy Annett	UTRCA	Yes
Terry Chapman	UTRCA	Yes
Tara Tchir	UTRCA	Yes
Tracey Haycock	UTRCA	Yes
Tracey MacPherson	ABCA	Yes
Geoff Cade	ABCA	Yes
Patty Hayman	SCRCA	Yes
Muriel Andreae	SCRCA	Yes
Michelle Fletcher	SCRCA	Yes
Alison Seidler	SCRCA	Yes
Mat Shetler	MVCA	Yes
Valerie Towsley	LTVCA	Yes
Dave Posliffe	Lambton County	Yes
Durk Vanderwerff	County of Middlesex	Yes
John Trott (Forester)	County of Middlesex	Yes
Jennifer Debono	County of Middlesex	Yes
Bonnie Bergsma	City of London	Yes
Linda McDougall	City of London	Yes
Sara Rowland	City of London	Yes
Stewart Findlater	Thames Centre	Yes
Paul Hicks	Strathroy Caradoc	Yes
Jarmo Jalava	Carolinian Canada	Yes
James Holland, Municipal Extension Specialist	Ducks Unlimited Canada	Yes
Jane Bowles	Western University/ Thames Talbot Land Trust	Yes
Amanda McCloskey	MNR	Yes
Brad Graham, Planning and Information Management Supervisor	MNR	Yes
Catherine Jong, SAR biologist	MNR	Yes
Brandon Woodworth, GIS Tech	MNR	Yes
Kate Macintyre, SAR Biologist	MNR	Yes

Name	Organization	Attendance
Joe Gordon	KCCA	No
Daria Koscinski	Carolinian Canada	No
Paul Michiels	Oxford County	No
Allan Rothwell	Perth County	No
Susanna Reid	Huron County	No
Mhairi McFarlane	Nature Conservancy of Canada	No
Jason Wintermute	LTVCA	No

- Open Despositional areas: bluffs are not depositional features. Is there another word to use?
- Hedgerow: is a very English term. What is the definition (e.g., treed or shrub). Other words include shelterbelts and windbreaks (wide windbreaks?)
- Road width and road allowance: Terry explained the non-paved road allowances don't separate vegetation communities. He buffers woodlands 10 m and if two buffers touch, they are <20m apart and can be clustered. See NHRM.
- Thicket: ensure there is a definition.
- Meadow vs. hay or pasture: Terry explained that we avoid active agriculture (even if a hay farmer is managing for bobolink, we don't include his field if we can help it).
- Seeps and Groundwater depended wetlands – Muriel knows of three locations (Komoka area, Dingman at Circle R Ranch, George White Centre); contain or did contain Harbinger of Spring flowers. Ask Tara if seeps can be <0.5 ha in size.

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Mapping – Terry Chapman - UTRCA

- Preliminary results from running most of the criteria separately:
  - Only 3% of woodland area is not being picked up as significant
  - Durk commented on needing something for how the information was identified.

Final Report

- Metadata – include in report or just with data?
- Include description of methodology that includes the meetings and reviews we've held
- Report should stand on its own; county can defend it with hired experts like Brent Tegler and not rely on the CAs
- Durk needs the Final formatted Report by **June 13th** to send out to the Committee of the Whole for the meeting on June 24th
- Share drafts with Durk ahead of time so he can write his report
- EIS/DAR Guidelines needs to be written but this can be added later
- Will City of London be consulted? No, Middlesex County is the client. London will receive it. They are undergoing their OP update now.
  - Jeff and Tara to give a 1 hr presentation with select London planners soon; Sara to supply some dates. Amanda indicated she would like to attend as well and copy Durk on the meeting e-mails.