

Indigenous Relations Framework Project Plan

Board of Directors

April 17, 2026

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Lake Simcoe Region
conservation authority



Outline

- Indigenous Relations Framework
- What are other agencies doing?
- Overview of Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Approach
- Work complete to date
- Next steps
- Considerations



Indigenous Relations Framework

- Municipalities, conservation groups, and other agencies are creating Indigenous Relations Frameworks
- Provides a path towards reconciliation
- A series of commitments and actions
- Aligns actions and/or commitments with:
 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action
 - United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
 - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S) Calls to Justice



What have other agencies done?

Conservation Authorities

- Co-developed watershed management, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, Upper and Lower Thames River Conservation Authorities
- Credit Valley Conservation - Indigenous Engagement Guidelines
- Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority
- Hamilton Conservation Authority
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

Credit Valley Conservation
inspired by nature

Credit Valley Conservation
Indigenous Engagement Guidelines
March 12, 2021

1. Introduction

Conservation (CVC) is committed to learning, growing, the path towards reconciliation together with Indigenous Peoples, and Peoples connected to the Credit River and watershed. This document represents our collective and current understanding and good practice. It is a living document. CVC still has much to learn and a place of humility and continuous learning.

CVC's commitment to engagement, partnership, and work with Indigenous Peoples, Communities, and Peoples is guided by: responsibility for the stewardship of the lands, waters, and Credit River Watershed for present and future generations; a commitment to inclusiveness, and our desire to engage Indigenous Peoples consistently, genuinely, and respectfully; and a commitment to ensuring that CVC activities and programs related to water quality and quantity are done in a way that respects knowledge and communities past and present are done appropriately, and in collaboration;

encompassing all the formal and informal ways of collaborating, working, and communicating with Indigenous Peoples. "Consultation" has legal implications associated with it. The term "engagement" is preferred, and "consultation" should be used only when necessary.

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**THE THAMES RIVER (DESHKAN ZIIBI)
SHARED WATERS APPROACH TO
WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY**

ThamesRiver
CLEAR WATER REVIVAL

Written and published by the Thames River Clear Water Revival

**The Georgina, Fox
and Snake Islands
Subwatershed Plan**

2017

**GEORGINA
ISLAND**

**Lake Simcoe Region
conservation authority**

What have other agencies done?

Municipalities in Lake Simcoe watershed

- Durham “Durham Region Indigenous Engagement Guidelines” and Bilateral agreement with Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
- Whitchurch-Stouffville “Reconciliation and Engagement Plan”
- Kawartha Lakes “First Nations Consultation Policy”
- East Gwillimbury “Indigeneity Inclusion Diversity Equity and Accessibility Action Plan”

Scan of other relevant agencies in Ontario

- AMO’s Indigenous “Reconciliation Action Plan”
- City of Guelph “Indigenous Relations Framework”

Wider scan across Canada

Indigenous Relations Framework

Commitments can be:

Action based

- Example: hosting engagement opportunities for local First Nations, including First Nations in planning decisions, engaging in nation-to-nation discussion

Human-resource based

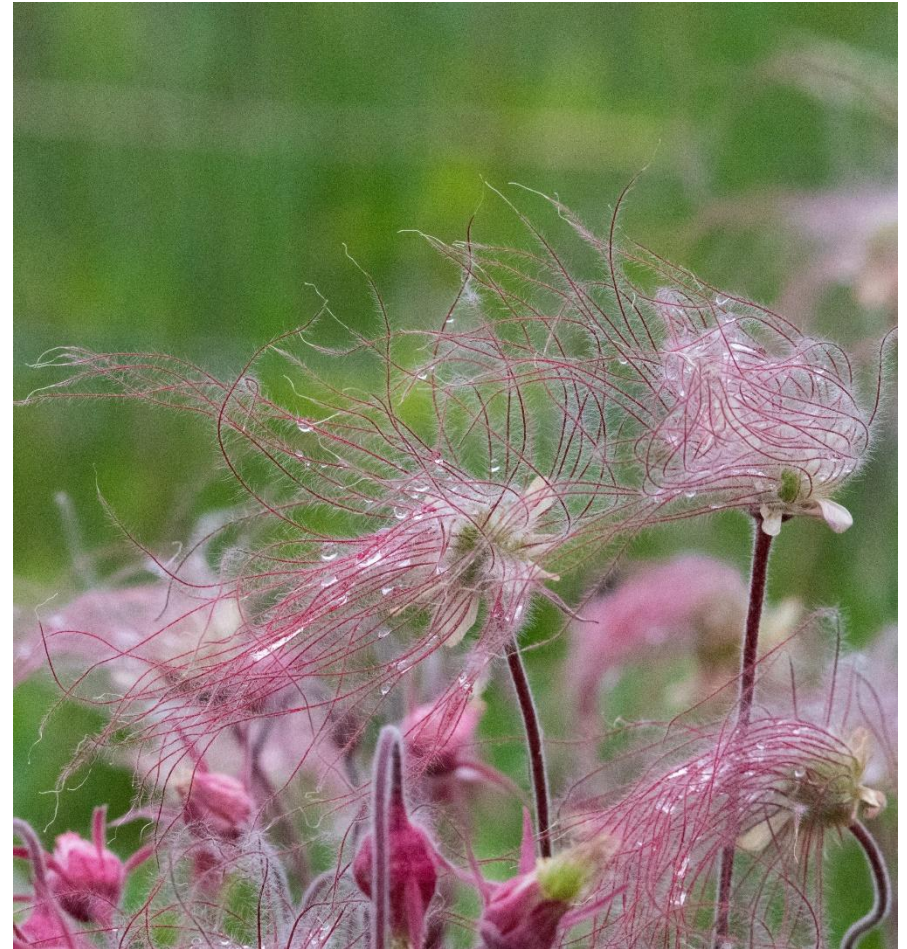
- Example: staff will be required to undertake training, senior leadership will attend First Nation events

Procedural based

- Example: provide procedural guidelines to staff on how to engage with the Indigenous community, review land acknowledgement

How are frameworks created?

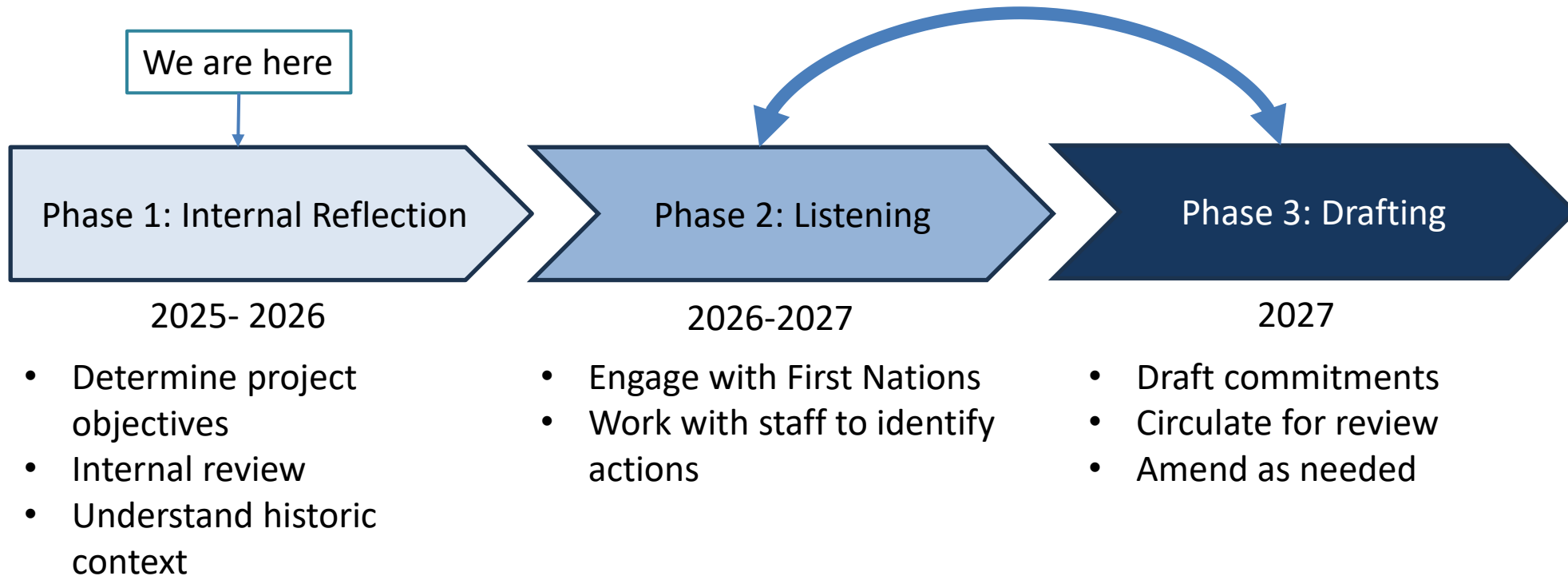
- Many agencies relied on guidance from consultants
 - Some Indigenous consultants, but not exclusively
- Few embarked on their own internally-led processes
- All relied on extensive engagement with First Nations and other Indigenous groups (e.g., urban Indigenous and Métis)
 - Focus groups, surveys, interviews, events, online engagement
 - Multiple touch points or phases



We must do our homework

- It is not the responsibility of the First Nation or Indigenous community to teach anyone about how to engage in reconciliation activities
- We have a responsibility to do a few things before we even reach out:
 - Understand the colonial and Indigenous history of the land
 - Relevant treaties
 - Consider what reconciliation could look like for us as a conservation authority
- Added challenge as a conservation authority
 - Our services and areas of focus are considerably different from a municipality
 - Structural changes with consolidation may expand engagement

Phased Approach: High Level



Phase 1: Internal Reflection

Work Complete

- Assemble internal working group comprised of representation of the different departments across the organization
- Conduct a review of Conservation Authority interactions with Indigenous groups
- Conduct a review of the historic context of the Lake Simcoe watershed, including treaties and Indigenous history.
- Review requirements under “Duty to Consult”
- Create a project description that will outline Phases 2 and 3

Phase 1 Next Steps: External Engagement

- “Nothing about us without us”
- Prioritize the closest rights holders
 - Georgina Island First Nation and Rama First Nation
 - Williams Treaties Nations
- Let them know we are embarking on this project
 - Review project plan (if desired)
 - Determine how they would like to be engaged throughout the project



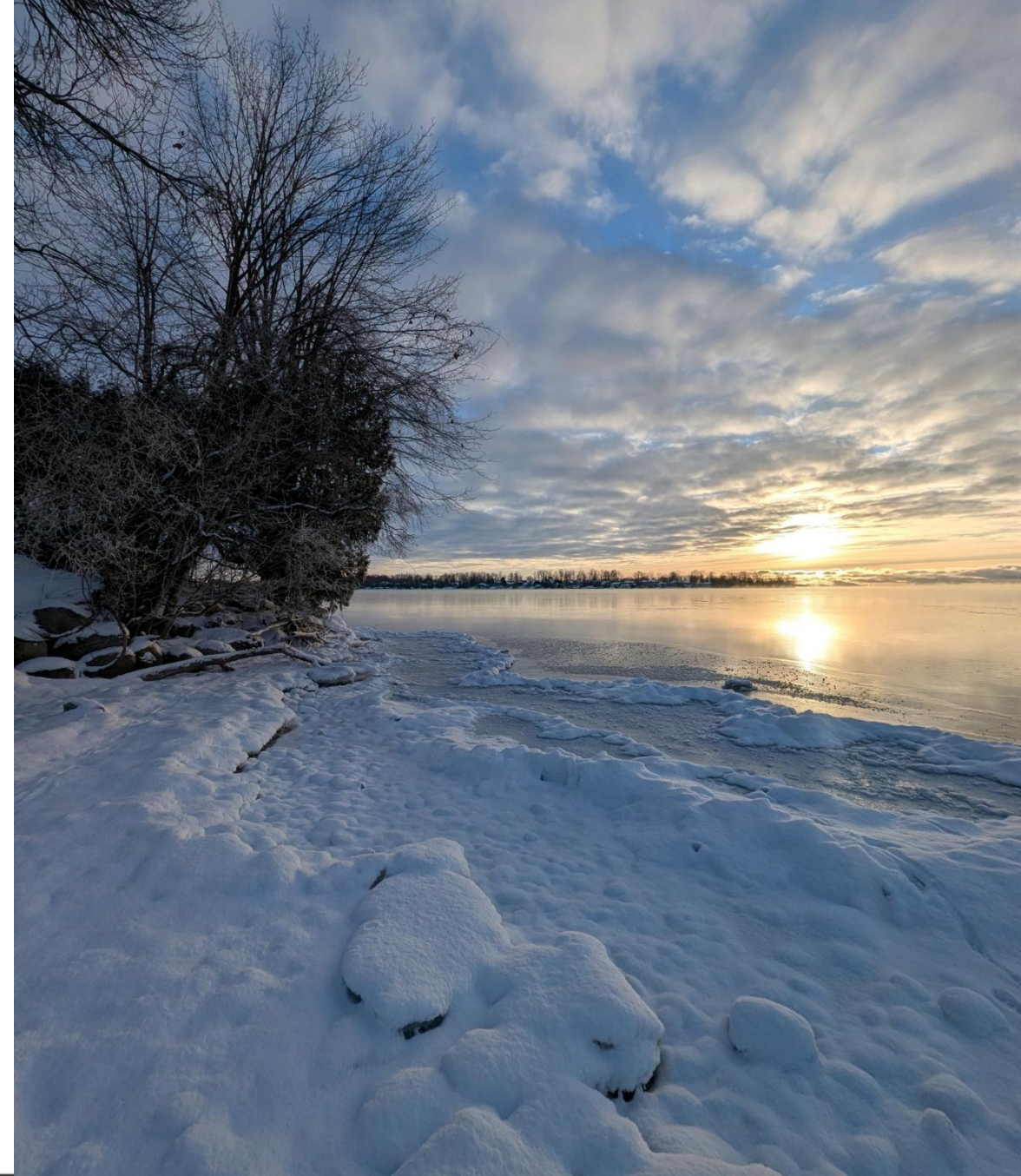
Phase 1 Next Steps: Internal Engagement

- Carry out workshops with individual business unit teams
 - Introduce reconciliation, Indigenous context of the Lake Simcoe watershed, treaties and Indigenous Rights, historic relationship between conservation and Indigenous people
 - Challenge staff to think about where their work intersects with Indigenous people, and identify areas of mutual interest and support



Considerations

1. Time required to build relationships
2. Risk of cultural insensitivity
3. Diversity of Indigenous Peoples and perspectives
4. External forces



Questions?

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