

**Submission to**

**The Ministry of  
Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR)**

**and**

**The Ministry of  
Environment and Climate Change (MECC)**

**from**

**The County of Haliburton  
and  
The Upper Trent Watershed Management Partnership  
(UTWMP)**

**Annual Conference of the  
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## **The Upper Trent Water Management Partnership (UTWMP)**

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In the fall of 2015 the County of Haliburton formed a partnership among its four lower tiers, two municipalities in northern Peterborough and a volunteer organization called the Coalition for Equitable Water Flow (CEWF) to advance the discussion of watershed management.

The municipalities in Haliburton County are the Municipality of Dysart et al, the Municipality of Highlands East, the Township of Minden Hills, and the Township of Algonquin Highlands; and the municipalities in northern Peterborough are the Municipality of Trent Lakes and the Township of North Kawartha.

The partnership is called the **Upper Trent Water Management Partnership (UTWMP)** and its primary purpose is to be a single voice for the Reservoir and Flow-Through (RaFT) lakes in the Haliburton Sector of the Trent Watershed on issues of water management.

The goal of the partnership is to advance Integrated Water Management (IWM) across the entire Trent River Watershed for the protection of aquatic resources, the environment, property values, and local economies.

## **The Members of the Partnership**

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The six local municipalities in the new Partnership represent the reservoir lake areas of the Upper Trent watershed and include 35 reservoir lakes and a number of flow-through lakes as well as the connecting rivers, which include the Gull, Burnt and Mississauga Rivers, and Nogies, Eels and Jack's Creeks. This area is the source of more than 70% of the flow in the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW) above Peterborough.

The Coalition for Equitable Water Flow (CEWF) is a volunteer organization created in 2007 which represents the water management interests of 33 reservoir and flow-through (RaFT) lake associations in Haliburton and northern Peterborough Counties, and the more than 30,000 waterfront property owners therein.

In spite of the successes achieved by CEWF in working with a wide range of stakeholders and the positive relationship it has with the TSW, it was recognized that a single voice for the Upper Trent area would be much stronger and unified with political participation. This realization led to the formation of the UTWMP.

## **Background**

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The control of the reservoir lakes was originally provided to the Dominion of Canada through Orders in Council in 1905 and 1906, and conflicts over the management of the water have been occurring ever since. Many lake associations and citizen-developed groups have worked hard for change over many years and as a result, some useful changes have occurred and much-

improved relationships have been built. However, the advance of climate change and its resultant weather patterns has changed all that and the consequences are now more serious than ever.

In 2007, the Federal government appointed a ***Panel on the Future of the Trent-Severn Waterway***. The Panel consulted widely and produced a comprehensive report, “It’s All About The Water”. As follow up to the Panel Report, Parks Canada established a Water Management Advisory Council in 2009, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Province of Ontario in 2011. However, neither of these initiatives has advanced the need for well-coordinated Integrated Water Management at the watershed level.

The UTWMP recognizes that Parks Canada is required to manage the TSW within its legislated mandate. Parks Canada has been successful in addressing its specific mandate for public safety and minimum navigation depths in the Trent Severn Canal. However, as weather patterns become more severe, there is an urgent and increasing need to focus on long range planning to deal with increasingly regular negative impacts across the entire watershed. That is, changing weather patterns are being widely recognized as the new normal, however, the issues of excessive flooding, States of Emergency, repetitive damage to public and private infrastructure, and untold damage to aquatic resources, along with the negative economic impact of such occurrences cannot be seen as normal or acceptable.

There have been three “water events” in the region in the last five years, wherein the Township of Minden Hills declared a **State of Emergency** in both 2013 and 2017; and wherein the member municipalities of UTWMP have suffered damage and losses to public and private infrastructure, aquatic resources have been at risk and local economies have suffered, in part because of lack of hydraulic capacity to manage the floods and in part because the water was held back throughout the system in order to prevent damage to downstream communities.

The UTWMP recognizes that there are already numerous government agencies and organizations that are participants in water management in the Trent Watershed. These organizations include four Conservation Authorities (CAs), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC), and TSW. However, none of these groups speaks specifically for the reservoir lakes area, which has no conservation authority and is generally not well represented in water management discussions.

### **Mission and Goals of the UTWMP**

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The mission of the Upper Trent Water Management Partnership (UTWMP) is to speak as a single voice on water management issues affecting the reservoir and flow-through lakes for all stakeholders of the Upper Trent Watershed.

The Partnership intends to advance the discussion on Integrated Water Management for the entire Trent River Watershed. It will also provide leadership on local water management

initiatives in the Reservoir lakes area in order to ensure equitable consideration for all communities on issues such as safe navigation, access to waterfront property, economic sustainability, and the avoidance of negative environmental, social and economic impacts that come with increasingly dramatic fluctuating water levels and flood events.

These discussions will ideally include the four Conservation Authorities, the Ontario Government through the MNRF and the MOECC, and Parks Canada. This engagement needs to address the future of Integrated Water Management across the entire Trent River Watershed. It needs to promote information exchange, meaningful dialogue and tangible action among all stakeholders for watershed planning and management including risks from floods and droughts as well as the impacts of climate change.

Within the Reservoir lakes area the main goal of the UTWMP is to advance water management and stewardship efforts for the protection of aquatic resources, infrastructure, property values, and local economies. The UTWMP intends to explore opportunities for projects to undertake initiatives in the reservoir area to achieve this.

### **The Role of MNRF and MOECC**

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The MNRF is committed to promote healthy, sustainable ecosystems and to conserve biodiversity and as such, the Ministry has a significant responsibility for land and water management across the Trent watershed.

The MOECC is committed to leading towards healthier communities and economic prosperity through the protection of Ontario's air, land and water and as such has a shared interest with MNRF for land and water management in the Trent Basin, particularly as it relates to climate change and planning for the future. MOECC also have a shared interest and overlapping responsibility with Parks Canada and their federal Ministry as related to Climate change.

In the southern Trent watershed the role of the MNRF is supported through the Conservation Authorities of Crowe Valley, Kawartha, Otonabee and Lower Trent. These agencies have numerous programs geared to the protection of land and water resources and they work with the TSW. The communities of the Upper Trent basin, from which 70% of the water in the waterway above Peterborough is drawn, have the same interests but do not have a Conservation Authority therefore we are seeking expanded MNRF support in these efforts.

We look to MNRF as the lead Provincial agency under the MOU with Parks Canada to ensure that integrated water management is implemented across the entire watershed and that long range plans are put in place to deal with climate change and increasingly extreme weather events.

We recognize the primary role of Parks Canada in managing the water of the Upper Trent basin however, we also believe the Provincial Government through MNRF needs to play an expanded

role, in partnership with local authorities, in implementing some of the programs Conservation Authorities would cover.

Specifically, we believe this involves engaging Parks Canada in encouraging water management practices and long-range planning that will avoid serious environmental, social and economic impacts as well as protecting the aquatic resources of the Upper Trent Watershed.

As a first step the County of Haliburton has made application to the Federal National Disaster Mitigation Program for 50% funding of Digital Terrain Model (DTM) mapping of The Gull River and Burnt River watersheds in Haliburton County to be used for Risk Assessments, Flood Mapping, Mitigation Planning and Prevention. The application will be submitted through the National Disaster Mitigation Program funding intake 2017.

#### **Our request of MNRF and MOECC:**

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1. We are seeking Provincial (MNRF) support for the County's application to the National Disaster Mitigation Program as outlined above.
2. We are seeking MNRF support for Hydrology and hydraulic studies from the Orillia Power Dam to the Gull Lake outlet for the purpose of establishing risk based flood plain mapping. This will permit the evaluation of mitigating measures and protection of critical infrastructure;
3. We are seeking MNRF and MOECC support for LIDAR mapping of the entire reservoir system, a project which has tentative support from TSW and the County of Haliburton through the County's ongoing aerial orthography program;
4. We are seeking MOECC as well as MNRF support for Climate change studies and planning, as well as the development of new strategies for the management of the reservoir system to accommodate changing weather patterns. This proposed initiative has tentative support from TSW but for which TSW cannot be the lead agency; and
5. We are seeking Provincial support from MNRF and MOECC for long term capacity and infrastructure plans for the reservoir system.

#### **Additional areas of shared interest where MNRF assistance is required in the reservoir area include:**

- Support for low water and drought planning by identifying and characterizing sensitive wetlands and shorelines, and expanding programs to identify the full range of the environmental and socioeconomic impacts that would result from extreme low water levels and flows.

- Expanding MNRF efforts to enhance the understanding of lake specific water level and flow constraints on fisheries by locating and characterizing spring and fall fish spawning beds.

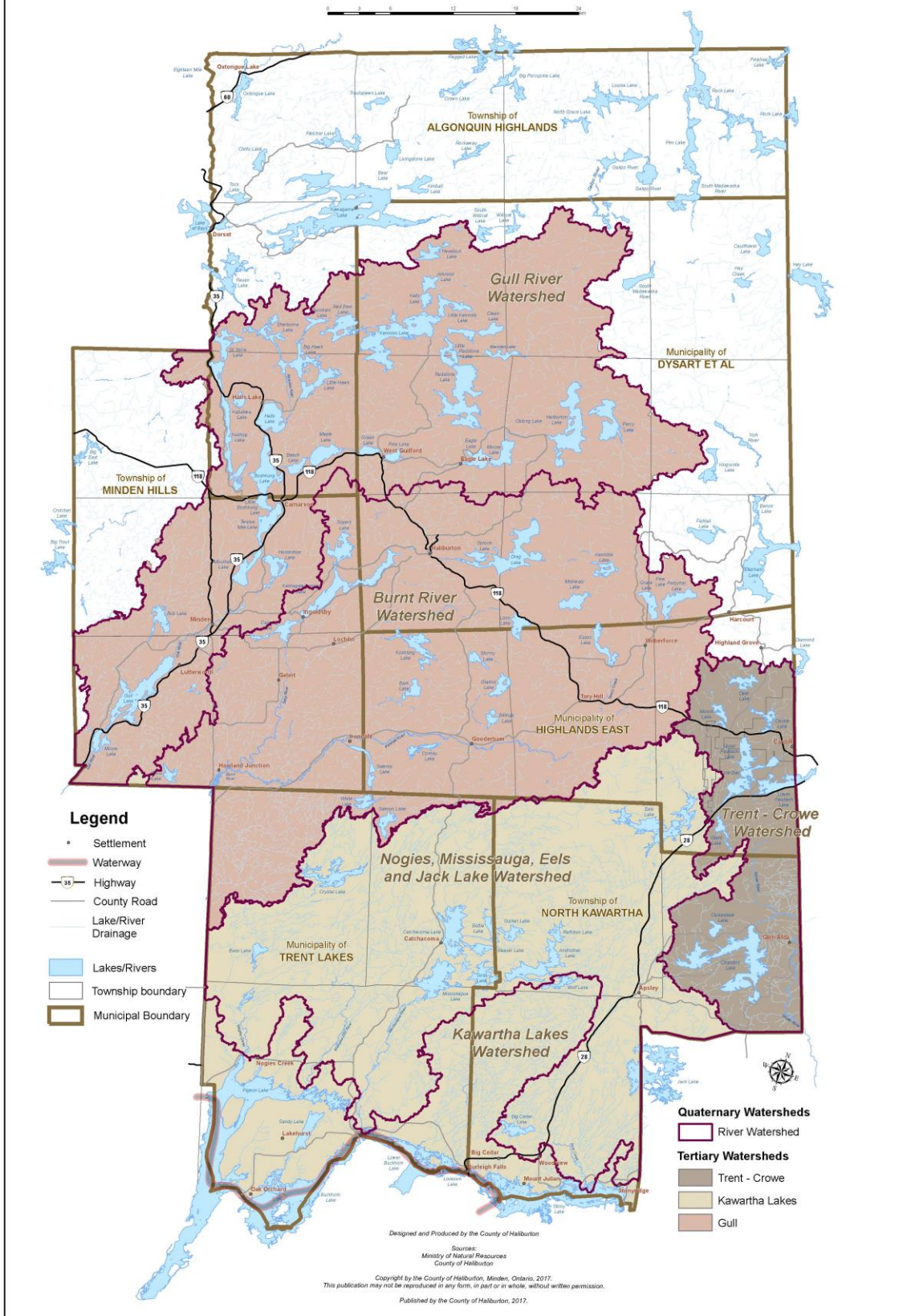
## **Conclusion**

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We are seeking MNRF and MOECC support for the UTWMP and its initiatives. We respectfully request the active engagement of both MNRF and MOECC with Parks Canada and other stakeholders across the entire Trent River watershed for integrated and balanced water management planning in the face of our changing climate. We respectfully request that an appropriate ministry staff be assigned to the file.

Our aquatic resources, infrastructure, property values and economies rely on it.

# Upper Trent Water Management Partnership Municipal Members



### Legend

- Settlement
- Waterway
- Highway
- County Road
- Lake/River Drainage
- Lakes/Rivers
- Township boundary
- Municipal Boundary

- Quaternary Watersheds**
- River Watershed
- Tertiary Watersheds**
- Trent - Crowe
  - Kawartha Lakes
  - Gull

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