

Advancing Water Thinking *Engaging People. Creating Ripples.*

Making Lake Simcoe a Living Laboratory



Ontario Water Centre for Innovation, Research & Learning
Business Plan Synopsis 2014 to 2017

February 2014



Vision *Advance water thinking. Nurture water thinkers.*

Mission *Water is all. Engage people. Create ripples.*

BACKGROUND

The idea of creating an internationally-recognized water centre on Lake Simcoe traces to 2006 when 300 citizens in the watershed came together to create an action plan to save the ailing lake. Support grew, and the concept evolved. In 2011, the Ladies of the Lake Conservation Association received a three-year funding commitment from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to launch the water centre's first initiative -- the multidisciplinary SPLASH Floating Water Festival in the Town of Georgina.

From 2011 to 2013, South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation invested in strategic planning, program development and a business plan for the water centre, as did York Region and the Town of Georgina. In 2012, the water centre gained CRA status as a charitable educational organization. Support and recognition from individuals, corporations, local, regional, provincial and federal jurisdictions have helped the water centre find its niche.

Now, the Lake Simcoe water centre is ready to join the emerging group of water thinkers—institutions, individuals and communities—throughout North America with its own unique focus:

- championing Lake Simcoe and the watershed as a living laboratory for water thinking while adding direct economic and social benefit to Lake Simcoe communities
- acting as a hub and a catalyst to advance thinking about the multidimensional aspects of water and watersheds bringing different sectors and those within sectors together to pursue results-driven outcomes
- creating programs such as "SPLASH" that link water and watersheds, citizens, science and the arts to attract visitors to Lake Simcoe

Water thinking begins from the perspective that water is our planetary lifeblood and the matrix of life. Water integrates all aspects of life from the ecological, social, cultural, economic and recreational to the spiritual.

Water thinkers know that water is a defining issue for the 21st century. They celebrate water's transformational power and the flows between multidisciplinary invention, research and learning to benefit people and nature equally. Water thinkers are inspired by the wonders of water and are excited by the possibilities of the unknown.

- leveraging current (government) investments by filling an identified gap: bringing proven communications skills that are as yet largely absent in this field --aggregating, sharing and mobilizing knowledge
- innovating through the use of 21st century participatory communications to allow researchers, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and engaged citizens extend and advance water thinking
- advancing Canada's position as a leader in water thinking

Adding Value to the Work of Others

The water centre will utilize the Lake Simcoe watershed as a living laboratory and use 21st century communications to: nurture water innovation; engage people; foster value-added economic, environmental and social innovation to benefit communities.

WHAT'S NEXT? GROWTH!

By 2017, the Lake Simcoe water centre is planned as a 10-person organization with a \$1.7M operating budget. The anticipated annual economic (GDP) impact of the water centre through activities including tourism is estimated at \$ 2.7 million -- \$2.3 million of that being labour. Environmental and social impacts add further value.

BUSINESS PLAN

The Business Plan that has been completed sets out an action plan supported by a financial plan and risk assessments. Organizational requirements are also articulated. Operating principles are:

- Limit capital costs to focus on programming and partners

- Growth/expense will follow program and funding growth
- Programs will be designed to attract quality partners to leverage water centre's direct investment in programs
- Program and financial planning will be laddered on an ongoing three-year basis.

The water centre will pursue diverse revenue sources and avoid singular dependencies. Revenues will be sourced from three major areas: public, private and earned. Multiple sources of revenues will be pursued within each area.

A start up campaign will begin in 2014. Operations will also be established that year.

See Strategic and Business Plan at www.ontariowatercentre.ca

| Programs and their Benefits | Administrative Operations | Program: SPLASH Festival | Program: Water Journeys | Program: Xchange Conference | Program: Business Incubation | Program: Frontier Research | Program: Clearwater Farm |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Programs shown to the right are described on the following pages. | | | | | | | |
| Economic Benefits | | | | | | | |
| - immediate economic impact of operating expenditures | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| - catalytic effect on surrounding business environment | * | * | | | * | | * |
| - positive branding impact on community | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| - economic impact of visitor expenditures | | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| - opportunities for greater profile for local, and watershed businesses through participation or sponsorship | | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| - creation of new businesses and jobs in watershed | * | | | | * | | * |
| - economic benefits to users of new ideas, goods or services created | | | | * | * | * | * |
| - academic and career opportunities for researchers | | | | | | * | * |
| Ecological Benefits | | | | | | | |
| - responsible, 'zero carbon' operation | * | * | | * | * | * | * |
| - demonstration project for visitors; environmental learning opportunities | * | * | * | * | | * | * |
| - encouragement of similar initiatives in other watershed communities | | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| - commercialization of goods and services that will encourage environmental remediation; have ecological benefit | | | | | * | * | * |
| Social & Cultural Benefits | | | | | | | |
| - learning and social opportunities | * | * | * | * | | | * |
| - volunteer opportunities ('citizen science' and other) | * | * | * | * | | * | * |
| - generation of sense of community wellbeing | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| - encouragement of healthy physical activity | | | * | | | | * |

Programming Underway

Water Centre programming promises to rehabilitate the watershed, help local economies prosper and enhance the quality of life for residents.

(1.) SPLASH Festival

SPLASH, heading into it's fourth season, is a series of "refreshing and cool" collaborative events celebrating the Lake while benefiting multiple stakeholders. www.splashfestival.ca. Last year 3,000 people at the SPLASH Beach Bash (Jackson's Point in Georgina) enjoyed music, participatory arts and sports. High school students in the Water Dragon's Lair shared ideas about how water-wise subdivisions could improve people's lives. Over 200 people took part in a research project about shoreline landowner views that incorporate for MOE listening to fusion jazz and playing croquet. This year 8,000 people will gather in Georgina, Innisfil, Beaverton and East Gwillimbury.

SPLASH contributes to local tourism, builds existing relationships, adds new ones, and pilots new ideas. Creates serious ripples.

(2.) Water Journeys

This program incorporates water/watershed trails and tales, travels and partners, and the fusion of real and virtual. Two pilot interactive websites created in 2012 and 2013 with a variety of partners — ourwaterphotobank.com and ourlakesimcoetrails.com — will merge in 2014 as ExploringLakeSimcoe.com, promoting engagement, enjoyment and learning. Expansion will include the addition of citizen science, and the wider use of interactive technologies.

Mobilization of knowledge will involve circumnavigating Lake Simcoe and developing innovative site-specific applications using QR codes and augmented reality (AR) advances.



Emerging Programs

The Lake Simcoe area becomes a living laboratory — a testing ground for scientific and social innovation about water and watershed living.

(1.) Xchange Conferences

This program is an arc of conferences on Lake Simcoe targeted at specific outcomes -- from applied science to multi-disciplinary research. Year 1 will explore areas of promise for collaboration on program development with recognized water thinkers and other Canadian water centres to accelerate common areas of work. Years 2 and 3 will deliver one major and two supplementary conferences.

Lake Simcoe as a living laboratory will create broader partnerships, more effective communications while increasing local business and tourism.

(2.) Water Business Incubation

An essential part of the water centre's work will be to connect sponsors and foster the incubation of water-oriented businesses faithful to its mission and vision. Opportunities may evolve from the Xchange conference series. Incubators would work with Economic Development departments of local/regional governments who could even jointly administer the program with The Water Centre.



Businesses could range from youth entrepreneur start-ups to emerging water-related businesses attracted by the value of association with a not for profit water centre and Lake Simcoe as a living laboratory.

(3.) Frontier Water Research

This program, now moving ahead through the multi-stakeholder "ReWilding Lake Simcoe" project involves partnering with researchers in science and social innovation related to water quality and quantity using Lake Simcoe areas to test ideas and demonstrate results. Research areas would include agri-innovation, low-impact development, urban and suburban stewardship and recreation advances as identified in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.



As with "ReWilding" watershed community members will be engaged in new ways that benefit people and nature equally.



Increasing the Benefits

The water centre business plan does not assume major capital costs or operation from a specific site. However, the door is open to unique opportunities that increase benefits to communities.

The “Tossed Salad” ClearWater idea

One quick way to increase the benefits from Lake Simcoe being a living laboratory would be to combine offices of the water centre with a demonstration site developed as a future-thinking private-public consortium. As the Lake Simcoe watershed comprises agricultural lands in close proximity to urban areas, it is a logical place for nurturing community, growing food imaginatively, enjoying food, and helping an ailing lake -- all at the same time.

A possibility to do this exists with The Reed Farm purchased in 2012 and 2013 by the Town of Georgina, currently under review by the Town as to its most beneficial use. This rare heritage farm could generate wide benefits “ClearWater at the Reed Farm” as a 21st Century demonstration site enhances public awareness, action and education. ClearWater could become to Lake Simcoe what The Evergreen Brickworks is to Toronto. **See proposal at www.clearwaterfarm.ca**

Every distinct ingredient of this “Tossed Salad” of enterprise --would add flavour, nutrition and texture. Deep collaboration is at the heart of this vision as is a commitment to grass-roots approaches to developing opportunities. The farm could provide a framework for demonstrations of many kinds: wise water-use of land and water management, growing natural food, learning about food, preparing and enjoying food, and agri-tourism. The toppings could be water-inspired artful experiences for residents and tourists, a wide variety of learning opportunities and incubation of 21st century communications that create ripples.

Outcomes could include job training, public engagement, interdisciplinary learning, entrepreneurial incubation, and a whole new

way of looking at environmental stewardship. GDP impact for Georgina would increase from the predicted base of \$2.7 annually to \$3.5 million, and provide a minimum of five additional jobs.



The “Solar Sailor” idea

Attracting a futuristic iconic solar and wind-powered boat to Lake Simcoe would showcase multiple forms of neutral energy including wind and solar, help deliver exhibits related to water thinking and programs to various ports of call across Lake Simcoe, generate publicity for Lake Simcoe tourism, and create awareness and interest in the work of the water centre.

Timing would depend on sponsorship, and local building opportunities.



Work to date has create a roadmap to the launch of the Water Centre on Lake Simcoe.

This work has involved a steering committee and ad hoc planning committees working with consultants. Special acknowledgement is due to South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation for significant and ongoing support. **WHO IS INVOLVED SO FAR:**

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Chippewa of Georgina Island First Nation | Kerry Anne Charles | Environmental Coordinator |
| | Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux | PhD Nexen Chair in Aboriginal Leadership, the Banff Centre, Faculty of Social Work U of T |
| Town of Georgina | Robert Grossi | Mayor |
| | Winanne Grant | CAO |
| | Kelan Jylha | Economic Development Coordinator |
| | Karyn Stone | Economic Development Officer |
| Regional Municipality of York | Tracey Carrigan | Manager, Environmental Education |
| | Doug Lindeblom | Director of Economic Strategy & Tourism |
| | Bruce Macgregor | CAO |
| | Chris Rickett | Manager, Strategic Economic Initiatives |
| Biodiversity Education & Awareness Network | Barrie Martin | Chair (BEAN) |
| Kortright Centre | Alex Waters | Senior Manager, Living City Campus |
| School Boards | Allan Hoyle | Superintendent, York Regional School Board |
| | Mike Nasello | Superintendent, York Regional Catholic School Board |
| Trent University | Peter Dillon | PhD, Professor Environmental and Resources Studies; Chair, Life Style Science Committee |
| University of Guelph | Isobel Heathcote | PhD, Co-Chair of the Canada-United States International Joint Commission's Science Advisory Board |
| University of Waterloo | Seanna Davidson | PhD candidate, Governance in the Lake Simcoe Region, Liaison Chair, University of Waterloo |
| York University | Kaz Higuchi | PhD Faculty ret'd. Climate Change Researcher |
| | Paul Hoffer | PhD, Digital Media Professor, Chair Bell New Media Fund, Former Chair , Ontario Arts Council |
| | Karen Kraft Sloan | York University, former MP and Ambassador to Environment |
| | Kelly Parke | Senior Media Designer, Professor, Schulich, Professor Humber College |
| | David Phipps | PhD, Director, Research Services & Knowledge Exchange |
| DHX Media | Steve DeNure | President & CEO |
| Eaglewood Resort | Marilyn Oldfield | Owner |
| Mark Setter Associates | Mark Setter | Principal; Ontario Association of Landscape Architects |
| Sojo Social Journal | Kanika Gupta | Social Innovation entrepreneur, Founder Sojo (social journal) |
| Ontario Network of Excellence (ONE) | Jeremy Laurin | CEO, VentureLAB |
| | James Sbrolla | Cleantech Entrepreneur-in-Residence, Research, Innovation, Commercialization Centre (RIC) |
| Brookfield Asset Management | Brian Lawson | CFO, Brookfield Asset Management, Treasurer, Ontario Water Centre |
| Goldman Sloan Nash & Haber (GSNH) LLP | David Bristow | QC, LSM, C Arb. |
| IBM | Ken Pace | Senior Manager Business Development |
| | David Robitaille | IBM Canada - Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs |
| Lehman & Associates Planning Consultants | Robert Lehman | President |
| South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation (SLCFDC) | Peter Budreo | General Manager |
| | Anne Pegg | Alliance for a Better Georgina, SLCFDC Board |
| Ladies of the Lake | Annabel Slaight | President, Ladies of the Lake, Alliance for a Better Georgina (ABG); Chair, Ontario Water Centre |
| | Goody Gerner | Past President, Ladies of the Lake; Secretary, Ontario Water Centre |
| Barrie | Joan Lehman | Social and Community Advocate |
| Ascentia Change Strategy | Hilary Van Weller | CEO, Ascentia; Past Chair Windfall Ecology Centre/Director of Social Innovation |
| Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Auth. | Renee Jarrett | General Manager, Communications and Education |
| | Mike Walters | General Manager, Watershed Management |
| Ontario Forestry Association | Tracy Smith | Retired Head MNR Lake Simcoe; ED, Ontario Forestry Ass'n, Vice Chair Ontario Water Ctr. |
| Ontario Parks | Lori Walbrook | Marketing Specialist |
| POUS Project on Ecological Governance | Carol Maas | Director of Water Sustainability Project |
| Walkerton Clean Water Centre | Larry Moore | CEO |

For more information; to become involved contact info@ontariowatercentre.ca

Lake Simcoe is the most intensively-used in-land lake in Ontario. Its shores embrace cities, wetlands, forests, industry and agriculture. It is close to research – universities and colleges -- and a critical mass of business innovation. It is a living laboratory — naturally.

