

Township of Douro-Dummer

Benny Lin

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

MUNICIPAL PROFILE:

POPULATION: 6,709 (2016 Census)

LOCATION: Central-eastern Ontario, Canada, in Peterborough County along the Trent-Severn Waterway

SIZE: 458.95 km²

TOTAL PRIVATE DWELLINGS: 3,434

GREAT LAKES WATERSHED: Lake Ontario

BACKGROUND

The Township of Douro-Dummer has experienced the compounding impacts of climate change on its natural, built, social, and economic systems. Having a largely agricultural community, the Township is particularly sensitive to changes in precipitation, water quantity, and water quality. The Township has heard concerns from the community about drought and limited access to water supply due to extreme heat throughout the year. The agricultural community was significantly affected by a drought in 2016 which led to water shortage and crop damage.

The Township of Douro-Dummer has demonstrated considerable effort in adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change. They have participated collaboratively in multiple sustainability efforts within the Greater Peterborough area, such as the Sustainability Peterborough Community Plan. In 2016, Sustainable Peterborough developed a Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) for the Greater Peterborough Area (including Douro-Dummer) to reduce local contributions to climate change and prepare the community for present and future impacts. These plans include goals and actions to help the agricultural sector adapt and prepare for the increasing impacts of climate change, ensuring that the community is resilient to recurring impacts such as extreme heat and water scarcity.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In keeping with community concerns and priority areas of the Township and the Greater Peterborough Area, Douro-Dummer decided to host a workshop for the agricultural community on how to adapt to and prepare for drought conditions. The

workshop was intended to be both a learning and a networking opportunity for local farmers and members of the agricultural community. The aim was to introduce them to new ideas and technology in adaptation and provide access to educational tools that comprise of up-to-date information that is both feasible and easily accessible. The full-day workshop hosted several subject matter experts, vendors, and speakers, including representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), biologists, conservation authorities, and local organizations such as Agricorp. Attendees learned about the water cycle and well considerations, alternative water systems and feeding strategies, as well as farm stewardship and incentives. Booths were set up with various organizations from the area sharing products and knowledge. Additionally, information from farmers was gathered to help inform current conditions and vulnerabilities of the agricultural community. Farmers were asked if they experienced any water shortages or concerns and how they typically dealt with these issues.



Derek Hatfield



PROJECT PLANNING

Planning of the workshop began in late 2016 as part of the Collaborative Implementation Group project. Township staff worked together to design the concept of the workshop and then began inviting vendors, speakers, and attendees.

By leveraging existing contacts from academic institutions, the Provincial government, and local members of the agricultural community, speakers were invited to actively participate in the workshop. To secure attendees from the target audience (local farmers), the project lead contacted local organizations and asked them to reach out and invite their members to attend the workshop. Much of the marketing was done through word of mouth and visiting farms and organizations.

Municipal partners were told about the workshop and asked to share the event with their staff and anyone interested in their own networks. Prior to the workshop, materials were gathered, and multiple planning meetings were held. Communications and announcements about the workshop were made through various means including word of mouth, social media platforms, posters, emailing to networks, and Eventbrite registration. The workshop was held on March 1, 2017 from 9-3pm at the Douro-Dummer Community Centre. After the workshop, an exit survey was conducted to evaluate the success of the workshop and determine interest in a second workshop to take place in 2018.

FUNDING

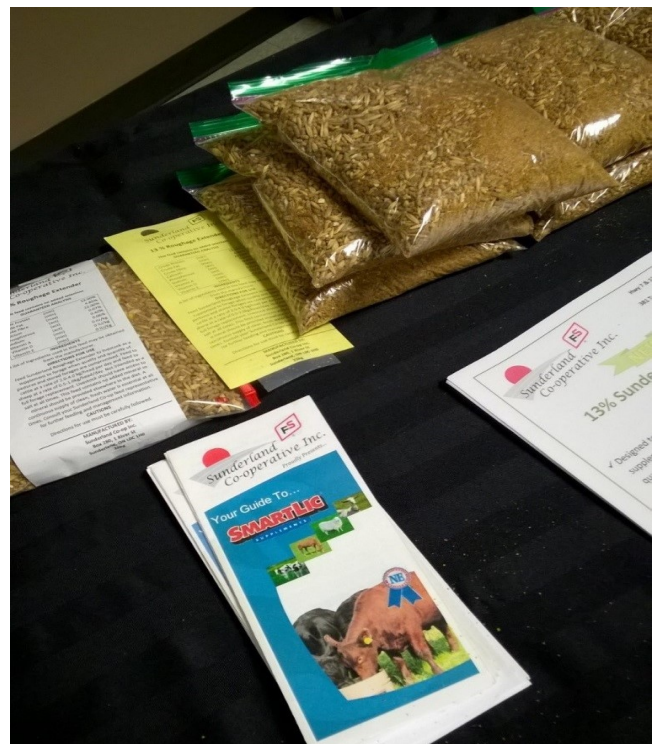
Funding for the project was supported by the \$7,000 grant from the MOECC for participating in the Collaborative Implementation Group project. These funds were matched by cash or in-kind contributions on behalf of the Township.

The funding was able to cover materials for the workshop such as posters and refreshments.

PARTNERSHIPS

The success of the workshop was partly due to the multitude of partners who participated in the event by speaking, hosting a booth, or simply attending the workshop. The list of partners is below:

Peterborough County, Sustainable Peterborough, Peterborough Cattlemen's Association; 4-H; Dairy Farmers of Ontario; Peterborough



County Federation of Agriculture (PCFA); OMAFRA; Agriculture Management Institute (AMI); Otonabee Conservation; Peterborough County Stewardship; Farms at Work; East Central Farm Stewardship Collaborative; Alternative Feed Suppliers; Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; Transition Town Peterborough; Climate Change Action Plan, etc.

The partnership that the Township found most helpful was with the Greater Peterborough Area Climate Change Action Plan (GPA CCAP) and OMAFRA, who helped to implement the first workshop. OMAFRA was very supportive in assisting with materials and coaching the coordinator of the GPA CCAP, as they have hosted similar events in the past. A business student from Trent University also assisted with the project.

CHALLENGES

The main challenges experienced with planning and delivering the workshop were limited resources and timeline issues with regards to avoiding the busy season for farmers (from Spring to freeze-up). This concern was highlighted when planning future workshops to re-engage the community, other projects, etc., as it will likely be during peak season for the agricultural sector.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

The Township received a great deal of positive feedback from the workshop. It was very well attended, and attendees reported feeling very informed. Post-event surveys demonstrated that participants were thankful for the information they received and that they would like to know more about sustainable farming best-practices at the next workshop or re-engagement opportunity.

Survey responses also determined several positive outcomes from the workshop:

- Most attendees would be interested in receiving more information on learning and engagement opportunities such as workshops or seminars, resources, and more information about climate change, drought, and extreme weather across Canada or locally.
- Attendees decided that if the Township were to observe the effectiveness of the workshop and continue to engage the agricultural community on adaptation measures, the best time to hold a second workshop would be in February/March 2018.
- The topics they would be most interested in learning about include: sustainable farming best-practices, soil, and technology on the farm.

MEASURING OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the workshop were centered around participant and partner feedback, in hopes of establishing a network within the agricultural community and hosting more events in the future. Moving forward, attendance at future workshops and community participation would be monitored. Township staff also intend to follow up with members of the agricultural community to determine whether they have implemented new strategies learned at previous workshops. The Township also hopes to gain a better understanding of participants' impressions of climate change and how these change as more events are hosted. Entrance and exit surveys will continue to be used to determine the impact of the workshops and to make improvements to future workshops based on participant interests and concerns.

LOOKING AHEAD

The project leads found the workshop framework to be quite successful for disseminating information about climate change to large groups of local stakeholders. As such, there is interest in engaging municipal staff for a training workshop on climate change in fall of 2018. Since there is also a continued interest by the agricultural community to learn more, a second workshop will be planned on a preferred topic such as sustainable farming best practices. The Township hopes to include this newly established network of agricultural community members in contributing to the ongoing Climate Change Action Plan being developed with the Greater Peterborough Area. Workshop attendees will likely have the ability to contribute their thoughts on climate change impacts and adaptation actions to improve resilience in the agricultural sector.



Aakash Maharaj

Acknowledgements

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The Great Lakes Adaptation Project Collaborative Implementation Groups

The Collaborative Implementation Groups (CIG) project targeted 12 municipalities throughout the Great Lakes watershed to identify and implement an adaptation initiative in their community over the period of one year (January 2017 – December 2017). The CIGs came together at various stages to share experiences, challenges, and opportunities on such items as measuring progress through indicators, project financing, budgeting, scheduling, evaluation, monitoring, and reporting. Ultimately, the CIGs were an opportunity to bring together practitioners struggling with implementation challenges to create a peer support network that brings these individuals together (both online and in person) to collectively work through the implementation of an identified action and share the resulting experiences.

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