

# Conservation Ontario & MOECC – Climate Change Workshop

## Summary of Feedback

### 1. Introduction

The Ontario Partner Environmental Network (OPEN) project is a long-standing collaboration between Conservation Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. A stakeholder workshop was held to request input on the rebranding of the OPEN Project to ensure it supports partner work in Ontario. Over the next two years, the OPEN project will refocus resources to address some overlapping priorities for Conservation Ontario and MOECC: Great Lakes health, climate change, and collaboration. The OPEN project will use innovative tools to showcase programs, initiatives, and integrate information to make connections between partners and stakeholders on a new website called 'Environment Connections'.

### 2. Overview of Workshop

On December 8, 2016 Conservation Ontario and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change hosted a climate change workshop at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre. The workshop was held from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm. Approximately 30 people participated in the workshop representing a variety of stakeholders.

The objectives of the session were:

- To provide an overview and introduction to the project.
- To gather input on:
  - How the Ontario Partner Environmental Network can be most useful to partners.
  - Useful applications or tools to communicate information to stakeholders.
  - How a “Community Hub” can help you.
- To share next steps.

To begin the workshop, opening remarks were provided by Jo-Anne Rzaeki, Business Development and Partnerships, Conservation Ontario. She thanked participants for coming to the session and noted that it was an important discussion and she looked forward to hearing the ideas and thoughts of the group on the key elements to help shape the Ontario Partner Environmental Network (OPEN) Project. Susan Hall, Lura Consulting, introduced her role as the neutral meeting facilitator. She provided an overview of the workshop agenda and facilitated a round of introductions.

Karissa Reichke, MOECC/Conservation Ontario, provided a brief overview presentation describing the history of the OPEN project and Portal. She reviewed the key linkages and recommendations in the *Connecting the Dots on Climate Data in Ontario* and *Watershed Adaptation in Ontario* reports as context to the project.

The format of the workshop consisted of three facilitated group discussions focused on: (1) audiences; (2) tools; and (3) data. Each discussion included a series of key questions to guide the conversation.

# Conservation Ontario & MOECC – Climate Change Workshop

## Summary of Feedback

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#### Audiences

Participants noted that the OPEN project focus on providing information for practitioners that support their efforts to engage the general public (including farmers) in climate conversations. In addition, participants identified the following audiences:

- All levels of government, decision makers and influencers (including politicians)
- Practitioners/engineers, public health units
- Different sectors which utilize climate change data
- Private sector
- NGOs, climate change groups
- Youth, academia

#### What are the key climate stories or climate messages you need to tell?

The group provided the following general advice about the types of climate change stories they need to share:

- The portal can serve as a ‘hub’ with linkages to show who is doing what as it related to climate change work, and create a platform for collaboration between the groups
- The information we share needs to create an emotional response
- There is still a need to make the connection to impacts and risks, not all audiences have ‘bought in’ to climate change
- A key message needs to indicate that adaptation and mitigation is everyone’s responsibility and not only that of government officials
- Some audiences do not respond to the environmental imperative, but rather need to understand the social impact of climate change. Others need to consider the cost of infrastructure

In addition the group noted the following types of climate change stories:

#### **Impacts**

- Multiple issues to report: flooding/snowmelt, warmer temperatures, drought, water quality issues, loss of natural heritage (forest cover, wetlands), health impacts, invasive species
- Social and economic impacts

#### **Data**

- Show the meaning of the data to specific audiences (for both adaptation and mitigation) and include MOECC climate projection data portal and the story how this data can be used by different sectors
- Make the data personal and show how climate change will impact people

#### **Looking to the Future**

- Create stories which can change and evolve as the climate change issue matures

## Conservation Ontario & MOECC – Climate Change Workshop Summary of Feedback

- Identify the overarching risks of inaction and benefits of action (i.e.: Low-impact development for storm water management, green infrastructure, etc.)
- Share lessons learned and best management practices (IWM, LID) – including a space where practitioners can honestly discuss lessons learned (what they would do or not do again, barriers they encountered, etc.)

### What are the projects or types of projects that you would like to share?

The group noted there are many types of projects that could be included. They recommended that there is a consistent format and that the projects showcased on the portal should demonstrate change. Some of the types of projects that could be profiled are identified below.

#### *Tools and Networks*

- Developing tools to understand the return on investment for adaptation and mitigation
- Network mapping Ontario Climate Consortium work (i.e.: Who is doing what in terms of climate mitigation and adaptation)

#### *Strategies*

- Working on developing climate change strategies for conservation authorities
- Sharing data on reports created for adaptation in municipalities

#### *Data & Analysis*

- Analyzing ice cover on Lake Simcoe
- Sharing real-time water quality reporting
- Linking to the Ontario Climate Data Portal to generate climate projections and adaptation modeling, currently only climate data, future could have examples and tools for use
- Sharing data through the Open Data Catalogue

## Tools

### How can the tools demonstrated (storymap) assist in storytelling?

A key message from the discussion was to carefully consider who the primary audience is for the OPEN portal. If the main purpose is to educate the public, then the tools identified will be different than those for practitioners who are looking for tools to advance policy and the provision of a platform for data and knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Specific feedback noted the need to:

- Provide real-time data while providing available historical data trends
- Look at global trends to provide context for Ontario and understand what is working in other parts of the world (lessons learned)
- Include storymaps, videos, data analytics, timelines
- Provide tools which can be accessed through simple means (instructions for use) – Note that some parts of Ontario cannot access high speed internet
- Consider survey data on visitors to sites

## Conservation Ontario & MOECC – Climate Change Workshop Summary of Feedback

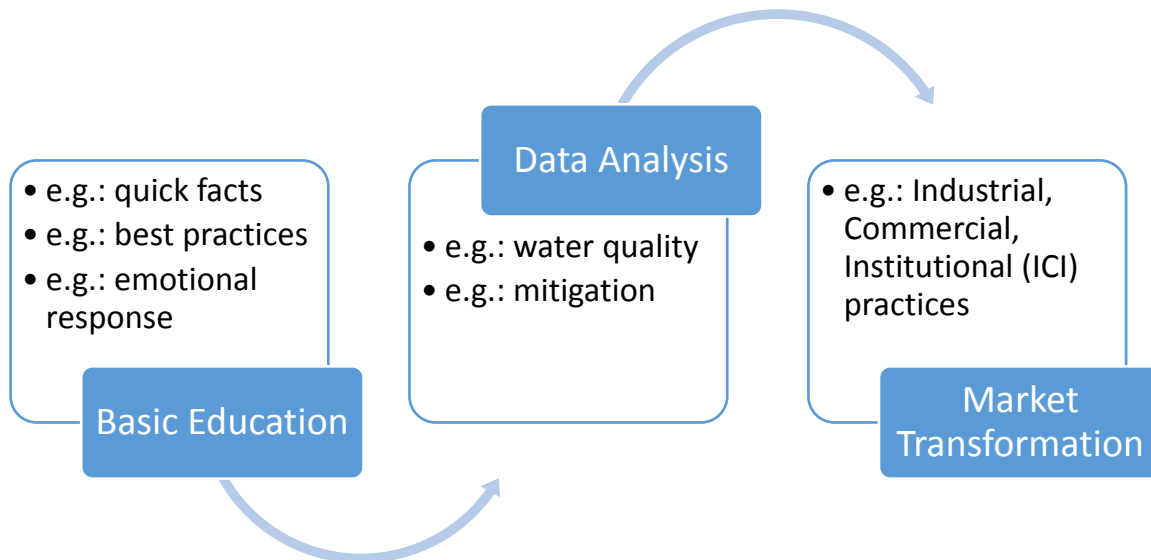
- Have separate platforms or spaces for different audiences (e.g., practitioners, community, municipality, etc.) through a pre-agreed framework to access information
- Provide a hub that links/redirects users to other information: lessons learned, benefits, best practices, fostering transformation, data sources, etc.
- Focus on collaborations and partnerships, point to the data you can access, basic info on what climate change is and transforming the marketplace
- Create a tool that can provide reliable and defensible data analysis

### Which online tools would help support your work in climate change?

The group identified a number of tools that could help support their work in climate change that could be available through the portal, such as:

- Groundwater level monitoring tools
- Impact on groundwater tool
- Water management tools

The group discussed the objectives of the portal tools. Some felt they should be designed to transform the marketplace while others indicated they should provide data analysis and basic education.



The group noted that the portal could serve as a 'hub' to redirect the reader to various trusted sources or champions. For example conservation authorities are trusted for monitoring data while BILD would be a trusted source of information and data for developers, etc. The hub model would allow trusted sources to show what the key issues are and make them understandable for their industry.

# Conservation Ontario & MOECC – Climate Change Workshop

## Summary of Feedback

### Are there other online tools that would be useful?

Participants noted the following tools would be useful for their work in climate change:

- **Notification function:** to notifying people about updates and new changes made to websites
- **Measurement and indicators:** Provide simple measurable to engage partners in being able to fund the projects which should be undertaken
- **Source of activity:** Provide linkages to know what studies are happening, the challenges they faced and measuring the impact of the projects
- **Cumulative effects:** Provide cumulative effects to show interaction of different impacts and how they impact different professionals and individuals

## Data

### Are the data sets currently available still relevant?

The group reiterated the importance of knowing who the audience as a precursor to creating the website/portal. Participants noted that there are numerous datasets that are still relevant to support climate change work amongst OPEN partners. These include:

- Monitoring and modelling data
- Existing modelling datasets such as: land use, natural heritage, ESAs (some is temporal), water quality, groundwater
- Source protection data

### Are there any new data sets to consider or that are needed?

Participants noted the following data sets are needed:

- Performance data on the impacts of actions
- Lessons learned
- Data on the social-economic costs of climate change
- Ecological feature valuation and the value of natural capital on preventing climate change impacts
- Use of indicators (rationale) – sustainability, census data, growth

### Are there any limitations or constraints on data sharing?

Participants noted that the key issue or limitation on data sharing is intellectual property (i.e.: who owns the data and how it can be used). Other issues included:

- Need for defensible and reliable data sources which are credible for validating interventions
- Access to secured or copyrighted data
- Need for metadata set to accompany data sets
- Gaps in the availability of data in different locations
- Liability and risk issues associated with how data is interpreted and used
- Quality control and quality analysis of the data sets for prescribed standards

# Conservation Ontario & MOECC – Climate Change Workshop

## Summary of Feedback

### What are the potential solutions to address data constraints?

- Citizen sourcing input on simple data
- Connecting the website to other data sets and websites to provide a larger breadth of information to draw from to address climate change (i.e.: hub concept)
- Site will provide access to all necessary data for climate change

## 4. Additional Advice

Participants made the following suggestions to the Project Team:

- Clearly articulate the objective(s) and audiences for the OPEN portal (i.e.: business case), then identify the relevant data
- Create a hub that can direct and redirect users to reputable and trusted information sources
- Consider a phased approach to rolling out the hub so that it is manageable and credible
  - Start with the uses for data, topics where there is a requirement to consult
  - Consider using the hub to identify the ‘accepted tools’ to support initiatives (e.g.: stormwater management applications for permit approvals, etc.)
- Consider the costs of building a portal and not getting people to visit it.
  - Consider a broader marketing campaign to promote the portal
  - Consider who is paying for data collection, validation, monitoring, etc.

## 5. Next Steps

Susan noted that a brief summary of the session would be shared with participants. Karissa noted that the information from these workshops will be used to develop a business case and inform the design of the OPEN portal. Jo-Anne and Karissa thanked participants and noted that a similar session will be held with organizations and individuals working on Great Lakes issues and that a third session will be held to review the portal design and discuss further collaboration in 2017.