

Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium Inc.
Strategic Plan
2015 – 2017

– BOARD APPROVED –

March 6th, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium Ltd. (LWRC) was founded in 1998 to address the need for scientific studies on Lake Winnipeg following evidence of water quality deterioration related to the 1997 Red River flood and to seize the opportunity to secure the former Canadian Coast Guard vessel “*Namao*” as a platform for conducting research. The administrative structure established to secure the *Namao* and sufficient funding for its operation served the LWRC well in that early time. The LWRC has a proven track record and is seen as a critical component of the collective efforts to understand and address the changes occurring in Lake Winnipeg. The LWRC was incorporated in 2001 and received charitable status in 2008.

Given the Board of Directors’ desire to pursue funding options that will better ensure the long-term sustainability of the LWRC and continued role of the *Namao*, it is now understood that enhanced administrative structure, reporting and financial management would be beneficial, especially as it relates to seeking more secure funding from public and private sources.

The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to identify current operational and governing priorities of the LWRC and to determine how they will be proactively achieved or overcome in the next two years in order to enhance and ensure the longer-term sustainability and relevance of the Corporation and its Programs. The time period for the Plan is restricted to two years in order to provide a solid foundation upon which a subsequent three- to five-year Strategic Plan can be developed.

Our strategic priorities for the period between 2015 and 2017 address the need to:

- Stabilize and diversify our **funding** base;
- Strengthen **governance** to ensure long-term sustainability;
- Augment the value and relevance of our **Programs**; and
- Enhance **communication** with our various constituencies.

BACKGROUND

PROGRAMS

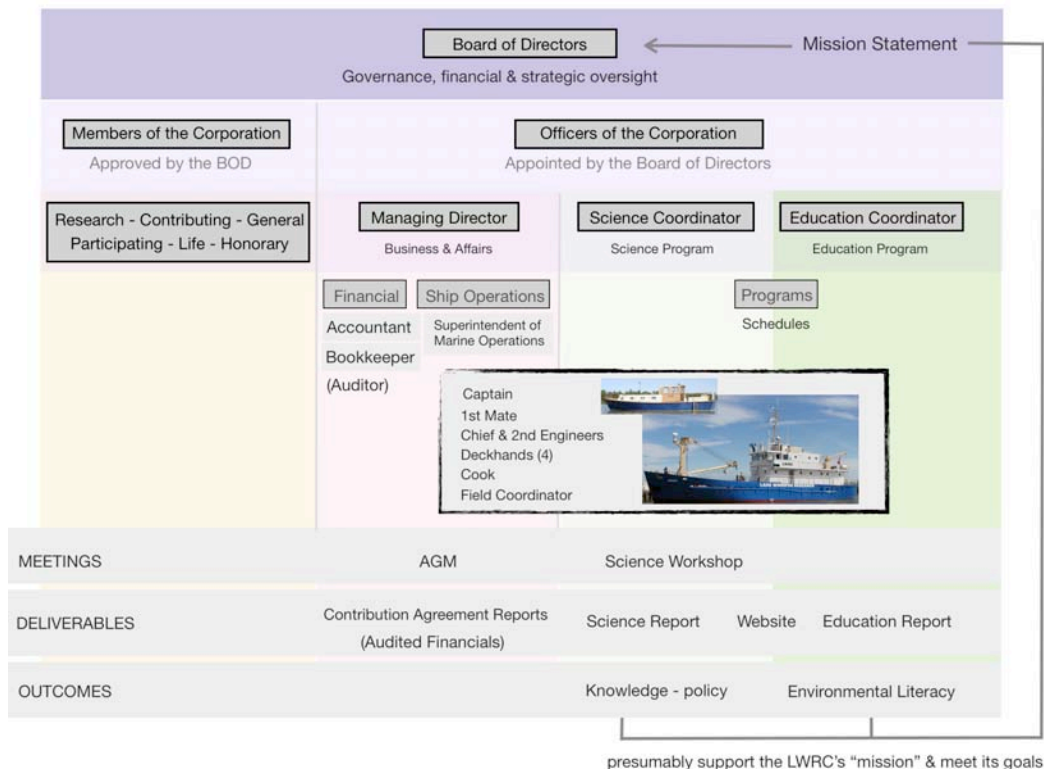
The LWRC has two formal Programs – Science and Education. The Science Program has enabled whole lake, multi-season scientific surveys on Lake Winnipeg since 2002 by providing the Motor Vessel (M.V.) *Namao* as a sampling platform to various agencies carrying out research and monitoring. In 2013, the LWRC acquired a smaller vessel, the *Fylgja*, for accessing the shallower, near-shore areas of the lake. In addition to coordinating three scientific surveys annually, the LWRC holds an annual Science Workshop and offers a Scholarship for honours and graduate students working on Lake Winnipeg and its watershed. The Education Program includes the Lake Ecology Field Program on board the M.V. *Namao*, classroom visits and web-based resources. Although

we do not have a formal Outreach Program, the LWRC website (www.lakewinnipegresearch.org) is populated with information suitable for the general public, such as the Image Library and Satellite Image Blog, found at www.lakewinnipegresearch.org/blog.

GOVERNANCE and STAFFING

The LWRC is governed by a Board of nine elected Directors from four of the six member classes of the Corporation, notably Research (3 directors), Contributor (3 directors), Participating (2 directors) and General (1 director). The remaining two member classes, Life and Honorary, do not have representation on the Board but do have the right to vote. Applicants for membership to the Corporation are evaluated and appointed at the discretion of the Board of Directors - the current membership is 32 members. The Board of Directors is also responsible for appointing Officers of the Corporation - at present, there are two paid Officers, the Managing Director and Science and Education Programs Coordinator. The LWRC also uses the services of an accountant and a bookkeeper.

The M.V. *Namao* requires a crew of nine - Captain, Chief Officer, Engineers (2), Deckhands (4), and Cook (1), all of whom work seasonally during the open water season. In addition, a Superintendent of Marine Operations oversees the overall operation and maintenance of the M.V. *Namao*, working year-round with reduced hours in the winter. A Field Coordinator is hired seasonally to oversee lake sampling, under the supervision of the Science Program Coordinator.



FUNDING

The LWRC requires an operating budget of roughly \$700,000 per year, \$100,000 of which is reserved for the 5-year inspection of the *Namao*. Contributors providing over \$150,000 annually to support the LWRC include Manitoba Hydro, Environment Canada and the Province of Manitoba. Additional contributions (of less than \$60,000 each) are received annually from the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba Pork Council, local government, municipalities, community foundations and other donors. Contributions less than \$1,000 support the Education Program.

ORGANIZATIONAL TENETS

MISSION

The Corporation is dedicated to facilitating multidisciplinary research on Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, promoting educational opportunities regarding the Lake, and fostering communication among all parties having an interest in the Lake.

GOALS OF THE LWRC

*To encourage, promote, and **facilitate multidisciplinary research** that will lead to a better understanding of the condition of the lake and human activities within its drainage basin:*

*To provide researchers with a **dedicated and capable research platform** such that research regarding the lake can be conducted where and when it is needed in a safe and effective manner;*

*To provide **educational opportunities** to students interested in any aspects of the research regarding the lake;*

*To **facilitate the communication of research results** to resource managers, commercial fishers, First nations people and other lake residents as well as recreational users and other parties interested in the lake, including the general public.*

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (2015 – 2017)

The strategic priorities for this two-year period align well with the mission and goals of the LWRC and directly address the need to:

- Stabilize and diversify our **funding** base;
- Strengthen **governance** to ensure long-term sustainability;
- Augment the value and relevance of our **Programs**; and
- Enhance **communication** with our various constituencies.

FINANCES

Goal #1: Achieve financial stability by addressing current financial shortcomings and longer-term fundraising in a strategic manner

Objective 1-a: Enhance the financial accounting system to provide greater details at the Board level, as well as for planning and fundraising purposes

Objective 1-b: Develop a fundraising strategy to take advantage of public and private support for the LWRC, including use of the endowment fund

GOVERNANCE

Goal #2: Optimize organizational efficiency, function and succession planning

Objective 2-a: Define and enhance Board sub-structure

Objective 2-b: Clarify expectations of paid personnel and Board of Directors

Objective 2-c: Define the reporting structure for summarizing activities to consistently and effectively update the Board

Objective 2-d: Unify, organize and store agency records

PROGRAMS

Goal #3: Add value to and maintain relevance of the LWRC's Programs

Objective 3-a: Enable and foster deeper partnerships with educational institutions, management and science agencies, with emphasis on Academia

Objective 3-b: Enhance on-board science infrastructure and adapt field programming to more effectively reflect changes to user needs

Objective 3-c: Ensure safe and efficient on-board facilities by means of a review and evaluation of safety protocols on board both research vessels

COMMUNICATION

Goal #4: Communicate effectively and regularly with the LWRC's constituencies to provide value and maintain credibility

Objective 4-a: Develop a communications plan that articulates and integrates the role and relevance of the LWRC's Programs within the collective interests of all contributors / society

Action Plan Goal #1 - Finances

GOAL: Achieve financial stability by addressing current financial shortcomings and longer-term fundraising in a strategic manner

Key issue(s) being addressed: Financial instability; cash flow issues; perpetual annual deficit; lack of financial clarity at Board level

Current Initiatives:

Objective	Actions (Steps)	Performance Measures	Time Frame		Roles & Responsibilities			
			Start	End	Board	Officers	Members	Other
1-a. Enhance the financial accounting system to provide greater details at the Board level, as well as for planning and fundraising purposes (by 2014/15 yr end)	Start a finance committee (could include fundraising committee)	Active committee formed	Q4 - 2014/15 Board mtng & then AGM	By 2014/15 fiscal yr end	Lead	Participate	Participate	Participate
	Adopt an accounting system that includes actual & projected income & expenses, based on established accounting guidelines* for non-profit (NFP) orgs. To be presented to the Board on a quarterly basis	Informative accounting spreadsheets Quarterly updates to Board	Once committee is formed	Q1 - 2015/16 Board mtng Ongoing as quarterly updates	Lead	Participate	Participate	Accountant Bookkeeper
1-b. Develop a fundraising strategy to take advantage of public & private support for the LWRC, including use of the endowment fund (Q1 Board meeting of 2015/16)	Form a fundraising committee with Terms of Reference that include both endowment and fundraising strategies. Recruit skilled/interested fundraisers, seek external assistance from Foundations	Committee formed	Q4 - 2014/15 Board mtng followed by recruitment at AGM	By 2014/15 fiscal yr end Duties ongoing	Lead	Participate	Participate	Winnipeg Fndn Thomas Sill Fndn
	Develop an endowment strategy	Board endorsed strategy Annual evaluation	Once committee is formed (after AGM)	Q2 - 2015/16 Board mtng for approval Ongoing	Lead	Participate	Participate	Participate
	Develop a fundraising strategy	Board endorsed strategy Annual evaluation	Once committee is formed (after AGM)	Q2 - 2015/16 Board mtng for approval	Lead	Participate	Participate	Participate

*Chartered Accountants of Canada – A Guide to Financial Statements for Not-For-Profit Organizations (proposed)

Action Plan Goal #2 - Governance

GOAL: Optimize organizational efficiency, function and succession planning

Key issue(s) being addressed: Board's participation as a governing body; succession planning

Current Initiatives: Programs updates provided in written format to Board; Board sub-structure (status?)

Objective	Actions (Steps)	Performance Measures	Time Frame		Roles & Responsibilities			
			Start	End	Board	Officers	Crew	Other
2-a. Define and enhance Board sub-structure (for 2014/15)	Create a Board Executive - chair, secretary, vice chair	Functional Board Executive	Action item at Q2 - 2014/15 Board meeting	Q3 - 2014/15 Board meeting	Lead			
	Set a regular meeting schedule for the year including time & location	Meeting schedule	Q2 - 2014/15 Board meeting	Q2 - 2014/15 Board meeting	Lead			
2-b. Clarify expectations of paid personnel & Directors in written format (by end of 2016/17)	Adopt / modify NFP guidance document* or Terms of Ref for Board members - include procedure for election of board members, terms to serve, # of terms...	Agreed upon NFP guidance doc t Terms of Ref for Directors Updated By-law	Q4 - 2014/15 Board mtng Q1 - 2015/16 Board mtng Q4 - 2015/2016 Board Mtng	Q4 - 2014/15 Board mtng Q3 - 2015/16 Board mtng AGM 2016/2017	Lead			
	Compile the duties / job descriptions of paid personnel Review & address duties, gaps & areas of overlap Revise By-law to reflect above exercise	Written duties of all personnel Board meeting to review & finalize Updated By-law	Q4 - 2014/15 Q1 - 2015/16 Board mtng Q4 - 2015/2016 Board Mtng	Q4 - 2014/15 Q3 - 2015/16 Board mtng AGM 2016/2017	Participate	Lead		
2-c. Define the reporting structure for summarizing activities to consistently and effectively update the Board	Develop reporting systems for: 1) Officers 2) Superintendent of Mar. Ops 3) Crew 4) Accounts (see Objective 1-a)	Effective reporting system(s)	1) Now 2) Now 3) 2015 field season 4) see Objective 1-a above	By fiscal year end 2015/16	Participate	Lead	Participate	

(by end 2015/16)	Implement reporting system(s)	Updates to Board using new system(s)	As above	Ongoing	Participate	Participate	Participate	
2-d. Unify, organize and store available agency records (by end of 2016/17)	Consolidate existing agency records including: governance directives, minutes, policies, job descriptions, standing orders, safety standards, audited financials, insurance coverage, bylaw, etc...	Comprehensive records	Q1 – 2015/16	Q2 – 2015/2016	Participate	Lead	Participate	
	Review & update (as needed) consolidated agency records	Summary report describing the review Board approval of review & updates	Q3 – 2015/2016	Q4 – 2015/2016 Board meeting	Participate	Lead	Participate	
	Develop a means to manage agency records to ensure they are up to date and accessible to Directors and others if relevant	Functional management system (i.e. web archive)	Q1 – 2016/2017	Q4 – 2016/2017 Ongoing		Lead		

*Chartered Accountants of Canada – 20 Questions Directors of Not-For-Profit Organizations Should Ask About Governance (proposed)

Action Plan Goal #3 – Programs

GOAL: Add value to and maintain relevance of the LWRC’s Programs

Key issue(s) being addressed: Keeping up with the new reality of reduced funding, increasing lake stressors and less Government-directed research and monitoring

Current Initiatives: Science Workshop discussions; proactively implementing changes to the on-lake field program

Objective	Actions (Steps)	Performance Measures	Time Frame		Roles & Responsibilities			
			Start	End	Board	Officers	Members	Other
Enable and foster deeper partnerships with educational institutions, management and science agencies, with emphasis on Academia	Initiate discussion pertaining to development of multi-agency NSERC proposal for near-shore program. Lead proposal writing	Summaries of meetings NSERC proposal	Q1 – 2015/16	Q4 2015		Lead	Science members	Industry, other partners
	Continue discussions with Arctic Watershed Institute	Meetings	Depends	Depends		Lead		
	Develop teachers’ workshop	Pilot 2-day, summer, on board Workshop	Q4 2014/2015	Q3 2015/2016		Lead		AT&E teachers
Enhance on-board science infrastructure and adapt field programming to more effectively reflect changing user needs	Determine equipment needs Determine science member agency program needs Develop partnerships & proposals to acquire funds (see below)	Input from users Discussions/input Modifications to field program New acquisitions	Currently going on	Ongoing		Lead	Science members	
Ensure safe and efficient on-board facilities by means of a review and evaluation of safety protocols on board both research vessels	Compile, review & evaluate safety protocols for vessels Develop system for effective communication from ship to Boardroom	See Governance Objectives 2-b and 2-d (above)	As per Objectives 2-b and 2-d	As per Objectives 2-b and 2-d	Participate	Lead	Crew participate	

Action Plan Goal #4 – Communications

GOAL: Communicate effectively and regularly with the LWRC’s constituencies to provide value and maintain credibility

Key issue(s) being addressed: Seemingly ineffective communication; reduced visibility in public sphere

Current Initiatives: Website; satellite blog; annual Programs Report; Science Workshop discussions

Objective	Actions (Steps)	Performance Measures	Time Frame		Roles & Responsibilities			
			Start	End	Board	Officers	Members	Other
Develop a communications plan that articulates and integrates the role and relevance of the LWRC’s Programs within the collective interests of all contributors / society (by Q2 of 2015/16)	Draft communications strategy - recognizing current time and financial constraints	Draft strategy	Q1 – 2015/2016	Q2 – 2015/2016		Lead		
	Board review	Approval or rejection	Q2 – 2015/2016 Board meeting	Q2 – 2015/2016 Board meeting	Lead			
	Strategy implementation	To be outlined in the strategy	To be determined			Lead	Participate	Participate

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The Table below provides an overview of the proposed timelines for the various tasks outlined in the Action Plans (Goals #1 and #2) above. In addition, it is recommended that an Implementation Chair be chosen to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Goal	Objective	Task	2014 / 2015	2015 / 2016				2016 / 2017				
			Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
G1	1-a	Form finance committee										
		Accounting system*		Approve	Implement							
	1-b	Form fundraising committee										
		Endowment plan			Approve	Implement						
		Fundraising plan			Approve	Implement						
G2	2-a	Executive & schedule	In place for 2015/16					In place for 2016/17				...
	2-c	Reporting	Officers, Sup Mar Ops	Crew – develop & test system			System in place					
	2-b	Board Terms of Ref**	Agree on Ref doc to use	Draft Terms of Ref	Revise or approve	Approve					Revise By-law	
		Duties	Compile	Review	Revise	Approve					Revise By-law	
	2-d	Records		Consolidate	Update	Update	Approve	Archive system	Maintain			

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**Chartered Accountants of Canada – 20 Questions Directors of Not-For-Profit Organizations Should Ask About Governance (proposed)