



# WREN

Waterloo Region Environment Network

**Waterloo Region  
Environmental Network**

Integrated Marketing  
Communications Plan

April 1, 2015  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Waterloo Region Environmental Network (WREN) is,

A community grown network of 110+ organizations and individuals in Waterloo Region with a shared interest in creating sustainable community.

With common needs and opportunities, this network works together to better achieve individual and shared community goals. Specifically, collaborating enables WREN to prioritize, build, and access community resources more efficiently, while making impact more effective.

This Integrated Marketing Communications Plan will help WREN meet the following objectives:

1. Increase WREN membership by 10%.
2. Convert 20% of WREN members into paying members.
3. Launch a stand-alone WREN website.
4. Engage 3 business partners in sponsorship relationships.
5. Increase conversations on Twitter by 10%.
6. Successfully launch WREN on September 10, 2015.

All these objectives will be accomplished through a wide variety of public relations, advertising, and media relations strategies. This IMC Plan recommends that WREN:

1. Conduct an annual membership survey.
2. Develop a dedicated WREN website and consistent brand presence online.
3. Clearly define and promote WREN membership fees and member benefits.
4. Develop and implement a social media strategy, which will result in a stronger social media presence, and a heightened capacity to promote member initiatives.
5. Develop a more engaging and useful newsletter.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Waterloo Region Environmental Network (WREN) is,

*A community grown network of 110+ organizations and individuals in Waterloo Region with a shared interest in creating sustainable community.*

*With common needs and opportunities, this network works together to better achieve individual and shared community goals. Specifically, collaborating enables WREN to prioritize, build, and access community resources more efficiently, while making impact more effective.*

### WREN's vision

*To create a resilient ecosystem for Waterloo Region's environmental community that defines, enables, and measures collaborative impact.*

### WREN's mission

*Using a three-tiered approach, WREN enables successful collaboration through ongoing programing, resource and knowledge sharing.*

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

WREN was started as a pilot project by Green Rocket. Green Rocket was launched in 2008 by Nicole McCallum and Jared Foxworthy who wanted to connect and drive new and stronger collaboration between socially driven individuals, organizations and innovations.<sup>1</sup>

In 2009, with support from the City of Kitchener, Green Rocket narrowed its focus on Waterloo Region and formed WREN.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.greenrocket.ca/history-mission-vision/>

## 1.2 MEMBER BENEFITS

To accomplish its vision and mission, WREN provides three types of benefits to its members:

- 1. Programing and Events:** That facilitate connections, share knowledge and expertise, and drive collaborative action within WREN.
- 2. A Digital Hub:** That hosts community resources and coordinates actions, priorities, and communication across the network.
- 3. A Physical Hub:** That secures and offers opportunities for affordable office and meeting space, as well as, other physical resources for WREN members.

At this time, WREN only operates the Programing and Events portion of its three-tiered approach. WREN plans to launch the Digital Hub and Physical Hub in September 2015.

## 1.3 CHALLENGES

WREN is at a point where it must step up or risk losing the momentum it has gained within the community to-date.

For this reason, WREN volunteers have developed the following Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Plan.

*This Plan recommends objectives, strategies and tactics that will grow WREN into an organization that will better fulfill its impressive vision and mission.*

## 2.0 MARKET BACKGROUND

### 2.1 WATERLOO REGION

As its name would suggest, WREN calls the Region of Waterloo home. The region is made up of three urban municipalities, Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo, and four rural townships, North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich.

- Between 2006 and 2011, the Region's population increased by 6.1%, exceeding the provincial and national growth rates.<sup>2</sup> The region's current population is more than 553,000 and is expected to be 729,000 by 2031.<sup>3</sup>
- Waterloo has an international airport, and has several world-class post-secondary education institutions: the University of Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier University, and Conestoga College.

### 2.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR IN CANADA

The environmental sector is challenging to describe and analyse because many different activities can be qualified as "environmental". ECO Canada, which has been analysing the sector in Canada for 15 years, has divided the sector into three categories:<sup>4</sup>

- **Environmental Protection:** air quality management; water protection, treatment, supply and conservation; waste management; remediation and protection; etc.
- **Resource Management:** management of forest resources, wildlife, minerals, fishers; management of energy resources

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<sup>2</sup> Region of Waterloo 2010. About Waterloo Region: <http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/discoveringtheregion/aboutwaterlooregion.asp>

<sup>3</sup> Region of Waterloo 2010. About Waterloo Region

(renewable resources, alternative fuels, heat or energy saving and management); etc.

- **Combined Environmental Protection and Resource Management:** education and training; policy and legislation, eco-innovation, research and development; safety and health; communications and public awareness; environmental consulting, engineering, legal and analytical services; etc.

The environmental sector is growing. In fact, the environmental sector will continue to change, adapt and grow according to changes in threats to the environment.

*As various types of environmental pollutions have diversified, so have the services to protect environmental quality, driving growth and evolution of the environmental sector.<sup>5</sup>*

The key drivers of growth in the environmental sector are:<sup>6</sup>

- **Environmental policy and regulation:** such as government spending, regulation and incentives.
- **Financial and economic drivers:** such as high energy costs.
- **Consumer demand:** for environmentally-friendly products and practices.
- **Environmental management practices:** such as lifecycle assessment and green procurement policy.

These drivers will likely continue to contribute to growth in the environmental sector, in Canada and/or across the globe.

<sup>4</sup> EcoCanada 2010: 5. Environmental Sector Trends: Labour Market Study. <http://www.eco.ca/pdf/Canadian-Environmental-Sector-Trends-2010.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> EcoCanada 2010: 24

<sup>6</sup> EcoCanada 2010: 7

## 2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR IN WATERLOO REGION

The environmental sector is thriving in Waterloo Region. Big non-profit organizations, such as Sustainable Waterloo Region, REEP Green Solutions and rare Charitable Research Reserve are well known within the community; deal with million dollar budgets; and have many strong regional, provincial and national partners and funders.

The Region of Waterloo is also home to a few environmental consulting firms: Dillon Consulting, Natural Resources Solutions Inc., AET group, to name a few.<sup>7</sup>

Various directories of businesses and organizations exist for the Region of Waterloo:

- **Sustainable Waterloo Region** provides a *GHG Services Directory* in order to connect their members to experience greenhouse gas (GHG) service professionals.<sup>8</sup>
- **The City of Waterloo** provides a listing of clubs, groups and organizations in the City of Waterloo that can be filtered by affiliation with *environment and nature*.<sup>9</sup>
- The **Ontario Environment Network** has a database of environmental groups, organizations and agencies across Ontario that can be filtered by city or town.<sup>10</sup>

All three suggest a prolific environmental sector within the region. Unfortunately a comprehensive database does not exist, though WREN would like to develop that resource.

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<sup>7</sup> As evident from a quick Yellow Pages search under *Environmental Consultants and Services*.

<sup>8</sup> Sustainable Waterloo Region's GHG Services Directory: <http://www.sustainablewaterlooregion.ca/our-programs/regional-carbon-initiative/ghg-services-directory/>

And there is still room for growth in the environmental sector in Waterloo Region. Threats to the environment continue to exist, and funding remains difficult to access. Many small to medium sized environmental organizations require support to grow.

Participants in a 2012 consultation study done by the City of Kitchener suggested that in order to grow the green economy, local government should:<sup>11</sup>

- Provide incentives to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour in the business community; and
- Offer integrated networking for businesses interested in environmentally responsibly behaviours.

WREN is perfectly suited to aid the City of Kitchener and Region of Waterloo as a whole, in accomplishing these tasks.

<sup>9</sup> City of Waterloo's Environment and Nature Clubs, Groups and Organizations: <http://directory.waterloo.ca/en/clubdirectory/search.aspx?>

<sup>10</sup> Ontario Environmental Directory: <http://www.oen.ca/dir/list.php>

<sup>11</sup> Regier et al. 2013: Our Region's Environmental Leadership 2012 Corporate Consultation.