

*Information letter will be made available to all potential participants, but cultural contexts may deem them inappropriate, particularly if literacy rates are low. Nevertheless, all hard copy materials (e.g., information letter, consent form, feedback letter) will be made available to all participants, regardless of whether literacy or other issues prevent signed consent.*

Date: August 18 2018

Dear Community Member,

My name is Charlotte Hings and I am a Master's student in Canada doing a thesis at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, in the School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability. I work under the supervision of Professor Derek Armitage. This Master's thesis focuses on the importance of various resources to the communities along the Lake Huron shoreline and shoreline conservation. More specifically, this study is focused on understanding the human-environment interactions along the Lake Huron shoreline and how knowledge of this can be used to improve coastal planning efforts for the Lake Huron shoreline.

Because you are a person who lives and/or interacts with the shoreline environment, your opinions are important to this study. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about this topic, and I hope to give back to the community through recommendations of participatory activities that may help you see how coastal planning efforts for the southeastern shoreline of Lake Huron can be modified such that they can better promote environmental and cultural sustainability and improve the well-being of local community members.

Participation in this study is voluntary and would entail involvement of a survey that aims in establishing what important benefits you and fellow community members receive from the shoreline environment, how they have changed recently or are currently changing, and how these changes have impacted your well-being. This survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and can be done over the phone, in-person or online, at your convenience. The information collected in this survey will then be brought to the attention of key informants in interviews that aim to gain understanding of the current ecosystem services that are of particular importance to community members along the southeastern shoreline of Lake Huron, how they are changing, reasons for those changes, examination of current coastal planning efforts and how they can be modified for the benefit of the environment and the people.



We will ensure that the association between your and the information you provide/research data is confidential. All information you provide will be grouped with responses from other participants. With your permission, I would like to record your responses using a voice recorder (if done in-person). However, you may choose to be referred to by a pseudonym or by “Participant #” during the survey. You may decline to answer any question that you do not feel comfortable answering and you may decline to be recorded. Digital audio recordings will be stored on a password protected computer and be deleted after a period of five years. Other data collected through this study will be kept in a locked cabinet in my supervisor’s office or be stored on a password-protected computer for at least five years. All of the data collected from this study will be de-identified (meaning that your personal attributes will be removed) and anonymized with a coded number to protect your identity. Once all the data is collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with decision-makers in the conservation field and the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations and journal articles. You will not be identified by name in my thesis or in any report or publication resulting from this study, neither will any of the names that you provide during our discussions.

If you have any questions about this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact Professor Armitage (by email at [derek.armitage@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:derek.armitage@uwaterloo.ca) or by phone at 519-888-4567, ext. 35795). My contact information has also been provided.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE 22119). However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have questions for the Committee contact the Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca).

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for your assistance with this project,

Sincerely,

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