

April 17, 2014

The Board of Directors Meeting of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority was held on the above date, at the Administration Office, in Strathroy, at the hour of 10:00 a.m.

Present: Steve Arnold, Chair; Terry Burrell, Vice Chair; Bill Bilton, David Boushy, Tony Bruinink, Elizabeth Davis-Dagg, Joe Faas, Norm Giffen, Rod Glen, Betty Ann MacKinnon, Kevin Marriott, Don McCallum, Netty McEwen, Frank Nemcek, John Romlewski

Absent: Anne Marie Gillis, Anne Gilbert, John McCharles, Steve Miller, Ben Phay

Also Present: Brian McDougall, General Manager; Kevan Baker, Director of Lands; Girish Sankar, Manager of Water Resources; Muriel Andreae, Manager of Biology; Patty Hayman, Director of Planning; Dallas Cundick, Environmental Planner/Regulations Officer; Tracy Prince, Director of Finance; Rick Battson, Director of Communications; Marlene Dorrestyn, Administrative Assistant

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested that each Director declare a conflict of interest at the appropriate time, on any item within this agenda in that a Director may have pecuniary interest.

BD-14-046

Bruinink - Giffen

“That the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting, held February 20, 2014, be approved as distributed.”

CARRIED

The General Manager’s Report was presented:

- staff hosted 5 Board members at the orientation for new members on March 27th
 - a presentation regarding the Authority’s projects and program was presented
 - several diverse questions and enlightening discussions provided a well-rounded introduction to the Authority
- the addition to the workshop at Clark Wright Conservation Area is all but complete
 - despite the difficult working conditions of the past two months the work was substantially complete within the schedule and on budget
 - final touch-ups and painting will be completed this week
 - septic system installation will be completed as soon as weather permits

BD-14-047

Glen - Marriott

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the General Manager’s report, dated April 7, 2014.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding Conservation Ontario was presented.

- the 2013 Audited Financial Statements were reviewed and accepted
- the Chair, 2 Vice Chairs were re-elected
- two of three members of the Board of Directors were re-elected and Jane Mitchell was elected to fill the remaining seat on the Board

- Conservation Ontario continues to inform and educate the Provincial Government on the state of Ontario's flood management programs
- in December, Conservation Ontario's Chair and staff met with both the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Finance on separate occasions to continue to pursue funding to support aging infrastructure
- after significant flooding events in Calgary, Alberta and Toronto, Ontario in 2013, Public Safety Canada has been charged by the Federal Government with developing a National Disaster Mitigation Program, a new program focused on reducing the impact of natural disasters, including overland flooding
 - the new program will focus on proactive disaster risk reduction approaches and has already commenced with
 - a review of floodplain mapping standards in six Countries
 - literature review and interviews by recognized experts in the fields of hydrology, hydraulics, mapping and flood risk assessment
 - a review of floodplain standards across Canada including the status of existing mapping
 - development of a framework and suggested standards to help formulate the development of new national standards
 - estimate of the cost to update existing mapping to future national standards
- Halton Region CA is moving forward to the Ontario Court of Appeals with a regulations issue
 - this very complicated, but potentially precedent setting, case has already been before two different judges and while somewhat favourable decisions have been reached Halton Region CA is seeking support from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Conservation Ontario at the Court of Appeals
- for many years a pass was provided to all Board members and staff members of each of the 36 Conservation Authorities across the province which provided free access to all Conservation Areas across the province
 - in the past few years the practice had fallen off due to a few hiccups in the system
 - this year the program will be reinvigorated with the support of Conservation Authority Land Managers and better operating guidelines for the program
 - more information and passes to be provided later this year
- Latornell Conservation Symposium will be undergoing some changes this year
 - it has been rescheduled to a Tuesday – Thursday event (November 18-20, 2014) and it will be expanded to 3 full days
 - some of the added conference time will be used to jump start Conservation Authority University
 - Conservation Authority University is proposed to assist in providing education, experience and mentoring to young conservation professionals utilizing experienced Authority staff who have reached the pinnacle of their careers
 - it is also proposed that some programs of CA University will be offered at other times of year and some will also be offered on a regional basis as it may be fitting with programs that are more regional in nature
- invitations to both the Great Lakes Mayors Conference (June 2014) and the Conservation Authorities Biennial Tour (September 2014 in the Grand River and Long Point Region watersheds) were extended to all Authorities by representatives of each of the host areas

BD-14-048

MacKinnon - Romlewski

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report regarding the Conservation Ontario meeting of March 31, 2014.

CARRIED

A request from the Town of Newmarket regarding the Ontario Junior Range Program was considered.

BD-14-049

Glen - Marriott

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the correspondence from the Town of Newmarket and further supports the request for the Provincial government to reinstate the Ontario Junior Ranger Program.”

CARRIED

A report on the business arising from the last meeting was discussed.

- there seems to be errors on the summary with the Lambton Shores entries – please check - *there were data entry errors for numerous municipalities that have been now been corrected in the database.*
- staff are drafting a request for quotations which will be sent out to qualified firms that have experience with Conservation Authorities – *process is underway, recommendations will be presented to the Board at their June 16th meeting.*

BD-14-050

Burrell - Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the updates on business arising from the February 20, 2014 Board of Director’s meeting.”

CARRIED

A Conservation Lands Update was reviewed:

Conservation Areas:

- Background:
 - the Conservation Authority owns 15 conservation areas in the watershed
 - of those 15 conservation areas, 6 are managed by the local municipality and 9 are operated by the Conservation Authority
 - of these 9, 3 conservation areas are regional campgrounds which attract campers from primarily South western Ontario
 - our three regional campgrounds have over 500 campsites and over 390 seasonal campers
 - profits obtained from our campgrounds are used to offset capital improvements
 - the camping season in 2014 runs from Friday, April 25th to Thanksgiving Day
 - over the winter months we have accepted campsite reservations at the administration office for our 3 regional campgrounds; as of March 31st over 570 reservations have been taken, collecting over \$ 80,000.00 in revenue (GST adjusted)
- Warwick Conservation Area:
 - access roadway project is ongoing; currently negotiations are proceeding for land securement and designs are being prepared to complete the soil erosion protection works
 - a new property identification sign has been installed
 - 15 new picnic tables and 3 new benches have been constructed

- roads to be upgraded with gravel
- a new 600 meter trail has been developed; gravel surfacing and trail signage to be installed when ground conditions are suitable (supported by Foundation)
- gatehouse interior walls and trim have been repainted
- L.C. Henderson Conservation Area:
 - new property identification sign has been installed
 - 15 new picnic tables and 2 benches have been constructed
 - main washroom lobby doors and trim have been repainted
 - a campsite reservation system has been purchased (Campground Master); it will be used on an experimental basis this year at LC Henderson and then implemented at the other campgrounds in 2015 if successful
 - 450 meters of existing trails to be resurfaced with chip & dust (supported by Foundation)
 - main reservoir weir to be improved with new cable concrete surfacing
 - a number of dead ash trees have been removed
- A.W. Campbell Conservation Area:
 - new counter tops and sinks have been installed in the women's pool washroom
 - 15 new picnic tables have been constructed
 - a new property identification sign has been installed
 - new campsite indicators to be installed on 20 campsites
 - a number of dead ash trees have been removed in the day use and camping areas
 - Lake trail to be improved with chip & dust surfacing and new boardwalks (supported by Foundation)
 - new carpet to be installed on the mini golf course (supported by Foundation Bingo)
- Wawanosh Conservation Area:
 - a new property identification signs has been installed
- Clark Wright & Strathroy Conservation Area:
 - a new trail map sign has been installed and a number of dead and dangerous trees have been removed along the trails (Clark Wright)
 - a number of dead ash trees have been removed and 6 new board walks to be installed along the trails (Strathroy)
- C.J McEwen & Highland Glen Conservation Areas:
 - Highland Glen - a new property identification sign has been installed; boat ramp and harbour area to be dredged in April
 - C.J. McEwen – renovations to the washrooms have been completed, they included new washroom partitions and ceilings; and when temperatures permit floors and walls will be painted.
- McKeough Upstream Lands:
 - Properties 38, 40 and 103 will have soil erosion repair works completed
 - Property 79/80 – a wetland to be developed
 - Property 82/83 – two hikenbottoms to be repaired
 - Property 97 – wildlife shrubs to be planted around the wetland and soil erosion repair works to be completed
 - Properties 38, 39, 40, 83 north, 95 north – grass buffers strips have been planted along drains and natural water courses
 - property management plans for each parcel are ongoing - it is anticipated that plans will be completed for most properties by years end

- consent (severance) applications have been submitted to St. Clair Township for the Authority owned homes at 1323 and 1327 Wilkesport Line.

Foundation Lands:

- Keith McLean Conservation Lands:
 - this property is still with the McLean Estate, however the Foundation (through the Authority) has signed a management agreement with the estate
 - McLean Overseer position was advertised and 5 candidates were interviewed, Kelly Johnson and Matt Caron were hired for this position; they have had a long time attachment with Keith McLean and the property and bring a positive, resource and technical background to this position.
 - Kelly and Matt will be living in the home and it is anticipated that they will move in June 1st
 - over the past few months, the Authority has hired a local contractor (Mark Evans Building Contractor, Ridgetown) to perform renovations on the home; the interior of the home was redone to bring the home up to current building code standards.
 - it is anticipated the renovations will be completed by May 31st.

Lambton County Lands:

- Lambton County Heritage Forest:
 - staff regularly inspect and perform maintenance on the 8 kms of trails
 - forestry staff have inventoried, marked and tendered a section of the woodlot for commercial thinning; there was only one quotation received so it has been decided to retender again this year
- Marthaville:
 - a new trail sign has been installed
 - 200 feet of property line fencing to be installed along the north side of the property
 - staff regularly inspect and perform maintenance
- Bowes Creek:
 - 8,100 seedlings to be planted and 43,000 previously planted seedlings to be sprayed with herbicide to control grass and weeds
 - subsurface drainage tile to be repaired
- Perch Creek
 - trail improvements to include widening and extending the existing trail; and developing a plan for future trails
 - staff regularly inspect and perform maintenance
 - existing trails will be cut by a local grass contractor

BD-14-051

Faas - McEwen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Lands Update dated April 4, 2014, outlining development and management activities on Conservation Areas, McKeough Upstream Lands and the Keith McLean Conservation Lands.”

CARRIED

A staff report on water levels, current and flood conditions was presented.

- Highlights:
 - continued cool temperatures into spring
 - gradual spring melt with moderate flows

- lower than average precipitation in March
- slightly increased lake levels over last year
- Watershed Precipitation and Stream flow Conditions - cold weather conditions are finally moderating with the anticipation of spring. A shift into daytime temperatures above zero has resulted in much of the snowpack being gradually lost. These conditions have also been coupled with significantly lower than average precipitation throughout March with most stations being recorded at below 50% of the normal monthly average. This lower precipitation trend has helped to balance the impact of the spring thaw with cooler nights and moderate daytime temperatures limiting sudden flow changes across the watershed. With the snow pack essentially gone across the region some ice remained on the rivers but is has now moved out of all watercourses during the week of March 31st. Regional precipitation numbers indicate near lower monthly precipitation across the region in March. Quarterly numbers remain close to normal at 95% and the last six month period remains on average at 97.9% and the yearly average is above average at 117% of normal. Most precipitation is expected as rain into spring months and the extensive snowmelt will result in excellent recharge to the groundwater system.
- Snow and Ice Conditions and Flood Threat - ice has gradually deteriorated with the warmer days but has remained in place with the reduced flows. With additional rain events into mid-April flows will begin to degrade and shift the ice cover as well as melt it in place with the higher daytime temperatures. Snow and ice conditions will be monitored on a bi-weekly basis into April together with the integrity of river ice at strategic locations. Currently snow depths have been significantly reduced range from zero in the south to small areas in woodlots in the northern parts of the watershed. Currently watercourses have approximately 2 to 5 inches of extremely deteriorated ice with some open sections near higher flow areas. All areas are anticipated to continue to degrade to the point where flows will begin to move broken ice downstream. No immediate flood impact is anticipated from ice jams however water levels remain high with rapid flows in all areas. Increasing daytime temperatures and precipitation conditions may change overall conditions suddenly as we move into the spring months.
- Weather Forecast
 - April - initially lower temperatures but warming to above average later in the month
 - Spring - temperatures will continue to be cooler initially with a late start to spring and the continued ice cover over the Great Lakes. May will be sunny but cooler with showers throughout the month. Precipitation below normal into spring.
- Great Lake Levels - lake levels are slightly improved over the same month last year and are expected to improve into 2014. Lake Huron levels are now much closer to the 10 year long term average than reported over the past several months. Factors, such as significant ice coverage has limited excessive evaporation over the winter months and continues into the spring.

BD-14-052

Burrell - Romlewski

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2014 on the current watershed conditions and Great Lakes water levels.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding Cathcart Park Shore Protection Revitalization Project was reviewed.

- December 20th 2013 - Township and Authority staff met on site with the design engineer, site supervisor and representatives of the contractor (Van Bree Contracting)
- construction work started second week of January 2014.
- approximately 100 m of shoreline has been completed in this phase.
- two habitat pods have been constructed along the shoreline to enhance the habitat features

- construction work was completed as of March 8, 2014
- spring inspection is planned for 3rd week of April.
- site restoration and landscaping will be completed in May 2014.

BD-14-053

Boushy - Romlewski

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 3, 2014 on the Cathcart Park Shore Protection Revitalization Project.”

CARRIED

A staff report on Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Projects submitted for funding in 2014-2015.

- applications for grants have been submitted for funding for in 2014-2015 for the project in the table below
- applications will be reviewed by a committee of provincial and conservation authority staff representatives later this month and will be ranked in comparison to all submitted projects from across the Province
- list of approved projects is anticipated in May or early June

Structure	Project Name	Description of Work	Total Project Cost (\$)	Grant Requested (\$)
Cathcart Park	Cathcart Park Shoreline Protection - Phase 4	design, tender and rehabilitate about 200 m of shoreline at Cathcart Park (Phase 4 construction).	600,000	300,000
Lambton area water supply system	Shoreline Repair	rehabilitate about 280 m of shoreline at the mouth of St. Clair River using armourstone and riprap.	600,000	300,000
Sarnia Shoreline Protection	Shoreline Repair (Helen and Kenwick St) Phase 1	carry out construction of Phase 1 from the recommendation of Engineering study.	500,000	250,000
McKeough Floodway	McKeough Floodway Berm Repair	perform repair work along the floodway	\$80,000	\$40,000
McKeough Floodway	McKeough Dam Drop structure/ Gate house concrete repair	repair several cracks in concrete slabs and barrier walls	\$60,000	\$30,000
McKeough Floodway	McKeough -Hazard Tree Removal	remove trees, shrubs and debris that have the potential to cause slope stability issues	\$8,000	\$4,000
Esli Dodge	Esli Dodge Repair Project	repair of Concrete cable/ retaining wall	\$10,000	\$5,000
L.C. Henderson	L.C.H. Outfall repair project	spillway repair	\$20,000	\$10,000

Other WECI Projects		
Structure	Project Name	Status
Cathcart Park	Erosion Protection Revitalization	Phase III of this project is complete with topsoil, sod and landscaping completed in May 2014.
Petrolia Dam	Minor crack repair	scheduled to complete in May 2014
Coldstream Dam	Shrub and tree removal	completed in June 2013
Running Creek Dyke	Erosion Control	erosion work will be completed by Envirolok in Spring 2014

BD-14-054

Nemcek – Bilton

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 3, 2014 on Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Projects and approves the projects submitted for funding in 2014-2015 and further will assist staff in obtaining matching funds, where required, to support these projects upon confirmation of funding approval.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding McKeough Operating Criteria was discussed.

- introduction: the W. Darcy McKeough Floodway is intended to mitigate flooding in Wallaceburg. The control gates remain open under normal flow conditions, but when Wallaceburg is threatened by flooding, they are closed and divert the flow down the diversion channel into the St. Clair River. The McKeough Floodway controls all flood water upstream of the dam by diversion and temporary storage. The diversion channel is capable of diverting high flows from both the Bear and Black creeks when the dam is closed.
- operating procedure: The Flood Coordinator shall present the facts on the circumstances of the flood threat to the General Manager. Where there is a probability that operation of the gates should be considered, the General Manager will present the facts with a recommendation to the Chair and a decision will be made and the gates at the dam shall be operated accordingly. The operating procedures for the gates are based on the following three observed/measured parameters:
 - water levels in Wallaceburg
 - rate of rise in Wallaceburg; and
 - Bear Creek flow at the Brigden gauge
- the table below shows the current operating guidelines established by consulting engineers; this is used as a criterion to operate the Floodway.
 - the McKeough Dam has 2 concrete gates that are lowered into place to divert flows from the north branch of the Sydenham River down the channel to the St. Clair River. The gates can operate individually, however, it is recommended that both gates be opened or closed slowly and with the same opening. The exception to this would be when the gates are used on a temporary basis to break-up ice cover or to assist in releasing an established ice jam. It is a general practice to raise/lower them in intervals of about 0.5 to 1m. The opening of the dam gates is a slow process and usually continues over a period of 72 hours.

- previous operations: The extent of rising and lowering of gates would depend on the intensity of flooding. The design engineers estimated that the structure would be operated in a flood event once in every seven years. The floodway/diversion channel has been operated 6 times since its construction in 1984.
- operating criteria review: requests to review the operating criteria have been brought forward on several occasions from the Town of Wallaceburg (previously) and now from Chatham-Kent. Concern has most often been focused on the fact that some minor flooding is already occurring in Wallaceburg before the criteria for gate closure is met.
- further, there have been multiple requests for the review of the criteria to permit operation of the floodway to reduce flooding in areas beyond the boundaries of Wallaceburg – although these can also be reviewed, the expropriations certificate which provided the basis for acquiring upstream easements and properties appears to close off this option.
- in the mid 1990’s, a review was undertaken with a committee of Authority Board Members consummating in a decision to maintain the existing criteria.
- subsequent to the February 2009 Flood in Wallaceburg, it has been requested that the operating criteria be reviewed and recommendations be brought forward to improve the data available to assist in decision making. Ice jamming in 2008 & 2009 further highlighted the need for additional monitoring stations in or near Wallaceburg to provide more data to improve the understanding of water levels in Wallaceburg.
- twenty five years of data on water levels, flows, wind conditions and lake effects as well as a quarter century of experience in operating the floodway could provide significant input into an engineer’s review of the operating criteria of the structure.
- flood easements purchased upstream of the dam were acquired based on the understanding that the dam would only be operated when Wallaceburg was in “imminent” threat of flooding. Any change to the criteria must reflect this and a legal review should be sought to confirm that there would not be legal and/or financial implications to any change to the operating criteria.
- an effort to seek funding through the Water & Erosion Control Infrastructure (WECI) fund under the Ministry of Natural Resources was made in 2012. However, this application for a study to incorporate an engineering and legal review of the operating criteria was considered ineligible for this grant. Details of the application is provided below:

W. Darcy McKeough Dam	McKeough Floodway Functional Review	Engineering study and legal review to assess current functional standards, existing easements and recommend potential changes based on 25 years of accumulated data and experience in dealing with extreme events.	75,000	37,500
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- in addition the Authority continues to receive calls from residents closer to the floodplain in Wallaceburg demanding a review of the operating criteria.

BD-14-055

Glen - Faas

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 3, 2014 regarding the operating criteria for the W. Darcy McKeough and further directs staff to continue to seek funding the support a study which would review the accumulated 30 years of operations records and data and assess operating criteria, propose revisions to these criteria based on the principles of the existing operating criteria, and provide a legal review to determine any consequences resulting from the proposed revisions in regards to flood easements.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding the Healthy Watersheds Program in Lambton Shores was reviewed.

- Lambton Shores Healthy Lake Huron Program - Lambton Shores Tributaries (LST) Watershed received funding from Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Environment Canada as part of the Healthy Lake Huron – Clean Water, Clean Beaches campaign, for immediate action to improve beach and inland surface water quality.
- Healthy Sydenham Headwaters Initiative (HSHI) - SCRCA and Middlesex Stewardship Council have partnered on this Initiative to guide conservation and restoration efforts in the Headwaters of the Sydenham River.
- these stewardship programs have three main components: water quality monitoring, outreach and education, and providing grants to landowners implementing best management practices (BMPs) and/or stewardship projects on their property.
 - water quality monitoring – to understand the current status of water quality in our creeks and rivers and contribute to long-term data sets that may show how stewardship projects and BMPs benefit the watershed. We monitor nutrient levels including phosphorus and nitrogen (Figure 1).
 - outreach and education – using workshops, planting days, letters to landowners, and bus tours to raise awareness of water quality concerns, stewardship projects, and the link between nutrient runoff (primarily phosphorus) and blue-green algae on the Great Lakes.
 - stewardship projects – **Grants available** SCRCA secures funding from many sources to support landowner implemented stewardship projects including riparian buffers, block tree planting, windbreaks, wetlands, and erosion control measures. Staff meet with landowners and offer expert advice and project design and where applicable, support individual projects with grants.
- Upcoming events:
 - *May 10, 2014, 9-11am:* Forest Sewage Lagoon - Wetland Community Planting

BD-14-056

Faas - Giffen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 7, 2014 on the Healthy Watersheds Program in Lambton Shores and the Sydenham Headwaters, and endorses staff efforts to engage private landowners in Best Management Practices to improve the surface water quality.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding Municipal Drain Review activities was explained.

- Conservation Authorities (CAs) regulate activities that change, divert, or interfere in any way with the existing channel of a river, creek, stream or watercourse, or that interfere with wetlands. Municipal drains are generally watercourses as defined under the CA Act and are therefore regulated by CAs.
- staff help member municipalities meet regulatory requirements by issuing Standard Compliance Requirements (SCRs) as per the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act (DART) Protocol and Letters of Review (LoR) for projects where DART does not apply (Drainage Act, S. 4: Petition Drains and S. 78: Improvements). If drain projects are carried out (with or without a CA Act S. 28 permit) and impact, with respect to the CA’s regulatory responsibilities under the CA Act, areas that are regulated, the CA could be held liable for not undertaking or enforcing its regulatory responsibilities.
- SCRs and LoRs outline project specific sediment and erosion measures for all projects. Upstream and downstream flooding are considered where appropriate (e.g., culverts and enclosures) and appropriate advice is incorporated into review letters and SCRs. Interference with wetlands is

discouraged by negotiating project specific mitigations. St. Clair Conservation staff work with municipalities to try to find solutions that meet the requirements of both the Drainage Act and the Conservation Authorities Act.

since November 25, 2013, 42 drain files have been submitted to SCRCA for review. 16 files have been reviewed under the DART protocol and proponents have received Standard Compliance Requirements permissions. 17 files have been reviewed by staff and have received Letters of Review. Letters of Review are issued when the project does not fall under the DART protocol. In most cases these are engineer's reports under section 78 of the Drainage Act for improvements, and advice is provided to further the conservation and management of the existing natural heritage features of the designated watershed. The remaining 9 files are under review.

Categories of Drain Review	January – April 2014
DART Protocol – SCR issued	16
Letter of Review Issued	17
Requires Letter of Review	4
Other Types of Files (e.g., Environmental Assessment, sign-off, Assessment changes)	5
Total Files from January to April 2014	42

other ways the SCRCA works with Municipal Drain Projects

- in some cases St. Clair Conservation is able to offer grant money towards measures that are above and beyond the legal requirements. A newly launched *Municipal Drain Habitat Enhancement Program* funded by the federal Great Lakes Sustainability Fund supports drain projects that increase fish habitat and mitigate sediment and erosion in agricultural watercourses of the St. Clair River Area of Concern. Projects that qualify include buffers, fish refuge pools, and two-stage (“benched”) drainage ditches.

- in early March, two SCRCA staff who review drain projects took the Drainage Superintendent (DSAO) course. The five day course covered the Drainage Act in detail including:

- role and responsibilities of the engineer under the Drainage Act
- process for developing new municipal drains
- process for improving existing drains
- municipal drain management
- roles and responsibilities of the Drainage Superintendent
- environmental regulations that impact municipal drains.

- by attaining a thorough understanding of the Drainage Act, CA staff are better prepared to find solutions that meet all legislative requirements.

- as the CO representative on the Board of Directors for the Drainage Investment Group (DIG) since July 2013, Brian McDougall has been proactively involved with drain management issues across Southern Ontario. One of the main goals of DIG is to help municipalities, engineers and other agencies reduce overall costs to projects and landowner's while enhancing environmental features.

BD-14-057

Boushy - Faas

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 7, 2014 summarizing Municipal Drain Review activities, and endorses staff efforts to help member municipalities meet regulatory requirements by issuing Letters of Review.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding Water Quality and Biodiversity in the St. Clair region was presented.

- Benthic Diversity of the Middle East Sydenham
 - the Middle East Sydenham station at Mawlam Road, south of Florence had better than average benthic scores in 2013. Previous Report Card averages were 6.35 and 5.33 for 2001-2005 and 2006-2010 respectively. In 2013, the benthic score for the site is 4.69. A lower benthic score is a good thing, indicating that the biota are less impacted by organic pollution.
 - when benthic scores are low, we typically find a greater species diversity. This year, a total of 18 different families were found at the Mawlam Road site, including mayflies, riffle beetles, caddisflies, fishflies, stoneflies and clams. We typically see anywhere between 5 and 19 different families at sites across the St. Clair Region. The Mawlam Road site had the greatest diversity in 2013.
 - a conservative approach is taken in interpreting water quality results. One year good benthic sample is not enough to conclude that water quality is improving. Instead, a bigger picture which includes an analysis of water chemistry, including nutrients and *E. coli* in combination with biological indicators such as benthic or fish sampling, is required to give a more complete picture of water quality. Nonetheless, it is always a good sign to see such an assortment of pollution intolerant animals.
- Road Salt and Freshwater Mussels on the Sydenham
 - surface water in the Sydenham River has been monitored by St. Clair Conservation since 1967. The station where the East Branch Sydenham intersects Shiloh Road near Alvinston, upstream of the richest freshwater mussel beds in Canada, shows an upward trend in chloride. The slope is increasing at a rate of 0.9 mg/L/year from 1975 to 2009. In 2007, a maximum chloride concentration of 58 mg/L was recorded at the station. Research indicates that chloride can become toxic to mussel larvae (glochidia) at levels as low as 153 mg/L.
 - increasing concentration of chloride is not unique to the Sydenham. There is an increasing trend in many of the southern Ontario streams where freshwater mussels inhabit. A recent study of 24 long-term water quality stations shows a link between road density and chloride concentration. The exposure of sensitive glochidia to increasing chloride concentrations may negatively affect mussel populations.
 - many Ontario road authorities have developed plans to better manage road salt use to reduce the environmental impacts of chloride while maintaining road safety; however, less attention has been paid to identifying areas that are vulnerable to salt loading. Recognizing the biological uniqueness of Sydenham River, extra precaution might be considered to protect the unique biodiversity of the river. Intersections of salted roads and these critical stream habitats represent potentially vulnerable areas where the road authority might consider additional salt management measures.
- Phosphorus in Surface Water
 - Phosphorus is a common constituent of agricultural fertilizers, manure, and organic wastes in sewage and industrial effluent. Phosphorus values were lower in 2013 than average at most of the monitoring stations in the St. Clair Region. Although phosphorus averages were lower, values were still about 2-4 times the provincial standard for phosphorus in surface water (0.03mg/L).

D-14-058

Burrell - Romlewski

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 7, 2014 on Water Quality and Biodiversity in the SCRCA, and acknowledges the value of continuing to support monitoring and reporting on the aquatic health of St. Clair Conservation watersheds.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding the Biology Department Funding was presented.

- the Authority has had great success with proposals again this year, with active grants totaling \$923,000 for projects valued at approximately \$5,000,000.
- new grants for 2014:
 - funding from Ontario Trillium Foundation to conduct fish and mussel inventories in Lake Huron Tributaries with a complementary education and outreach program that builds on the program delivered at Kettle Stony Point First Nation. \$58,000 over two years was awarded.
 - Wildlife Habitat Canada awarded \$22,000 for wetland and riparian buffer projects on McKeough Lands.
 - a three year, \$75,900 grant from the Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund to continue to deliver Reptiles-at-Risk Program. The grant will help pay for snake and turtle monitoring, and related outreach and education activities.
 - Ontario Land Trust Alliance Program grant \$10,000 to support restoration of Bowens Creek Habitat Management Area and \$2,000 to support erosion protection on McKeough Lands.
 - \$1000 from Friends of the St. Clair River for Water Quality Monitoring in St. Clair River Tributaries.
 - about \$70,000 from Trees Canada towards planting about 40,000 trees.
 - \$8,000 from Ministry of Natural Resources for Phragmites treatment at Stag Island.
 - \$17,800 from Ministry of Natural Resources for Lambton Shores Coastal Wetland Restoration and riparian buffer restoration.
- ongoing projects:
 - 2014 is the third year of a three year, \$117,500 grant from the Environment Canada’s Great Lakes Sustainability Fund for wetlands creation and tree planting at Bowen’s Creek Habitat Management Area.
 - 2014 is the third year of a 3 year \$173,400 grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation for landowner/community engagement, headwater wetland construction and other wildlife BMPS in the Upper Sydenham Watershed.
 - 2014 is the third year of a three year, \$38,000 grant from Showcasing Water Innovation towards Rural Storm water Management in the Lambton Shores Priority Watershed
 - 2014 is the second year of a three year \$244,050 grant from Environment Canada to implement best management projects through the Sydenham River Habitat Stewardship Program.
 - 2014 is the second year of a two year \$85,000 grant for Sediment and Erosion Mitigation and Fish Habitat Enhancement of Agricultural Watercourses of the St. Clair River Area of Concern (AOC).
- a number of projects were completed in the first part of 2014:
 - \$40,000 grant from Ministry of Natural Resources Species at Risk Stewardship Fund to benefit Reptiles-at-Risk in the region. The grant helped pay for snake and turtle monitoring, and related outreach and education activities over the last two years.

- Ministry of Environment's Great Lakes Guardian fund allocated \$22,000 toward five education events coordinated with Aamjiwnaang First Nation Environment Committee, and pre and post restoration benthic monitoring at Talfourd Creek.
- Wildlife Habitat Canada allocated \$28,000 to landowner/community engagement, headwater wetland construction and other wildlife BMPS in the Upper Sydenham Watershed.
- Great Lakes Sustainability Fund allocated \$45,000 towards the second stage of Peers Wetland Restoration.
- Environment Canada allocated \$8,500 to implementation of workshops and landowner engagement in the Lambton Shores Tributary area.
- Ministry of the Environment allocated \$50,000 to a study and project to look at improving water quality in Lambton Shores including BMPs.
- OMAFRA-COA allocated \$58,000 to drafting soil and erosion nutrient management programs for 500 acres of SCRCA-owned cropland, design and implementation of erosion berms on the McKeough Properties 82, 83, 95 and 97, collection of water quality and soil sample analysis.
- Ministry of Natural Resources allotted \$17,800 for Lambton Shores Coastal Wetland Restoration / Phragmites Control Watershed Wetland Riparian Buffer Restoration
- waiting to hear on a few grants:
 - an application to the Ontario Community Environment Fund for \$20,000 to support surface water sampling including water chemistry and benthic organism analysis.
 - applications to the Land Stewardship and Habitat Restoration Program: \$20,000 for wetland creation and erosion control projects in the Black Creek watershed and \$5,640 for wetland creation and Tallgrass Prairie Restoration in the Upper Sydenham Headwaters.

BD-14-059

Bruinink - MacKinnon

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 7, 2014 on the Biology Department Funding Update, and applauds the success of staff in obtaining grants to support water quality monitoring and reporting, education and outreach, and Best Management Practices for watershed landowners.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation Partnership was reviewed.

- the SCRCA is one of eight partners working with KSPFN to provide monitoring, habitat enhancement, stewardship and outreach with respect to Species at Risk on Kettle Stony Point lands
- last fall Outdoor Education and Biology staff members visited the Grades 3, 4 and 5 classes at Hillside Elementary School to teach about the significance of the KSPFN area to species diversity
- this included visiting work stations about Birds, Turtles and Snakes; playing the “Survivor Game” in the playground to illustrate the web of life; and hiking through a meadow to collect insects with sweep nets and then examine and discuss their relationships with other animals
- for a third year our Biology staff attended the KSPFN Species at Risk Community Meeting, on March 26 2014, and spoke about the SCRCA staff involvement in their community
- we staffed a display on stewardship and Reptiles at Risk monitoring activities and our museum specimen of an Eastern Fox Snake sparked much interest
- residents at KSPFN are very familiar with their natural environment, and proud of the species diversity on their lands

- in a recent KSPFN Species at Risk Project newsletter Chief Thomas Bressette, said that: *“The St. Clair Region Conservation Authority representatives always receive a very warm welcome from our Hillside Elementary School students as they run their annual in class programs and nature walks.”*

BD-14-060

Nemcek – McEwen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 7, 2014 on the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation Partnership, and endorses continued staff involvement in youth education and community outreach and engagement at Kettle and Stony Point.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding Conservation Services projects and programs was presented.

- Tree Planting Program
 - tree seedling suppliers are reporting slow spring thaw conditions and later than usual tree lifting dates. Normal tree lift date is around April 10th.
 - with an estimated minimum 1 week tree nursery startup delay we do not expect delivery of stock until April 30th from the three individual private nurseries supplying 84,000 trees.
 - planting program uptake for 2014 for SCRCA is close to record high numbers with most CA’s across the province reporting well below average numbers this year.
 - SCRCA crews will be planting 75,000 trees this spring
 - an additional tree planting crew will be added this year due to the quantity of trees and sites. Three tractor mounted machine planters and possibly one small hand planting crew will be needed to plant 75,000 trees on 27 properties over a 3 week time frame.
 - \$180,000 has been secured through 8 separate funding sources this year to offset planting costs for most landowners taking part in this year’s program.
- Vegetation Control Program
 - approximately 120,000 trees require spray maintenance this spring (under the 3 year vegetation control program) plus the 75,000 newly planted trees scheduled this year. Two machine sprayers will start herbicide applications mid to late April pending spring soil conditions.
 - most of the 3 year tending work is paid in advance and carried forward each year to cover the cost of the labour and material.
- Large Stock Trees
 - there are 730 large stock trees on order this spring for approximately 10 landowners and one large bulk order from Brooke-Alvinston
 - the Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston is providing a subsidized rate for landowners wanting to plant trees on their property. This resulted in a large landowner uptake for a second year in a row.
 - trees range in size from 1 metre for the evergreen trees to 1.8 metres for the hardwood trees. Most of the trees ordered for spring are either potted or balled and burlap stock.
 - trees are expected to arrive sometime around the week of April 22nd depending on spring conditions.
- Stewardship projects
 - there are 23 stewardship projects that are being funded through the provincial species at risk stewardship fund and federal habitat stewardship program (2013-2014 funding year) in the combined amount of \$99,000

- projects include riparian buffers, stream bank stabilization, wetland enhancement or creation and upland habitat improvements
- estimated project value with landowner in-kind and financial contribution is \$639,000
- construction will begin in April for most projects and completed by the end of May
- verbal confirmation has also been received from MNR-SARSF to continue with project funding for 2014-2015 as per approved 3 year funding agreement sign in 2013.
- Phragmites
 - efforts to control phragmites that has invaded a Lake Huron coastal wetland area, approximately 120 acres in size just south of Stoney and Kettle Point will start this spring. Burning and spraying is planned for this year on approximately 30 acres of the area.
 - COA funding in the amount of \$10,000 was awarded by MNR for SCRCA to use toward phragmites control work in this area
 - we will be working with the Lambton Shores Phragmites volunteer group on this long term project as well as partnering with them for additional funding through to the Great Lakes Community Guardian Fund.
 - local MPP Monte McNaughton has been very supportive with the volunteer group by attempting to place Phragmites australis on the noxious weed list in order to make it easier to control this invasive plant without the need of special spray permits.

BD-14-061

Glen - Bilton

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2014 regarding Conservation Services projects and programs.”

CARRIED

Directors Comments:

- municipalities offering subsidies find that triple the number of people order trees.

A staff report regarding the larvicide program in Lambton County was explained.

- West Nile Virus Program
 - larvicide operations will take place in Lambton County in the summer of 2014.
 - the County of Lambton operates a West Nile virus (WNV) surveillance program including a larvicide application program to control mosquito populations in catch basins.
 - 70% of the positive samples of WNV are found in the mosquito species Culex pipiens (the house mosquito) and related species of Culex. The house mosquito breeds mostly in stagnant water that is heavy in organic content. Therefore, catch basins in urban areas are the most common breeding grounds for WNV carrying mosquitoes.
 - last year several WNV positive mosquito pools were found in the County of Lambton along with several birds that tested positive for the virus.
 - less than 1% of people infected with the virus will get seriously ill, however, there have been a total of seven confirmed human cases of the virus in Lambton County since 2000, including one death in 2005 and a second death in 2006.
 - the Conservation Authority has been treating catch basins since 2006 under its Pesticide Operators Licence for the County of Lambton under direction of Community Health Services Department. SCRCA obtains permits each year from the Ministry of the Environment

- approximately 16,000 catch basins are treated in all towns and rural communities with 3 separate applications of methoprene (a mosquito larvicide) between July 1st and August 30th. Approximately 65% of the catch basins are within the City of Sarnia.
- Methoprene disrupts the life cycle of mosquitoes, preventing them from maturing and reproducing and is used in many cities and municipalities throughout South-western Ontario.
- Health Canada studies indicate methoprene is of low toxicity and poses little risk to people when used according to the label instructions.
- Catch Basin Samples for Larvicide Efficacy – 2013
 - last year SCRCA staff sampled a number of randomly chosen catch basins treated with pellets and long term briquettes.
 - ten samples were collected in three different areas (Sarnia, Forest, and Petrolia).
 - the samples contain mosquito pupae that were then monitored for several days for the emergence of adult mosquitos
 - the goal was to collect 25 pupae for each sample cup. This was difficult to obtain and in order to reduce the influence of smaller sample sizes having an impact on the overall emergence rate the data was filtered so only samples that contained 20 or more pupae were looked at.
 - in total there were 21 samples collected with 20 or more pupae.
 - the average mosquito emergence rate for all testing was 12.9% which represents an 87.1% effective rate for larvicide application.

BD-14-062

Boushy – Davis-Dagg

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 4, 2014 on the application of larvicide to catch basins in Lambton County for the control of West Nile Virus in 2014.”

CARRIED

Regulations Summary Reports dated March 31, 2014 was reviewed.

BD-14-063

McCallum - Faas

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges and concurs with the Regulations Summary Reports on *“Development, Interference with Wetlands & Alterations to Shorelines & Watercourses”* Regulations (Ontario Regulation 171/06), dated March 31, 2014.”

CARRIED

Planning Activity Summary Report for February and March 2014 was reviewed.

BD-14-064

MacKinnon - Burrell

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority’s monthly Planning Activity Summary Reports for February and March 2014.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement was explained.

- effective April 30, 2014, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) comes into effect. The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and

development. In respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter, Section 3 of the *Planning Act* requires that decisions affecting planning matters “shall be consistent with” policy statements issued under the Act.

- highlights on impact to SCRCA - **note – attempts have been made to convert planning jargon to plain language, however, quotes from Policy are verbatim as policy is applicable law and some terms should not be presented otherwise.
- CA Delegated Responsibility – Natural Hazards
 - How does the PPS impact the SCRCA?
 - SCRCA have been delegated ‘ Provincial Interest’ in plan review regarding natural hazards encompassed by Section 3.1 of the PPS. This occurred in 1995 and the SCRCA has been providing this service to the municipalities. This service is eligible for grant funding from the province.
 - How does the 2014 PPS impact the SCRCA with regard to Section 3.1; Natural hazards?
 - no significant changes which impact the SCRCA delegated plan review commenting.
 - the preamble to the PPS provides defined terms and meanings which clarifies policies.
 - the following has been added to Section 3:
 - Section 3.1.3 “Planning authorities shall consider the potential impacts of climate change that may increase the risk associated with natural hazards”.
 - Section 3.1.8 “Development shall generally be directed to areas outside of lands that are unsafe for development due to the presence of hazardous forest types for wildland fire. Development may however be permitted in lands with hazardous forest types for wildland fire where the risk is mitigated in accordance with wildland fire assessment and mitigation standards”. (note – not deemed to be an issue in our area)
- Other Provincial Interests as identified in PPS
 - beyond delegated natural hazard plan review commenting, individual Conservation Authorities may enter into service agreements (MOA’s) with municipalities to perform a technical advisory role to municipalities, as determined under the terms of the service agreements.
- currently, the SCRCA assists municipalities by commenting, as an advisory agency only, on the following provincial interests:
 - Section 2.1 Natural Heritage
 - general policies
 - significant habitat of endangered species and threatened species
 - significant wetlands
 - significant coastal wetlands
 - significant woodlands
 - significant valleylands
 - significant wildlife habitat and significant areas of natural and scientific interest
 - fish habitat
 - adjacent lands to above features as stipulated by MNR (provincial) Natural Heritage Reference manual (NHRM)

- Section 2.2 Water
 - identifying municipal drinking water supplies and designated vulnerable areas as per the provincially approved Upper Thames, Lower Thames and St. Clair Region Source Protection documents.
 - Stormwater management
 - How does the 2014 PPS impact SCRCA commenting re: Section 2.1 Natural Heritage and Section 2.2 Water?
 - the following has been added to Section 2.1 Natural Heritage:
 - Section 2.1.3 Natural Heritage systems shall be identified in Ecoregions 6E & 7E, recognizing that natural heritage systems will vary in size and form in settlement areas, rural areas, and prime agricultural areas. SCRCA comment on this change: Each upper-tier municipality has varied natural heritage system technical studies. Some are more robust than others. The less robust, the higher chance of more field work required by proponent and therefore more review/positioning by reviewer and decision maker. Summary: higher costs for review agency.
 - Robust level of natural heritage system studies in order of higher level:
 - Middlesex County Natural Heritage II study
 - Lambton County Natural Heritage study
 - Chatham Kent Natural Heritage study (not initiated to date)
 - no significant changes to Section 2.2 Water ; however, additional policy under Section 1.6 (Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities) will impact SCRCA commenting regarding stormwater management.
 - the additional Section 1.6.2 states: “Planning authorities should promote green infrastructure to complement infrastructure”.
 - Status of services provided by SCRCA to municipalities
 - the Planning and Regulations Dept. is finding the provision of non-delegated Natural Heritage comments challenging. Some issues are as follows:
 - the review of Natural Heritage Environmental Reports Terms of Reference and the follow-up Environmental Reports and compensation agreements can be very time consuming and the current fees are not recovering CA costs. This is partially due to the release of updated MNR Natural Heritage guidance manual, which now includes an extensive section on Wildlife habitat. The level of background natural heritage study in each upper tier municipality is also a factor in CA biology staff time requirements as described previously.
 - current SCRCA fee: OPA/ZBA/Consent = \$200.00 (including pre-consultation meeting in which a CA Planner and Biologist attend, Terms of Reference review)
- Environmental Report scoped = \$300.00
 Environment Report full/complex = \$500.00
- the lack of detailed environmental reporting check list in NHRM intended to support development applications. For example, a 120 metre default adjacent lands applies to significant woodlands, valleylands, wildlife habitat etc. regardless of application. (ie. site plan, single lot residential, minor variance).
 - the Endangered Species Act is the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources. MNR is responsible for permitting. The CA may not have up to date information that may reside at MNR. Significant investigation is often required here. Although the Species at Risk Act is federal legislation and is not recognized in the PPS, the CA, due to the significance of the Sydenham River aquatic SAR, often assists the municipality in identifying sensitive reaches in planning

applications. Investigation is necessary and appropriate mapping provided when applicable.

- the cancellation of the DFO/CA agreement no longer obligates the SCRCA to comment on Natural Heritage Section 2.1.6 “Development and site alteration shall not be permitted in fish habitat except in accordance with provincial and federal requirements”. Provincial and federal requirements relate to permitting during the building phase which is often late. Often, important fish habitat information is needed up front at the planning and development application stage. Municipalities often look to the SCRCA to provide this service, but again, the fees are not reflective of the service provided.
- a meeting on a renewed Planning Advisory Service agreement (MOA’s) was held at the SCRCA office on March 28, 2014 between D. Posliff, Manager of Planning and Building at the County of Lambton, Brian McDougall, SCRCA General Manager, Patty Hayman, SCRCA Director of Planning and Muriel Andreae, SCRCA Manager of Biology.
- It was agreed that the Authority will redraft the agreement based on the 2014 PPS and discuss further with Clerks/Treasurers, County/municipal planners and the Ausable Bayfield CA planner. D. Posliff willing to assist with co-ordination.
- the Upper Thames CA is the lead regarding a renewed Middlesex County MOA and a draft is forthcoming based on an internal CA committee which includes Lower Thames Valley CA. Based on the Middlesex County outcome, we will go forward with an MOA with Chatham Kent Planning as SCRCA shares Middlesex County and CK with LTVCA.
- Recommendation
 - that the SCRCA planning staff endeavor to pursue renewed municipal service agreements (MOA’s) to provide plan review advisory comments based on the 2014 PPS and the needs of the municipalities.
 - the technical advisory service for non-delegated provincial interests are to be carried out on a full cost recovery basis to be charged to the proponent. Delegated provincial interest service will reflect funds received provincially. The SCRCA planning and regulation fees are to be reviewed and follow the SCRCA Fee Administration policy. As a parent ministry, MNR has required the following: “Fees for planning services should be developed in conjunction with the appropriate planning authority and are set to recover but not exceed the costs associated with administering and delivering the services on a program basis”.

BD-14-065

Bilton - Glen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 7, 2014 on the 2014 Provincial Policy Statement, to be effective April 30, 2014, and further directs staff to endeavour to acquire renewed municipal/CA plan review advisory service agreements based on the 2014 PPS and municipal needs.”

CARRIED

Directors Comments:

- would like to have time for the municipalities to incorporate the costs into their annual budgets.
- an Executive Summary was requested. One to be mailed following the meeting.

A staff report regarding the St. Clair River Area of Concern was discussed.

- 2014 Areas of Concern (AOC) Workshop – Burlington, Ontario

- on February 12-13, 2014, Claude Lafrance and Donna Strang attended Environment Canada's third biennial Great Lakes Areas of Concern Remedial Action Plan Implementation Workshop in Burlington, Ontario. The theme of the workshop was "Sharing Practical Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) Strategies", focusing on methods of restoring beneficial uses and ultimately delisting Areas of Concern (AOC). The workshop brought together AOC coordinators, federal and provincial scientists and other administrators to share ideas, network and collaborate. Over 100 people attended the two day event.
- presentations delivered at the workshop provided many valuable updates on new science and approaches in moving the AOC program forward. Many of these could benefit the RAP for the St. Clair River AOC. In particular, lessons learned from sediment remediation conducted in other AOCs will be helpful during the implementation of the contaminated sediment project over the next few years and outreach activities introduced for such areas as the Detroit River and Hamilton Harbour could provide the opportunity to develop new and unique avenues to engage local communities.
- proceedings from the workshop are currently being prepared. All presentations and other related resources are available on the workshop website (www.amiando.com/GLAOC_2014workshop.html). The next workshop will be scheduled for 2016.
- Save the Date! 2nd Biennial St. Clair River Area of Concern Symposium
 - on Thursday, September 18, 2014, the Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) will be sponsoring the second biennial St. Clair River Area of Concern Symposium at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Port Huron, Michigan. The theme of this year's symposium will be "Bridging the Environment and Economy". Although planning is still underway, presentations are expected to cover topics including St. Clair River species and population dynamics, regulatory frameworks and new challenges facing the river. More information on the symposium and registration will be forthcoming in June.
- Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) Re-Designation Update
 - Degradation of Aesthetics - the draft "Degradation of Aesthetics" BUI status assessment for the St. Clair River which recommends re-designation from "impaired" to "not impaired" was accepted by the Walpole Island and Aamjiwnaang First Nations Heritage/Environment committees and has been forwarded to Chief and Council for concurrence. The report will likely be presented to the Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) in May 2014 for their support.
 - Beach Closings - a report is currently being prepared for the "Beach Closings" BUI for the St. Clair River which is currently identified as "impaired". The report will look at local remedial actions, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) levels at beaches and swimming areas as well as comparisons between AOC and non-AOC beach closing frequencies. In addition, results of a DNA source track-down study at Centennial Park in Sarnia will be provided. The track-down study was designed to distinguish between human and avian sources of *E. coli*. Three years of beach monitoring data were collected through partnerships between the SCRCA, Lambton Public Health Unit, the Ministry of the Environment and the City of Sarnia.
 - Restrictions on Dredging Activities - the "Restrictions on Dredging Activities" BUI status assessment was accepted by CRIC at their January, 2014 meeting. It recommends that this BUI be re-designated from "impaired" to "not impaired". It is currently under review by Walpole Island and Aamjiwnaang First Nations. Guidance on further community consultation is expected soon.

- Great Lakes Sustainability Fund (GLSF) 2014-2015 - proposal evaluations for projects applying to the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund (GLSF) were completed in January 2014 and five projects benefitting the St. Clair River AOC were recommended for funding. The requested funding totalled \$330 000. In addition, four multi-year agreements remain active for the AOC this year. Approval by the Federal Minister of Environment is expected in the coming months.
- Michigan Update – Degradation of Benthos Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI)
 - in March, the BPAC passed a motion to support the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality’s (MDEQ) recommendation to re-designate the “Degradation of Benthos” BUI to “not impaired” on the American side of the St. Clair River.
 - the MDEQ prepared a comprehensive review of 14 studies conducted on the American side of the river that examined sediment chemistry, toxicity and benthic invertebrate communities. Results indicated that: 1) there were no significant areas of sediment contamination along the U.S. shoreline; 2) benthic invertebrates had high survival rates when exposed to sediment (low toxicity) and 3) benthic community structure on the American side of the St. Clair River was generally good and indicative of an unstressed community. The recommendation along with a letter of support from BPAC will continue through the American re-designation process in the following months.
 - the “Degradation of Benthos” BUI remains “impaired” on the Canadian side of the St. Clair River. Significant improvements in benthic communities have been observed over the past several years and a reassessment of this BUI will occur upon completion of the Sediment Management Project, which will see remediation of the last areas of contaminated sediment along the Canadian shoreline.

BD-14-066

Burrell - Marriott

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 2, 2014 regarding the St. Clair River Area of Concern (AOC).”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding the January – April 2014 municipal drain activity report associated with the Drainage Act and Conservation Authorities Act Protocol (DART) was reviewed.

BD-14-067

Burrell - Bilton

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report, dated April 9, 2014 on Drainage Act and Conservation Authority Act Protocol (DART) Municipal drain activities for February and March 2014.”

CARRIED

Authority revenue and expenditures to March 31, 2014, were reviewed.

BD-14-068

Boushy – Nemcek

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the revenue and expenditure report to March 31, 2014, as it relates to the budget.”

CARRIED

January, February and March 2014 disbursements totaling \$535,596.07 were considered.

BD-14-069

Boushy - Romlewski

“That the Board of Directors approves the January, February and March 2014 disbursements as presented in the amount of \$535,596.07.”

CARRIED

A status report on general levy received to date was discussed.

BD-14-070

Marriott - Faas

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the status report on the 2014 general levy receipts to date.”

CARRIED

Directors reviewed the 2013 Investment Statement and the March 31, 2014 reports.

BD-14-071

Bruinink - Giffen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the 2013 Investment Statement and March 31, 2014 report.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding a grant to the Authority for accessibility improvements and draft plans for the improvements were considered.

- St. Clair Region Conservation Authority is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- as part of the Authority’s Multi Year Plan to meet the requirements of AODA, the Authority has completed the following
 - website has been updated to the appropriate format (WCAG 2.0, Level A)
 - staff training is completed annually as a refresher and training has been incorporated in new staff training
- under the accessibility standards for the Design of Public Spaces, accessible off street parking, building access, restrooms and service counters were identified as projects to be undertaken in association with other works
- plans to repave the parking lot and install improved access to meet the Building Code have been in place for several years
- with the implementation of AODA, and the opportunity to obtain grants to support some of the proposed works, staff applied to Enabling Accessibility Fund under the Workplace Accessibility sector
- designs and cost estimates were obtained to support this application
- staff were successful in obtaining \$50,000 in grant to support the proposed improvements
- the cost estimate for the project at right provides a total cost of \$136,400 plus contingencies and taxes

- some savings are expected to be achieved by existing staff completing the works (demolition, concrete work, landscaping)
- some additional work (window replacement) may be added and contingencies are always appropriate when renovating
- the approved 2014 Authority budget identified \$75,000 for building maintenance much of this funding being carried forward from 2013
- approximately \$25,000 of those maintenance funds will be required for other works with \$50,000 remaining to support this project
- in accounting for contingencies, taxes, added work and project savings, we estimate that a maximum of \$80,000 may be required to complete the work
- the work is proposed to be completed this summer

BD-14-072

Bilton - Faas

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report, dated April 7, 2014 regarding the grant of \$50,000 to the Authority for accessibility improvements and the draft plans for the improvements and further approves that the balance of the project costs estimated to be \$80,000 to be obtained from reserves with the Chair and General Manager to accept proposals and sign contracts subject to the project costs being within the estimate for the project.”

CARRIED

A staff report regarding the JCP program was discussed.

- the Conservation Authority submitted a pre-proposal to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for a Job Creation Partnership Program involving eight participants in December 2013. The application requests funding of \$112,941 for wages and \$29,566 for support.
 - Resource Technicians (3): April 21 – October 17 (26 weeks)
 - Flood Management Assistant: April 7 – December 19 (37 weeks)
 - Fisheries Technician: April 7 - January 24 (42 weeks)
 - Planning Technician: April 7 - January 24 (42 weeks)
 - Conservation Services Technician: April 21 – October 17 (26 weeks)
 - Documentation Clerk: April 7: December 19 (37 weeks)
- the proposal was approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities on April 9, 2014 for the proposed positions. The job openings have been posted on the website and we plan to have the positions filled with successful applicants starting May 5, 2014.

BD-14-073

Burrell - Faas

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 10, 2014 on the approval from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and University for the JCP program involving eight participants.”

CARRIED

Plans for this year’s proposed project tour were explained.

- staff is proposing a Conservation Authority Tour on Thursday, June 26, 9:00 – 1:00. The bus will leave and return to the A.W. Campbell Conservation Area. We will have lunch followed by the Board meeting. This year, we will be focusing on projects in the upper eastern portion of our watershed and will highlight Conservation Services projects.
- Highlights of Tour

- A.W. Campbell Conservation Area
- Wetland, prairie and tree planting projects on private lands
- Electro-fishing demonstration at Coldstream Conservation Area
- Strathroy Community Conservation Programs – Alexandra Park
- Strathroy Pool Tour

BD-14-074

MacKinnon - Giffen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the report dated April 3, 2014 on the proposed project tour scheduled for June 26, 2014.”

CARRIED

A staff report on Conservation Education was discussed.

- Winter Programing
 - thanks to a rather deep layer of snow, many primary classes were booked into the Nature In Winter Program. However, the Polar Vortex created temperatures too severe to allow all classes to participate. A few classes still made the trek to Henderson C.A. where they had the opportunity to learn about snow insulation, animal tracks, and coping with winter. Some lucky students even hand-fed Black-capped Chickadees and Red Breasted Nuthatches.
 - a list of our in-school sponsored programs follows:
 - St. Clair River Bottom Critters: Grades k-9
 - Go With The Flow (groundwater) Grades 4-10
 - River Rap: Grades 4-10
 - Aquatic Species At Risk: Grades 4-10
 - Spring Water Awareness Program: Grades K-6
- Program Development & Expansion
 - Go with the Flow: Began development of curriculum based programs specialized for grades Kindergarten through grade 3. This expansion will make the program accessible to all elementary grades as well as several high school level classes. More students will learn the importance of water in their own lives and their greater watershed community.
 - Alternative Energy Solutions: Developed an in-school version of this popular outdoor program allowing staff to reach a more diverse audience within our watershed. The program has also been expanded with curriculum based programming now being offered to
 - grades 1 – 8. Many in-school bookings are scheduled for April 2014.
 - Introduction to Entomology: Currently developing an Entomology program for the High School level providing curriculum appropriate programming for grades 9, 11 and 12. Using insects as a guide, this program will explore a wide range of topics including; classification, insects as bio-indicators, human impacts on ecosystems, climate change, restoration and rehabilitation techniques. This program aims to provide students with hands-on experience performing field sampling techniques & to demonstrate tangible real-life examples of biological theories learned in the classroom.
- Maple Syrup Festival - following a delayed start to the sap flow, 1,000 people were welcomed to the Sugar Bush at A.W. Campbell Conservation Area on March 15th and 16th. Visitors viewed historical demonstrations of First Nations, Pioneer and Modern methods of collecting sap and turning it into liquid gold. The Alvinston Firefighters prepared many pancake and sausage meals for hungry visitors

- Sydenham River Canoe Race - mark your calendars for this year's Canoe Race: Sunday April 13, 2014. We look forward to another great turn out for this Conservation Education Fund Raiser! In an attempt to reduce the number of competitors in the Recreation Class, it has been divided into Competitive and Lazy River Classes. Other less used classes have been eliminated. Check our website for more details.
- Special Events - Aamjiwnaang Earth Day Celebration, April 26, 2014: upon request, SCRCA will be participating in this day-long annual event. We will be providing a display of aquatic life found within our watershed & offering educational games & activities for the community to enjoy.
- Community Partnership - LWI Young Naturalist Groups: staff continue to run outdoor meetings for both the Young Naturalist Group (ages 7-11) and the Junior Conservationist Group (ages 12 +). Some recent meetings have included Astronomy Night, Woodcock Peenting, Owl Prowls & workdays at Bluewater Centre for Raptor Rehabilitation. One of LWI's Young Naturalist members was recently nominated for the Margaret & Carl Nunn Camp Scholarship Award through Ontario Nature. Winners will be awarded a 4 day scholarship to Camp Kawartha in Peterborough Ontario.
- Return the Landscape: one staff person continues to sit on the Return the Landscape Committee. This group aims to rescue native flora from development sites and replant them within native landscapes within Lambton County. Some current projects include: Lanxess/VIP Rail compensation planting, acquisition of a new 'naturalization station' @ the Pointlands in Sarnia, & Schoolyard plantings @ Aamjiwnaang Day Care & King George VI.

Directors Comments:

- a director requested that some of the special events be planned for other days than Sunday.

BD-14-075

Marriott - McEwen

“That the Board of Directors acknowledges the Conservation Education Report, dated April 2, 2014 including the winter programing, program development and expansion, Maple Syrup Festival, Sydenham River Canoe Race, Special Events, and Community Partnerships.”

CARRIED

Directors requested that a permit/floodplain issue presentation take place at the June meeting.

BD-14-076

Faas - Bilton

“That the meeting be adjourned.”



Steve Arnold
Chair

Brian McDougall
General Manager